

CAT CHAT

The Journal of the Catfish Study Group

Breeders Award Programme

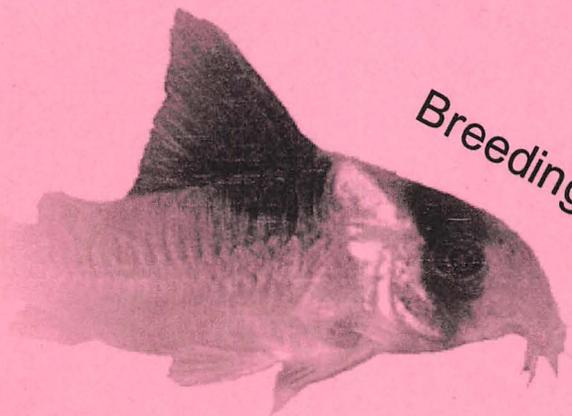


On the revision of the genus *Lasiacistrus*



No cod? Catfish and chips please

“What’s new”



Breeding *Callichthys callichthys*

**Volume 8 Issue Number 1
March 2007**

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This is the first journal of the Catfish Study Group. There are no new surprises, the journal is still the same format etc. and articles will still be as hard to get hold of.

As you will be aware, from 1 January 2007 the group changed it's name to the Catfish Study Group (without the (UK) bit). However, the journal will still be called Cat Chat

Articles for publication in Cat Chat should be sent to:

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Or by e-mail to: editor@catfishstudygroup.org with the subject title **Cat Chat** so that I don't treat it as spam mail and delete it without opening it.

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CAT CHAT

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From the Chair



The New Year started quietly, the AGM in January was a pretty straightforward affair with no officers up for re-election. We do have a couple of committee changes though, our president Trevor Morris, because of ill health has relinquished his committee post as functions manager and the committee decided that this position would not be refilled. A new position of publicity officer was made and Paul Fox was duly appointed.

As you all know February is the month we hold our annual convention, and the second of our full weekend of programmes. Although I was well pleased with the way the convention went and the fact that everyone who attended seemed to thoroughly enjoy themselves. I was somewhat disappointed with the attendance, there were many of the previously regular convention faces absent. Whether this was due to the fact the Robin Hood Club in Nottingham were holding an auction on the same weekend and members thought it better to go for a bargain rather than support their own event I do not know. Have I pricked a few consciences? I sincerely hope so.

That said, I was very pleased that the British Cichlid Association, the Anabantoid Association of Great Britain and the British Livebearer Association came with their group stands. I know that there were many people who enjoyed seeing and talking about other aspects of the hobby besides their own particular areas of interest.

Also in the specialist areas we had cultured live food expert Mark Breeze providing information and giving advice and water expert Chris Ralph advising people on how to provide and maintain perfect water conditions.

Preparations are already under way for our 2008 convention, which will be held on the 16th-17th February 2008. So please make a note in your diaries. Further details will be announced in due course.

By the time you receive this we will have held the first of the groups annual auctions, 'The Spring Auction' on March 18th.

To keep the CSG flag flying we will be taking the stand to the BCA convention on the 25th March, to the Grocklemania convention on the Isle of White on the 15th, 16th & 17th June and the Festival of Fishkeeping at Hayling Island in October and personally I will be flying the flag in Cincinnati USA on the 19th & 20th May. Any members in these areas are welcome to come and give us support on the stand.

The Breeders Award Programme got underway on the 1st of March and at the time of writing this I am told we have some 27 species registered and as we progress with the scheme a regular updated list will be presented on the website as well as well as here in Cat Chat, so don't be left behind, get your spawning registered and become part of a worthwhile and rewarding scheme.

GATFISH STUDY GROUP

OPEN SHOW

16 SEPTEMBER 2007

Highfields Working Men's Club

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On the revision of the genus *Lasiancistrus*

by Ingo Seidel

Since time immemorial the experts have been at odds regarding the definition of a species, and every ichthyologist has their own slightly different opinion in this regard, with the so-called "splitters" and "lumpers" representing the extreme positions. The splitters are thus termed because they would call into life a new species on the basis of even the slightest differences between two fishes. Meanwhile the lumpers are the precise opposite and would combine everything together into a single species even where there are clearly recognisable differences that other ichthyologists would undoubtedly regard as specific characters. In ichthyology it is desirable to arrive at a sound compromise between these two extreme positions. Unfortunately in the recent past fairly common species and genera among the loricariid catfishes of the subfamily Hypostominae (*sensu* Armbruster 2004) have been lumped together to a degree which in my view can hardly be justified.

At the end of 2005 the American ichthyologist Jonathan Armbruster, who has been working for several years on the loricariid catfishes of the subfamily Hypostominae (including the former Ancistrinae), published a revision of the genus *Lasiancistrus*. Of the original 12 species regarded as valid by Isbrücker (2001) Armbruster recognises all of four (!!!) species as still valid. In addition he describes two new species, *Lasiancistrus saetiger* and *Lasiancistrus tentaculatus*, both of which are already well known in the aquarium hobby.

For the differentiation of these species Armbruster utilises almost exclusively differences in the coloration, a dangerous strategy if we consider that in *Lasiancistrus* species the majority of pattern characteristics frequently disappear only a short time after preservation (see Knaack 2000). In numerous specimens from this genus deposited in museums it is thus virtually impossible to discern anything of the original natural markings. Differences that are readily discernible in the living fish are only faintly recognisable, or under certain circumstances not at all. Unfortunately the aquarium-hobby literature, in which numerous species are also illustrated very good in live coloration, is completely ignored by many ichthyologists. Closer cooperation between science and the hobby would be very beneficial in getting around this type of problem.

In this paper I would like to look more closely at the small number of species still regarded as valid by Armbruster, as well their synonyms.

Lasiancistrus caucanus Eigenmann, 1912

Synonyms according to Armbruster:

Hemiancistrus mayoloi Eigenmann, 1912

Ancistrus planiceps Meek & Hildebrand, 1913

Lasiancistrus volcanensis Dahl, 1942

Under the species name *L. caucanus* Armbruster groups together all the taxa described from Colombia and Panama with a transandine distribution. The species *L. mayoloi*, described from the Río San Juan, and *L. volcanensis* from the Magdalena basin, along with *L. planiceps*, which is found in Panama, are supposedly in agreement with *L. caucanus*, described from the Río Cauca. The loricariid catfish that Armbruster figures as *L. caucanus* originates from the Magdalena basin and is identical with L 312/LDA 71, which has recently been imported more frequently from Colombia as an aquarium fish. Specifically, the fish illustrated likewise exhibits the characteristic dark longitudinal stripes on the back, which L 312 also displays in fright coloration in the aquarium, as well as the light spots at the base of the pectoral fins. Whether or not the two species *L. mayoloi* and *L. volcanensis* are correctly regarded as synonyms of *L. caucanus* cannot in my view be ascertained without sight of the type material of these taxa. But I would exclude the synonymy of *L. planiceps*, as live specimens of this species are now present in the aquarium hobby (see Seidel & Evers 2005, Sosna 2006). The species is completely differently coloured to *L. caucanus* and Armbruster himself mentions in passing that in specimens of "*L. caucanus*" from the Río Bayano in Panama the light areas of the body are spots and not forming a light background as in the other "forms". Armbruster cites three characters as particularly characteristic of *L. caucanus*: the absence of plates ventrally in front of the anus (what is even the case in *L. saetiger*, *L. tentaculatus* and some *L. schomburgkii*), an emarginate caudal fin and the presence of hair-like odontodes at the sides of the snout in sexually mature males. But the last character appears to apply to practically all the transandine *Lasiancistrus* species known to date from Colombia and Panama (including, for example, *Lasiancistrus* sp. "Colombia"; see Seidel & Evers, p. 365). And the hair-like odontodes on the margin of the snout are likewise nothing out of the ordinary in this genus. They are also seen in, for example, the newly described species *Lasiancistrus*

saetiger, but not only there. But because this character is developed only in sexually mature males and perhaps also only during the breeding season, finding it in preserved specimens is largely a matter of luck.



Fig. 1: *Lasiancistrus* sp. (L 312) from the Río Magdalena in Colombia is the species which Armbruster figures as *Lasiancistrus caucanus* (photo: I. Seidel).

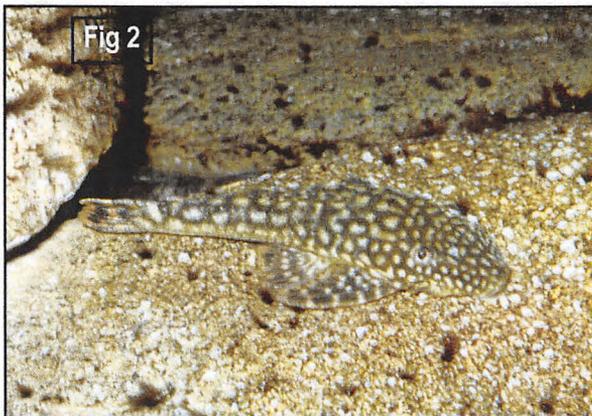


Fig. 2: According to Armbruster *Lasiancistrus planiceps* from Panama is merely a synonym of *L. caucanus* (photo: E. Sosna).



Fig. 3: The hair-like odontodes on the margin of the snout in sexually mature males are supposedly species-typical for *L. caucanus*. (photo: I. Seidel)



Fig. 4: The newly described *L. saetiger* also exhibit this character, for example, seen here (photo: I. Seidel).

***Lasiancistrus guacharote* (Valenciennes, 1840)**

Synonyms according to Armbruster:

Ancistrus mystacinus Kner, 1854

Lasiancistrus maracaiboensis Schultz, 1944

The provenance of *Lasiancistrus guacharote* remains to date unclear. Valenciennes specifies the island of Puerto Rico as the type locality, but the occurrence of a *Lasiancistrus* species on this island in the northern Caribbean is highly doubtful. Because the collector of the holotype, August Plée, a young adventurer and naturalist, made collections not only on Puerto Rico but also in the Maracaibo basin in Venezuela, Armbruster postulates that the latter is the actual locality for *L. guacharote*. *L. mystacinus* was described by Kner from Caracas; here too Armbruster postulates that this is not its true provenance in view of the absence of subsequent collections of this fish in the vicinity of Caracas. In all probability the locality cited was, as was not unusual at the time, the place in Venezuela via which the material collected left the country, and in those days too that would have been the capital city, Caracas. Because *L. mystacinus* and *L. maracaiboensis*, which was not described until a lot later on, are otherwise in agreement with *L. guacharote* in their typical characters, the assignment of these taxa to the synonymy of *L. guacharote* is only logical. The species is probably distributed only in affluents of the Lago de Maracaibo in Venezuela and Colombia.

According to Armbruster *L. guacharote* can be distinguished from the majority of other species in that the species has light spots on a dark background and an almost naked underside with only a small number of scutes between the pectoral-fin insertions. The species can be distinguished from *L. schomburgkii* by the presence of black spots on the dorsal fin along with black bands on the pectoral and ventral fins as well as the tail.

Fig. 5: *Lasiancistrus maracaiboensis* from north-western Venezuela (in this case a specimen from the



Río Motatán in Venezuela) is regarded as a synonym of *L. guacharote*.

***Lasiancistrus heteracanthus* (Günther, 1869)**

Because *Lasiancistrus heteracanthus* was described almost 140 years ago, the holotype, the only type specimen of the species, is by now almost completely faded. All that can now be seen is that the species has indistinct black spots on the dorsal and caudal fins. In addition the type locality, the Amazon in Peru, is not specified precisely. Nevertheless Armbruster apparently regarded this as quite adequate to identify as *L. heteracanthus* the only two specimens from the Peruvian Amazon region in which he found black spots on the fins. On this basis Armbruster provides the following description of coloration for *L. heteracanthus*: large, barely visible, light spots on a brown head, devolving into a marbled pattern on the back and flanks; two longitudinal stripes on the flanks. In so doing Armbruster completely ignores the description of coloration in this species, based on the at the time relatively freshly preserved specimens, given by Günther in the species description. Günther describes the coloration as uniformly greyish, but with every scute on the dorsum having a light centre. Regan (1906) subsequently re-examined the holotype and in addition mentions that the species has a striking black spot at the base of the dorsal fin. Both points apply to the *Lasiancistrus* pictured here, from the Río San Alejandro in the upper Amazonas basin in Peru, which in my view is the true *L. heteracanthus*. This species is

widespread in the river systems of the Río Huallaga and the Río Ucayali. Armbruster also had these fishes available for determination, but identified them as *L. schomburgkii* on the basis of the light spots.

Fig. 6: This *Lasiancistrus* from the Río San Alejandro in Peru is probably *L. heteracanthus*, as it agrees precisely with the description of coloration given by Günther and Regan (photo: I. Seidel).

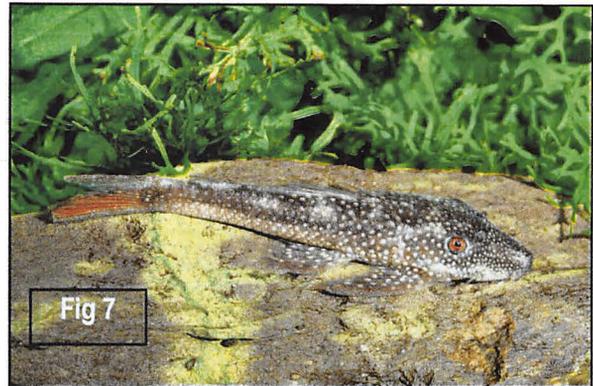


Fig. 7: The real *L. heteracanthus* – in my opinion - in the aquarium (photo: I. Seidel)

***Lasiancistrus saetiger* Armbruster, 2005**

The newly described *Lasiancistrus saetiger* is an old acquaintance in the aquarium hobby. This species, which is mainly caught for export in the Río Guama in the north-east of Brazil, was first portrayed by Stawikowski (1988) as *Lasiancistrus scolymus* and was known by that name thereafter. Evers (2001) eventually made it clear that this species could not be *L. scolymus*, which was described from the Río Aripuana in the river system of the Río Madeira. Hence a short time later it was given the code number L 322 by Werner (2002). A characteristic feature of *L. saetiger* is the light spots, practically the same size as the scutes on which they lie, on the body and the paired fins. In addition the dark bordering of the scutes is so far unique within the genus. *L. saetiger* is undoubtedly one of the largest species of the genus. Some time ago Gottwald (Aquatarium, Garbsen, Germany) imported a specimen purportedly 22 cm in length.



The Rio Guama lies in the extreme north-east of Brazil in the river system of the Rio Tocantins. More recently, however, what is undoubtedly the same species has also been imported by Gottwald from the Rio Anapu, a tributary of the Rio do Pará, and even from the Rio Jarauçu, a Xingu affluent. The distribution region of the species is thus somewhat larger than previously assumed.

Fig. 8: *Lasiancistrus saetiger* – also known as L 322 – from the Rio Guama in Brazil (photo: I. Seidel).



Fig. 9: Adult *L. saetiger* from the Rio Anapu (photo : I. Seidel).

***Lasiancistrus schomburgkii* (Günther, 1864)**

Synonyms according to Armbruster:

Hypostomus pictus Castelnau, 1855

Hemiancistrus castelnaui Miranda-Ribeiro, 1911

Ancistrus multispinis Holly, 1929

Hemiancistrus caquetæ Fowler 1945

Lasiancistrus scolymus Nijssen & Isbrücker, 1985

Lasiancistrus guapore Knaack, 2000

Armbruster examined the two syntypes of *Chaetostomus schomburgkii*, a species still classified as *Guyanancistrus* by Isbrücker *et al.* (2001) and later transferred by Armbruster (2004) to the genus *Pseudancistrus*. Despite the exceptionally poor condition of the specimens (they are by now damaged and completely faded) he was now able to establish that they were members of the genus *Lasiancistrus*.

All that is known about these two syntypes is the country of origin (Guyana) and the colour description given by Günther (1864) ("Brownish, clouded with darker; fin rays with brown dots"), but this was sufficient for Armbruster to identify the only *Lasiancistrus* species from that country available for study as *L. schomburgkii*. The fishes identified as that species by Armbruster originated from the Rupununi River (Essequibo basin) and the Takutu River (Negro basin), two river systems that are temporarily connected during the rainy season

and hence exhibit a fish fauna with many features in common. Thus it may be that Armbruster's *L. schomburgkii* corresponds to L 302, a black *Lasiancistrus* with white spots, which Miller (2002) figured from the upper Rupununi.

Armbruster goes on to nominate numerous *Lasiancistrus* species with white speckling, described from very different parts of the Amazon and Orinoco basins and including a number of L-number catfishes, as synonyms of *L. schomburgkii*. But there is no valid basis for the synonymisation of some of these taxa. Much is highly speculative, and hence I would have preferred to see species whose precise status at present remains unclear retain their individual specific status. Armbruster, however, synonymises some of these taxa without adducing a single piece of evidence – as might be expected – that some of the specimens he studied agree with *L. schomburgkii*, but just because they have a similar distribution. Nowadays it is known from aquarium-hobby imports that in many areas of the Amazon region it is commonplace for several similarly coloured loricariid catfish species to live in the same river system. If the possibility of the existence of further similar species in a region is excluded simply because there are no further specimens in the museum, that is to ignore the fact that collections of all ornamental fish species are available. And that is clearly to underestimate the diversity of the loricariid catfish family.

Lasiancistrus castelnaui, described from Peru, is in my view a dubious synonym of *L. schomburgkii*. The taxon *Hemiancistrus castelnaui* was established by Miranda Ribeiro (1911) as a replacement name for *Hypostomus pictus* Castelnau, 1855, as the latter name was preoccupied in *Hemiancistrus* by *Ancistrus pictus* Kner, 1854. Armbruster writes of this species: "The color pattern of the holotype of *L. castelnaui* is mostly gone; however, there are a few small white spots in the dorsal fin, and I have examined only one specimen of *Lasiancistrus* from the upper Amazon of Peru (excluding the río Napo) making it most likely that the common species of the upper Amazon is *L. schomburgkii*."

L. scolymus and *L. guapore* from the river system of the Rio Madeira in Brazil are also stated to be synonyms of *L. schomburgkii*. The describers of these two species (Nijssen & Isbrücker 1985 and Knaack 2000) differentiated them from other *Lasiancistrus* largely on the basis of meristics. Armbruster writes of this: "Although some measurements were given as differences between the species in both descriptions, the results of the morphometric analysis in this study suggest that measurements cannot separate species of *Lasiancistrus*." Instead he uses mainly colour

characters and the development of scutes on the ventral surface to differentiate the *Lasiancistrus* species. But as already explained earlier, the coloration of preserved *Lasiancistrus* as a rule fades markedly after a short time, and in ancistrine loriciid catfishes the development of scutes on the underside is strongly age-dependent. In life the coloration of *L. scolymus* and *L. guapore* is very different and it differs even quite clearly from that of L 302 from the upper Rupununi River, so that the synonymy of these two species is highly doubtful.

The basis for the synonymisation of *Ancistrus multispinis* is likewise very vague. The type of this species is lost and all that exists is the brief description by Holly (1929), according to which the species is light brown with a darker dorsum and brown fins. The type locality is given as "Mercado Bl  n", which is probably the market at Bel  m. Although the description of coloration doesn't agree with that of either *L. schomburgkii* or *L. saetiger* (both species from the vicinity of Bel  m), Armbruster assumes that *A. multispinis* must be a synonym. And because *L. saetiger* is always clearly spotted, while according to Armbruster *L. schomburgkii* can also be completely brown, then according to the exclusion principle *A. multispinis* must be a synonym of *L. schomburgkii*. In this Armbruster completely ignores the fact that by now five clearly distinct *Lasiancistrus* species are known to the aquarium hobby from the river system of the Rio Tocantins (on which the city of Bel  m stands) including the tributaries the Rio Guam   and Rio Araguaia. According to the same exclusion principle *Lasiancistrus caquet  e* from Colombia is declared a synonym of *L. schomburgkii*.

Thus if we follow Armbruster, the species name *Lasiancistrus schomburgkii* can be regarded as including all *Lasiancistrus* species that either have white spotting on a dark background or are uniform dark brown, in which the dorsal fin is either uniformly dark or light spotted, and in which there are no dark spots at all on the fins. Of course this would simplify matters considerably and whole series of L-number catfishes would disappear at a stroke, for example L 33, L 178, L 228, L 302, L 337, and L 365. According to Armbruster *L. schomburgkii* is found in practically the entire Amazon basin, the upper Orinoco basin, plus the

Essequibo basin, and in Brazil, Ecuador, Guyana, Colombia, Peru, and Venezuela.

Fig. 10: Armbruster identified this species also known as L 302, from the Rupununi River in Guyana, as *Lasiancistrus schomburgkii*. This is the only known specimen of L 302, now deposited in the Zoologische Staatssammlung Muenchen (photo: I. Seidel).



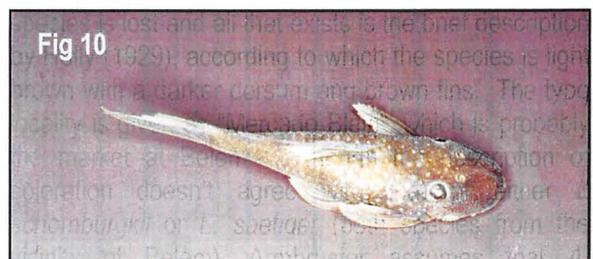
Fig. 11: *Lasiancistrus guapore* is a doubtful synonym of *L. schomburgkii* (photo: J. Knaack).



Fig. 12: The nomination of *Lasiancistrus scolymus* as a synonym of *L. schomburgkii* is certainly not justified (photo: I. Seidel).



Fig. 13: According to Armbruster's definition the following species are simply local variants of *L. schomburgkii*: L 33 from the Rio Tocantins at Tucuru   (photo: I. Seidel), ...



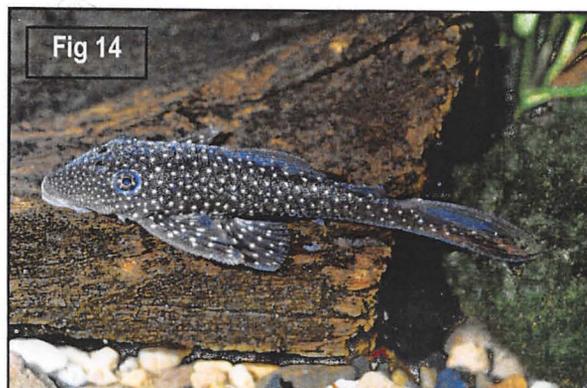


Fig. 14: ... L 228 from the upper Amazon in Peru (photo: I. Seidel), ...



Fig. 16: *Lasiancistrus tentaculatus* (L 92) from the Río Orinoco in Venezuela (photo: I. Seidel).



Fig. 15: ... and this *Lasiancistrus* from the Río Ventuari in Venezuela (photo: I. Seidel).



Fig. 17: The characteristic growth of tentacles on the margin of the snout in a sexually mature male of *L. tentaculatus* (photo: I. Seidel).

***Lasiancistrus tentaculatus* Armbruster, 2005**

Lasiancistrus tentaculatus has again been known as an aquarium fish for many years. The species has been imported in large numbers via Colombia under the label L 92 and/or L 194, but has its main distribution in the Llanos in Venezuela. I regard this species as a relatively small member of the genus, as I have never seen specimens more than 10-12 cm in length, either as imports or during two expeditions to the habitats of the species in Venezuela. In addition I do not regard L 92 as being identical with the noticeably more compressed *Lasiancistrus* sp. "Flachkopf" (see Seidel & Evers, p. 362 ff.), but this species is apparently variable in its body depth. Both forms are henceforth to be regarded as *Lasiancistrus tentaculatus*, as they have a species-typical feature in common. Sexually mature males develop a thick "cushion" of short "tentacles" on the margin of the snout.

A typical feature of *L. tentaculatus* is the white speckling on the anterior body and the red-brown and black banded paired fins. The holotype of *L. tentaculatus* has a length of 147.6 mm SL. The species is widespread in the Orinoco region of Colombia and Venezuela, but according to Armbruster also occurs in the Maracaibo basin.

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Dirty fish - Dirty tank

Filtration comment by the Editor

I don't know if I am on my own here but I keep and breed Ancistrus and find that in no time at all, I have to clean out the filter because of the dirt produced from their constant gnawing on the bog wood.

Don't you think that external power filter canisters aren't big enough for a tank full of fish that produce that high rate of detritus. Most power filters have a powerful motor but in my opinion, the canisters that collect and filter the muck are too small and they have to be cleaned out before the filter begins to operate properly.

Why don't manufacturers put larger containers with their power source even if the filtration rate is slower or faster?

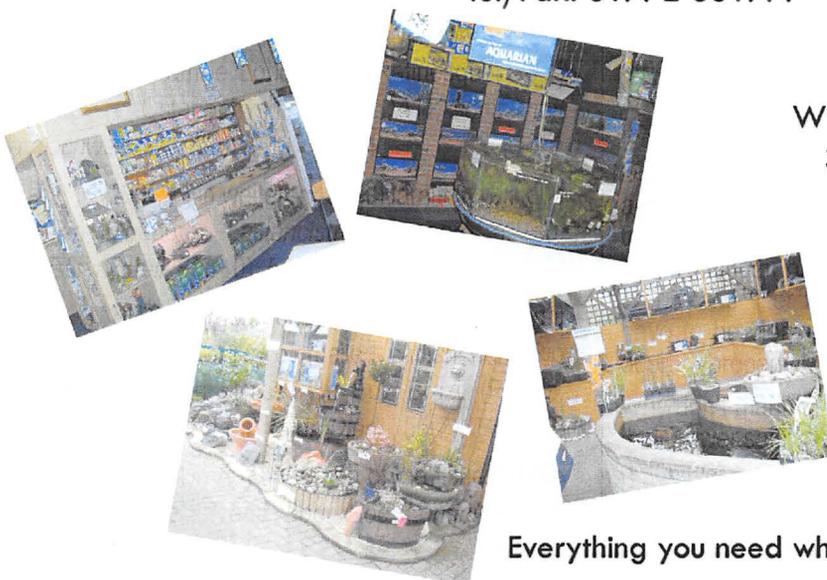
They do it with heaters and some manufacturers still produce heaters of different wattages but the heater itself is the same size. Do you remember the old heaters that were all about six inches long with a separate thermostat of similar size? They ran from 25 watt up to 200 watt.

Look at the external filters. Big motor - big canister - big tank. Small motor - small canister - small tank. Why not small motor on a large canister for a smaller tank? Or am I missing something here?

Comments please.

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No cod? Catfish and chips please.

by Paul Wilkinson

SO long as you don't have to look at it - live, that is - Vietnamese catfish could soon be the new delicacy down at your local chippy. The ugly freshwater creature, named for the cat's whisker-like feelers on its head, can weigh up to 100lb. But, sliced up and fried in a thick layer of tasty batter, it could take over from cod. Said to taste "a little" like the traditional favourite, the flesh tends to stay in one piece rather than flake.

However, its biggest appeal to retailers is the price. A catfish fillet wholesales for around 50p, compared with £1.50 for endangered North Sea cod or haddock. The Oriental fish is arriving on the British market after a trade war between the US and Vietnamese fish farmers who were accused of undercutting the American catfish industry.

Popular

When the Americans slapped a huge tax on imports, the Vietnamese had to look for new sales elsewhere - and with Britons polishing off around 300 million fish suppers a year, the potential UK market is huge.

Members of the National Federation of Fish Friers, which speaks for the UK's 10,000 chippies, have tested the fish and pronounced it perfectly acceptable.

"It fried well and tasted fine," said David Audley, the federation's president, who runs a chippy at North Walsham in Norfolk. "I tried it in my shop and customers were well satisfied. Several came back and asked for it again.

"It's good that people should "try something new. Dogfish is already very popular, especially in the south, where people know it as rock salmon."

In some parts of Yorkshire dogfish is even sold as Scarborough Woof. But the catfish - called Basa or Tra by the Vietnamese fishermen - has already caused cat-fights in some markets.

Edinburgh council has warned people to beware of

doorstep salesmen peddling Vietnamese Catfish as the fashionable delicacy monkfish, and last year Australian fish merchants claimed huge quantities were being passed off as other better-known varieties.

Some food producers were using it in prepared dishes where the exact type of fish did not need to be specified on the packaging. There have also been reports that some fish shops in south Yorkshire were already selling it as cod. One chip shop owner in Doncaster, who didn't want to be named, said: "I've been offered it by various suppliers and I know other people are selling it. The suppliers say demand is strong.

"It's an easy way to make a quick buck but it's wrong. Cod is expensive now and it's cheaper for me to buy salmon. This is just conning the customer." But Mr Audley did not believe deceptions were happening on any significant scale. "I cannot say categorically that no one is doing it," he said, "but we have not heard of that going on. It is illegal to pass it off as something else and if they get caught they will get into trouble."

The Government's Food Standards Agency said it was working on a DNA test for trading standards officers to tell which species of fish was beneath the batter.

If Vietnamese catfish does become acceptable its lower cost should certainly boost its popularity. And at those prices there must surely be at least some left over for the cat.

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Breeding *Callichthys callichthys*

By Jim Humphrys

I recently purchased two pairs of *Callichthys callichthys* from a shop in Bethnal Green. I hadn't seen any around for a number of years but I remember a friend of mine breeding some a number of years ago. They weren't cheap and cost me £25.00 a pair but they were genuine *Callichthys* and not the old Hoplo's. They were between 10 to 12 cm in length and in good condition.

When I got home I put each pair in 18 x 10 x 10 tanks in my garage and in one tank set the heater to 75°F and left the other tank without a heater but the temperature was steady around 70°F.

I fed them frozen bloodworm pellets and ordinary catfish pellets for around two months with occasional water changes using normal London tap water.

I placed a small piece of polystyrene in each tank and after a couple more weeks bubbles started to appear around around the polystyrene.

I was still changing water but still observing the bubble nests.

I thought that one pair had spawned but couldn't see any eggs so I left the other pair alone.

As usual, the unpredictable happened. The pair that I had left alone spawned and I noticed very small fry under the polystyrene. They looked like miniature tadpoles. I removed the adults because I don't know if they eat their fry.



Callichthys callichthys, (Linnaeus, 1758)
Countries of origin: Peru, Bolivia, Brazil

in one tank after a few days I started feeding microworm and then brine shrimp. Shortly after this I fed them on crushed flake and catfish pellets and continued with the live food. I carried out water changes every other day. There are about 100 fry and now at six weeks old they are about ¾ in long. I recently started to spread the fish around to other tanks and have given some to friends.

These fish are very easy to keep and raise and are not at all aggressive.

I hope that this little bit of information will be useful to anyone who is interested in these fish.

Editors note:

Jim when you next breed them perhaps you will take part in the Breeders Award Scheme which started on the 1 March 2007. Information on this is elsewhere in this journal.

AQUARIUM HEATING

A point of view by the Editor

Wouldn't you think that, in this day and age of alleged advanced technology, a better system of thermostat/heater in the home aquarium would have been invented.

The current heater/thermostats are still operating on the old-fashioned bi-metal strip which, at a guess, must have been invented around the 1920's or earlier.

These wonderful bits of equipment, that we rely on in temperate or colder climates, bear no resemblance to the natural world. And isn't it strange how they always stick 'on' and boil the fish when they break down. At least if the water went cold there's a chance that your expensive fish will survive in the room temperature.

From my own experience in Angola, water temperature varies considerably from day to night, even taking the seasons into account. The water temperature is not

'accurate to ± 1°' like the bi-metal heater/thermostat promises.

I feel that in order to create something more natural, you would need two heater/thermostats, one on a timer which heats to your maximum temperature setting and then switches off completely when the lights go out. The other comes on when the temperature drops to the minimum you require, maybe 62°F. This temp would be maintained for the rest of the night until the lights/timer comes on again in the morning and raises the temperature back to your maximum setting.

I am not an electrical technological expert but I think that, having heard a lot of aquarists complain about the loss of their expensive fish through heater failure, the companies could do more for protection. However I do realise that business is business and I suppose the bi-metal strip will last for the next 100 years.

Breeders Award Programme

The Breeders Award Programme (BAP) will be launched on the 1st March 2007. Any CSG member can register a genuine spawning which occurs after this date.

For each spawning (after 1st March), a registration form should be sent to the BAP Secretary. For all 'first to breed' records (for which bonus points apply) confirmation of receipt will be provided. The completed spawning log should be sent to the BAP Secretary, up to the point for which points are being claimed. Updated logs should be submitted as the fry reach maturity.

Details of the programme and a set of forms are included in this edition. A short list of rules is included below. Further queries should be made to the BAP Secretary.

All submissions are to be made to the BAP Secretary, Mark Walters at:

bap.secretary@catfishstudygroup.org

or by post to:

**The Studio
Clifford Road
Boston Spa
West Yorkshire
LS23 6DB
UK.**

Rules

1. Entry into the program signifies acceptance of the rules.
2. Entry into the program gives the Catfish Study Group here after referred to as the CSG, the right to publish in part or in full, the contents of any breeding report submitted. However, copyright remains the property of the author.
3. Each spawning must be registered either by e-mail or letter within seven days from the spawning date. Confirmation of receipt of a 'first to

breed' record will be given by the BAP Secretary. *This will then give the first person to breed a species, first position on the "first to breed species" report list. To gain the 20 bonus points the report must be submitted within fourteen days of the completion of Pt 3 breeding report. Failure to do so will bring the second person on the list into play and if their report is submitted before the first person, then they will be awarded the points.*

4. Information will be collated and managed by the BAP Secretary and will be available for the scrutiny of members, through a request to the committee, as necessary.

5. The spawning records database will be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect changes in scientific description, nomenclature and other changes to families, genera and species. Classification changes may result in amendments to existing points totals and awards. Points could be removed in the event of amalgamation of genera or closely related species.

6. The Breeders Award Programme will accept records for undescribed species, at the discretion of the BAP Secretary and committee as necessary. It is assumed that undescribed species will be assigned, at least, at genus level.

7. The Breeders Award Programme will assume a year zero position with respect to first time records being submitted. This is regardless of previous success that members may have.

8. Points of issue, disagreements and recommendations will be made to the BAP Secretary in the first instance. If agreement is not met, issues will be escalated to the committee for action.



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Convention 2007 - a report from the edge.

By A W Taylor

Like many other convention in years gone by, it is the culmination of nearly 12 months of committee meetings, telephone calls, e-mails, and quite a bit of driving around and behind the scene negotiations. Although it was quite early known that two behind the scene's stalwarts Danny and Ann Blundell, would be away in Australia, during this Convention, along with the untimely death of the groups Social Secretary Terry Ward, it was evident by the enquiries made about them that their absence had not gone un-noticed, along with that of our Vice President Dr Peter Burgess who unfortunately could not attend due to ill health.



Mrs Audrey Ward, Mrs Glyne Barton, Mr Roy Barton & Dr David Price

Most of the committee arrived at the venue quite early on Friday afternoon to sort out the convention room, as to where the trade stands, invited specialists groups, merchandise, membership renewal, raffle prize and admission stand; along with the projection, video and audio systems, should be placed and arranged. After this was done all that was left to do was to go to our rooms and freshen up in time for a quick drink at the bar before the Friday night informal evening meal. After the meal and with 'Happy Hour' prices we spent some time talking to friends old and new; about all things cat-fishy, into the early hours of the morning.



Liz Carney and Alan Vazier enjoying a chat with Chairman Ian Fuller.



The Saturday morning segment of the convention got underway with the "workshops". These being small table areas, where various sized groups were given in rotation; some practical demonstrations, and small advice on varying themes from culturing live foods, water quality and from specialists groups such as the British Cichlid Association, British Livebearers Association and the Anabantoid association of Great Britain, which proved to be a popular addition to the convention.



After lunch the first of the weekend's lectures got under way, which was by Dr Marcello Britto telling us amongst other things the History of the University in Rio de Janeiro, and of the scientists that had in the past worked there, and their part in building the universities fine collection of specimens, which I have to say I found rather interesting as Dr Britto mentioned the influence



FORUM AUDIENCE



Dr David Price Having a chat with Mary Bailey (British Catfish Assoc.)

some past ichthyologists had on the university; some which I have covered briefly in the series of articles I have been publishing in the group's journal during the last couple of years. After a short break the lectures resumed with Dr David price telling us about the role genetics plays in fish management, both from a fish farming for food point of view, and from a aesthetical hobbyist point of view. After a question and answer session the Saturday lectures came to an end and it was time to retire and get ready for the formal Saturday night banquet.



Tropical World's Simon Wolstencroft talking to Dan Jones (BLA)

After the banquet everyone settled down to the Saturday night Forum Panel, which was comprised of: - Peter Liptrot, Bolton Nat; Hist, Museum. Rupert Bridges Tetra UK. Chris Ralph, Sparshot College, Hampshire. Dr David Price, University of Plymouth. Live food expert Mark Breeze and our chair Ian Fuller. The Forum proved very popular, with many a question asked and answered, and with everyone at times joining in and giving their opinion, it wasn't long before the clock struck 12, and the bar had to close in the banqueting hall, which meant that the forum ended, and it was then time to retire to the hotel lounge for some more liquid refreshment, where the odd game of darts and pool was played along with the usual chit chat that often accompanies these late night drinking parties.

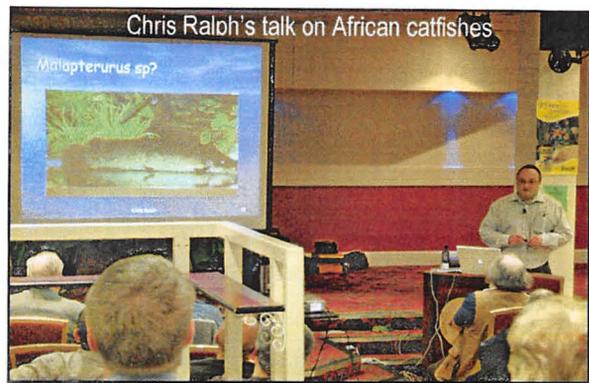
Surprising; nearly all those who stayed up until the wee hours of the morning, managed to make it down on time

for breakfast and be in a fit state for the start of the Sunday's lectures. The First lecture of the day was the one non-catfish lecture on the programme, this being an excellent talk on Labyrinth fishes and their habitats, ranging from Borneo and Sumatra to South Africa from anabantoid specialist Dave Armitage. After a question and answer session on labyrinth fishes and their habitats a short refreshment break was taken, and many people took this opportunity to talk to a few of the specialists group representatives.

After this short break it was time for the second of Dr Britto's lectures, and this was about Phylogeny of the Catfish super family Loricarioidea, which was well received and generated some well thought out questions; and before anyone realised it was time for Sunday lunch. After lunch; all the convention speakers were presented with unique hand carved wooden sculptures of varying catfish, and as usual these had been carved by Brian Walsh (CSG executive committee. 1st right).



The lectures resumed shortly after the presentations, with a talk on African catfishes by Chris Ralph, covering catfish fish families from Mochokidae to Malapteruridae; and as Chris had planned his talk partially around audience participation, his talk proved to be quite popular. Following another refreshment break it was time for our Chairman Ian Fuller to give his much requested talk on Breeding Corydoradinae catfishes, where he informed the audiences on some of the aspects of the ways and techniques he uses not only in his spawning successes, but on how he selects adult catfish for breeding. Unfortunately the time flew by, and it was left to the Chair to close this year's convention. On a personal note I enjoyed my self immensely, throughout the convention, and I hope that everyone that attended did the same. I would also like to thank David and Carol Page for all their efforts in selling raffle prizes over the weekend and Roy Barton for all his work in liaising with the hotelier, which helped



to make convention '07 such a success behind the scenes, and I know that as I write this our Chair is busy planning for Convention '08.

The Rio Salinas Cory: *C. habrosus*

Written by Kevin Korotev for the SPLASH, the official publication of the Milwaukee Aquarium Society, INC.

(Corydoras) habrosus is a dwarf. It is smaller than the 5-centimeter average of the STANDARD Cory, yet bigger than its pygmy cousins: hastatus and pygmaeus. A huge female would be 3.5 centimeters. Males are slightly smaller.

If I have a favorite Cory, this is...this... Heck, it's silly to have a favorite Cory.

Here are my continually modified guidelines for (Corydoras) breeding:

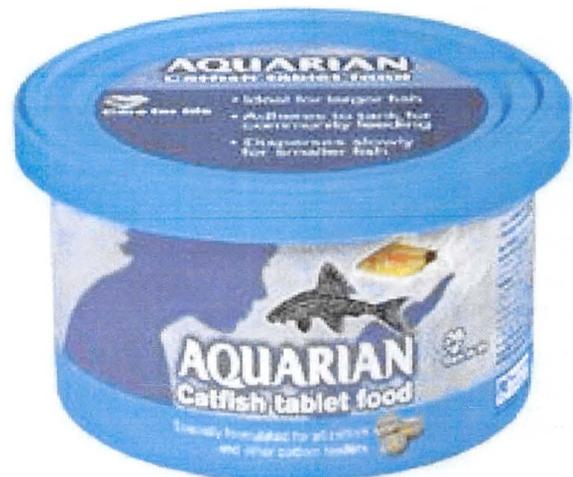
- 1) Have some tank raised males in the group as they SEEM more likely than wild males to initiate courtship.
- 2) Be ready with plenty of good food (live black and frozen bloodworms) when the females FIRST ripen. It seems exponentially harder the longer you/they wait.
- 3) Keep them cool and change their water (with still cooler water) regularly.
- 4) Keep a regular, but moderate 'current'. I used a sponge fitted powerhead.
- 5) Keep the pH under 7.0
- 6) Have a big group.
- 7) Know that there are exceptions to all of these rules.

I spent over two years waiting for (Corydoras) habrosus to read the rules while other cats were spawning IN THE SAME TANK. In this scenario, point #4 was the problem.

I had actually taken my group of 4 adults (only one female) and thrown them in to do "clean up" for a messy

group of top water tetras. It's embarrassing, as a cory lover, to admit doing what so many people who buy Corys do on purpose. So be it. They were good at it and just the right size for the boulder strewn tank bottom. It was amidst plum sized rocks that they spawned.... In the dead calm water, possibly indicating a backwater preference in the wild. It took multiple spawns to collect and raise five fry to 45 days for MAS-BAP credit. Habrosus females carry 1 egg at a time and my female never let me find more than 4 eggs after any spawn. I should have better followed my own rules with regard to point #6.

As I read and edit this article 4 years after its original writing, I reminisce that in the three or 4 times I have spawned (Corydoras) habrosus SINCE this writing, ALL spawns occurred in the quietest parts of the tank...if there were quiet parts and not at all, if there were not.





“What’s new” March 2007

By Mark Walters

This article presents abstracts for four scientific papers for which further details are available.

Catfish sightings:

Following on from the list of not-usual or new species available in the hobby, the following have been sighted:

Corydoras xinguensis, *C. oiapoquensis*, *C. nattereri*, C 123, *Glyptothorax* sp., *Mystus falcarifer*, *Bagrichthys* sp., L's 260, 124, 333, 134, 48, 14,

Selected scientific papers:

Ng, HH and J. Sparks (2005) - The paper describes two new species in the new genus *Gogo*; *G. arcuatus* and *G. ornatus*, as well as a third species - *Ancharius griseus*, which lies in a closely related genus. The three new catfishes are members of the family Anchariidae, endemic to Madagascar, and have feathered barbels, like those of the mochokid *Synodontis*. The paper revises the family, covering all five known species and explanation on how to tell them apart.

Ng, HH, 2006. A new species of Erethistidae catfish, *Erethistoides infuscatus*, is described from the Brahmaputra and Meghna River drainages in northeast India and Bangladesh. *E. infuscatus* differs from congeners in having a brown body with a few indistinct pale patches sometimes present (vs. body with alternating brown and cream vertical bands) and the serrations on the anterior edge of the pectoral spine always distally directed.

Ferreira KM and AC Ribeiro (2007 - A small suckermouth catfish, *Corumbataia britskii* has been described. *Corumbataia britskii* is a member of the loricariid subfamily Hypoptopomatinae and was discovered in 2003 in the Rio Sucuriu, a tributary of the upper Rio Parana basin in Mato Grosso do Sul State, central Brazil. The genus *Corumbataia* was erected by Heraldo Britski in 1997 and now contains three species. It only grows to 3cm and has prominent "tufts" of odontodes on the tip of the supraoccipital.

Mori H and OA Shibatta (2006) - A new species of bumblebee catfish from the *Microglanis* genus has been described from the waters of the Rio Sao Francisco basin in Brazil. *M. leptrostriatus* is most likely to be confused with *M. parahybae* and *M. garavelloii*, which have the closest ranges to the species. *M. leptrostriatus* has a longer head, shorter dorsal spine and shorter pectoral spine length than both species.

If you have any sightings you would like to share or would like to track down a paper, contact me for the full reference: mark.walters70@ntlworld.com

Acknowledgement is made to Planet Catfish, Practical Fishkeeping and the All Catfish Species Inventory (ACSI) database for the original source of information on papers.

MW



MEET THE MEMBER

Paul Fox

Publicity Officer CSG

I live in Worcestershire in the centre of the UK, where I work as an estimator for a large shop fitting company. I have been keeping fish for less time than most of my fellow CSG committee members, but what I lack in experience, I try to make up for with enthusiasm and hope to learn from the vast amount of knowledge within the membership here.

I first started keeping fish about four years ago with a small 60ltr community tank, however it wasn't very long before I was completely hooked on fishkeeping and a few tanks later, I have a 'hi tech' planted discus tank,

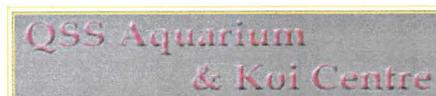
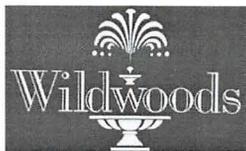
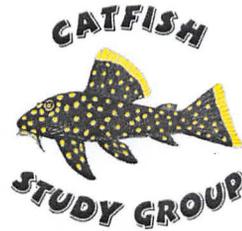
which has several of the warmer loving *Cory* species in as well as three smaller *Cory* only tanks set up for breeding purposes.

Within the next year or so I hope to be building a fish house primarily to house and breed *Corys* and dwarf cichlids, until then I am having to put up with house rules on the number of tank I am allowed. I am married with a five year old son, who likes to watch the fish and already has a keen interest in helping me keep them and is already asking for his own tank.

PF

GATFISH STUDY GROUP

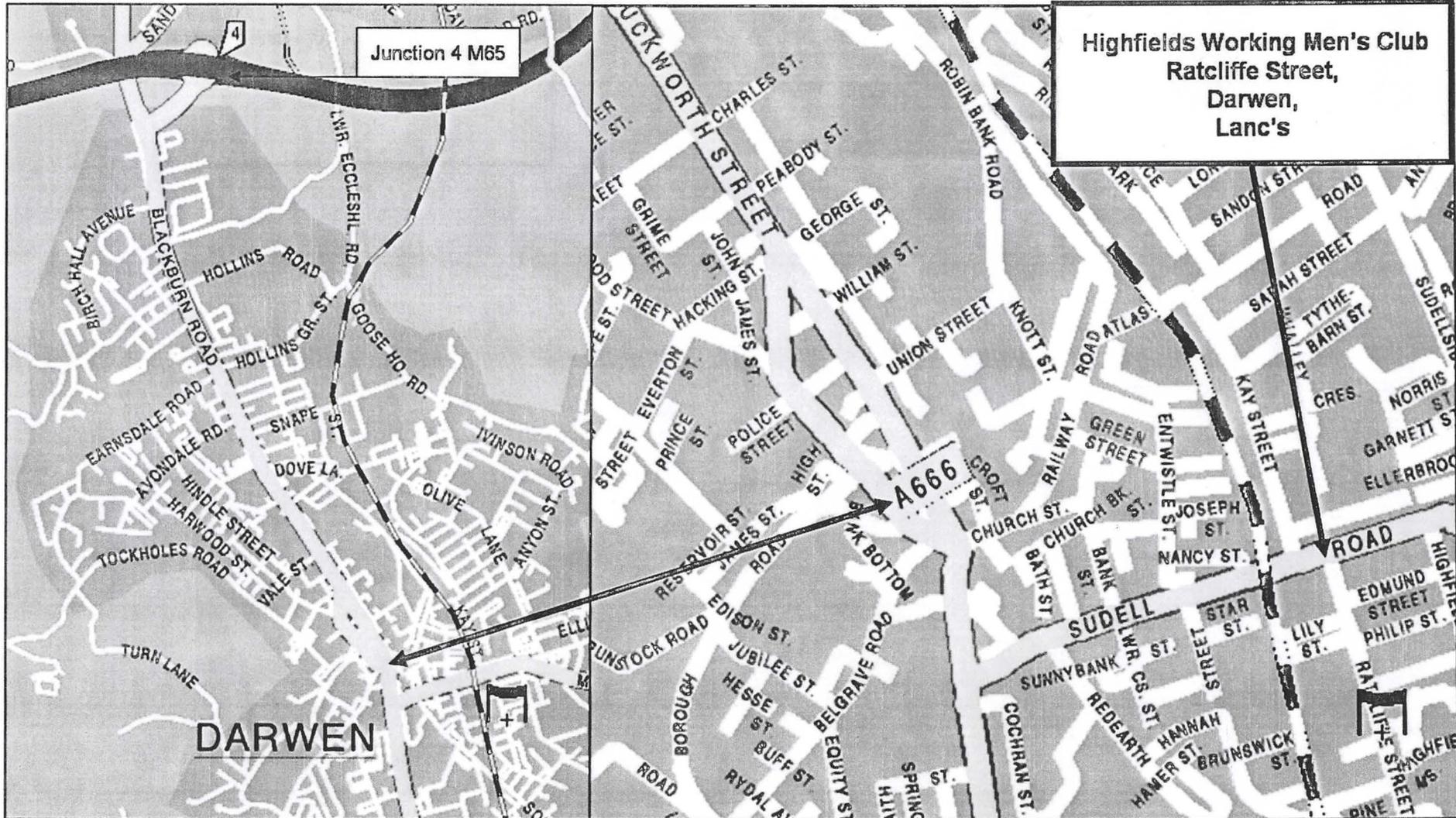
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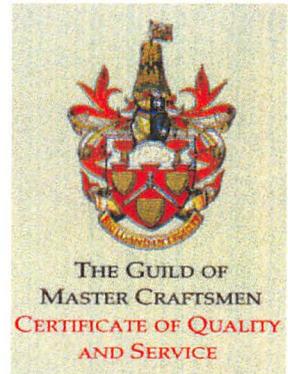
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