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Catfish Study Group (uk) Convention 2006

Report for FNAS web site.

By A W Taylor (secretary).

After many months of worldwide negotiations and planning. Convention 2006 at the Britannia Hotel, Standish, Wigan got under way, Danny and Anne Blundell used both of their cars in order to collect both Dr Stanley Weitzman and his wife Dr M Weitzman (Smithsonian institute U.S.A.) from one terminal and arrival time at Manchester airport and Lee Finley (U.S.A.) from another terminal and arrival time; Neil from Pier aquatics (Wigan) kindly picked up Hans-Georg Evers and his friend (anabantoid expert) Michael Schlüter both from Germany, and Pete Liptrot (Bolton museum) kindly picked up Dr Stefan Hetz (Humboldt-Universitat, Berlin Germany) and Ingo Seidel (Germany).

The Convention, it could be said by some "started proper" when everyone assembled on the Friday night prior to the evening meal in the lounge bar of the hotel. At 7.30pm we were all called to make our way into the dinning room and then settled down to enjoy the evening meal, after everyone had eaten, CSG Chairman, Ian Fuller; presented all the invited speakers with a commemorative convention sweat shirt.



Dr Weitzman receiving his Sweatshirt



Hans-Georg Evers receiving his sweatshirt

After all the commemorative Sweatshirts had been presented. A general forum panel made up of Lee Finley (USA), Julian Dignall (Planet Catfish), Dr Peter Burgess (Aquarian), Peter Liptrot (Bolton Nat Hist museum) and Corydoras expert, Ian Fuller; answered questions on a variety of subjects. Before any one realised time had flown by and the Bar in the dinning room had to close, so we had to close the evenings forum and retire to the main lounge bar, where everyone sat around and exchanged a few fishy stories along with the necessary lubricant; talking well into the early hours of the morning.



The Panel



A few friendly faces enjoy the night's forum.

The Saturday lectures got underway with Lee Finley giving a talk on "The History of Fish keeping" Where he gave an informative talk, explaining not only the beginning of keeping fish but the varied early designs of aquariums, and how they looked and their varied functions as decorative pieces. After a short break Dr Weitzman gave a lecture on hearing in *Otocinclus* species and other amazing facts about this little Loricariidae. All to soon however Dr Weitzman finished his lecture and answered some questions from the audience.



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Michael Schlüter and Dr Hetz enjoying Dr Weitzman's lecture.



After lunch Ingo Seidel gave a talk on - Searching for Loricariids in the Rio Xingu in Brazil, explaining that this was the river having the highest "Pleco" Diversity found anywhere in Brazil. Ingo gave not only a talk on the varied types of pleco's that are to be found there, but also on his experiences whilst collecting in the area. After which a short break was taken while people freshened themselves up, and had a cup of tea or coffee. The final lecture of the day was by Dr Stefan Hetz who gave a lecture on respiration in *Otocinclus*, and like the other speakers before him, he had people enthralled by his presentation over the results of his studies into these fishes, including the designs of the equipment used to monitor precisely how much oxygen was available to these fish, in a given scenario within his experiments.



Chairman Ian Fuller listening from the sidelines.



Dr Hetz's lecture.

After a lengthy time answering all manner of questions on *Otocinclus*, the day's lectures came to close. But before anyone could retire from the lecture room, The Chairman presented the speakers with hand carved mementoes of various catfishes that had been masterfully carved as usual by Brian Walsh and special thanks must go to Brian for providing these excellent, highly detailed and accurate carvings of actual catfish.

After a good meal Lee Finley gave us all a after dinner treat by showing us some humorous images of advertising literature from bye-gone days explaining how fish had been used to imply different things but when you looked at the image closure, there were big flaws that weren't apparent at the time; as in a advert showing a little girl toppling over a large aquarium full of water with one hand!

As usual it was another long night in the lounge bar of the hotel discussing the day's events, swapping tales of how big the fish used to be in days long ago, and after a beer or two, it was time to retire.

The next morning Dr Hetz started the lectures off by telling us about the Breeding habits of *Hisonotus* species and his research into this. As like the day before, Dr Hetz lecture was hugely popular with everyone.



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An attentive audience.



Dr Weitzman, talking characins.

After a short refreshment break, Dr Weitzman gave his second lecture, which (as planned) was on the Breeding modes in Characins. Dr Weitzman's lecture proved to be an eye-opener for nearly everyone present, explaining that due to his research, he can say that certain characin species actually partake of internal fertilisation, going on to explain in depth the varied means and ways this occurs. Unfortunately the lecture was all too soon over, and after a question and answer session, it was time for Sunday Lunch.

After the rather filling 3 course luncheon, everyone made their way back to the lecture room, settling down to hear Hans-Georg Evers second talk on 'The search for "Shampupa" or better known as the 'Gold Trim panaque'. Hans treated every one to a thorough account of his expedition to find this elusive Loricariidae. Showing all manner of other Panaque's that he and his party had come across whilst searching for this Catfish. After a multitude of questions about his talk as well as many other questions relating to his many trips to South America, another break was taken.



Committee member Roy Barton with Lee Finley, Ingo Seidel, Michael Schlüter, Dr Stefan Hetz & Peter Liptrot.



Lee Finley

Lee Finley finished off the convention by giving an in-depth talk on Auchenipteridae telling everyone about, not only his field trips into South America, but also their particular breeding Habits (many of which he had bred under aquarium conditions). After his talk Lee answered quite a few questions over the points he had raised and before anyone realised the time had flown by, and the convention was at an end for another year.

The Chairman (Ian Fuller) closed the convention by thanking the speakers for all their talks & Lectures and everyone that had attended for making Convention 2006 an enormous success. Needless to say, plans are already underway to make Convention 2007 as huge as a success, if not better!