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Classics News – First female workshop apprentice appointed at National Motor Museum, Beaulieu

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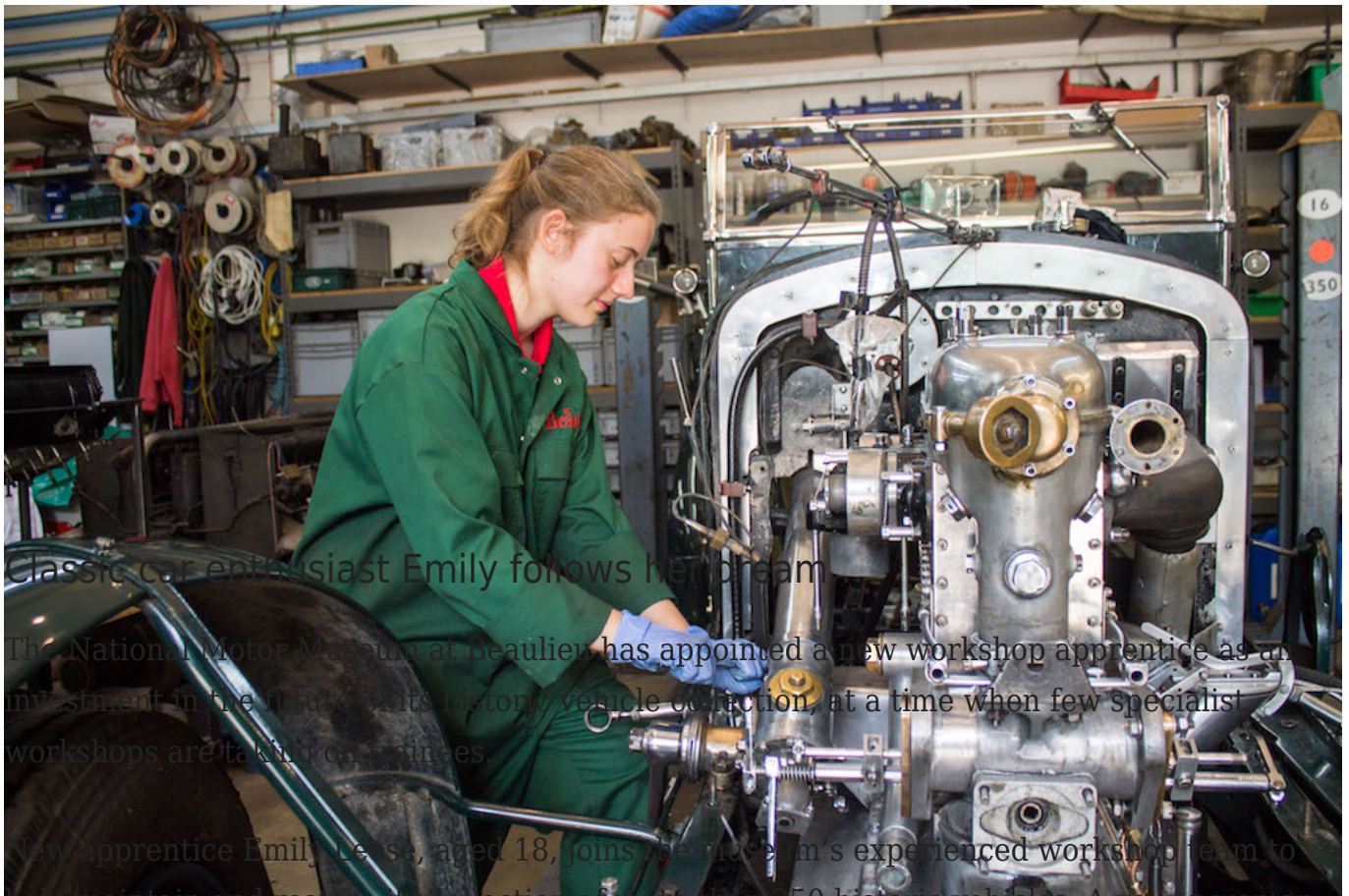
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Classic car enthusiast Emily follows her dream

The National Motor Museum at Beaulieu has appointed a new workshop apprentice as an investment in the future of its historic vehicle collection, at a time when few specialist workshops are taking on trainees.

New apprentice Emily Leese, aged 18, joins the museum's experienced workshop team to help maintain and restore its collection of more than 250 historic vehicles. A young woman in an industry traditionally dominated by older men, Emily's training will help to keep alive the essential skills needed to look after and preserve the museum's remarkable machines.

When she completes her apprenticeship, Emily will become the first to do so since Museum Manager and Chief Engineer Doug Hill finished his apprenticeship 40 years ago.



Classic car fanatic Emily, who has been a volunteer at the National Motor Museum since the age of 14, is starting a four-year apprenticeship which is being generously funded by a small group of *Beaulieu One Hundred* members. The *Beaulieu One Hundred* membership is committed to supporting the work of the National Motor Museum Trust to preserve Britain's motoring heritage for future generations.

Emily's training will be overseen by apprenticeship provider Heritage Skills Academy, which specialises in enabling trainees to work towards industry-standard qualifications as part of its *Heritage Engineering Apprenticeships* programme, tailored to the specialist automotive restoration industry.

Spending most of her time based in the museum workshop at Beaulieu to gain vital hands-on experience, Emily will also study the skills of the trade with Rolls-Royce and Bentley specialist *P&A Wood* in Essex as block release study, working towards Level 2 and 3 Diplomas in Classic Vehicle Restoration.

Funding for this block release part of her training will be covered by the Automotive Apprentice Bursary awarded by the *Worshipful Company of Coachmakers and Coach Harness Makers of London*, a charitable association which promotes excellence in the automotive, aerospace and rail industries.

Draper Tools has generously donated a comprehensive tool kit and chest to Emily from its Draper Expert range, which will be indispensable to her over the course of her apprenticeship.



National Motor Museum Manager and Chief Engineer Doug Hill (pictured) said: "Ever since Emily first visited us for work experience four years ago, I have been impressed by her enthusiasm and determination. I was the last apprentice to complete my training here at the National Motor Museum 40 years ago, so it makes me exceptionally proud to offer this opportunity to a new recruit by employing Emily

as our apprentice in the workshop.

It has been a long process to make that happen but with the help of our sponsors, the *Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs* and many others, we can move a huge step forward in ensuring our legacy of knowledge is safe for the future."

National Motor Museum Trust Chief Executive and Beaulieu Managing Director Russell Bowman said: "We are delighted to welcome Emily to the workshop. In her previous role as a volunteer, she has already proven herself to be a very dedicated and hard-working team member. By learning specialist maintenance and restoration skills from our experienced engineers, she will be helping to safeguard the museum's vehicle collection. We wish her a very long and happy career at Beaulieu."

Emily is launching a blog to follow her apprenticeship story. To read the first post with a Q&A with Emily, see www.beaulieu.co.uk/news/.

By assisting and learning from the museum's experienced team of five workshop engineers, Emily will help to maintain and repair a staggering variety of vehicles including prestigious veteran cars, classic racers, luxury limousines, vintage motorcycles, Land Speed Record-breakers and even the famous Beaulieu Monorail. Previously Emily, from North Baddesley in Southampton, had spent two years studying Motor Vehicle Engineering at Sparsholt College in Hampshire.



Emily said: "It's good fun being in the workshop and getting involved. I think I fit in quite well so far and all of the guys have been really good. They're a welcoming bunch, so I definitely feel like part of the team and I'm really enjoying working here.

I get involved in whatever projects are being worked on, from cleaning and polishing to putting things back together. Recently, I helped to re-fit the engine to our 1930 'Blower' Bentley, helping to steady the engine and to line everything up.

I don't know why I love cars so much but I have ever since I was about three-years-old. My parents aren't into cars, so I guess it all came from me. Fixing things is my passion. I was always playing with toy cars when I was a child and wanted to be an AA lady! Even then, I decided that I wanted to have the knowledge to fix a broken-down car.

At school, I chose to study Design Technology Resistant Materials rather than, say, cookery. I was the only girl on the course. Then when I finished school I found the course at Sparsholt College, which gave me a direction to go in although I was one of only two women on the course. My friends aren't into cars but they think my career path is pretty cool.

I came in for work experience and they couldn't get rid of me! I have become much more outgoing and confident since I have been coming here, as I used to be very shy."

Emily is adamant that maintaining and restoring historic vehicles is a viable career. "I don't know what the future of the classic car movement will be or what will be considered a classic in years to come but with so much going on in the workshop all the time, I'm hoping to stay here at Beaulieu for a long time. However, I would like to see more youngsters given the same opportunity that I have."

After spending all day working on old machinery, Emily drives home in her own modern classic, a Rover 100 - the later incarnation of the successful Austin Metro. "It's one of my favourite cars," she says. "My mum had one when I was about five or six and I really liked hers, while my grandparents had two Metros. I really wanted a classic as my first car and I found this one for sale on the internet. It's really cute and I just fell in love with it. I've not



had to do anything to it yet, although a hole in the exhaust will need sorting out soon.”

Emily’s true motoring passion lies with the legendary Morris Minor. “Years ago, I saw one and thought ‘that’s a really nice car’. Then I saw how easy they are to work on and I thought I’d like one of those.” When space allows, her plan is to one day have her own Minor to restore.

As to career plans for the future, Emily remains focused on her short-term goals. She said: “I’ve always wanted to work here at the National Motor Museum, so after my apprenticeship I really want to stay here in the workshop for a long time. To be honest, I haven’t really thought about where the future will take me, I just want to focus on doing the best job I can. As there are so many vehicles to look after and maintain, I think that I will be working on all sorts of things for quite a while yet.”

The National Motor Museum...

...was founded by Edward, Lord Montagu in 1972, taking over from its forerunner, the Montagu Motor Museum. The museum has a policy of keeping its collection of more than 250 historic vehicles in the best condition to preserve them, which means that many exhibits are in roadworthy condition and are used throughout the year. The National Motor Museum has its own workshop, staffed by a team of engineers, which maintains and restores these vehicles. For more details see nationalmotormuseum.org.uk.

The Beaulieu One Hundred...

...is limited to a select one hundred motoring enthusiasts, car collectors and supporters of the National Motor Museum at Beaulieu. It is an exciting initiative which offers many benefits to its members, while helping to preserve motoring heritage and the essential work of the National Motor Museum Trust for future generations. To find out more about the *Beaulieu One Hundred* and membership, call 01590 614634, email b100@beaulieu.co.uk or visit wordpress.com.



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