

*Press Release*  
*June 2010*

## ***Automotive Academy Graduates***

Nearly 40 young crash repair vehicle technicians graduated from Thatcham's Automotive Academy last week in the vehicle research centre's latest Apprentice Graduation ceremony. The Apprentice Graduation was one of many events that visitors were able to take in as Thatcham opened its doors to visitors from the motor insurance, vehicle security and vehicle repair industries at their annual Triple Focus event.

Guests joined senior members of the crash repair industry at Thatcham's Research Centre, on the 17<sup>th</sup> June, to applaud successful apprentices from the 3 disciplines of Panel, Paint and M.E.T. (Mechanical, Electrical and Trim). These young technicians, who now represent the next generation of vehicle crash repairers, have studied for three years to complete their apprenticeships, attending Thatcham's Automotive Academy 4 times a year, for 2 weeks at a time.

Joining this year's successful apprentices were Town Mayor of Thatcham, Councillor Lee Dillon as well as a range of employers, friends and relatives - all keen to share the moment as these up and coming technicians celebrated an important milestone in their careers.

Thatcham's Head of Automotive Academy, Ben Cardy who hosted the awards and Chief Executive Peter Roberts were joined on stage during the ceremony by Liz Batten –Apprentice Training Advisor at Rolls Royce' as well as Paint Technician and former Thatcham Apprentice Shane Lawrence of A&J Lawrence based in Hampshire.

During the ceremony, three 'Outstanding Achievers' were additionally honoured for their particular tenacity in achieving an apprenticeship, against often challenging circumstances.

The winner for the Outstanding Achievement Award in Panel was Andrew Burrett of Stephen James BMW in Enfield; in Paint, James Youell of Rolls Royce and in M.E.T, Marc Sallis from BMW franchise Specialist Cars Ltd in Hitchin.

Following the Apprentice graduation Town Mayor of Thatcham, Councillor Lee Dillon cut the ribbon on Thatcham's newly refurbished Automotive Academy which has recently undergone a £750,000 refit to ensure the best possible learning environment for experienced and apprentice crash repair technicians.

**Ben Cardy, Head of Thatcham's Automotive Academy** said, "These outstanding young graduates have a bright future and my sincere congratulations and good luck go to all of them. We now look forward to continuing to welcoming technicians of all ages and backgrounds to Thatcham well into the future at our state of the art Academy."

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FOR FURTHER MEDIA INFORMATION CONTACT:

Iain Wallace, Communications Executive

Tel No: 01635 293153

Fax No: 01635 861862

Email: [press@thatcham.org](mailto:press@thatcham.org)

Photographs to accompany this story are available.

**Note to Editors:**

Thatcham are happy to provide informed opinion to press on a range of automotive issues including vehicle repair, security and safety. Please contact our press office as above.

**Thatcham**

The Motor Insurance Repair Research Centre, or 'Thatcham' as it is widely known, was formed in 1969 by British Insurers. The Centre is independently operated and has its own Board of Directors. Its main aim is to carry out research targeted at containing or reducing the cost of motor insurance claims, whilst maintaining safety standards. Thatcham provides products and services for a number of functional areas within the collision repair industry: Insurers; Motor Manufacturers; Equipment Manufacturers and Suppliers.

Employing over 140 members of staff, Thatcham has an established reputation as an automotive standard setter and a proven capability in delivering an array of totally unique, high quality, ready to use and bespoke products and services to the automotive industry, on a global stage.

**Iain Wallace**  
**Communications Executive**

Direct Tel: +44 (0)1635 293153

Main Switchboard Tel: +44 (0)1635 868855  
Email: [jain.wallace@thatcham.org](mailto:jain.wallace@thatcham.org)  
[www.thatcham.org](http://www.thatcham.org)

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**Place of registration:** England and Wales  
**Registered number:** 967763  
**Registered address:** Colthrop Way, Thatcham, Berkshire, RG19 4NR  
**Legal form of the company:** Private Company Limited by Guarantee