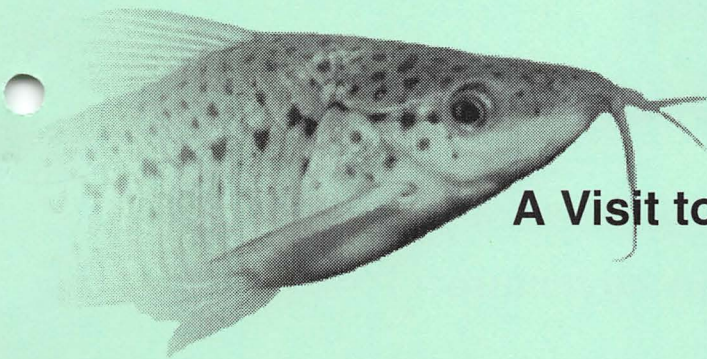


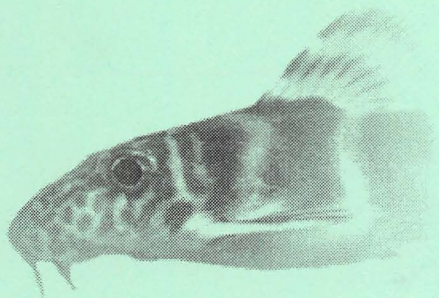
CAT CHAT

The Journal of the Catfish Study Group (UK)



In this issue

A Visit to the Stockholm Water Museum
by David Marshal



THE FAMILY LORICARIIDAE

By
Chris Ralph

Peru 2000
An Amazon Adventure
by Allan James



Open Show 2001
Results

Volume 2 Issue Number 4
December 2001

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Dear Members

I would like to thank all the people who have submitted articles to Cat Chat during our second successful year.

Our little series of 'Meet the Member' seems to have dried up. Are you shy?

Did you know that some scientists have never seen a live specimen of the fish that they have described? An article from you, however rubbish you think it is, is of interest to someone. A bit of someone else's know how can be very useful to other members. Every little helps.

Our Vice President Dr Peter Burgess will be changing his address in the near future and details will be in the next Journal.

I'd like to wish all our members, and other readers, a very Merry Xmas and a Successful Fish keeping New Year.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Our Honorary President Trevor (JT) Morris has moved (I'm sure there's an article here) to:

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Ed

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Front Cover: Original Design by Kathy Jinkins.

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 FOR THE
CATFISH STUDY GROUP (UK)
2001

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CAT CHAT

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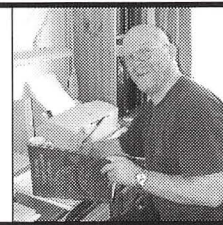
All Electrical Goods must have a Name and Telephone number on them, together with the condition of the item i.e. Spares, Working Order, Faulty etc..

All plants and fish to be auctioned should be in clear plastic bags, or jars large enough for them. Large fish may be offered in plastic containers/buckets. Fish should be identified (Common or Latin names). 'Painted' fish will not be auctioned.

There is a 15% commission to the Catfish Study Group on all sales. Payments to vendors will be made at the interval or at the end of the Auction.

The CSG is in no position to accept responsibility for the condition of any item sold at the auction or to exchange any item purchased. If in doubt, bid for an item 'as seen'. The vendor's name will be available to the purchaser, in the event of a problem, on the day only.

From the Chair



Our Canteen Staff (from the left; Mr & Mrs Morris and Mr & Mrs Ward). I'm sure that all members will wish them a Very Merry Xmas and good fortune in the forthcoming year

event and I took the opportunity to take the Group's display stand with the view to attracting some new members.

November saw the Autumn Auction, another of those busy and sometimes hectic meetings. This time there were some large lots to get through which Steve Spencer did in his normal efficient way. Again here I would like to thank all those members who helped throughout the day to make it a very successful event.

The year is now coming to a close and it only remains for me to wish every one a Merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year.

Ian Fuller

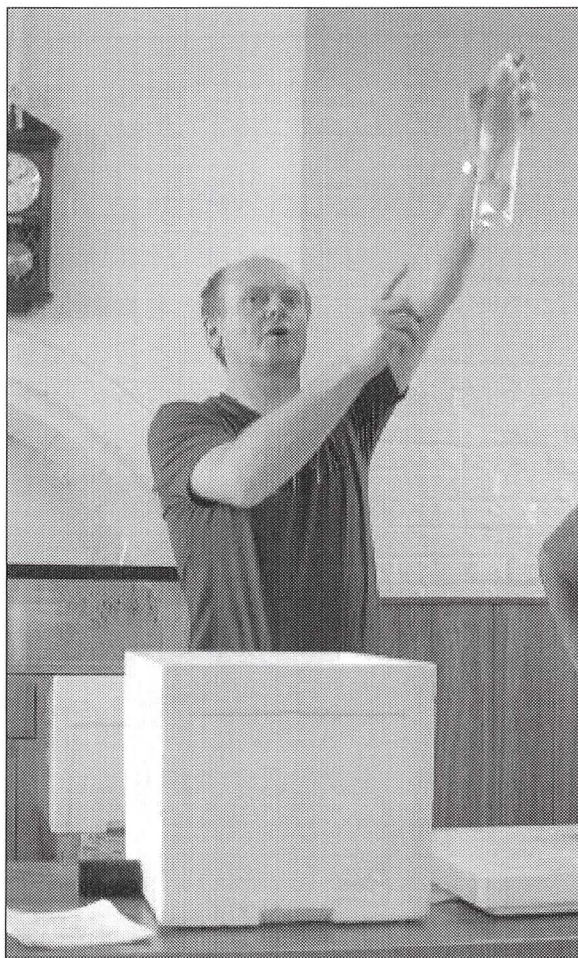
Here we are again almost at the end of another year and as far as the Catfish Study Group (UK) is concerned, a very successful one. Hopefully the Group will continue to grow throughout the next year.

September was our Annual Open Show and Auction. The show attracted around eighty entries and along with fellow judges Brian Walsh and Chris Ralph we had a difficult but enjoyable time sorting out the winners, such was the quality of the exhibits. Results are on another page in this issue. Thanks must go to Ann and Danny Blundell for keeping the trophies in order and coping with all the results.

The auction was also very well attended with the quality lots going under the expert hammer of auctioneer Steve Spencer, with Roy and Dave Barton and their runners keeping everything moving along smoothly. Our resident raffle organiser, Terry Ward, was unfortunately unable to be with us owing to a hospital appointment but his stand in for the day, Jeff Cain, did him proud

My final thanks go to all the members and guests who attended, whether they brought fish for the show, lots for the auction, looking for bargains or just to be part of a great day.

October Unfortunately I was not able to attend this meeting. I had a prior engagement at the Festival of Fishkeeping down on the south coast where I gave a talk on my favourite Corydoras. This was a two-day



The Auctioneer, Steve Spencer, taking bids

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A VISIT TO THE STOCKHOLM AQUARIA WATER MUSEUM

By David Marshall

During August 2001, Sue and I spent an enjoyable week in Stockholm, which gave me the chance to achieve yet another ambition; to visit the Aquaria Water Museum there.

Situated on Djurgarden Island and a few minutes walk from the famous Wasser Ship Museum (also well worth a visit), the Aquaria Water Museum houses the largest exhibition of fish in Stockholm. Prior to our trip I had read, in a couple of aquatic magazines and other publications, the words 'this Aquarium is small when compared to many other Public Aquaria on the European mainland but what it lacks in quantity it makes up for in quality'.

As you enter the Aquarium, you walk up a small flight of stairs and into 'Living rain forest'. This is a 'plant lovers paradise' where you are surrounded, on all sides, by lianas and many other plants collected on expeditions to South America. In the middle of this foliage is a very large tank split, through the creation of natural barriers, into four sections.

The first section is home to a variety of large South American fish which include extremely large Phractocephalus hemiliopterus, a Pseudoplatystoma tigrinum and an extremely bossy Black Pacu. The size and excellent looking quality of these fish was testament to their good care but, in our opinion, they could have done with a little more room in which to move about.

The second contains two very large Arrowana and a shoal of the plumpest Prochilodus (Night Tetra) that I have ever seen. An extremely large Plecostomus was also roaming about but it hid away too quickly to be identified.

The third section was very different to anything I have previously seen as it houses shoals of both vegetarian and flesh eating Piranhas swimming around together in perfect harmony. At the time of our visit, Peruvian Ducks occupied the final section.

Just to complete this particular spectacle, a continuous programme, complete with mock thunder and lightning, is in operation and this condenses the 24 hour cycle of light, humidity and rainfall in the Amazon jungle into a 15 minute show.

The 'Living rain forest' passes into 'Mangrove swamp'. This was our favourite part of the Aquarium and we

spent a lot of time here literally entranced by this particular exhibit. Basically a shallow kidney shaped pond was dug into a concrete floor. Several roots, the largest of which reached the ceiling, placed at various angles were the only decor.

The brackish water in this pond must have been 'spot on' because the shoals of Archer Fish, Mudskippers, Scats and Arius Catfish (which I think were A. seemanni) were really at home here and never have I seen such fish looking and acting so healthily. The way these fish interacted was a spectacle to behold.

Exiting this section brings you into 'Coral reef/The sea'. Here you find the largest tank in the exhibition and this is home to four Black-Tipped Sharks and a large shoal of Blue Chromis. After lingering over this particular display many visitors exit this section and, what a mistake, as the real 'gems' are found in aquaria on the adjacent wall and were the most beautiful Marine Betta I have ever seen.

Finally comes 'from mountain streams' and here you find an assortment of fish and other aquatic creatures found in and around Stockholm. The highlight of this section is the Salmon ladder, which allows its occupants access to and from the surrounding Bay.

Well worth a visit. Please note that once at the cafe area there is no way back into the Aquarium (without paying again) so don't rush through any of the sections thinking that you can return for another look when it is less busy etc.

During our stay we also visited the Aquarium Of The Stockholm Archipelago (to visit this attraction requires a 30-minute ferry ride to the Feather Islands), where one extremely large tank is split into five sections to display 'local' fish species, and the Skansen Akyariat (about fifteen minutes walk from the Aquaria Water Museum) where, amid some spectacular displays of rainforest primates, you will find ten or so aquaria which are used to highlight the current plight of Australian marine fish.

Although we searched, we were unable to find any aquatic retail outlets or pet centres etc. but perhaps a fellow Catfish Study Group member knows of such places as we hope to make a future return visit to Stockholm.

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CSG OPEN SHOW 2001 RESULTS

1	ASPIDORAS		ENTRIES 4	
1	G COWAN	SOLWAY	A raimundi	83
2	D & L SPEED	C.S.G.	A menezesi	79
3	G COWAN	SOLWAY	A albater	77
4	A SUTTON	PRESTON	A pauciradiatus	74

2	BROCHIS		ENTRIES 1	
1	D & L SPEED	C.S.G.	B splendens	84

3	CORYDORAS "A" up to 57 mm		ENTRIES 7	
1	D & L SPEED	C.S.G.	C melini	88
2	D & L SPEED	C.S.G.	C elegans	83.5
3	F TAYLOR J	C.S.G.	C condisciplus	83
4	B WILSON	NWCG	C elegans	78

4	CORYDORAS "B" over 57 mm		ENTRIES 13	
1	P DIXON	C.S.G.	C robustus	87
2	P DIXON	C.S.G.	C pulcher	83
3	D & L SPEED	C.S.G.	C gossei	82
4	A TAYLOR	C.S.G.	C gossei	80.5

5	CORYDORAS TYPES		ENTRIES 2	
1	A JAMES	C.S.G.	Corydoras species	73
2	G COWAN	SOLWAY	Corydoras sp 'asher'	70

6	A.O.V. CALLICHTHYIDAE		ENTRIES 2	
1	D & L SPEED	C.S.G.	Dianema urostriatum	77
2	A TAYLOR	C.S.G.	Dianema urostriatum	71

7	ASPREDINIDAE		ENTRIES 1	
1	J T MORRIS	C.S.G.	Dysichthys caracoides	78

8	AUCHENIPTERIDAE		ENTRIES 2	
1	A JAMES	C.S.G.	Tatia aulopygia	84
2	A JAMES	C.S.G.	Tatia perugiae	74

9	BAGRIDAE		ENTRIES 3	
1	K LAWN	C.S.G.	Leiocassis siamensis	84
2	A JAMES	C.S.G.	Hylobagrus flavus	80.5
3	P FOWLES	C.S.G.	Leiocassis siamensis	80
10	CHILOGLANIS/AMPHILIIDAE		ENTRIES 3	
1	B WILSON	N.W.C.G.	Amblydoras hancocki	89
2	G COWAN	SOLWAY	Agamyxis pectinifrons	86
3	P FOWLES	C.S.G.	Hassar notospilus	79
11	LORICARIIDAE up to 130 mm		ENTRIES 3	
1	D & L SPEED	C.S.G.	Leoporacanthicus galaxias	85
2	G COWAN	SOLWAY	Peckoltia oligospila	84
3	G COWAN	SOLWAY	Leoporacanthicus galaxias	78
12	LORICARIIDAE over 130 mm		ENTRIES 5	
1	D & L SPEED	C.S.G.	Pseudacanthicus spinosus	86
2	G COWAN	SOLWAY	Pseudorinelepis pellegrini	85
3	P FOWLES	C.S.G.	Scobiancistrus auratus	84
4	R KIRKUP	C.S.G.	Pseudacanthicus spinosus	65
13	LORICARIIDAE L&LDA Nos up to 130 mm		ENTRIES 6	
1	G COWAN	SOLWAY	L128 Chaetostoma sm spotted	84
2	K LAWN	C.S.G.	L121 Peckoltia sp 'worm line'	83
3	D & L SPEED	C.S.G.	L163 Big Spot Peckoltia	82
4	R KIRKUP	C.S.G.	L128 Chaetostoma sm spotted	81
14	LORICARIIDAE L&LDA Nos over 130 mm		ENTRIES 0	
15	MOCHOKIDAE up to 130 mm		ENTRIES 10	
1	D & L SPEED	C.S.G.	Synodontis serpentis	87
2	G COWAN	SOLWAY	Synodontis altrimus?	86
3	A JAMES	C.S.G.	Mochokiella paynei	84
4	K LAWN	C.S.G.	Syndontis marmoratus?	80
16	MOCHOKIDAE over 130 mm		ENTRIES 3	
1	A JAMES	C.S.G.	Synodontis schoutedeni	85
2	R KIRKUP	C.S.G.	Synodontis alberti	82
3	A SUTTON	PRESTON	Synodontis schoutedeni	74

17	PIMELODIDAE up to 100 mm		ENTRIES 4	
1	D & L SPEED	C.S.G.	Microglanis iheringi	83
2	G COWAN	SOLWAY	Microglanis peocilius	80
3	A TAYLOR	C.S.G.	Brachyrhamdia marthae	73
4	R KIRKUP	C.S.G.	Pimelidid sp	72
18	PIMELODIDAE over 100mm		ENTRIES 2	
1	D & BLUNDELL	C.S.G.	Pseudopim. zungaru bufonias	85
2	K LAWN	C.S.G.	Pimelodus pictus	78
19	COLDWATER CATFISH		ENTRIES 0	
20	SPECIAL - UNIDENTIFIED		ENTRIES 1	
1	D & L SPEED	C.S.G.	Erithistes sp	73
21	A.O.V. CATFISH		ENTRIES 1	
1	D & L SPEED	C.S.G.	Hara hara	85
22	PAIRS - ASP/BROCHIS/CORYS		ENTRIES 4	
1	D HALL	PRESTON	C rabauti	77
2	A JAMES	C.S.G.	C sp 'ashen'	76
3	A SUTTON	PRESTON	C maculifer	72
4	K LAWN	C.S.G.	C davidsandsi	66
23	PAIRS - AOV CATFISH		ENTRIES 1	
1	P FOWLES	C.S.G.	Ancistrus teminckii albino	69
24	BREEDERS - ASP/BROCHIS/CORYS		ENTRIES 5	
1	D HALL	PRESTON	C rabauti	79
2	P DIXON	C.S.G.	C burgessi	77.5
3	A SUTTON	PRESTON	C orapoquensis	77
4	A SUTTON	PRESTON	C maculifer	76
25	BREEDERS - A.O.V. CATFISH		ENTRIES 2	
1	D & A BLUNDELL	C.S.G.	Ancistrus teminckii albino	74
2	A SUTTON	PRESTON	Ancistrus teminckii albino	73
26	FAMILY CLASS – Pair & Breeders Team		ENTRIES 2	
1	D HALL	PRESTON	C maculifer	78
2	A SUTTON	PRESTON	C rabauti	73.5
27	BREEDERS – MASTER CLASS		ENTRIES 1	
1	A SUTTON	C.S.G.		

SPECIAL WINNERS 2001

**Best Breeders, The Linnaeus Award
donated by TetraMin**

D Hall of Preston for his team of *Corydoras rabauti*

**Best Overall Synodontis Species
donated by LMB Aquatics**

D & L Speed of C.S.G. for a *Synodontis serpensis*

**Best Catfish Over 300mm
J T Morris Trophy**

No winner

**Secretary's Choice
donated by A & D Hodges**

G Cowan of Solway for *Pseudocanthicus galaxias*

**Show Secretary's Choice,
donated by Mr & Mrs Baldwin**

B Wilson of N.W.C.G. for *Amblidoras hancocki*

**Social Sec's Choice,
donated by B Baldwin**

D & L Speed of C.S.G. for Hara hara

**Chairman's Choice,
donated by George Waterhouse**

D & L Speed of C.S.G. for Class 20 unidentified species

**Editor's Choice,
donated by A M Taylor**

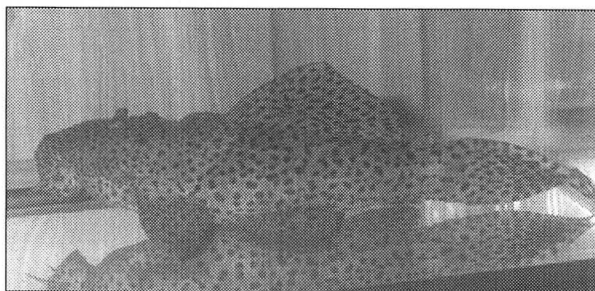
D & L Speed of C.S.G. for *Corydoras melini*

**Zoukai Choice,
donated by A & L Morris**

R & K Kirkup of C.S.G. for *Synodontis alberti*

**Highest Pointed Exhibit (Not a single fish)
Clint Cup**

D Hall of Preston for Breeders team of *Corydoras rabauti*



Best Fish in the Show. The TetraMin Award

D & L SPEED of the C.S.G. for this
Pseudocanthicus spinosus



Dave Speed (left) receiving the Best Fish in Show Trophy from Trevor Morris, Honorary President CSG.

Junior Trophy

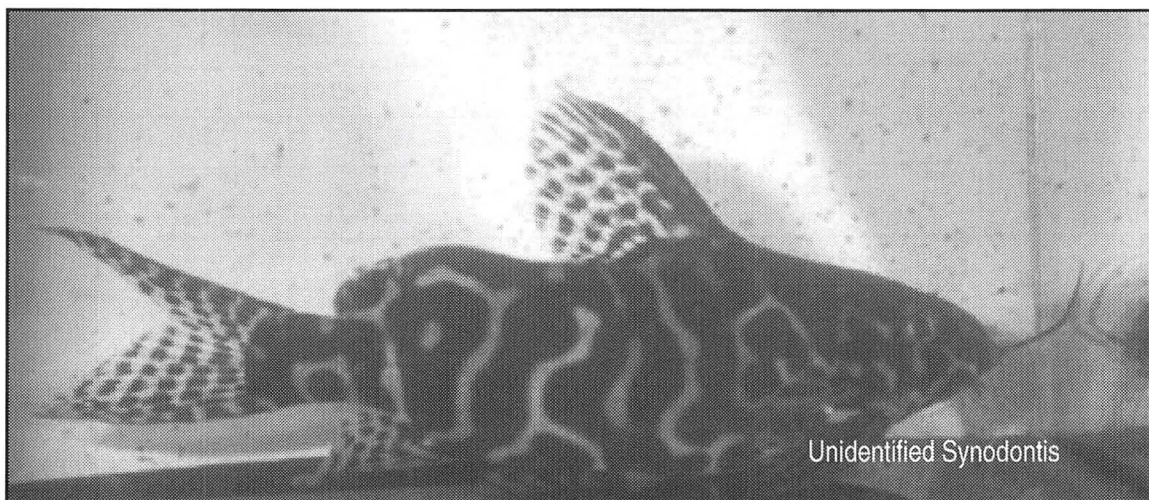
Amanda Junior Cup

F Taylor, C.S.G. for his *Corydoras condiscipulus* 83 pts

President's Choice

Masterstaff Trophy

B Wilson of N.W.C.G. for his *Amblidoras hancocki*



Unidentified Synodontis

THE FAMILY LORICARIIDAE

By
Chris Ralph

The family Loricariidae covers a vast number of the so-called "Sucker mouthed Catfish", which also includes those catfish generally classified or referred to as "Plecs". The catfish that belong to this family can be found widespread throughout South America. The majority of the species available tend to be from wild caught stock, although there are commercial breeding farms in other parts of the world such as Singapore where some of these catfishes are being bred for the aquarium hobby trade. There are also some catfish enthusiasts in this country who have been known to successfully keep and spawn certain members of this vast family of catfish.

Some of the representatives of this family may be sold as good old algae eaters, although this is not entirely true as not all of these fish are herbivores. Quite a few of the catfish offered for sale are indeed omnivores, thriving best on a mixed and varied diet of plants, algae and meaty foods which will be mentioned later. For this article I have chosen five species of Loricariid to describe, and where possible advice on breeding will also be given.

Keeping and Housing Loricariids

As with all fish in order to keep them successfully, we the aquarist must first provide an environment in which our chosen fish feel safe in. What I mean by the term safe is an aquarium which is going to provide sufficient room for the catfish, with plenty of hiding places amongst bogwood and rocks, and perhaps most importantly good water quality and nutrition (see feeding section). Most Loricariid's can be kept under the following conditions:

Temperature range 22 to 25°C or 71 to 77°F (although higher temperatures may also be tolerated), with pH in the range of 6.5 to 7.2. A wide range of hardness is tolerated by most species of between 5 and 25°GH (general hardness). Most if not all species of Loricariid prefer a planted aquarium with plenty of hiding places amongst the chosen décor. The substrate chosen will depend upon individual taste, although personally I prefer to use aquarium sand instead of gravel.

Feeding Loricariids

Most Loricariids can be fed a mixed and varied diet and can be described as omnivores, although there are exceptions to every rule. Please refer to my article in the May 2001 issue of PFK on what to feed your catfish. Most of these catfish will feed on aquatic plants and algae as well as other meatier foods such as, chopped mussel, whole prawns, frozen bloodworm etc. Other vegetarian foods to consider would include peas, courgette, cucumber, spinach, and lettuce. Whilst most aquarists think that these catfish are vegetarian it has recently been suggested that wild catfish seen feeding upon algae are also feeding upon the tiny microscopic organisms that live in the algae. Other prepared foods to consider feeding to your catfish include the following:

- Catfish pellets (sinking variety)
- Algae wafers
- Good quality flake foods
- Tablet foods

Granular foods fed sparingly as they tend to have high protein content and can foul the water if overfed.

Another thing not to forget is bogwood not only for décor, but to provide an important source of lignin that these catfish require in order to be able to digest their food properly.

The species of catfish chosen for this article cover a broad range of species and price bands, which hopefully means that there is a little of something for everyone. As mentioned earlier where possible details of how to breed these fish will also be given.

The Gold Nugget Pleco

This particular species has been chosen, as it is quite often available to the aquarist, and because of its colouration tends to be very popular. The Gold Nugget Pleco is referred to as *Baryancistrus spp.* Sometimes this catfish is offered for sale with an "L" number reference, and just to add to the confusion there are four reference numbers for this catfish, which are L018, L081, L085 and L177. The reference

numbers are given to the fish and refer to the various locations in which these catfish are found in the wild. L018 is found in the area around Altamira, which is on the Rio Xingu in Brazil, and is also referred to as "Golden Nugget". L081 is found in the lower Rio Xingu region in Brazil, and is sometimes referred to as the small spot gold nugget, or the "Xingu Orange Seam Pleco". L085 is also from the Rio Xingu and is also referred to as the "Xingu Baryancistrus". L177 is found in the Rio Iriri referred to as the "Iriri Yellow Seam". I hope that I have and is also not confused you all too much here!

With regard to keeping the "Gold Nugget Pleco" they prefer good quality clean water with plenty of current provided. Water with a pH in the range of 6.5 to 7.5 is also preferable. These particular catfish seem to fare better at slightly higher temperatures of between 78 to 86°F. With regard to the size attained by these catfish L081 with the smaller spots only grows to approximately 7", whilst the remaining L018, L085 and L177 are thought to grow between 10 to 14". This particular catfish prefers meatier foods in its diet such as chopped mussel, bloodworm and prawns.

The Gold Nugget Pleco can be quite territorial towards members of its own kind and indeed towards other bottom dwelling fish. This aggression is probably due to the fact that these catfish are attempting to defend the best spawning cave, which could be under a piece of bogwood or under slate. The Gold Nugget has a liking of bogwood in its diet so please remember to provide it within the set-up as it contains lignin, which is vital in order for these catfish to digest their food properly. With regard to sexing these catfish the male is said to be wider and has a flatter more levelled slope to its forehead than the female, which tends to have a more rounded forehead. The female takes on a plump appearance when in spawning condition. There have been records of this particular species of catfish having been successfully spawned in an aquarium. These fish are cave spawners, and in order for them to breed successfully good oxygen supply and high water flow rate are required. Raising the fry is said to be a long process starting with feeding small foods first such as newly hatched brineshrimp and gradually increasing the size of the food as the fish grow. It may take up to six months before the fry reach 2" in length. I think that most people will agree with me that this is one of the most attractive catfish available to the hobbyist, with a variable price range of between £20 to £40.

The Zebra Pleco

This particular catfish is a particular favourite of mine and is also referred to as *Hypancistrus zebra*. When this fish was first seen it was referred to as the Imperial *Peckoltia*. There are also some other names that this particular fish has been given over the years such as the Zebra Pleco, Imperial Pleco, Emperor *Peckoltia*, L046, L098 and L173! As with the Gold Nugget Pleco this particular catfish is also found in the Rio Xingu in Brazil. There have been some recent reports to suggest that this catfish is endangered in its natural environment, which is possibly due to over-collecting. I have also heard that there are people in Brazil collecting adult fish to breed and are returning the adult fish back to the wild after spawning them. L046 is referred to as *Hypancistrus zebra* or "Zebra *Peckoltia*". L098 is referred to as *Hypancistrus spp.* or "Pseudo Zebra". L173 is referred to as *Hypancistrus spp.* or "New Zebra *Peckoltia*". The size given for this particular catfish varies between 7 to 12 cm.

With regard to keeping this catfish water with high oxygen content that is clean and warm seems to be the only real requirement. The preferred temperature range is between 80 to 86°F with a pH in the range 6.5 to 7.5. In the wild these catfish are found at depths of up to 10 metres. As with the Gold Nugget this catfish is more of a carnivore than a vegetarian and it is therefore very important to feed meatier foods to this fish such as chopped mussel and bloodworm.

When sexing these catfish the male is said to have a thicker first pectoral fin ray than the female. When in breeding condition the males pectoral fin develops small spine like projections or "odontodes". When breeding these catfish it is important to provide spawning caves and crevices in which they can breed. When breeding the male takes on the responsibility for guarding the cave and eggs. Eggs take up to seven days to hatch and after ten days the fry will have consumed their yolk sac, at which point newly hatched brineshrimp needs to be fed. It is documented that the fry will take approximately two to three months to reach 1" in length. Again this is one of the more striking catfish to keep in an aquarium. Depending upon availability this particular species is normally priced between £40 to £60.

Pygmy Sucker Mouth Catfish

There are a number of pygmy or dwarf sucker mouthed catfish commonly available to the hobbyist. Perhaps the one species that is most often seen is *Otocinclus vestitus* or the "Pygmy Sucker Mouth Catfish". This catfish as its name suggests only attains a length of 2" or 50 mm. This particular species can

be found widespread throughout the rivers of Peru, Brazil and Columbia. At one of the wholesalers in Iquitos, Peru last year there were literally hundreds of these catfish in plastic bowls and shallow ponds waiting to be shipped off around the world. These catfishes are quite often described as being omnivores, in other words they feed upon detritus. In their natural habitat these catfish feed upon algae, plants and small invertebrates.

With regard to keeping this catfish it is tolerant of most water conditions and is perhaps not as fussy as the previous species mentioned. I have found these tiny catfish to be quite robust once settled in and are quite happy being kept at pH 6.8 to 7.5, with a temperature around 75 to 78°F. Being so small this species of catfish is ideally suited to small aquariums, which have an algae problem. I have found that it is best to keep these catfish well fed at all times due to the fact that they can be parasitic towards other fishes if left hungry.

When sexing these catfish the males tend to be more slender than the females. These catfish have been successfully spawned in an aquarium. The female lays her eggs on plant leaves and also on the aquarium glass. There is some degree of parental care shown to the eggs and subsequent fry. When raising the fry it is important to provide good water quality at all times and to provide them with plenty of green foods and newly hatched brineshrimp. A good quality flake should also be offered to these catfish to feed on. As this catfish is quite often available I would not expect to pay more than £1 to £2 for it.

Giant Whiptail Catfish

The Giant Whiptail Catfish is also referred to as *Sturisoma aureum*. This particular species originates from the rivers of Columbia. As its name suggests it can grow quite large up to 12" or 300mm. Although it is quite a large catfish it is a very peaceful species to keep with other community fish, in small confines they can be slightly territorial to their own kind. They prefer a diet that is varied and includes algae, other green foods and small aquatic invertebrates.

With regard to keeping this catfish it is quite tolerant of most water quality conditions, and is quite happy being kept in water with pH 6.5 to 7.5. An ideal temperature would be around 75 to 78°F for this particular species. This is one of my favourite species of catfish to keep, and it has fin extensions that are almost as long as the body. It is a fascinating catfish to watch when feeding, as it almost appears to "walk" to its food using its pectoral and pelvic fins as we would our arms and legs.

When breeding these catfish they are difficult to sex until they are mature. In breeding condition the male develops cheek spines or bristles that may be shed after breeding, hence making sexing the fish difficult once more. They have been successfully bred by a number of catfish enthusiasts over the years and are said to be relatively easy to breed. When spawning the eggs are deposited on plants and the aquarium glass. The male guards the eggs until they hatch and the fry emerge. The key to raising the fry is to feed plenty of green foods and to provide good water quality. Quite often tank-bred specimens are available for sale at aquatic outlets. These catfish depending upon availability are usually priced at £18 to £30.

Common Whiptail Catfish

There are a number of catfish that can be described by this common name and are quite often referred to as *Rineloricaria* spp. These catfish are quite commonly available at most good aquatic retailers and most are sold as "Whiptail Catfish". Most of these catfish grow between 5" and 8" in length, and are ideally suited to a community aquarium as they are usually very peaceful. They can be found widespread throughout the rivers of South America. In my experiences of keeping these catfishes they are tolerant of most water conditions, with pH between 6.5 to 7.5 and temperature between 20 to 24°C or 68 to 75°F. Like the other species mentioned they thrive on a diet that includes algae, other green foods, small aquatic invertebrates, granular foods and good quality flake.

When sexing these catfish the males tend to be more slender than the females especially when viewed from above. Fully-grown or mature males can be distinguished by the fact that they have bristles on their head and quite often on the edges of their pectoral fins. When breeding these catfish they prefer to spawn in a cave in a hollow in a tree trunk, although plastic drainpipe provides a good alternative in the aquarium. The eggs are deposited within the cave and are guarded by the male until they hatch. The fry thrive on a diet that includes plenty of green foods and newly hatched brineshrimp. Depending upon their availability these catfish are usually priced between £6 and £15.

For those of you that currently keep Loricariid catfish, or if you are contemplating keeping them for the first time, I am sure that you will agree that they are a fascinating group of fish to keep and to observe. There are of course a number of different species available to the aquarium trade, and gradually more and more information is becoming available to the hobbyist, which helps to make it easier for us to provide the correct environment for our fishes.

MINI CONVENTION

As previously mentioned, Michael Hardman, a long standing member of the NACG, is returning to the UK over the Christmas period. He has offered to give us a talk during his stay but his only available Sunday is the 6 January 02. We obviously are not going to pass up this opportunity and we have decided to hold an extra meeting to coincide with Michael's visit. For those of you who attended the NACG Convention when Michael gave a talk, you will remember what a good, well structured and interesting presentation he gave.

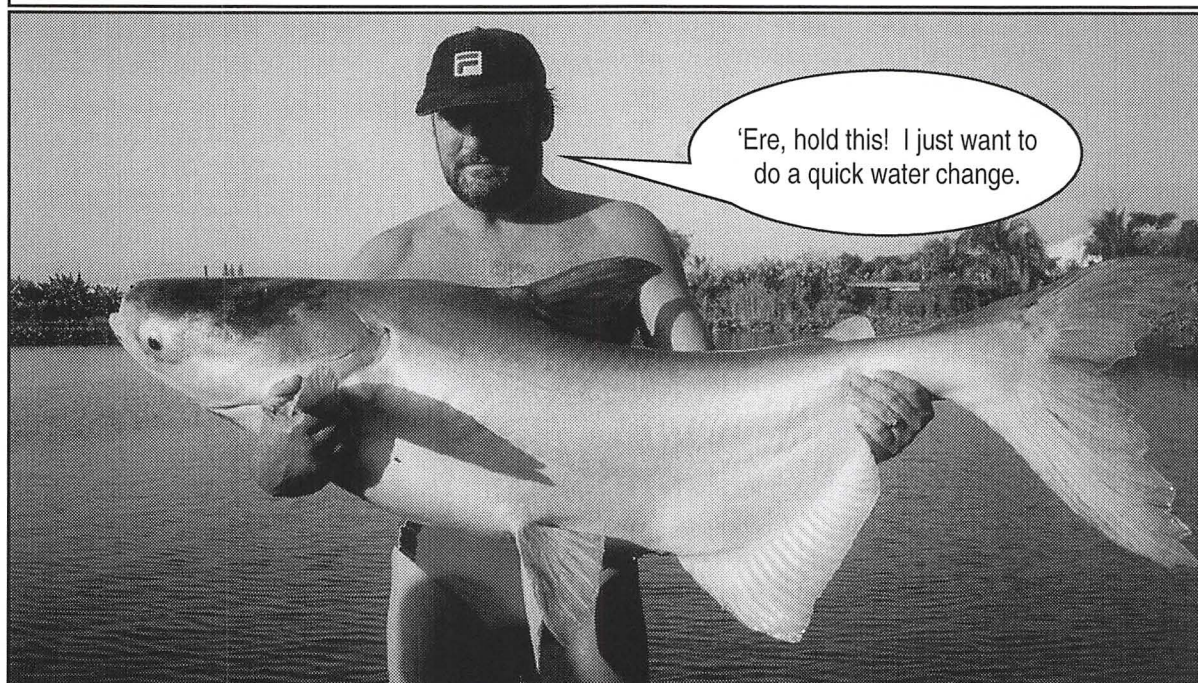
To be held at St Elizabeth's
(our normal meeting place).

6 Jan 02

- 1000 Doors open
- 1100 Introduction by Chairman , Ian Fuller
- 1110 Audio/Slide presentation by Brian Walsh
- 1125 Introduction of Michael Hardman by President, Trevor Morris
- 1130 "Evolutionary Relationships of North American Catfishes (Siluriformes Ictaluridae)."
by Michael Hardman
- 1230 Lunch
- 1330 An informal Slide Show and Talk by Michael on some of the fish collecting trips that he has been on in Peru, Guyana, Venezuela and Thailand. He has enough slides to go all day, so ask him plenty of questions.

Tea breaks hourly or thereabouts and hot food will be served.

Talk times are approximate but the day should close roughly between 4 & 5 pm in time for work on Monday.



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An Amazon Adventure

by Allan James (allan@scotcat.)

This is my own personal experiences over a twelve day period on a trip that for me was a once - in - a - lifetime adventure and I hope that it will give you an insight on what to expect if you ever have the fortune to experience it for yourself, and of course to also have an understanding bank manager!

Day 1

My adventure actually started at Glasgow Airport on the Wednesday evening flight to London/Gatwick on the 12th July and an overnight stay at a B&B near the Airport.

Next morning I met Steve Pritchard and Alan Appleton at Gatwick, meeting Alan for the first time, as I had known Steve for a number of years.

The flight for Atlanta USA was leaving at 1155 am and at 11 am there was still no sight of our traveling companions the husband and wife team of Julian (Jools) Dignall (from www.planetcatfish.com) and his long suffering wife Clare!

We boarded the flight ready to fly when the aforementioned couple scrambled aboard all stressed out before we had even started our adventure, their flight from Edinburgh was late but no worries as we all settled down for the 8 hour flight to Atlanta, Georgia.

Day 2

We arrived at Atlanta Airport at 4.30pm after a good flight and had a 6-hour wait for our next connection, the Delta flight to Lima, Peru. If you ever have to hang about at this airport try the yoghurt on offer, lovely, lovely!

We boarded the 10.20pm flight to Lima and tried to sleep on and off which was only broken by the hilarious antics of Alan when he woke up with a start and sent his dinner halfway down the aisle, priceless!

Day 3

Arrived in Lima, capital of Peru, at the unearthly hour of 4.30 in the morning of the 14th (I think) then we were off again on our internal flight with TACAS Airways to Iquitos on the edge of the



Flying over the Andes

Amazon. The highlight of this flight was the view of the snow-capped Andes Mountains from the plane window, fantastic, then again from the window our first look at the Amazon Rainforest and its meandering tributaries. Landed at Iquitos Airport which by the way has the longest name for an airport that you will ever see in the world, so long that I couldn't remember it.

Cezar, the local manager for Margarita Tours, met us and if there ever was a man organised, he is that man. Off we went in the minibus into town to our Hotel, the short journey was memorable as I had never seen a place like it,



Flying over the Amazon Basin

there seemed to be a soap opera being played out on every corner and the taxi's were something else, a fantastic and vibrant city.

We arrived at the Amazon Gardens Hotel or Hostel as they are called here where we had a small pool situated just outside the reception area. The rooms were pretty basic but comfortable.

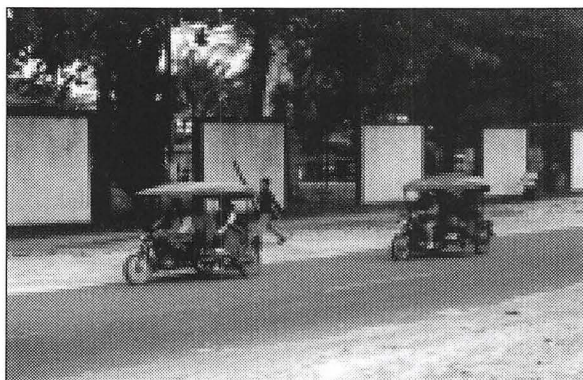
We went for a short walk around to get our bearings then retired for a short nap to recharge our batteries. Before we went out for a meal at night we met our tour guides and operators Drs. David Schleser and Devon Graham who turned out to be the two most enthusiastic people I had ever met.

We took our meal at Ari's Diner, which was recommended to us and known to the locals as "Gringolandi" as tourists usually find their way here. This is were I ate something that I thought I would never eat, Catfish! it was the local *fasciatum* variety labelled in the menu as 'Delgado', it was very nice and I put my guilty conscience to the back of my mind.

It was a fun relaxing evening and the five of us rode back to the hotel in these fantastic taxi's which was basically a motorbike with the back cut off and double wheels welded on with a seat and canopy, great fun. Steve and I retired for the night and we woke at 5.30 a.m. with Steve suggesting that we head down to the fish market before breakfast. Well, why not? I was on holiday.

Day 4.

This was the time that I wished that I had learned some Spanish as we had trouble communicating with the taxi driver and ended up at the Fruit Market instead, it was still interesting and I had never seen so many bananas in the one place before. After breakfast we headed off for a look at the fish exporters in town.



Iquitos Taxis

First one we stopped off at was Rio Mamon and let me tell you we only got here and most other places by taxi with Devon, who was pretty fluent in the lingo.



Siamese fighters at Rio Mamon

Rio Mamon is run by an Austrian who breeds believe it or not Asian Siamese fighters which were lined up in rows on half a dozen shelves. They had lots of Cory's here notably *C. fowleri* and *C. aeneus* (Peru Gold stripes). We then headed for the second exporter, Yacarunas International Enterprise that had some nice Loracariids and Characins In the afternoon we visited the fish and food markets an experience in itself. In the evening myself, Devon, Jools, Clare, Steve and Alan went for a few beers, the Peruvian beer is to be well recommended. We then went on to a Chinese Restaurant for a great sweet and sour and a few more beers of course.

Day 5

This is the day when the serious adventure begins. After Breakfast at 8 we repacked our bags and headed for our boat the Amazon Explorer where we were given our cabins for the rest of our journey down the Amazon.

They are a bit cramped with two bunk beds and a shower/toilet. I shared with Robin Warne from Huddersfield who joined us along with two other CSG members, Giles Barlow and Chris Ralph, who all came to Peru a week earlier and had done the grand tour of Cusco and Machu Pichu, which I fancy doing myself sometime in the future.

The boat had an ongoing problem with its generator so we just got out the fishing rods and hung them over the sides and preceded to catch large hatchet fish, *Triportheus sp.*, with would you believe it, bread rolls on the hooks, wow!



The Amazon Explorer

what a start. We had still not left Iquitos yet because of the generator so we left the boat by skiff (long boat with outboard motor) and headed across to the opposite bank to do our first fish collecting. This was good training for our trip as I went up to my knees in the water as you sink in the muddy clay at your feet.

We caught small characins (*Hemigrammus sp*) and pims (*blochi and maculatus*). After about an hour we headed back to the Amazon Explorer.

We then set off at 2 pm for the Rio Nanay picking up a new generator on the way.

After a short trip up the river we laid anchor and took the skiff across to our first village. We lighted and proceeded to follow Dr.Fish (David Schleser) and Dr.Bird (Devon Graham) through



On the Skiff

the village. What really enthralled me here was a full-bodied game of football going on between two teams fully rigged out with strips and a commentary going on by megaphone! Nothing changes around the world where football is concerned, not even in the Amazon jungle. We fished, with our nets two shallow blackwater creeks at Padre Cocha where I caught my first catfish, an unusual one for me, a small gold parasitic cat and also small *Ancistrus*, *Hyanuary* tetras and a small Pike Cichlid which I later found out to be a male *Crenichila lucius*. The pH of the stream was about 6.5 and temp 75° F.

Our first night on the boat comprised of a meal of pineapples, avocados, carrots, tomatoes and Shovelnose Catfish (dorado), rice and bread, we then finished that off with a few beers. We then fished off the side of the boat and caught a few 10 inch *Cetopis* (parasitic whale cats) I didn't think I would hear myself saying this about a catfish but they were gruesome looking and not the least bit pretty. Retired to bed at 1-15 am after a few more beers.

Day 6.

Woke up with a rotten headache this morning, I think due to the noise of the generator, definitely not the beer! The weather so far has been overcast but nice and comfortable (70°-75°F). We had breakfast at 7 am and headed down river and berthed at an Indian village of Atun Cocha where the headman of the village informed the party about a forest stream part of the way through the jungle. We walked the jungle path for about 20 minutes and I was enthralled with the amount of Butterflies flying around especially the Morpha which is electric blue and apparently is illegal to take out of Peru, dead or alive. There was an abundance of different trees, hollow Balsa wood trees and one tree with porcupine type spikes (palm trees), which I can assure you are quite sharp and sore! We at last stopped at the clear water stream but it was quite disappointing, as we didn't catch too many fish here another small Pike Cichlid being my only catch. The weather is changing now and is getting quite sunny and hot so on with the sun cream and the silly hat.

The water levels are still a bit too high this year and this makes it harder to catch fish.

We made our way back to the Amazon Explorer where we had the 'Dorado' again, done this time in a batter, which was delicious. We now headed

again down the Amazon towards the Rio Orosa and stopped in the afternoon at a mud sandbar on the upper Amazon adjacent to a small Village, this was one of the funniest episodes of the trip especially trying to walk the gangplank from the boat and ending up to our knees in mud. If you have ever tried to walk in knee deep mud its not to be recommended especially when you start sinking in it and you find that your travelling companions are all taller than you and I'm 6' 1"!

I was pulled out by Steve who, by the way, was standing on my feet under the mud, and a native boy who must have thought that we were all mad. Then Chris Ralph decided to follow my example and started sinking in the goeey mess and he is only 5' odd! I don't know how we got him out with all the laughing that was going on, but we managed.

With all the hilarity going on, I never caught any fish. When we got back on board a (cold) shower was definitely on the cards. After we all cleaned up we all sat down to our dinner where the Chef had made a fruit cake which went down well with a cup of tea. We made our way into the Rio Orosa and on to the Madre Selva Forest Preserve, which is run by the Amazonian Project, this area covers 50 sq. km. and is one of three on this clear water tributary.

We berthed by the floating house/office and later started fishing from the deck pulling in *Calophysus macropterus*, a large pim which is known as an Amazon vulture and will eat just about anything. We pulled in quite a few large pims here. I retired to bed at midnight after an enjoyable but hectic day and crashed out, apart from the ever-noisy generator of course!

Day 7

Up bright and early at 6 to photograph the sunrise and then a sit down for breakfast.

One of the local Indians came around to visit us in his canoe and showed us his catch of *Pimelodus fasciatus* and a woodcat species; the cameras were out in force.

This was the most superb day of all as I caught my first *Corydoras*.

We crossed the short creek from the boat at the Madre Reserve, walked about 450 yards across a timber bridge and down to the Tunche Cano stream were we caught *Corydoras elegans* by the score and the adrenaline is really running

high now. Jools and I were really up for it and we couldn't stop talking and laughing at the same time as we scooped up Cory after Cory with sometimes three or four in our catch nets. The substrate here was rusty red clay covered with a leaf litter over a closed canopy.

All good things have to come to an end but things were to get even better in the afternoon.

We travelled about a ½ mile back down the Rio Orosa to a small flooded cocha at Eloise's house, a local Indian woman who's husband had died a few years earlier and had lived alone ever since with her dog and chickens for company.

The rest of the group crossed the cocha, which was waist deep to net near the house. I decided to head in the opposite direction from the house at the head of the small lake as I had quickly learned that when there is a lot of netting activity going on, the water gets quite turbid and lessens the chance of catching fish.

The first few sweeps brought up young *Amblydoras hancocki* (talking catfish). They must have been spawning here as they were really tiny, I kept a few but there was too many and released quite a few of them back to their home. (As an afterthought it wasn't until 2 months later and these fish were growing on in tanks in my fish house that I realised that they were in fact *Anadoras grypus*). There was also Cichlids here of the *Aquidens* genus. I then started to catch *Brochis splendens*, which were a stunning green colouration, which heralded the arrival of the rest of the party. I must have caught about 30 *splendens* all about young adult size, a good day by anyone's standards.

We went back to the boat happy and I was ready for our evening meal. We relaxed at night



Corydoras elegans collecting site.



The author catching *Corydoras elegans*

playing cards with Steve and the two American boys, Stuart and Corrie. We had a few beers of course but retired early at 11 pm for a good nights sleep (in spite of the generator).

Day 8.

Slept well and woke about 6 am and wandered up to the main deck.

A couple of local families had caught a few whiptail cats under the Madre Serva Reserve Station and I went down to the lower deck to barter with them.

I swapped a t-shirt and 2 batteries (for their torches) to each family for their catches, one of the tops being my much coveted Heart of Midlothian football top, so the Hearts now have a supporter in the Peruvian jungle! One of the fish traded was a rather large *Sturisoma* species and the rest were common whiptails, which are now safely tucked up in a tank in my fish house.

After breakfast we sailed back up the river to a village where the locals were expecting us. This was a part of the trip that I was looking forward to as we met the local village folk and traded our t-shirts and batteries for the locally made souvenirs such as dried seeds and an enormous pair of Dorid pectoral bones, which must have made this fish about a foot long! I also snapped up a set of panpipes, which were made to order on the day! which I still can't play properly. We then set sail back down the river for about 2 hours to the next reserve, the Paucarillo Forest Preserve.

We docked here and went quite a trek through the jungle to a small stream where we found

Apistogramma agassizi in abundance, youngsters and large adults in their colourful livery.

In the evening we stopped of at a large village/town as the crew of the boat wanted to see the World Cup qualifier between Peru and Colombia. Jools, Stu and I joined the crew to watch the match in the local school hall on satellite TV. with one of the local youngsters of the village stationed beside the screen to swipe away the flies of the screen!

We stayed for about half an hour with most of the village crowded around us and it came to a head when Jools suddenly shot out of his seat and explained in a pained expression that he had to go a place, he was certainly a funny colour and I don't think I have ever seen him move so fast, all the way back to the boat in Olympic time! Inca's revenge strikes. Stu and I headed back, had a beer and retired for the night.



Jools with his dead Pleco!

Day 9.

It was my turn for the Inca's revenge this morning as I had terrible stomach cramps and the rest of the day was lost and just a blur as I slept off and on. I missed the night trip when a few of the lads went collecting in the skiff with their torches. I would have liked that but I just crashed out again at 8.30 to bed.

Day 10

Felt a bit better today but tired. I didn't eat anything, just drank, not beer, but tea and plenty of it. I spent most of the day changing water in the basins, which were supplied to us for that purpose, but I had lost a few fish due to not being able to change the water the previous day.

We also relaxed on deck as the Amazon Explorer made its way back up the Amazon

River to the Port of Iquitos. We arrived late afternoon and disembarked where we were driven back to our hotel, the Amazon Gardens. The first thing I done was to dangle my feet in the hotel pool, fantastic! Jools, Clare and I said our goodbyes to our fellow passengers who were either staying over for another week or leaving the following day (Saturday).

We flew out of Iquitos on the 8.10 pm flight to the capital city of Lima and were met there at the airport by the representative of the Manhattan Hotel.

He drove us over to the hotel and if any of you have ever been in Lima traffic it was a very scary experience! It was a first class hotel where we had a couple of drinks at the bar where the barman spent his time practicing his English on us (in a Scottish accent) a lot better than my Spanish. The three of us then retired for the night in a nice comfortable bed.

Day11

Woke up the unearthly time of 4 am and decided to have a long hot shower, it was bliss! Breakfast at 5.30 and then off to the Airport for the early morning return flight to Atlanta.

After we arrived in Atlanta we declared our fish boxes at U.S. Customs and he checked most of the fish bags. He was only concerned that we

hadn't any Piranhas or electric eels so we just made the 6.30 pm flight to Gatwick, London as we had It was along flight made only bearable by the good movies on board. Arrived Gatwick at 7.30 am London time and I had to sit around for the 12.15 connections to Glasgow. We just drank tea and coke and we all felt like s**. I said my goodbyes to Jools and Clare (who had fallen asleep) who were waiting for a later flight to Edinburgh.

I arrived back in Glasgow and was picked up by another CSG member, Mark Bryson, who dutifully dropped me of from where I had started 12 days earlier at the ferry for the Clyde crossing. Arrived home at 4.00 pm shattered and still not feeling too well.

It must have been at least two weeks before I was back to normal but I must admit that I would do it all over again with a bit of luck in the not too distant future.

My thanks go out to my travelling companions Jools, Clare, Steve, Alan, Chris, Robin, Giles and Terry for making this trip such an enjoyable experience and of course Drs. David Schleser and Devon Graham for their invaluable help and patience and I hope that I haven't bored you too much with my meanderings.

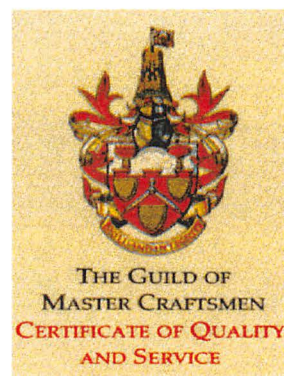
Pictures by www.scotcat.com and www.planetcatfish.com

2002 Diary				AGM	
Jan	06	Mini Convention	St Elizabeth's	<p>Sunday 20 Jan 02</p> <p>Any points, proposals or items of interest concerning the Rules or the Constitution should be sent to the Secretary before the event.</p> <p>Matters for discussion will be the election of a new Honorary Treasurer. Last year Bill was Secretary, Treasurer and Editor and at the last AGM he gave up the post of Secretary and announced that he would give up the post of Treasurer at the 2002 AGM. He feels that the Journal gives him enough work to do (so does his wife).</p> <p>Dave Speed has also stated that he will give up his post as Membership Secretary should a volunteer be forthcoming.</p> <p>It is understood, at the time of going to press, that all other appointments will remain the same unless any proposals to the contrary are put forward.</p>	
Jan	20	AGM	St Elizabeth's		
Feb	17	Convention	Lowton		
Mar	17	Spring Auction	St Elizabeth's		
Apr	21	Meeting	St Elizabeth's		
May	19	Meeting	St Elizabeth's		
Jun	16	Meeting	St Elizabeth's		
Jul	21	Meeting	St Elizabeth's		
Aug	18	Meeting	St Elizabeth's		
Sep	15	Open Show	St Elizabeth's		
Oct	20	Meeting	St Elizabeth's		
Nov	17	Autumn Auction	St Elizabeth's		
Dec	08	Meeting	St Elizabeth's		
Any changes of dates or venues will be notified to members as soon as possible and before the event.					



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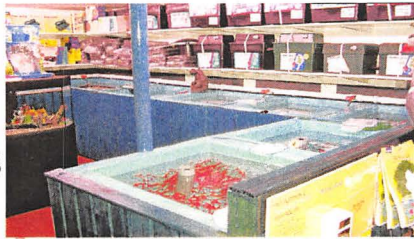
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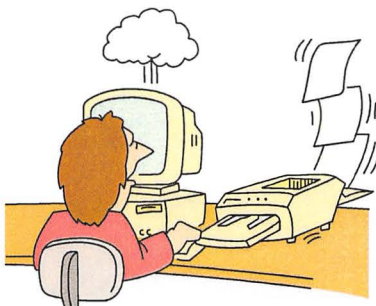
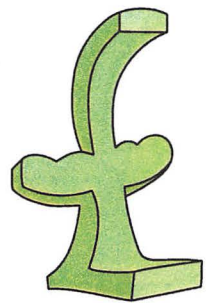
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