

April 2024



Dear Club Members,

One hundred and ten years ago the Institution of Automobile Engineers refused the application of Dorothee Pullinger on the grounds that the word "person" in their constitution could only refer to a man, and not a woman. Pullinger was 20 years old at the time, and had trained as an engineer. Her father had been a car designer and had become managing director of Arrol - Johnstone, at the time Scotland's oldest and largest car manufacturer. In 1910, aged just 16 she started work as a draftsman in the Paisley factory.

At the outbreak of World War I Pullinger moved to Barrow in Furness, where she was appointed female supervisor of a munitions factory producing high explosive shells. Born in Guernsey Pullinger was fluent in English and French, enabling her to effectively manage the workforce, many of whom were French and Belgian refugees.

At the end of the war she returned to Scotland, the Arrol - Johnstone factory in Paisley was returned to car manufacturing, and was the home of a new company, Galloway Motors Ltd. Pullinger was the director and manager. The company produced the Galloway, a car designed for women motorists, and mainly employed female workers. This built on the work her father had done, in 1916 he established an engineering college for women and an apprenticeship programme connected to the munitions factory. The apprenticeship programme was only for 3 years rather than the usual 5, this was because the girls were thought to be better at attending and to be quicker learners than boys.

In 1919 she founded the Women's Engineering Society and in 1920 received an MBE for her war work. In 1922 she was finally accepted into the Institution of Automobile Engineers. By the late 1920s though she was becoming dissatisfied with the automobile industry, the continual uphill battle to be recognised and respected had worn her down. Together with her husband she set up White Service Laundries in Croydon, which over the next 20 years expanded to 17 shops.

During World War II she stepped up to serve again, returning to engineering, managing 13 munitions factories, and supervising the recruitment and employment of female workers. She was the only woman to be appointed to the Ministry of Production's industrial panel. At the end of the war she contributed to the 1944 report- Looking Ahead: Work and the Future of British Industry.

In 1947 she returned to Guernsey where she lived for the rest of her life; driving a Galloway car around the island apparently with scant regard for The Highway Code. She died in 1986.

The Galloway factory logo used suffragette colours, purple and green. I've not been able to find anything confirming that Pullinger was a suffragette, but the choice of colours is unlikely to be a co-incidence. At the time she was awarded her MBE Pullinger would still not have been old enough to vote, it took until 1928 for the voting age for women to be brought down from 30 to 21 in line with men.

Happy Spinning

Katie

Fibre Content- In case your parcel is missing the label
13% Bamboo Rayon
87% Superfine Merino

Further Reading-

BBC New Article, which includes a photo of the Galloway logo, and an interview with Pullinger's daughter-

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-35414177>

Scottish Engineering Hall of Fame, to which she was posthumously inducted in 2012

<https://engineeringhalloffame.org/profile/dorothee-aurelie-m-pullinger>

The Herald article, including information about her passion as a racing driver-

https://www.heraldsotland.com/life_style/arts_ents/17708483.dorothee-pullinger-remarkable-story-behind-pioneering-car-engineer/

You Tube Playlist-

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLyZTuh4EdTXUC8kA4jUARDd1BYDKudkv7>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UHM2RqVTs5E>