

Preface

This volume contains the papers for TAROS 2013, the 14th conference in the now annual Towards Autonomous Robotics and Systems conferences.

The TAROS series was started by Ulrich Nehmzow in Manchester in 1997 under the name TIMR (Towards Intelligent Mobile Robots). In 1999, Chris Melhuish and Ulrich formed the conference Steering Committee, which was joined by Mark Witkowski in 2003 when the conference adopted its current name. The Steering Committee has provided a continuity of vision and purpose to the conference over the years as it has moved around the UK, and under their stewardship TAROS has become a major conference on autonomous robotics, while also attracting an increasing international audience. Sadly, Ulrich died in 2010, but his contribution is commemorated in the form of the Ulrich Nehmzow Best Student Paper Award, sponsored this year by his family.

In the 14th edition of TAROS 2013, we received a total of 75 submissions. The submissions were offered under two categories, one: full-length papers, of which 58 submissions were received, and the other: extended abstracts, of which we received 17 submissions. All the submissions were reviewed by three members of our International Programme Committee. This year there were 20 oral paper presentations corresponding to an acceptance rate of 34 % plus two poster sessions that consisted of 28 poster presentations in the main part of the conference, with presenters from the UK, together with Belgium, Brazil, China, Ecuador, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, The Netherlands, Spain, Taiwan, and the USA.

The Springer-Verlag Best Paper Award went to Nina Gaissert and her colleagues from FESTO for their paper “Inventing a Micro Aerial Vehicle inspired by the mechanics of dragonfly flight”; we were all slightly saddened to discover that she was unable to bring that particular vehicle with her to Oxford. The Best Student Paper Award went to Nima Keivan et al. for their paper titled “Realtime Simulation-in-the-loop Control for Agile Ground Vehicles”.

We were also fortunate to hear keynote lectures from John Hallam of the Maersk Mc-Kinney Moller Institute in Odense and by Arnoud Visser of the University of Amsterdam, and a special lecture by Paul Newman of Oxford University sponsored by the IET. On the Friday a well-attended Industry Day took place with the theme of Horizon 2020.

As general chair I am deeply indebted to many others for making TAROS a success.

I would like to thank all those many members of the Program Committee for their (generally) prompt efforts in reviewing the papers; to Chris Melhuish and Mark Witkowski for their overall guidance; to Elizabeth Walsh and Andrea Pilot for running

the show; to the local members of the Committee, Ashutosh Natraj the programme chair and Samuel Bucheli who made and maintained the web-site; and to all the attendees for making TAROS 2013 an interesting and vibrant event.

August 2013

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Stephen Cameron
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Towards Autonomous Robotic Systems

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