

REPORT ON THE ELEVENTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON FIBONACCI NUMBERS AND THEIR APPLICATIONS

George M. Phillips

The Eleventh International Conference on Fibonacci Numbers and their Applications was held in Braunschweig, Germany 5–9 July 2004, hosted by the Technische Universität Carolino–Wilhelmina. It is now twenty years since Andreas Philippou initiated and organized the First Conference, which was held at the University of Patras, Greece. Amongst those who attended the conference at Braunschweig I believe there were seven who had been at Patras in 1984. In his report on the Patras conference, Karel de Bouvère wrote “It was suggested [at the end of the conference] that similar international conferences should be held every other year, and that the University of Santa Clara, in California, U.S.A., ‘home of The Fibonacci Association’, should be the host in 1986, followed by an appropriate institution in Pisa, Italy, birthplace of Fibonacci.” Thus a pattern was established that has continued to date: conferences have been held every two years, and have alternated between Europe, the home continent of Fibonacci, and the United States, the home of the Fibonacci Association. I have enjoyed this formula, which is commendably simple, and has taken us to so many wonderful locations in our first twenty years. However, it is heartening that these conferences have also had continuing loyal support from two other continents, specifically from Australia and New Zealand, and from Asia, including always a strong contingent from Japan.

Every one of these conferences has had at least one unique ingredient. In this case, one *very* special feature was that the conference was held in the home town of Carl Friedrich Gauss (1777-1855), and many commented on the beauty and charm of Braunschweig. I believe we all visited Gauss’s statue, which is sited near the conference venue, and after the conference my wife Rona and I stopped off in Göttingen and visited Gauss’s grave.

One happy feature of a conference of this size is that one can attend all the talks, and the size of the audience at a typical talk indicated that most people did just that. I have said before that the overall standard of the papers presented at these conferences has improved, and I adhere to this view after attending the 2004 conference, although there was one paper whose delivery took the customary twenty minutes, but whose only result could have been obtained in two lines. However, such a thing can happen at any conference, and this conference will be remembered for the many very fine talks, some delivered by people I have heard speak several times, and whose polished performances chimed in reassuringly with my expectations, and others by mathematicians whom I enjoyed hearing for the first time. I am glad to report that the membership of these, the friendliest of conferences, is not just a clique of friends who are growing old gracefully together. We continue to attract able and enthusiastic new participants.

As we all know, it is not just by chance that a good conference goes well. It is because dependable people have thought through all possibilities, made all the right moves, and left nothing to chance. The arrangements for this conference were certainly in the best of hands. We are thus indebted to Bill Webb for scheduling the talks and for editing the conference proceedings, two most onerous and time-consuming tasks. We are also most grateful to Heiko Harborth who, aided by his good colleagues Jens-P. Bode, Arnfried Kemnitz and Hartmut Weiss, worked so hard as our conference hosts. In addition to ensuring that the conference ran smoothly and metronomically, our hosts arranged several congenial and cheerful events to give us a rest from our mathematics, including a wine and cheese reception hosted by the

Technische Universität Carolino-Wilhelmina, and a most interesting visit to the Volkswagen works at Wolfsburg, which was followed by a fine meal together. The final social event was a splendid Conference Banquet. I believe that this conference set a standard for the attention given to spouses and other accompanying persons that will be very hard to maintain at future conferences. An excursion to some nearby place of interest was arranged for every day of the conference. My wife has asked me to be sure to mention the name of Detlef Dornieden, who was their perfect host and most thoughtful and kind guide.

Echoing the words that my dear friend Herta Freitag used in her report of the Seventh Conference in Graz, in her native Austria, let us say *auf wiedersehen* to Braunschweig. We are already looking forward to reconvening in San Francisco in 2006.