

TYRE TRACKS

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Caroline's Cars

Numerous people have asked me why I started running classes for women in basic vehicle maintenance.

I first thought of the idea about five years ago as many women who visited the garage I worked at, commented to me that they knew nothing about their cars and would feel too scared to ask a man!

I love teaching and I love cars, so an idea began to form in my mind that I could combine my passion for both - by writing a lesson plan for a course to offer hands on training.

I spent some time planning a class that would assume no prior experience, give women the knowledge and

confidence to tackle simple tasks and be easy to follow without being patronising.

Opening a bonnet, checking levels, even changing a wheel doesn't require a rocket scientist mentality, just a little confidence and determination. I have found with so many things in life that fear stops us from trying and felt I could do something to help alleviate that fear.

The plans were shelved for a while as I didn't have a suitable venue and not many people in the trade shared my enthusiasm for the idea! When I finally opened my garage last June, I dug out my old notes and shaped them into a class I felt and hoped would work. Delivering the first one was unbelievably nerve racking as I had no idea whether

my timings would be accurate or whether it would be well received. I was delighted and relieved at the end of the first class when my first students told me how much they had enjoyed the evening. The response since has been overwhelming and I feel very lucky to be doing something I love so much.

I have discovered that it is not just women who know very little about their cars, several men have expressed a desire to attend a class.

As a result of this I am planning to offer a mixed course for father/daughter husband/wife type combinations. I am also in the process of writing a syllabus

for a more in depth class as a follow on, to be held over a number of weeks.

Some of you may remember me saying that this year I was going to buy a Triumph Dolomite Sprint and call it Dorothy. Ah, well that plan may have to wait. I am now the proud owner of a Triumph TR4 needing restoration. She is called Dixie and affectionately nicknamed 'Sieve' by Paul my mechanic (owing to the large number of holes)!

I plan to have her on the road by the end of the summer, Paul says: 'Summer next year if you're lucky!' We'll see!

