"The Woman Engineer"
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All correspondence relating to this Paper should be addressed to The Editor.
Items of interest and newspaper cuttings regarding the position of women in the Engineering World will be welcomed by the Editor.
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contents:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WE OWE THEM MUCH</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chronology</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tributes</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMY, BY A FELLOW PILOT</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extracts from Speeches</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Memoriam</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Day's Work in the A.T.A.</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women in Industry</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"I certainly appreciated being remembered by my friends."
—Extract from Miss Johnson's last letter is the keynote of this issue.

Miss Amy Johnson, C.B.E.
Past President, Women's Engineering Society
We Owem Them Much—
AMY JOHNSON —

In the month of January our hearts were saddened by the death of Amy Johnson, and a few days later by that of Lord Wakefield. Our first reaction to these ideas was “how great a loss”—we felt the world would be a poorer place, less joyous, less noble, because two such great souls had departed. But the passing days have put the emphasis in another place: having focused our minds to suit the new conditions we see how much brighter, how much better, life is because two such spirits lived here.

We cannot draw up a profit and loss account and state in precise terms how any one life affects others but the old simile of the pebble dropped in the pool sending out concentric circles that grow larger and larger and farther and farther as it is applied to Amy Johnson. The outer circle has touched the horizon everywhere, every corner of the world knew her, was acquainted with her, knew her courage, her patriotism, her disinterestedness. The small inner circle enjoyed the strongest essence of her spirit, knew by personal experience how truly courageous, patriotic, unselfish she was, and added to admiration, affection. Another circle, our own, very privileged too, had many opportunities to prove that lavish praise was never too lavish, that devotion to a higher, nobler ideal is one of the sweetest experiences a young girl could have.

In harness, death must have been a familiar figure for her since she planned her first record flight more than ten years ago, and her whole life since was a struggle to become the last to give up adventure for the sake of security. Amy Johnson died on 5th January, 1941. Ten days later Lord Wakefield died, having completed 81 years of unceasing and unremitting work. His name was associated with London, with the Empire, with aviation. The man is revered by every one as the man who made London School and the Choice of a Career; his sympathies with the youth who must venture forth from school to undertake some of the world's work was an indication of his attitude to all adventurers and his care for those not content with the battle of life. His benefactions to hospitals and other charities were very great and continuous.

One of his greatest enthusiasms was for aviation and another for the Empire and when these were combined, as they frequently were, he obtained his whole-hearted co-operation. Amongst others whom he encouraged was Amy Johnson, and her first record flight to Australia received his support. He gave many large gifts, but his encouragement of small causes was equally eminent. The Society of Model Aeronautical Engineering for instance owed much to him, and the Women's Engineering Society funds were augmented by his practical interest. The list of colleagues (almost) all of whom have accomplished the Memorial Service in St. Paul's Cathedral, is an indication of the variety of his interests.

Of Lord Wakefield, as of Amy, it is true that his deeds live after him and that he lives on in the men and women whom he enshrined by his kindly thought and generous consideration.

LORD WAKEFIELD

CRONOLGY OF AMY JOHNSON'S CAREER

Two years' practical work in Engineering Workshops, London Aeroplane Club, Stag Lane, control installations and overhaul of aeroplane engines. Associate of Royal Aeronautical Society.
March, 1939 Elected member of Women's Engineering Society in recognition of her achievement in becoming first woman to obtain government licence.
May, 1939 Flew solo from Croydon to Australia. Record flight to India.
October, 1934 Made Hon. Member, Guild of Air Pilots.
March, 1939 Presented by the Society of Engineers with the President's Gold Medal for the year 1939 for her paper on “The Attention which I gave to Jason's Engine during my Flight.”
August, 1939 Flew from England to Japan with C. S. Humphreys.
September, 1931 Japan to England.

TRIBUTES TO AMY JOHNSON

SIR FRANCIS SHELMDRINE IN 1937

At the Annual Dinner of the W.E.S. in 1937, when proposing the toast of “Women in Aviation,” Lt.-Col. Sir Francis Sheldrake, C.I.E., O.B.E., Director General of Civil Aviation, concluded by saying:

“...to feel that no account of the work of women in aviation can have a more adequate summation up than is afforded by the record of Miss Johnson’s most distinguished flying career.

“At about the time when, as I have already mentioned, aviation had received a great fillip by the introduction of the light aeroplane, Miss Amy Johnson had already served a thorough apprenticeship to aviation. She first granted her A. licence on the 6th July, 1929, and in December of that year, under her ground engineer’s licence, became the first woman in this country ever to do so, though she has since allowed it to lapse. In May, 1930, she surprised the world by flying solo from Croydon to Australia. She was the first woman to have accomplished the journey in the then record time of 19 days. In December of that year Miss Johnson obtained her B. licence, and in the following year (1931) she flew with C. R. Humphreys to Japan, covering the 7,000 miles in 10 days. In 1932 all existing records were beaten by her flight to Cape Town; flying solo she did the journey in 4 days 6 hours 54 minutes. The return journey was one of many severe trials, but she did it again in 7 days 7 hours 5 minutes, a record at the time. In 1933 she flew the Atlantic from East to West, and in 1934 she broke another record by flying solo from London to Cape Town in 3 days 6 hours 26 minutes.

“The knowledge and experience gained by these flights form the most important contribution to the work of laying the foundations of the regular services now in operation. In this, as in all other respects, the services to aviation by Miss Johnson may be said to have been equalled by few individuals, and it is a matter of speculation how others, whether in their cumulative effect, they can have been excelled by anybody, man or woman.

“I have had the privilege of knowing Miss Johnson for many years and I know that her achievements have been accomplished by one sole objective, to advance the cause of aviation in Great Britain and the Empire. In this, as in all other respects, the services to aviation by Miss Johnson may be said to have been equalled by few individuals, and it is a matter of speculation how others, whether in their cumulative effect, they can have been excelled by anybody, man or woman.

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“I have had the privilege of knowing Mis
THE PRESIDENT wrote

All the world knows of the Amy Johnson who flew solo to Australia ten years ago, but it is perhaps those who knew her more closely who were able to appreciate her gifts and abilities, the genuineness of her modesty over real achievement, her unquenchable spirit which, with her keenness and boundless humour, must have carried her through times of treadmill as well as of dreadful experience. Whatever Amy did she did it with zest and vigour; her personality communicated itself to all who came into contact with her and the Women's Engineering Society enjoyed it in full measure during her three years as its president. She was no nominal president, but someone who imparted her own verve and enterprise to this society, to whose pioneering spirit she was a keen and active member. She was always ready to give of her time and talent, and the latter certainly was not limited. As a public speaker she had a clear, incisive style, and the ability to infect others with her own enthusiasm.

Amy Johnson was intensely alive to the beauty and strangeness of form and colour which her flying experiences presented to her in a very vivid manner. Her book, *Sky Roads of the World*, is full of many word pictures seen from the cockpit of her aeroplane, and she infused into them the emotions she must have felt when enchanted by the vagaries of sea, sky, and cloud, or awestruck by the crude and relentless manifestations of nature in adverse moods. The dream which characterised Amy’s activities either in word or deed was tempered by a shrewd common sense; the vision which inspired her to seek the arduous which led her to attempt her feats of aviation were accompanied by a capacity for endurance which is not always appreciated by those who read of the triumphal conclusion to a well-sighed impossible venture. Only recently the Women’s Engineering Society received from her an article telling of the pleasure she found in her work in the Air Transport Auxiliary and of the delight she found in the opportunities it gave her, an article which, while recording the satisfaction in a job well done, exults in the unexpected turns encountered in the performance, and in the camaraderie to be met on every hand—its author was truly Amy.

CAROLINE HASLETT.

The Times, January 14th, 1941.

THE HEAD OF THE WOMEN’S SECTION, A.T.A., wrote

Miss Amy Johnson was known throughout the world for her flying feats, but in her private life as a person she was less well known. I had the privilege of meeting her first in 1930, and only very recently have I got to know her as a friend. Although I always appreciated her brilliance as a pilot, the qualities which went to make her character were to me more impressive than her wonderful feats in the world of aeronautics. Her physical courage as an aviator was undoubted; her moral courage, her large-heartedness and her sense of humour were only fully appreciated by her friends. In her private life Miss Amy Johnson was unassuming and entirely lacking in conceit. It is inevitable that the name of someone as famous as she was should be coupled with many extravagant stories. Those who knew Amy Johnson intimately know her as an ordinary human being, keen on her work, brilliantly successful but always accessible. After her spectacular flight, when the world was at her feet, she could spare the time to give encouragement, help, and advice to others. Many of us were much assisted, encouraged, and cheered by her.

When she joined the Air Transport Auxiliary she settled down to her new life with all the eagerness and enthusiasm of somebody who obviously had her heart in her work and was anxious to do a job for her country. The flying was required to do was not spectacular, but it required steady application. Sometimes it was easy for one with her experience; at other times her skill stood her in good stead. Whatever the circumstances, however she was feeling the job was done; and the conscientious manner in which she carried out her duties was an inspiration to all those who worked with her. Amy Johnson is not only a loss to aviation; those who knew her have lost the type of friend who cannot be replaced.

PAULINE GOWER.

The Times, January 8th, 1941.

AMY

by A FELLOW PILOT OF THE A.T.A.

AMY—a photo of her at the N.Z.F.A., 1935

The two most noticeable things about Amy Johnson were, at one end of the scale, the range, depth and consistency of the devotion she inspired in many thousands of people who could never ordinarily hope to meet her, and, at the other end, the affection of those who knew her well. She had her detractors, but they fell mainly between these two classes and consisted mostly of the smaller fry of aviation.

To fly regularly with Amy was a revelation; ten years after she had made the flight which, in fact, made her, she had only to land at an R.A.F. aerodrome for airmen to crowd round. Some of them only wanted to look at her, but many wanted her autograph. In fact, it became a kind of Air Transport Auxiliary “family” joke that whenever she was to be in the party, an extra ten minutes must be allowed at every stopping place for Amy to sign autographs. The officers would want to take her out to lunch—a superior of autograph hunting.

One day, at a country inn, a party of the A.T.A. were having lunch. The cook came in, carrying a six months’ old infant; would Miss Johnson hold the baby, just for a minute? A week after her death, two women ferry pilots were dining at a well-known restaurant; the chef brought to them personally an unusual savoury he had created, “in memory of Amy Johnson.” Many such stories could be told by her colleagues, but perhaps the most moving effect was the unconscious one paid by a member of the congregation at her Memorial Service. Her daughter, women A.T.A. pilots, in uniform, were acting as ushers; someone was heard to ask who and what they were. Amy was proudly displayed in a job which she belonged.

The secret of Amy’s popularity lay, I think, in a combination of two facts. Firstly, her achievements were not made easy by advantages of wealth, position or influence. She got away, and got away by her own efforts, from the treadmill which makes up the life of the ordinary young man and young woman, whose escape can usually be only a vicarious one through the experiences of the cinema. Amy typified Hollywood for them. The second secret was the general feeling (it is surprising how accurate most popular estimates of character in public figures are) that she was not out for what she could get. She somehow sensed that achievement was itself our objective, and that although she did reap big rewards, and certainly enjoyed getting them, they were quite incidential. It was for these two reasons, taken together, that she captured the imagination of the world.

Timing had of course much to do with her fame; a few years earlier she could have been too soon, and a few years afterwards, too late. That this had little to do with her popularity, as apart from fame, is proved by the comparative oblivion into which most of the other record-breaking pilots have sunk.

Many people have wondered why Amy did not receive the public appointments which have fallen to other women in aviation. I think the answer lies quite simply in one of the things which endeared her to so many people: she had no eye to the main chance. If you want a thing enough (and the operative word is “enough”) you know instinctively how to conduct yourself so that it comes your way. Unlikely, too, did she do some silly things at all—sort of things which office-seekers simply must not do—but then why the devil shouldn’t she? The things which Amy did want were friends, flying and fun, and these she had plenty of.

She gave much, too. As a senior pilot of the Women’s Section of the A.T.A., she was kindly and helpful to the young women who were anxious to know about the achievements of her equals, and completely silent about her own. She was so direct and unassuming that they all quickly forgot she was a celebrity, and learnt to accept her as one of themselves. Perhaps the best that for probably the first time she was working with pilots who could have no sex jealousy may have helped.

Much of her time was spent in giving concrete replies to many addresses, mostly women, who wrote to her for advice about flying careers, and she tried to act as an understanding and sympathetic representative of women in professions generally, and in aviation particularly.

No lasting tribute could therefore be more fitting than the Amy Johnson Memorial Scholarship for Women which is now proposed to found. Amy Johnson’s unique reputation and her fame is the means of giving practical effect to her views, as she was perhaps never quite able to do in life.
"My flight was carried out for two reasons: I because I wished to carve for myself a career in aviation, and because of my innate love of adventure."

"We women are just now on the threshold of another career which has so far been regarded as the province of man—that of aeronautical engineering."

The only argument that men can bring forward against woman's intrusion is that of physical strength, but this seems to me very poor grounds for establishing and retaining a monopoly. After all physical strength is purely relative—there are some women stronger than some men. In engineering they do jobs beyond a man's strength. What does he do? He fetches an instrument. When I found a job beyond my strength! At first I used to fetch a real man engineer, and if he couldn't do the job he'd fetch some tool that would. I soon learned that it saved time to fetch the tool right away.

"Women, I am sure, share with men the vital qualities needed in aeronautical engineering—patience, skill, delicate fingers, and a fertile mind. There is surely no reason whatever why we should not make good, whether it be in the design department, or the assembly shops. Anyhow, we're going to try."—March, 1932.

"Progress in aviation, as in every sphere, is due to the belief that nothing is impossible. The course of ease is to say it cannot be done. The sceptics actually do much to further progress—they hold the pistol at the head of the dreamer and the optimist, challenging them to bring their dreamers to reality. Progress to "It can't be done" is "Hold tight and watch." Progress means always trying to go one better. To get more out of a set of circumstances—corial accident, or by crying for the moon, by hitching one's wagon to a star, by never saying die, so the world progresses. Individual steps may be too small to matter much, but the sun total, like the ant heap, the honeymaker, the skyscraper, or the "Queen Mary" is an achievement worth while."

"In "Madam Butterfly" (Miss Catrin's picture), there is portrayed a time when man succumbs to the machine. I should hate to imagine such a possibility, and frankly, I think it highly improbable. Behind the machine there is the mind, creative and controlling. Human emotions will always rise superior to any degree of mechanism, and we must retain the machine as a servant to life, leaving us freedom for leisure, pleasure and High Thought."—September, 1936.

"Why it is that there are not many more women employed in aviation: I believe the fault lies as much with the women aspirants themselves as with the employer of labour so often captivated as heart-hardened, prejudiced and unquiet." It is a significant fact that in every case of a woman achieving success, she is hailed by her firm as a real treasurer, not only of their company but of the organisation.

"As a general rule it may be admitted that technical efficiency is not the only qualification for a job. Book-learning and skill can be acquired by every eighth out of ten merely by patient application to one's instructors. About 15% of real success is due to technical efficiency, and about 85% to skill in human engineering—to personality and the ability to deal with people."

"I say to my women friends have such a struggle and uphill fight that by the time they have acquired the technical skill they have acquired something a great deal more valuable and of vast potential importance to their future employers—personal skill."

"To women who may sometimes feel they are not being given their dues I would like to say: We should try not to start off in a spirit of resentfulness and aggression. Sometimes we are our own worst enemies. We argue and try to convince that we are just as good as any man and we are snubbed when we go unwarranted, when we fail to get the job and complain bitterly of inequality and injustice."

"Instead we should be first of all sure of ourselves on the technical side of the job and spend the rest of our energies putting women are noted for talking. Well, remember it is said that leadership gravitates to the man who can talk. Lowell Thomas, one of the best known aviation figures, says: 'How truly—that the man who can speak acceptably is usually given credit and the ability out of all proportion to what he possesses."

"You need not wait for an after dinner speech to try this out—try it at intervals all week."—September, 1937.

The following quotations are taken from Testament of Friendship, by Vere Brittain, a recent biography of her husband."

"A recent volume of popular psychology puts to its readers, as a test of their ability to win affection; if you died tomorrow how many people would come to your funeral?" In Winifred's case we know the answer. Midday on Tuesday in London is a busy hour and St. Martin-in-the-Fields is a large church, but at Winifred's funeral service it was crowded to capacity."

"But of this at least I feel certain; that whether or not the spirit of man is destined for some unknown flowering in a life hereafter, the benediction of the good and the courage of the undefeated remain, like the creative achievements of the richly gifted, a part of the heritage of humanity for ever."

The Memorial Service.

When there was no longer any hope that Miss Johnson might still be alive the Women's Engineering Society arranged a Memorial Service for her in the church of St. Luke's, SR. This was held on 14th January when Rev. G. L. Dawye offered the service. Miss Janet Miles sang "I vow to thee, my country."

The congregation, which taxed the capacity of the church, represented many types of people and societies which were interested, in one way or another, in Miss Johnson's life and work. They included her parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Johnson, her sisters, Mrs. Trevor Jones and Mrs. Betty Johnson, her brother, Mr. Trevor Jones and her godmother, Miss Pauline Curtis.

The Secretary of State for Air, Sir Archibald Sinclair, the Minister of Labour, Mr. Attlee, Lord Beaverbrook, Lord Rothermere and Lord Wakefield sent representatives. Amongst others present were men and women of high and humble standing who were friends of Miss Johnson. It was invited to list them.

Some forty women's organisations that at service paid a tribute to one woman who did so much for all women by being herself, by daring to live to her full capacity, by following her bent. There were men in the congregation too, one who had come from Cornwall, because he so much appreciated Miss Johnson's achievements.

A Permanent Memorial.

It was generally agreed that there should be a permanent record of this intrepid airwoman, and various suggestions have been received such as the erection of a statue in an appropriate location, the placing of a plaque where heroes and public benefactors are generally represented, such as Westminster Abbey or St. Paul's Cathedral. But then another suggestion was made, which was immediately approved, the establishment of a Scholarship in Aviation for Women.

Scholarship in Aviation for Women.

It is of interest that when funds were raised to commemorate the late Miss Johnson's Flight to Australia Miss Johnson herself advocated that they should be used to found the Amy Johnson Scholarship at University College, Hull, and she herself contributed a large sum to make this possible. It is the more fitting then that the memorial should take this form. The Women's Engineering Society has launched the scheme which is sponsored by the Viscountess Astor, C.H., M.P., Colonel the Rt. Hon. Lord Sempill, A.F.C., Sir Malcolm Campbell, M.B.E., Miss Caroline Hadlett, C.B.E., Miss Pauline Gover, and Mrs. Gabrielle Patterson.
1st January, 1941.

My dear Caroline,

Enclosed is my effort for the "Woman Engineer" which you asked me to write. It is an honour to be asked to contribute to your magazine, and I am afraid my article isn't anywhere near adequate. My only excuse is that I am so out of practice (this is my first bit of writing since war started) that I find it extremely difficult to string words together. I'd rather do a week's flying any time!

Very many thanks for your card for Xmas. I'm afraid I didn't send any out this year, but I certainly appreciated being remembered by my friends.

I hope the gods will watch over you this year, and I wish you all the best of luck (the only useful thing not yet taxed!)

All the best,
Yours affectionately,

[Signature]

[Note: This last letter from Miss Johnson, written a few days before her death, is so typical of her that it seems justifiable to share it with her friends in the Society. C.H.]
enquires from the Signals Officer (Miss Susan Slade, late secretary of Airwork, Ltd., Heston, or Miss Connie Leathart, veteran peace-time private-owner of wide experience) where are the balloon danger zones on her route; obtains from the safe the "Signals" for the day (i.e., signals which must be given if one's plane is challenged by one of our own aircraft, ships or ground stations); telephones for a route weather forecast; asks permission from Fighter Command H.Q. to land at the aerodrome for which she is bound; collects together her parachute, Sidecet suit, flying boots, gloves, helmet and goggles, emergency kit for the night (in case she cannot get back to her base), some sandwiches in lieu of lunch, and, reinforced by a cup of hot coffee from the canteen, is ready to start.

Unfortunately, the weather still persists in being damp and misty, and only an enthusiastic pupil of the Women's Section's instructor—Miss Margaret Cunnison, formerly chief instructor at Perth—takes off to do a "circuit and bump." Miss X, tired of gazing at the miserable sky, goes inside into the cheery atmosphere of the "mess" and challenges someone to a game of darts. The game finishes, two others are played, more coffee is consumed, knitting is taken out, friendly gossip and "shop" fly back and forth, one or two of the girls ask for and receive permission to go and have their hair washed and do some shopping.

"How many hours did you get in last month?" asks Miss X of "Margy" Fairweather, one of the four taxi pilots. "70 hours on Ansons on taxi work and three hours on a ferry flight to Scotland."

"You lucky thing!" chimes in Mona Friedlander, erstwhile ice-hockey champion. "I only manage to get in about thirty hours' ferrying, with at least a hundred waiting about!" Margy smiled quietly to herself, as there are two definite points of view on this subject. An outsider would naturally conclude that the more hours flying a pilot puts in in a given time the harder she must undoubtedly have worked, but the outsider "knows nuthin." Amongst the ferry pilots (i.e., those delivering machines) competition is as keen as mustard for any jobs that may be going, and the hours flown are carefully collected in a most miserably fashion. The smaller their total the keener they are to augment them, only those with two thousand or more losing to some degree this urge to "pile them up." The taxi pilots, on the contrary, always have so much extra flying that their totals for the month are always in excess of anyone else's. For example, a ferry pilot may have a job which means only twenty minutes' flying for the day, whilst the rest of her time is spent waiting on the aerodrome for the taxi machine to collect her, or riding with the taxi pilot on her long round. The outsider would consider twenty minutes' flying a very slack day's work as compared with the taxi pilot's probable five hours (or even eight or nine in the summer), but ask both the pilots separately what they think! Anyway, Margy Fairweather won't swop her taxi job for even the most exciting machines the ferry pilots fly, which is a very good thing for the rest of the girls, as she is one of the safest and best pilots to be found anywhere in the country, and taxi work is a great responsibility, to say nothing of being in the nature of a command performance before an audience of experts.

Miss X, however, is getting tired of talk, and wanders outside to have another look at the weather. It looks rather better, so she asks the Chief Ferry Officer, if she can "have a crack at it." The C.F.O. confers with her C.O., Miss Pauline Gower, well known as to her high flying capabilities, but nowadays seen mostly in the light of a clever psychologist, studying and understanding to no mean degree the temperaments of the girls under her care. The C.O. knows that Miss X is a good, careful pilot, but not brilliant, but having the commonsense to know her limitations, and she feels justified in allowing her to set off if she feels like it, knowing that she won't take undue risks. After all, the work of the A.T.A. is to deliver machines safely and in one piece. Whether it be to-day or to-morrow matters far less than the condition in which a brand-new highly expensive machine arrives.

All Miss X has to do now is to persuade the taxi pilot to take her to the aerodrome from which she has to collect her machine. Her pilot being Mrs. Fairweather, this is easy. Arrived at their destination, Miss X gets out, with parachute, Sidecet suit, maps and kit and goes in search of the Station Engineer. Eventually, after innumerable papers are signed, she is tucked into the cockpit of a shining new Moth, the propeller is swung and she is away.

Even if she does have to battle in an open cockpit with wind and rain, snow and hail; though she may lose her way in driving mist and narrowly miss colliding with a balloon barrage; though she may at last arrive frozen and frightened, she knows it is useless to "shout a line" to people who are doing this sort of thing every day as a matter of course. So she just gets her receipt signed and makes enquiries about transport back to her base. If she is lucky, the taxi machine will come and collect her, though there may be a long wait, but otherwise she will have to "hitch-hike" or take train, 'bus and car. Only too often a half-hour flight entails hours of travel to get back to her base, but she is as used to this as she is to the uselessness of airing her troubles.

Back at last, she triumphantly hands over her precious receipt for the safe delivery of her machine, and, after packing away her kit in the locker room, putting her parachute on its proper place on the shelf, and locking away her maps, she finally goes home, to what she is herself at any rate convinced is a well-earned dinner and sleep (perhaps to dream of the super machine she may have to-morrow).

Back at the aerodrome, in the Operations Room, her day's work is officially entered up as "One Tiger Moth, No.——— delivered by First Officer X (followed by appropriate times and places). Flying Time fifty minutes." Just another job done.