

REPORT ON THE AUTUMN MEETING IN THE OBAN AREA, 2007: DIPLOPODAA.D. Barber¹ & S.J. Gregory²¹ Rathgar, Exeter Road, Ivybridge, Devon, PL21 0BD, UK.² Northmoor Trust, Hill Farm, Little Wittenham, nr, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, OX14 4QZ

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During the BMIG field meeting in the Oban area (29th September to 5th October, 2007) a total of 24 species of millipede were recorded (Table 2) from more than 20 sites from a total of 10 10km National Grid squares predominantly within the 100km square NM but also NN (Table 1). Collections were made both from the mainland and from Seil Island, Isle of Mull and Lismore Island, including a large proportion from coastal habitats and ornamental gardens in various rural and urban locations. Those involved were Glyn Collis, Richard Price, Peter Nicholson, the present authors, and also Gordon Corbet for part of the week. Some of the identifications, including that of *Alajulus nitidus*, were made by Paul Lee to whom thanks are due.

Collections were made at Bragleenmore and Scammadale in the immediate area. Also at Ballahuan NR and adjacent areas, Cuan Ferry and Ellenbeich on Seil Island, Craignure, Torosay (including Torosay Gardens) on Mull, woodland at Moss of Achnacree, Ledaig, Banderloch, Tralee, Ardmaddy Gardens, Appin Port, Lismore Island, the Dunollie/Dunstaffnage/Connel area north of Oban, Fearnach Bay, Airds Bay and various sites in the town of Oban (including in the vicinity of the cathedral) (Table 1). The soils were mainly non-calcareous but Lismore Island is entirely composed of limestone, which also outcrops at Tralee.

Table 1: List of sites surveyed

Code	Locality	10km Grid	Code	Locality	10km Grid
1	Bragleenbeg	NM92	12	Appin	NM94
2	Ballahuan (Seil Is.)	NM71	12	Lismore Island	NM84
3	Cuan Ferry	NM71	14	Dunollie Castle	NM83
4	Ellenbeich (Seil Is.)	NM71	15	Dunstaff'g Castle	NM83
5	Craignure (Mull)	NM73	16	Connel L.Linnhe	NM93
6	Torosay (Mull)	NM73	17	Fearnach Bay	NM81
7	Moss of Achnacree	NM93	18	Oban Town	NM83
8	Ledaig	NM93	19	Oban Town	NM82
9	Banderloch	NM93	20	Scammadale	NM82
10	Tralee	NM83	21	Airds Bay, Tainuilt	NN03
11	Ardmaddy Gardens	NM71			

By comparison with the centipedes recorded at the same time, there was a larger number of specimens collected and a much greater species diversity for millipedes. One species, a *Brachychaeteuma* sp. could only be determined to generic level since a male specimen was not collected. As far as the millipedes were concerned, not only was a good range of species found, but there were a number of highlights.

On Seil Island sampling in the 'slatey' shingle at Cuan Ferry (primarily for centipedes) yielded numbers of *Thalassiosobates littoralis* allowing participants to see this elusive animal in the living state. It was subsequently found at another site on Seil, Ellenbeich. The new Millipede Atlas (Lee,

2006) shows only 17 “dots” in total for Britain and Ireland for this interesting species that occurs both in the Mediterranean and on the Atlantic coast of the United States. These are the most northerly British records.

The visit to Mull included Torosay Gardens where collections were made in the garden work area and greenhouses. Here 16 species of millipede were collected including specimens of a blackish Juline millipede. Despite lacking the supposedly diagnostic white stripe (Blower, 1985) these were subsequently identified by SG as *Leptoiulus belgicus* (male gonopods examined). Subsequently, this same species was identified from another 4 sites. Often the pale dorsal stripe was indistinct or entirely absent. Some females had a distinctive marbled brown colouration, but in these examples the pale dorsal stripe was always distinct. This variation in pigmentation is much wider than suggested by Blower (1985), but has been noted before (Des Kime, pers. comm). In Britain *L. belgicus* is known mostly from the Channel Islands, south west England, south Wales and north-west Ireland. Lee (2006) includes a record from the Inner Hebrides and in light of the additional records detailed herein it is probable that this species has a widespread distribution along the entire Atlantic fringe of Britain.

Table 2: Species recorded from the Oban area, by site.

N = number of 10km squares

Species	Site Code																					N
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
<i>Chordeuma proximum</i>						x	x	x	x		x			x								4
<i>Chordeuma</i> sp.						x		x			x	x			x							-
<i>Nanogona polydesmoides</i>						x			x	x	x	x	x				x	x	x			9
<i>Melogona scutellaris</i>						x																1
<i>Melogona</i> sp.															x							-
<i>Brachychaeteuma</i> sp.				x														x				2
<i>Thalassisobates littoralis</i>			x	x																		1
<i>Blaniulus guttulatus</i>	x					x							x	x	x			x	x	x		4
<i>Archiboreoiulus pallidus</i>																		x				1
<i>Proteroiulus fuscus</i>	x	x				x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x							6
<i>Choneiulus palmatus</i>						x																1
<i>Boreoiulus tenuis</i>																		x	x	x		3
<i>Tachypodoiulus niger</i>	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x	9
<i>Ommatoiulus sabulosus</i>	x	x		x		x	x			x	x					x						5
<i>Brachyiulus pusillus</i>						x												x				2
<i>Julus scandinavicus</i>		x				x			x									x				5
<i>Ophiulus pilosus</i>	x	x		x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x		x	x		9
<i>Leptoiulus belgicus</i>				x	x	x					x	x										3
<i>Cylindroiulus punctatus</i>	x	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x		x	x	x	x	9
<i>Cylindroiulus britannicus</i>	x				x	x	x	x	x		x		x		x		x	x	x	x		8
<i>Cylindroiulus latestriatus</i>		x		x		x	x		x	x		x										5
<i>Allajulus nitidus</i>									x													1
<i>Polydesmus angustus</i>	x	x		x		x				x		x	x				x		x	x		8
<i>Polydesmus inconstans</i>									x													1
<i>Polydesmus</i> sp.							x		x													-
<i>Brachydesmus superus</i>	x	x		x		x			x		x		x				x	x	x	x		8
<i>Macrosternodesmus palicola</i>																		x				1

Gordon Corbet had already collected in the area and had found a *Chordeuma* species, unidentifiable to species level at the time due to lack of adult males. Visiting his site at Moss of Achnacree at a later time of year yielded several adult males, clearly identifiable as *C. proximum*, a species already known from the Inner Hebrides (Lee, 2006). Again, further specimens were obtained from other localities, a total of 4 10km NG squares, suggesting a much wider distribution in western Scotland than previously noted.

Two other chordeumatidans, five blaniulids/nemasomatids, four polydesmoids and another nine julids added up to an interesting collection. The most widely recorded species, not completely unexpectedly, were *Nanogona polydesmoides*, *Tachypodoiulus niger*, *Ophiulus pilosus*, *Cylindroiulus punctatus*, *C. britannicus*, *Polydesmus angustus* and *Brachydesmus superus*. There were, not surprisingly, no glomerids collected although *Glomeris marginata* and *Geoglomeris subterranea* could possibly be here, just at the apparent edge of their range (Jura, Arran).

REFERENCES

- Blower, J.G. (1985) *Millipedes*. Synopses of the British Fauna (New Series) No. 35. London: (Linnean Society) E.J. Brill & Dr W. Backhuys.
- Lee, P. (2006) *Atlas of the millipedes (Diplopoda) of Britain and Ireland*. Sofia & Moscow: Pensoft.