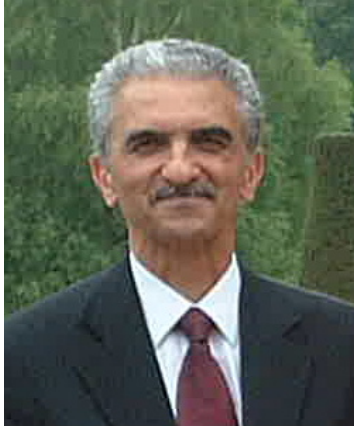


Preface



The year 2009 sees the return of the leading sheet metal conference to Birmingham. SheMet'09 is the thirteenth conference and the fourth time that it has been hosted by Birmingham City University. On each occasion I have been fortunate to act as the chairman of the organising committee. The conference provides an important landmark in the international, sheet metal calendar, where every two years it facilitates the assembly of leading researchers, academic and industrial partners to discuss the latest trends, methods and applications in the metal forming, processing and finishing industries.

At the first conference in 1992 there were 60 delegates and 39 papers. Today these figures have dramatically increased. In spite of the impact of the global credit crunch there is much to be optimistic about when one sees the variety and depth of research in improving existing processes and technologies and developing new ones.

To provide a direction and theme for the conference there are keynote speeches from three leading experts, pre-eminent in their own field. The first speech reports on the innovative manufacture of car components by forming high strength steels. The second speech outlines the operational trends in sheet metal manufacturing and ICT features, while the third assesses the risks and opportunities associated with metalforming and the environment. Their contribution and those of practitioners and conference delegates are encapsulated in a plenary session that is focused on the impact of the global credit crunch on the sheet metal industry, in particular on the research and collaboration that facilitates innovation and the development and improvement of its processes.

The focus of the conference is on innovation in forming processes, high strength materials and joining technologies. As with previous conferences it is interesting to note how the papers reflect the changes taking place in the sheet metal industry: the introduction of new ideas and technologies; changes in process design and operations; and new materials. A total of 88 abstracts were submitted, which after review and the recommendation of the Scientific Advisory Board, 71 papers were accepted for presentation at the Conference.

I would like this opportunity to thank all of the support staff at the University who have succeeded in making this such a successful conference. I am grateful to the keynote speakers for their time and contribution to the conference and in particular I must thank the members of the Scientific Advisory Board who proffered advice when needed and diligently reviewed papers for the conference when asked. Their expertise and standing is an important factor in ensuring the quality and standard of accepted papers and why this continues to be the leading conference in the sheet metal field.

Final thanks must go to the authors and presenters of their papers – without you the conference would cease to be the undoubted success it is. I trust that all delegates will have a pleasant, memorable and rewarding stay in Birmingham and leave with new friends, new ideas and a renewed enthusiasm for their work in sheet metal.

Bez Shivani

Chairman of the Organising Committee