

IM 2017 in Bonn, Germany By Hans Kordetzky

The 23rd "International Meeting of Collectors and Researchers of Historical Computing Devices" took place from 22nd to 24th September 2017 in Bonn, Germany. A special word of thanks should go to the meeting organiser Professor Karl Kleine. Also deserving a special mention is Professor Dr. Ina Prinz, Director of the *Arithmeum Museum for Computing Instruments* at the University of Bonn and her team at the Arithmeum. The museum hosted and provided free-of-charge conference rooms for the main part of the meeting. Thanks should also go to Gerti Alber and Inge Rudowski. Between them they came up with two possible Partner Programmes – catering for either good or bad weather. As good weather prevailed, the partners could enjoy a day out to the Drachenfels.

Around 11 B.C. Bonn was built on the banks of the river Rhine as the Roman military camp "*Castra Bonnensis*" and the city of "Bonna". Bonn was and still is a place synonymous with politics. For many years it was the capital of West Germany and there are still parts of the government that have not yet relocated to Berlin. In addition there is a rich cultural scene with museums, galleries, the Beethoven concert hall, the University and much more. Finally Bonn was famously the birthplace of Ludwig van Beethoven. Every year in September there is the "Beethovenfest" - a month full of classical music concerts. If you are a lover of classical music, you cannot possibly leave Bonn without visiting the *Beethoven House*.

The conference hotel was the 4-star "Günnewig Hotel Bristol". It is centrally located in the heart of Bonn, picturesquely situated between the Poppelsdorf Palace and the former residential palace of the Prince-Electors of Cologne.



The meeting hosted 51 collectors from 13 countries as follows:

- 1 Australia
- 1 Belgium
- 3 Switzerland
- 20 Germany
- 4 Spain
- 3 France
- 1 South Africa
- 2 United Kingdom
- 1 Israel
- 2 Italy
- 11 Netherlands
- 1 Luxembourg
- 1 USA

and 19 partners made a total of 70 participants - a gratifying number of attendees. This also speaks volumes as many of the participants had to make very, very long journeys to attend the event.

Meeting Programme:

Traditionally every International Meeting has a theme. This year the theme was: "*Calculating in Everyday Life*". Most of the time we unconsciously perform many calculating-related actions while going about our daily lives. We are equally unaware of the related appliances we use daily – we just use them without thinking.

Friday, 22nd September 2017, Bristol Hotel, “Churfürstensaal II”

- Registration
- Welcome to all participants by Professor Karl Kleine
- Formal handover of the IM drum by Wolfgang Irlner
- Presentations:
 - Stefan Heimann The Hydroculator – a World Novelty
 - Bob Adams Elektro Rules by Faber-Castell
 - Fabrizio Brentini The Pregnancy Slide Rule Faber-Castell 51/88
 - Jacques Perregaux Effective Banking with Modern Tools
- Swap & Trade Fair (*more on the last page*)
- Dinner at Hotel Bristol in the “Churfürstensaal I” – a buffet of starters, main courses and deserts.



Saturday 23rd September 2017, Arithmeum Museum

- Welcome to all participants by Professor Dr. Ina Prinz
- Presentations:
 - Wolfgang Irler Is Small Beautiful or Useful? Pocket Size Everyday Calculating Devices
 - Ed Chamberlain Slide Rules and Historic Calculators as Art Forms in Everyday Life
 - Nicola Marras (presented by Manuel Villar-Zarko) Dangerous Sliding
 - Jose Fernández Spanish Patents in Everyday Calculations
 - Peter Holland & Jacques Perregaux RST Community Project: Overlooked Beauties
 - Andries de Man Checksum and Check Digit Calculators
 - Florian Lucas & Simon van der Salm Replicating the Lost Skew Distribution Machine of Jacobus Cornelius Kapteyn
 - Otto van Poelje Three of a Kind
 - Timo Leipälä Russian Do-It-Yourself Slide Rules
 - Karl Kleine It looks like a Zippo – the Microcalculatore 2A
- Handing over of the IM drum to Rod Lovett - a member of the organising committee for the IM 2018 in Great Britain next year.
 The 2018 “*International Meeting of Collectors and Researchers of Historical Computing Devices*” will be held from 21st to 22nd September. The venue is the “*Stratford Hotel*”, Stratford-upon-Avon, England.
 Following tradition the meeting will have a theme. There are also plans to feature early British-made slide rules and long-scale slide rules. For more information see: <http://uksrc.org.uk/im2018/> .
- Each year the *Oughtred Society* honours individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to the world of slide rules or calculating instruments. This year the OS Award Committee (Karl Kleine, Ed Chamberlain, David Riches and Otto van Poelje) made the following awards:
 - Oughtred Society Award:
 - Robert De Cesaris (USA) and
 - W. Richard Davis (USA)
 - Oughtred Society Fellowship:
 - Wolfgang Irler (Italy)

On behalf of the whole collecting community I would like to congratulate all the award winners.



All the papers and all the “Overlooked Beauties” are published as “*Proceedings 23rd International Meeting IM 2017, Bonn*”. The book, with ISBN 978-3-7448-1056-2, is available from bookshops for € 39.00.

While the collectors gathered in the Arithmeum, the partners left to explore the scenic surroundings of Bonn and go on an excursion along the romantic Rhine valley to the 321 metre high Drachenfels (Dragon’s Rock). After a walk to the jetty they boarded a ferry operated by *KD Deutsche Rheinschiffahrt* to Königswinter. Then after disembarking they took the oldest cogwheel railway in Germany to the peak of the legendary Drachenfels. At the top they enjoyed an à la carte lunch with a superb view. They then retraced their steps back to Bonn and the hotel.

Traditionally an IM ends with a meeting dinner for all the participants. This time the dinner was held in the rustic ambience of “*Brauhaus Bönnsch*”. Not only is delicious self-brewed beer served but in a Brauhaus you can also eat well. However, a Brauhaus is much more. It is a slice of Rhineland life and reflects the Rhineland mentality. Besides being in the heart of Bonn, the “Bönnsch” is charming and serves a beer which cannot be found anywhere else. The real “Bönnsch” is a top-fermented cloudy beer with a somewhat yeasty taste and a slightly sour note.



Sunday 24th September 2017, Arithmeum Museum

Those who had time and were interested were able on Sunday morning to visit the exhibition: "300 Years of Logarithmic Reckoning in German-speaking Regions". The exhibition was opened by Professor Dr. Ina Prinz, Director of the Arithmeum. Afterwards, there was a guided tour through the exhibition by Werner Rudowski and Peter Holland. In the afternoon there was a presentation "How does a slide rule work?" and a repeat of the guided tour.

With the help of the specialists in this field, Werner Rudowski and Peter Holland, the Arithmeum staged for the first time ever an exhibition of the earliest and most spectacular logarithmic-based German historical calculating aids. The items came from international private collectors and museums.



Because of the variety and beauty of the items, the exhibition appeals equally to generalists and to specialists. All this despite the quite complicated way some objects were used not detracting from their fascinating appeal. Even though calculating with logarithms was not a German invention, for over 300 years precise, functional and beautiful instruments using logarithms were produced in various German-speaking regions.

For the exhibition a catalogue, with ISBN 978-3-00-057703-1, has been published. Copies can be purchased from bookshops for € 24.00.

If you want to be merry, surround yourself with your slide rule collector friends. If you want to be happy, surround yourself with slide rules!

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The following note about the swap fair part of the meeting was supplied by David Rance. "When it comes to the IM2017 swap fair probably the most important "news" is that it was bustling and there were a healthy number of tables with swap/sale items. In past IM's the number of swap tables was often disappointingly low and easily outnumbered by the number of exhibition-only tables. From what I could see there were items on offer for most tastes and most pockets – including some rare items. Sadly I did not make a note of "top items" as these days I try to curb adding to my collection! Having said that, I did travel home with a couple of unusual Graphoplex's, a hat rule and a Fowler in a lovely (but sadly cracked) original hinged Bakelite felt-lined case." Among the many items exchanging ownership in the auction part of the meeting were the following:

- 50cm Desktop Tavernier-Gravet
- A.W. Faber System Torda
- F-C Pocket 345 System Hohenner
- F-C 2/83N Novo-Duplex OHP demo model