



## **Dorothee Pullinger MBE 1894-1986**

### **Motor engineer & businesswoman**

Dorothee was born in France the eldest of 11 children and the daughter of Thomas Charles Pullinger an engineer and car designer. The family moved to England when she was 8 and her father managed the Humber car factory in Beeston from 1904-1908 and the family lived at 32 Cranmer Street (evidenced by her younger brother's Marcel Henri's 1906 birth certificate) and Dorothee was educated at Loughborough High school. In 1908 her father moved to work at Arrol-Johnson Vickers motor company in Paisley, Scotland, but the family remained in the Nottingham area until at least 1910 when Dorothee began to work as a draftsman at Arrol-Johnson, and by 1912 the family had moved to Paisley. In 1914 she applied to join the Institution of Automobile Engineers but was refused on the grounds that "the word person means a man not a woman." The factory changed from automobile production to aeroplanes because of the advent of WW1 and this gave her an opportunity and she was put in charge of female munitions workers in Barrow-in-Furness producing bombs for the frontline in a factory operated by Vickers. She was awarded an MBE aged only 26 for her work there and a plaque was unveiled in Barrow-in Furness in 1984. Her fluency in French and English enabled her to manage the workforce of about 7000 some of whom were Belgian and French refugees.

After the war she returned to Arrol-Johnson and persuaded her father to keep the factory open after it had stopped making aeroplane parts and to provide employment for local women. The company began to produce a car, the Galloway, designed specifically for women and advertised as "*a car made by ladies for those of their sex.*" The Galloway was designed with women's average height 5foot 4inches in mind not men's taller average height. It was also lighter and smaller with gears and brakes in the middle of the car not on the outside; the seat was raised, there was more storage space and the steering wheel was smaller. It was also one of the first models to have a rearview mirror. Dorothee became Director and manager of Galloway Motors – a subsidiary of Arrol-Johnston, at the factory in Tongland near Kirkcudbright. It was no ordinary company -she largely employed women and she set up training courses and 3year apprenticeships, shorter than the usual 5 years because it was believed that women learned more quickly. The Company adopted the colours of the suffragettes and they produced Galloway cars until 1923 when production moved to Arrol-Johnson's Heathhall works in Dumfries. The Galloway 10.5 Coupe is thought to be one of the only times a car was made specifically with women in mind – at a time when engineering was dominated by men. A Galloway 10.5 can be seen in Glasgow Riverside Museum collection.

She was a founder member of the Women's Engineering Society in 1919, and in January 1921 she was accepted as the **first** female member of the Institution of Automobile Engineers, which had earlier refused her. Dorothee was an enthusiastic race car driver and won the Scottish six-day Car Trials in a Galloway in 1924. Production of the Galloway moved to the nearby Heathhall works in 1922/3 and Tongland was closed and by 1929 production of the car ceased. Only about 4000 were made.

Dorothee married in 1924 and had 2 children and with her husband set up and ran White Service Steam Laundry Ltd in Croydon soon having 17 shops and selling the business in 1946. During WW2 she was the only woman appointed to the Industrial panel of the Ministry of Production; she was a member of the Conservative and Unionist party and served on a panel to address post-war problems. In 1947 the family moved to Guernsey where she established the Normandy Laundry Company which still continues. She continued to drive her Galloway around the island and died there in 1986.

In 2012 she was inducted into the Scottish Engineering Hall of Fame and in 2019 an exhibition at Glasgow Riverside Museum celebrating the Women's Engineering Society featured her car.