

Meeting Report Tue 15th Dec 2009

Contributed by RichardJones
Wednesday, 16 December 2009
Last Updated Thursday, 17 June 2010

A nice summer evening with about 20 people, some new faces and an age span from about 7 to 70. The gold coin collection raised \$13.55 for Science Alive which was much appreciated. Thanks to all who came, and to those who brought items to show and share, and christmas food to eat. For those who could not make it here is an account of what we got up to. Also a link to pictures of some of the robots attending the event:

<http://picasaweb.google.com/rjchchnz/ChchRobotics2009December?feat=directlink>

Kay arrived with a tin man robot and walking legs that welcomed and entertained people at the door.

We started with the challenge to locate and lift drink cans off the table. Hayley came along with a Lego robot with an innovative lifter. It performed really well, locating cans, lifting them and crashing them down onto the table so that they bounced off. Hayley gave us a good description construction and operation of the software that uses two lego bricks interconnected using bluetooth. Wow.

I brought along my can lifting robot and described a free multiplatform graphing tool called graphviz that I used draw the can finder state machine, and showed an easy way to construct and test finite state machines in Lego NXT-G. The can finder and lifter performed well and we discovered that some more states would be handy. For example when the robot finds a can, but the can gets stolen just as the robot has decided to lift it!

Sam and Braden came along and performed their RoboBoogie for us. This was the dance entry that won them first place in the regional and national robocup competitions this year. The performance was brilliant and you can see it on youtube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Qfi0JwF2lc> Thanks again for coming, I can't wait to see what you have planned for next year.

Kay brought along his Tin Man and Walking leg mechanisms and entertained us with stories of lawn mowers appearing to run on water and grass, impulse jets, mechanical green man men rowing boats and more. In addition to building electric cars, vans and mobility scooters Kay also makes violins and cellos. Have a look at Kays web site: <http://storydad.com>

Jimmy gave away some prototyping boards from Brighspark. Thanks Jimmy.

Hanno showed me how 12 blocks can be used to program state machines in a graphical way that expresses the program in a way that can resemble the state diagram. A much nicer approach than NXT-G. Maybe we get to see 12 blocks programming Lego soon?

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday 17th February 2010 when the challenge will be speed line following using a course constructed from Robocup competition mats if we can borrow some. These have a 15mm black line on white background with green direction hint squares. There will be edible treats for robots who bring their owners.

Richard

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