



RCAR

Research Council for Automobile Repairs

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Newsletter

www.rcar.org

March 2004

RCAR People

CESVIMAP—MAPFRE – Spain

Antonio Estrada Retires

Every year is remembered for something in particular and 2003 will be remembered as being the year when Antonio Estrada severed his professional links with MAPFRE and CESVIMAP. After almost thirty-two years working in many different capacities in the field of material damages, he has decided, in agreement with MAPFRE, to devote more time to his family and to himself.



Antonio At His Farewell Ceremony

Antonio is a trained Technical Engineer, specialising in Mechanics. He joined MAPFRE in 1972 as a claims adjuster and later became Head of Adjusters. In 1977 he took charge of MAPFRE's Material Damages Area and, with the backing of MAPFRE's Management, in 1983 set up CESVIMAP (the MAPFRE Centre for Road Safety and Research) and was appointed its first Managing Director.

In 1991 he was named Deputy Managing Director of MAPFRE Mutuallidad, which is the post he has occupied until now, combining his work with his role as President of CESVIMAP and CESVIMAP International.

Throughout his professional career Antonio has always brought a great deal of enthusiasm, hope, time, affection and imagination to create things which hitherto had not existed (CESVIMAP, the CESVIs in Argentina, Brasil, Mexico, Colombia and France, etc).

Antonio's relationship with RCAR has been very special because he is convinced that meeting points such as RCAR are necessary in order to improve society and the world in which we live. This conviction has meant that CESVIMAP-MAPFRE have given RCAR their full support and backing and RCAR Members have been able to rely on this. At the same time he has always been ready to help, an arbitrator in search of agreement and harmony, and a long standing member of the RCAR Steering Committee. These are some of the reasons, and there are many more, why all those of us who have worked and lived alongside Antonio can only offer him our gratitude, sincere thanks and very best wishes for his future. RCAR will miss him..

(CESVIMAP: www.cesvimap.com)

Special points of interest:

- *News from 11 RCAR Centres.*
- *RCAR People.*
- *News Sources and Forthcoming Events.*
- *The Challenge Ahead*

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RCAR People

RCAR Steering Committee Chairman, Given Lifetime Achievement Award



Ken Roberts at his desk at Thatcham with his Lifetime Achievement Award

Bodyshop Magazine's Chris Mann presented Ken Roberts with the newly created Lifetime Achievement Award. This award is given on behalf of the UK Repair Industry to an individual who has made a truly exceptional contribution over the years. The citation reads as follows:-

“Ken joined the Motor Insurance Repair Research Centre (MIRRC) in 1982 and has played a key role in its development as a world renowned research facility. He has played a major role in the huge growth and availability of practical training for repairers and the development of Thatcham's methods manuals. He was also instrumental in tackling the growing problem of car crime in the early 1990s.

Ken is well respected on all sides of the industry and plays a key role in the Research Council for Automobile Repairs—RCAR—and other international committees. Having devoted his life to improving the standards in our industry, Ken is due to retire next year. We wish him every possible success for the future.”

Stéphane Couturier Leaves CESVI France To Join Renault



Stéphane In His Office

Dr.-Ing. Stéphane Couturier is leaving CESVI France to join Renault. He has taken up an important appointment in Renault's Safety Department where he will be in charge of crash-testing, external relationships, ie consumer associations, compatibility, reparability, etc.

Stéphane joined CESVI France when it was set up and has been responsible for developing a very strong and well respected technical department. His department's research has been varied and creative and his Centre has been economically successful within France. He worked extremely hard developing new testing protocols for the RCAR Low Speed Crash Test and made a major contribution to thinking within the RCAR Working Group.

We thank Stéphane and wish him every success in his new work.

RCAR People

Peter Roberts of Thatcham UK Joins Euro NCAP Board



Peter Roberts

The UK insurance industry's investment in vehicle research has been recognised by Euro NCAP with the invitation to join them in their work. Peter Roberts, Chief Executive of MIRRC Thatcham, will join the Euro NCAP Board with other senior Thatcham personnel joining the Primary Technical Working Group and the Media Group.

Peter said that this powerful new alliance in Europe would result in direct benefits for vehicle occupants and pedestrians. Thatcham's head restraint data and security ratings expertise would strengthen the Euro NCAP contribution to safety in Europe.

Charles O'Halloran—New Head of Tech-Cor, USA

Charles O'Halloran was appointed Project Manager over Tech-Cor's Research Division and Collision Repair Centre in July 2003. He had been with Allstate Insurance for 15 years prior to coming to Tech-Cor, serving in various roles from auto claim field adjuster to auto claims manager. The last two and a half years he was in Allstate's Home Office as a Claim Analyst in the Auto Process Mastery Division. His responsibilities included policy, practices and procedures for auto claims countrywide. He was also part of a Home Office review team which validated auto process compliance and estimate accuracy around the country.

Prior to joining Allstate he had 10 years experience in the auto body collision industry where he worked as a Collision Repair Technician during most of this time, but also spent the last two years as the body shop manager for a General Motors' dealership.

Charlie says he looks to increase Tech-Cor's involvement and interaction with RCAR. He sees value in Tech-Cor's membership of RCAR and is determined to find ways to leverage this partnership in the future. He has noted many areas of work being conducted by various RCAR members that could have an impact in the US and hopes to identify existing projects or opportunity areas that Tech-Cor can work collaboratively on with other RCAR members.



Charles O'Halloran

News From The Centres

JKC—Japan

JKC celebrated its 30th Anniversary on 2nd July 2003. Delegates from the major insurance companies were present. Mr Yasuaki Kada, President of JKC, gave the opening speech in which he thanked all the parties concerned with the operation of JKC for their long term co-operation and he promised that JKC will continue to work for the benefit of the motoring public and motor insurance policyholders. JKC received many heartfelt congratulations from both the insurers and automobile manufacturers and also from the Secretary General of RCAR on behalf of RCAR Members. To commemorate the anniversary JKC compiled a history of the company, planted three cherry trees and made and hung a name board giving the names of member insurance companies in the front lobby.



**KAGAMIWARI: Break The Top Of A Cask,
The Japanese Traditional Way Of Celebration**



The New Cherry Trees Outside JKC's Centre

Repair Timetable For Imported Cars

JKC started its "Repair Timetable Project For Imported Cars" in January 2003 to meet the urgent requirements of the automobile insurance industry and other users of JKC's timetables. They plan to produce repair timetables for 15 top selling imported models in 18 months. The project will end by June 2004. As they had already produced 13 timetables for imported cars before the commencement of the project, they will be able to provide 28 timetables in total and these will cover the majority of the most popular imported models.

In recent years the number of imported cars (mainly European such as VW, Mercedes-Benz, BMW and Volvo), has increased in Japan and had exceeded 3 million units by the end of March 2003: about 6% of the total number of passenger cars on the road (see table below). At the same time, the average repair cost (insurance claim paid) of imported cars is 1.5 to 2 times higher than that of domestic cars.

As general repair times standards for imported cars do not exist in the market, repairers are obliged to use repair times provided by the major importers, which often leads to higher estimated repair costs. Even the repair part prices for imported cars are set much higher than those for domestic cars. Moreover, as most of the importers actually do not provide any repair information such as repair manuals or parts catalogues to the market, only those authorised by the importers are available to repair shops. In these circumstances the production of repair times for many imported models, based on the same standard as for domestic models, has long been needed.

JKC have also published a series of manuals named "Structure Investigation Series", which comprise repair times and photos and detailed data of car structures obtained from their repair times production work. These manuals have been greatly appreciated by repair shops as well as insurance loss adjusters and JKC therefore proposes to produce similar manuals as part of the current project.

As of January 2004 the project was progressing successfully with work on 8 models having been completed. They expect to reach their goal of 15 models by June this year.

News From The Centres

JKC—Japan

[Note: Models whose repair times are being calculated: Mercedes-Benz E Class, Mercedes-Benz E Class Wagon, Mercedes-Benz C Class Sport Coupé, Mercedes-Benz S Class, Mercedes-Benz V Class, VW Passat, VW Passat Wagon, VW Rupo, BMW 3 Series, MINI Cooper, Peugeot 206, Peugeot 307, Volvo V70, Audi A4, Audi A4 Avant.]

Population of Imported Cars in Japan at the end of March 2003
(Total passenger car population in Japan: 54,471,376)

Make	Units
Mercedes-Benz	565,565
Volkswagen	534,882
BMW	434,070
Volvo	198,850
Opel	195,602
Rover	128,359
Audi	107,987
Ford	99,571
Chrysler	88,479
Peugeot	75,630
Others	859,861
Total	3,288,856

(JKC is at: www.jikencentre.co.jp)

MPI—Canada

Fuel Contamination Research

It is a commonly held belief in the automotive industry that sugar or products containing sugar introduced into a vehicle's gasoline supply will not cause internal damage to a combustion engine. This belief came about as a result of research carried out in the early 1990s by a respectable research organization. Their research confirmed that common table sugar would not dissolve in gasoline. Tests had proven that if granular sugar were introduced into a vehicle's fuel tank the vehicle's fuel filtration system would capture any granules entering the fuel delivery system. The sugar granules would eventually plug the filter causing the engine to stall or causing a no-start condition. Tests of various sugar-laden carbonated drinks had also shown that although the liquid could make its way through the filtration system the non-combustible liquid in the carbonated drink would cause the engine to stall or would result in a no-start condition.

The early 1990s research claimed that if an insurance company was presented with a suspected "sugar in gas" claim, the recommended repair plan was to drain and flush the fuel tank, replace the fuel filter, flush the fuel delivery lines, and if the vehicle's engine was fuel-injected, the injectors should be cleaned or replaced. The 1990s research claimed that no internal damage to the engine could occur from the introduction of these various forms of sugar contamination into the gasoline supply.

Over the past years we have investigated a number of vandalism claims where sugar was purported to have been the cause of seized engine parts. The findings from these investigations have cast doubt on the original research's conclusions. Two recent case studies, one involving a 2000 Ford Explorer, the other a 2001 Pontiac Venture van, revealed that a form of sugar contaminant had made its way into the engines' combustion chambers thereby seizing the moving parts. The photos below point to caramelised deposits on piston tops (Ford) and gummy deposits on injector tips (Pontiac) that caused both engines to seize.

News From The Centres

MPI—Canada (continued)



**Caramelised Deposits On Pistons And Cylinder Walls
2000 Ford Explorer**



Caramelised and gummy deposits on injectors – 2001 Pontiac Venture

Laboratory tests proved that gummy and caramelized deposits found in these engines' combustion chambers were definitely sugar-based. Scrapings of these deposits were analysed by a food laboratory and were found to have high concentrations of sucrose and lesser concentrations of fructose and glucose. These forms of sugar can all be found in popular carbonated drinks.

MPI's research team is designing tests to revisit the original research done on sugar contamination claims. Depending upon the research outcome we will develop claims handling procedures for instances where sugar is suspected to have caused an engine failure. The results and recommendations emanating from this research will be presented at the 2004 RCAR conference.

(MPI is at: www.mb.ca)

Centro Zaragoza—Spain

“Pedestrian Safety” - A New Study On Road Safety At Centro Zaragoza

Centro Zaragoza's new study on road safety deals with the problem of pedestrian accidents. The object of the study was to analyse the causes of such accidents by means of studying the most frequent injuries suffered by pedestrians across differing age groups. It presents and studies the necessary prevention measures to reduce the number of accidents. This can be achieved via a safety atmosphere and by applying different traffic calming measures, both as regards traffic density and speed. The aim of these measure is to prevent pedestrian involvement in accidents and to reduce the severity of injuries. It must be remembered that pedestrians are the most unprotected and vulnerable road users.



News From The Centres

Centro Zaragoza—Spain (continued)

Centro Zaragoza has already published 21 reports on road safety, all of them directly produced with the State Traffic Office of Spain. As in the past Centro Zaragoza has incorporated its findings into a book which, with the accompanying video giving the main conclusions of the study, covers the whole research. For more information please contact the Publications Department (publicaciones@centro-zaragoza.com).

Centro Zaragoza Participate in the European Conference on “Zero Vision”

The European Conference on “Zero Vision” was held in at the State Traffic Office in Madrid on 19 January 2004. Several experts on road safety from the EU presented their plans to drastically reduce road traffic accidents. Among them were Mr Muñoz-Repiso, General Director of the State Traffic Office; Mr Theologitos, Chief of Unit of DG Energy and Transport of the European Commission; Mr Magnusson from SNRA (Swedish National Road Administration); Mr Carcaño, General Manager of Centro Zaragoza. The Conference was chaired by Mrs Torme, President of the Traffic and Road Safety Committee of the Spanish Congress.

Mr Carcaño presented the great progress made by Centro Zaragoza in road safety, with the publication of different studies produced in collaboration with the State Traffic Office, and in particular on its recent report: “Zero Vision’s Theory On Road Safety”. The research conducted by Centro Zaragoza, which has been incorporated into a book, considers the number of victims and people injured by road accidents as a disease to be eradicated. The scientific basis of “Zero Vision” differs from the traditional approach to road safety, which consists of designing a system to minimise the events that cause damage. “Zero Vision” assumes that these incidents will occur but considers that the level of violence must not put life at risk or cause serious injury.



Jose Carcaño Presenting Work by Centro Zaragoza at the
“Zero Vision” Conference in Madrid

“Zero Vision” can be achieved by reducing the exposure to violence, ie by reducing the speed and therefore mobility, as well as by simultaneously increasing the tolerance towards violence and by improving the passive safety of vehicles and roads. The conclusions of “Zero Vision” are:

- (i) The implementation of supervision and control of rules compliance, in particular “the control of speed limits”. This action offers better results in the short term.
- (ii) Technical development of vehicles to improve their security.
- (iii) Technical development of roads to enable the growth of mobility without reducing safety, as well as a quick action on so-called “black spots” (dangerous points).

These three actions are closely related to an important aspect: “road education”, which is considered as compulsory at the new Law on Road Safety and Traffic in Spain, guaranteeing in the medium to long term the preservation of the system and searching for a bigger engagement from society on behalf of its own safety.

(Centro Zaragoza is at: www.centro-zaragoza.com)

News From The Centres

Thatcham—UK

In addition to the EuroNCAP activity outlined earlier in the Newsletter, Thatcham has reported recent news in the area of Vehicle Security and in their parts price guides.

In 2001 Thatcham first issued the results of their security tests on all new cars in the form of Star ratings on the ability to resist “theft of” and “theft from” the vehicle. One car, the Lexus LS430, received top rating in both categories in 2001. Today the Lexus is joined by the Audi A8 Quattro and the Volkswagen Phaeton. One of the main reasons for success is the use of laminated glazing all round the vehicle, which makes it more difficult for a thief to break into. In congratulating the manufacturers, Hazel Blears, UK’s Home Office Minister, confirmed that UK vehicle crime was at its lowest level for 20 years.

Thatcham has upgraded its Parts Price Guide (TPG). The derivative match, the powerful function that establishes whether a selected part is used by the same manufacturer in any of its other cars, is being extended to cover other manufacturers. At the same time functionality is being improved and simplified. TPG covers 34 car manufacturers and embraces circa 700 parts prices per derivative.

Recent issues of Methods Manuals include Vauxhall Vectra 5-door Hatch 2002, Daewoo Kalos 5-door Hatch 2002, Hyundai Getz 5-door Hatch 2002, Citroen C8 MPV 2003, Toyota Avensis 5-door Hatch 2003, Peugeot MP 2003 and Fiat Ulysse MPV 2003. Newsletter covers Vauxhall Vectra 5-door hatch, Nissan Primera 3-door Hatch, Honda Jazz 5-door Hatch and Citroen C8 MPV, Volkswagen Commercial Paint Colours MY2003, Paint Material Cost Guide.

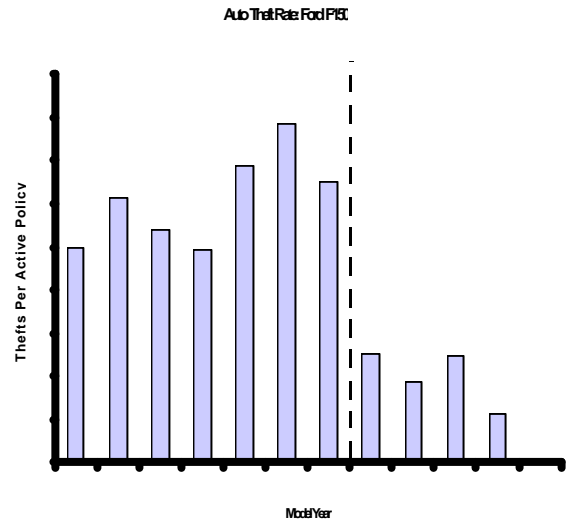
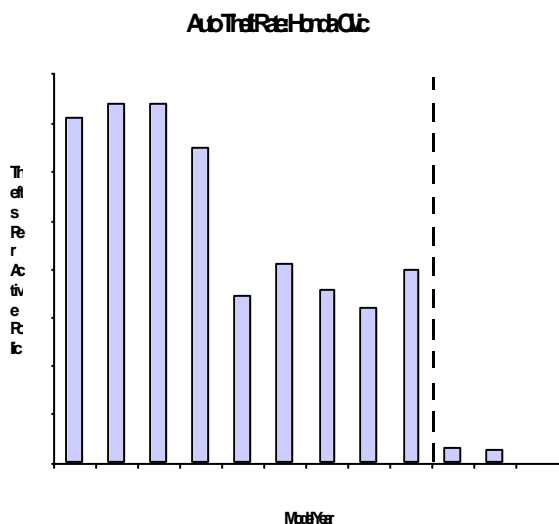
(Thatcham is at: www.thatcham.org)

ICBC—Canada

ICBC Supports Proposed Immobiliser Requirements in Canada

British Columbia has the highest rate of automobile theft in Canada. In fact, the statistical chance of having your car stolen in BC is higher than even the worst cities in the US, such as Detroit, New York and Miami. Most of the thefts in BC are done by amateur “Joyriders” or petty thieves who steal a vehicle to use in other crimes. 71% of those people killed in auto theft related incidents were under the age of 25. These kind of thefts can be largely stopped by immobilisers, as many RCAR Members have pointed out from their own experiences.

The Canadian Government has now announced proposals to require immobilisers as standard equipment of future cars, and ICBC has formally supported this proposal. In a letter to the Director of Transport, Canada, ICBC referred to the experience of other RCAR Members (as evidence in RCAR Conference presentations and the RCAR Theft Resistance Standard) that immobilisers are an effective deterrent. ICBC also provided the results of their own experience before and after immobilisers were installed on similar vehicles.



(ICBC is at: www.icbc.com)

News From The Centres

CESVI Argentina

CESVI Argentina was recently designated by Managers Consulting as one of the best 40 companies to work at in Argentina under the international programme "Great Place To Work". The Centre has also been selected to undertake tests for Audi for their customer service and repair quality of their dealers' network.

The Centre has been much improved and enlarged with the new facilities comprising a reformed and enlarged office area of 200 square meters, including two new offices for managers, one meeting room, and a special room for the Video Department. The facilities are now able to house 110 employees. The Systems and Workshop areas were also improved. The pictures below tell the story of the construction.



External Construction



Not Quite There Internally



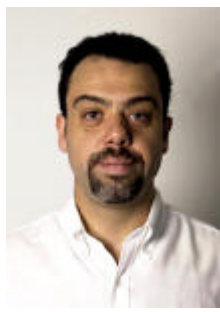
The Finished Offices

CESVI Argentina also underwent a reorganisation in January 2004 based on the real and mid-term needs of their market aimed at optimising results.

Alejandro Oltra is the R&D Manager responsible for the Bodyshop, Refinishing, Mechanical Research, New Activities, Systems, Adjusters, Claims Investigation and Analysis, Pilot Shop, Development of Bodyshops. **Marcelo Aiello** is responsible for Public and Commercial Relations including all issues relating to Highway Safety, Video, Marketing and Public Relations, Training, Website Contents, Library, Publicity and Sales. Finance & Administration is headed up by **Roberto Martin**, Accountant. This covers all Administrative, Financial and Community Matters.



Alejandro Oltra



Marcelo Aiello



Roberto Martin

(Cesvi Argentina is at: www.cesvi.com.ar)

News From The Centres

Joint Conference 2003 Japan and Korea

JKC and KART held a joint conference in Ichon, Korea, where KART is located, on Friday 21 November 2003. The Joint Conference has been held annually since 1999, the two centres taking it in turns to host the event. In 2003 Audatex Japan, a company with expertise in developing and distributing repair cost estimating systems (the Audatex System), attended the conference and they have indicated their willingness to attend in future. Three delegates from JKC were Messrs Naoki Hara, Masamoto Sito and Ichiro Fujino. Mr Masakazu Tanaka represented Audatex Japan. KART was represented by 5 speakers and 10 for discussions. Five separate research results, one each from JKC and Audatex and three from KART, plus two topics common to both JKC and KART were presented and discussed.



- JKC Presentations: Approach to Car Manufacturers on Checking Methods of Discharge Headlamp Control Units. (Ichiro Fujino)
Damageability and Reparability Research Activities. (Masatoshi Saito)
Effective Training for Technical Adjusters. (Naoki Hara)
- KART presentations: Damageability and Reparability of the Sports Utility Vehicle. (Jong Hun Lim)
Case Study on Car Fire (Investigation into Car Accident). (Se Ill Park)
ARECCOM System. (Sang Woo Shim)
Damageability and Reparability Research Activities. (Ji Won Kim)
Effective Training for Technical Adjusters. (Yeon Sun Jung)
- Audatex Japan: Audatex System. (Masakazu Tanaka)

Whilst the Conference this year was quite short (just one day) it provided an extremely valuable opportunity for everyone to share technical information, improve understanding and build on friendships. In particular Audatex Japan participated for the first time.

For the first time this year two subjects studied by both JKC and KART were discussed jointly. The aim of this, namely to gain greater understanding of the particular subject, was successful.

Besides the technical conference all attendees enjoyed dinner together at a Korean restaurant and this helped relationships. The 2004 Conference will be hosted by JKC in Japan.



(I am grateful to Mr Sang Don Lee of KART for providing this short report on the conference. See Gen.)