



Christine Arrowsmith

Interviewed by

Elisabetta Mori

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Via Zoom

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Welcome to the Archives of Information Technology. It's the 31st of March 2022, and we are on Zoom. I am Elisabetta Mori, an interviewer with Archives of IT, and I am in Tuscany in Italy.

[00:00:13]

Today I'll be talking to Christine Arrowsmith, who is in the UK, in [inaud], Greater Manchester. Christine Arrowsmith started as a trainee programmer in the language of COBOL in 1970. During her career she worked as a freelance business analyst. She is now a retired chartered IT professional. So welcome Christine, and thank you for agreeing to be interviewed today.

Mm.

[00:00:41]

So, let's start with, where and when were you born?

I was born Christmas 1948, and I was born in a coalmining village in the north-east coast of England, just, three miles south of Sunderland, and the village was called Lyeth[sp?]. I had one grandfather who was a coalminer, and my father's father was a butcher. My dad was a joiner.

What about your mum?

Well, Mum was a stay-at-home housewife, until I was about thirteen when she started as a shop assistant, and then transferred into a mail order company where she became a scrutiny clerk.

[00:01:33]

What was your family life like? What are your memories?

Unfortunately my main memories was being ill. My mother's family were asthmatic, Mum was asthmatic, and guess what, I inherited it. But I'm only five months younger than the NHS, and the NHS assured my parents that there would be no problems because they had wonderful drugs. I know I was admitted to hospital, don't know what age, Mum couldn't remember, but I certainly don't remember. I started out in

the children's hospital; for an unknown reason was transferred to the isolation hospital, and arrived home with a collection of bedsores, and one scar that's actually a stone hot water bottle burn. And, my parents never got any answers, and they did attempt to sue, but there's a time limit, and the two hospitals shuffled their staff around, so the solicitor couldn't get any contract information at all. So my earliest memories was simply of being ill, [inaud] every night, and penicillin every six hours. And the bed was moved into the living room to make life easier for Mum. So, that was my, beginnings. When I got to school age I was classed as too ill to start school, so I had a tutor for an hour a week, a lady who used to arrive after lunch on a Friday, and basically, it was Mum and Dad that taught me to read and write and do arithmetic. It took two years . At seven I started at the junior school. Had I been going to school as an infant I'd have gone to St Paul's infant school . That was interesting, because when the coalmines were opened the population increased dramatically, so [inaud] was built, and the old church was converted into the infant school, with [inaud] split into two classrooms. [inaud] I've got a Christmas birthday, the first Christmas, my mum baked a cake and took me to the school party with the cake, and [inaud] just go to the playground [inaud] the graveyard. But I never actually physically attended the school as a pupil. The junior school was a school cross the road from the church, and I went there until I was, sat the Eleven Plus.

[00:04:40]

So, what subjects did you study, and which were your favourite subjects?

Oh. As I remember it, it was basically, English and mathematics. There were some religious instructions. There was some history. But I do remember when I started school, Mum had taught me to do printing, and then graduated me to join-up writing. And at school they were only just learning joined-up writing. So I tended to win prizes for my writing the first few years. We did have PE sessions, but I wasn't allowed to take part, in fact I wasn't allowed to take any exercise at all, which I think was a big mistake, but you can't turn the clock back. There were trips to the hospital of course, to see the consultant, and that was a bus ride into Sunderland, and then a ride out the other side of Sunderland to the hospital. And there was one session where I went in every week for six weeks to do physiotherapy lessons. So, by the time I got to the point where I was leaving, I understand my total attendance was only 50 per

cent of the time. Really stupid education which didn't improve at senior level. When it came to the Eleven Plus, in County Durham it was done as two exams. You sat the first exam at your own school, and I missed it because I was ill; the second exam was for the people who passed the first part, or missed the first part, and it was taken at the appropriate grammar school. The boys' grammar school was in the village; the girls had a bus ride down the coast to Seaham, to the Seaham Grammar School. I didn't pass, but it was considered well enough educated to do GCEs [inaud] secondary modern school in the village actually ran a GCE stream. We got through the four years with the fifth class which would stay on an extra year to do the O Level exams. So at the end of year four lots of my friends left, and we all returned to find [inaud] major upheaval. We lost the chemistry, physics, biology and geography teachers. The headmaster had only been able to replace the geography teacher, and he changed the geography syllabus. I hadn't realised there was a choice. [coughing] We had actually studied North America in great detail, and we planned to study the United Kingdom in year five. In year five we had to study the whole of Europe as well as the United Kingdom. And science, well, the headmaster had arranged for the grammar school that those of us wanting to do a general science subject could go across and join a class and return, we had to leave our classes early, and return to find your class had started, which wasn't very popular with some of the secondary modern teachers. And then of course, I had to keel over with bronchitis and missed two weeks. And I made the decision, there was no way I was going to try and catch up, because, I wanted to do physics. The maths teacher had suggested that if I wanted to work with computers, I needed to study maths and physics.

[00:08:56]

[inaud] what made you interested in computers, or what was the first contact you had with computers? Where did you get the idea?

1958 I used the public library, and I was allowed two fiction books and one nonfiction, and I just happened to select a nonfiction that talked about the Lyons Tea Company desire for an electronic office, and it described how they had set off investigating how they could have their own LEO computer. And that sounded very exciting. So every time anybody said, 'And what do you want to do when you grow up Christine?' I would say, 'I want to work with computers,' from the age of ten.

Everybody always then said, 'What's a computer?' Which I didn't really know how to explain, just, it was a big adding machine, it was very fast. The maths teacher... Sorry, go on.

When did you see your first computer?

Not until I started college. The college had a computer, and don't ask me what it was, I can't remember. I obviously wasn't able to do O Level physics, and when it came to going on to do A Levels we had to go over to the grammar school. I had assumed I would start getting the bus to Seaham, but no, the schools had gone co-educational, and the boys' grammar school needed girl prefects. So we crossed the road where the boys were not very keen on having these Eleven Plus [inaud] amongst them. And I made matters worse by choosing to do maths, and I was the only girl doing maths. So I sat at one side of the classroom and they sat at the other. I chose economics as my second A Level subject, and opted for economics, and there was another girl and a friend Doreen and I. That teacher was particularly offensive [inaud] at us the least little reason. So, [inaud] sat the O Levels, not go what I wanted. I then moved across to the grammar school and spent two years there. And again, looking back, nobody ever had any discussion, I don't think with any of us, about what we wanted to achieve. There was no talk about what subjects we could study. Because I did query history, as I liked history. That clashed with the maths class. Nor did they tell me I could have done pure maths and applied maths as two subjects. I did general maths. I wished I had known, but by the time I found out, [inaud] the headmaster said, 'It's too late now.' That then put a limit on me [inaud] my education. University wasn't even considered. [inaud] was going to be one of these new technical colleges that had appeared with the white heat of technology of Harold Wilson's government, Stafford was the one I applied to. And they put me on their list. But my A Levels weren't good enough, and I had a letter that states I could do the HND course. But I wanted a degree. And I had been offered a place at Middlesbrough Constantine College of Technology . So, I opted for Middlesbrough. Said goodbye to [inaud]. Sorry.

No, go on. Go on.

[00:13:**]

And said goodbye to Ryhope, and moved into a bedsitter land in Middlesbrough. And I had a bedsit over a television rental shop And started college. And I did meet computers there. We studied PLAN and FORTRAN and computing in general. And I survived two years. But the last term I was struggling, I was having difficulty getting myself pulled together on a morning to get in to college and [inaud] sitting end of the year exams. So I had to go. And I had no idea why, until I got home after the end of term, and I collapsed. And the flat had been damp, there was damp mould. I had been allergic to the damp mould. And I spent a month in hospital, and six months to get back on my feet. I hate my lungs.

[00:14:16]

And then what happened?

I didn't get back to college, so I didn't finish the course. But I had some knowledge. And there were jobs in the north-east of England. At college I had been introduced to the British Computer Society during the first year, so I had signed on as a student member, and was getting the *Computer Weekly* and the *Computing* as a result of that, which had jobs in. And there were a lot of jobs in the north-east of England. I feel as if I went for a job interview a week, and it always started with doing an aptitude test. If a system was ICL, you did the ICL test; if it was IBM, there was a different test. When I had attended an IBM interview, my test results were kept, and each future interview, I didn't need to re-sit the aptitude test. With ICL, I did the test each time, knew it off by heart at the end. It then came to the face-to-face interview. 'Why do you want to work with computers?' And they always asked me, 'Are you engaged dear?' Not sure what that's got to do with programming computers to be honest. 'No I'm not.' No job. As I say, I feel as if I had a job interview a week, six months it went on. And I travelled all over the north-east of England. And in the end the Job Centre stepped in and said, 'Well, banks are getting computers.' 'OK I'm willing to go along with that one.' I ended up in a branch office for the TSB. There's no way a branch office was getting a computer. They had a big fireproof [inaud], which had metal files, and in the metal files every customer's account was recorded on a paper file page. They were all filed numerically, so when you got a customer at the desk, you had to go to the appropriate filing unit and pull out the right card so you could put whatever the transaction was on the record. On a Monday afternoon the local school

would deliver the little envelopes [inaud] the kiddies' savings, and somebody had to open all of those envelopes and put whatever the kids had saved on to the appropriate card. Come the end of business, all of those lockers had to go back in their file, in the safe, and be locked up. But at that point in time, we were approaching decimal day, and pounds, shillings and pence were about to be replaced with decimal coinage. And in the bank we had to know about it. So Thursday evening we stayed behind an hour and we learnt the difference between pounds, shillings and pence and this wonderful new decimal coinage. [inaud] time I pick up a bar of chocolate now, I think, oh god, that used to be six old pence, two and a half new pence. What is it now? 75 pence? The start of inflation. [pause]

[00:18:**]

So, I didn't want to work in the bank. I started job-hunting using the magazines that I got, and I had a day off and went down to London to Rank Hovis McDougall in North West 10 for an interview, and I was offered a job as a trainee programmer. So, I gave my notice in at the bank, started job-hunting in NW10, and ended up in bedsitter land, but this time it was a three-bedroomed semi-detached, and the owners lived downstairs, and each bedroom was set up as a bedsitter with a Baby Belling cooker. And I started with the box room. No visitors after ten o'clock. Fine. And I had to cook in a Baby Belling cooker. We used the bathroom as kitchen and for washing facilities. And, Rank Hovis McDougall wanted me to understand the business. So instead of going straight into the computer department, I spent three months in six different departments within the business, so that I knew it inside-out. The one I mainly remember was where all the orders came in, and you had to batch them up into blocks of 20, with a batch header [inaud] the date on, and they went through to be punched on to paper tape. In the afternoon all the dispatch notes which were the remaining three pages of the order, and each one was stamped with the depot that dispatched the goods, and the date of dispatch, so they had to be sorted and put into batches of twelve, based on date and depot, with the appropriate batch header. The next morning it all arrived back. You got the printouts, and provided they had gone through without a problem, you could then put them in the file section. Anything that had failed for whatever reason were re-batched and sent back [inaud] punching. And they were all put on paper tape.

[00:20:**]

The computer was a System 4, and it used COBOL. So at the end of eighteen months I was sent on a three-week COBOL course. During that eighteen months I had been struggling financially, so I got a Saturday job in a television rental shop, would you believe, working nine till five where people were signing up to have a rented television. And I met a very nice gentleman there, Ken. Ken and I started going out together. And as time went on he actually took me to meet his mother, who was a widow, for Sunday lunch, and that was where I developed my love for going to the theatre, the London theatres. Once I had got into programming, that was a whole new ballgame, the money was better for starters. Although I did keep on at the television shop for another year. And, it was quite a friendly office. It had to be, because we had to write, any program we were writing, we had to raw flow[????] a diagram. And we had to think of data, and we had to walk the data through. And [inaud] usually [inaud] the three of us would take part, each one doing a different role, to check that the logic was right. Once the logic was OK, it was then coded, and that was punched on to punched cards, and you get a pack of punched cards back. And every card was automatically numbered by the punch card machine. If you dropped them, they could be sorted, which was quite important.

[00:22:27]

Can you tell us more about the checking procedures? So you were [inaud] charting .

[inaud]... Well...

Who was checking, was it you or was another coder, another programmer?

Well, you, you drew the logic out that the program would need to have, and you would take the data in, and somebody would read what the instruction was. And then you would do whatever the instruction was, and you would write down, you know, you'd input the data. You might have to look something up, so you needed data that would be part of the [inaud]. Somebody would be looking after that and giving me what I needed. And then we'd take the next step till you got through to the end, and at the end you had a result. And you then go back and start with the next bit of data. And the idea was to make sure you went into every steps of the logic. It was quite fun actually.

So, what...

I'm not convinced the modern-day programmers do anything like that. Nor do I think they even understand the business of the programming [inaud]. But that was Rank Hovis McDougall.

[00:23:46]

So, what year are we talking about now?

It was 1970 when I joined the company, and it would have been, midwinter of '71 when I actually started programming.

And for how long did you stay?

I actually left late 1974. But I got in, in the July, late July, on the Tuesday, and there was a letter from Dad, very unusual, Mum was very ill in hospital. Now 1974, we didn't have a house telephone. I knew a neighbour had a phone, but, I wasn't going to ring. I went to work on the Wednesday, and I rang the hospital, and, this nurse said to me, 'Oh well, she's on the danger list. If it was my mother, I'd want to be here.' Oh crumbs. So I told my boss, I rang my boyfriend, I went back to the flat to collect my medical needs, and got the train back to Sunderland. Now it was after visiting hours, but I went to the hospital anyway, and in the hospital there was a phone box, and I rang my dad's neighbour. She got my dad, and he said, I will come and collect you. Wait by the phone box and I'll pick you up.' So I went to the ward. They weren't very happy with me, but they did let me in. And yeah, my mum was doped up to high heaven, she was in a lot of pain. So I went down, and I travelled home with my dad. And I think that was probably the first time in my life that my dad had ever sat and talked to me the way he did, because he had seen the sun rising as he had followed the ambulance into town. And, he was very unhappy that Mum was ill. That was Wednesday. It was summer vacation time. My brother had sat his A Levels. He was planning to go to university. And, he had a vacation job, so he and Dad went out on Thursday. And Friday morning I wandered down to the bathroom, and I noticed my dad's car was at the door, and the master bedroom door was ajar but in darkness. I

pushed the bedroom door open, and there was a very still lump in the bed. My dad was dead. [pause] And I went down, and I worked my notice at Rank Hovis McDougall, and left London and I left Ken and I'm afraid I wasn't very good at letter writing, so we lost touch. And, I started working on pyrotex[?]. They decided, after fifteen months, that they wanted to consolidate all their IT departments. And they did offer me a transfer, but I want-, I needed to stay at home with Mum. So, I moved from there to Vickers.

[00:27:25]

By the time I was working at Vickers, I was actually training programmers. [coughing] I got Neil a vacation job that summer. He had one two years at university, and unknown to me they gave him an aptitude test. Now he had been studying business management at university. They offered him a job as a trainee programmer, and he took it, and left university. I didn't have to train him, fortunately, somebody else did. And, after a while I thought, hang on a minute. Some of these people that I've trained have been promoted. Why aren't I? So I went to the management, and they said, 'With your health, we don't think you could cope.'
[pause] Great. All right, every winter I do go down with bronchitis, it's a fact of my life. But once I'm up and running, I'm up and running. And this industry was my life, I loved it.

[00:28:**]

So, I looked around, and there were no jobs in the north-east. One of the things I did do when I got back from London, I signed up with the Open University. I wanted a degree, I was going to get it one way or another. At that point in time I had done four years of Open University work, and that year I was doing two half credits, one of which had a summer school. If you dropped out, you had to pay for the summer school. And since I had been offered a job in Lancashire to work for Woolworths at Rochdale, and decided to take it, I felt I had to drop a half credit because I had a new job, somewhere new to live, and of course, something had to give. Rochdale Council gave me a flat, which was two-bedroomed, and after about three months a new Welsh lady joined the team, and she wanted somewhere to live, and I asked her if she wanted to share. So she moved in with me. And, she was good fun. We're still friends.
[pause] I was actually saving, and after a period of time I managed to buy a dormy bungalow. I could afford the house, [laughs] I couldn't afford to furnish it. But I figured, I'd save up, I'll get there?[some second-hand furniture. Mum gave me

curtains for all the front windows, so people didn't know I was living there in a state of almost penury. I was working as a lead programmer at Woolworths , and [inaud] a number of different areas. And I remember one office, a big open-plan place, [inaud] was telephone and one desk. There was two Christines and two Christophers. The phone would ring, and whoever answered it would say, 'There's a phone call for Chris,' and four of us would say, 'Which would?' [laughs] Nine times out of ten it tended to be me.

[00:***]

So, again, I was getting... Life was going quite well, I had built up a social life. Ann had decided she didn't like Woolworths , so she went off to London. And, at some point [inaud] Vickers made my brother redundant, don't know why. He spent time looking for a job that would let him stay living at home, and he couldn't get one. But he was offered a job in Bury , and I can always[????] lodge at my big sister[???]. I think that was probably my second big mistake; leaving London was the first. Getting my brother to live with me was the second one. Because, not long after that Mum hit 60, so she retired. She was in a council, a three-bedroomed council house 160 miles away, and her two kids were in Rochdale. It made sense for her to move down, but I didn't believe that house was adequate, and I did say to Neil, 'You did say you were temporary.' [pause] So Mum got the box room, I got extra wardrobes in my bedroom. Mum took over the television to watch the soap operas. Neil[sp?] put a BBC computer in his bedroom, and I had got the kitchen/diner.

[00:*****]

And at the same time I'm bored with being a lead programmer. I wanted to move into analysis. So I go to Woollies and I say, 'What about me moving into analysis, and training?' 'With your health, we don't think you'll cope.' I heard that somewhere before. The first time I was a free agent, or a *freer* agent. I've now got a mortgage, and residence. I can't just uproot and go. And I couldn't find any other work. So I decided I would set myself up freelance, and I created a limited company. I used my mother's maiden name of Kinsey, Kinsey Computer Services Limited. And, Ann[sp?] knew about this, and her company wanted a contractor. So I went off and worked for LBMS . And they extended the six months to a year.

What year are we talking about now?

Oh, crumbs, I'd have to look that one up. I haven't got [inaud]. It's on the record where [inaud].

OK.

It was... I can't remember.

Early 1980s?

Yes.

Like, 1983 maybe?

[pause] I'd have to dig the paperwork out and have a [inaud], dig it out. [inaud].

[coughing]

[00:34:32]

When I got back after the LMBS job, I had sent out my CV to an assortment of agencies, and nothing was happening. And I looked at my CV and I thought about that big open-plan office, and I thought, well, I'll change the name on my CV to Chris and see what happens. All of a sudden I started getting invites for interviews.

[laughs] And it was quite interesting when I turned up, because the look on some of the faces, it was mainly men that did the interviewing, they were all a bit dumfounded [?????] kind of woman . Because one of the things I did when I finished at

Woolworths, I actually put myself on a training course, so I had some basic

knowledge of analysis. [coughing] And most of it I picked up as I went along.

[pause] It was interesting work. I actually had a job in Salisbury, which was the

[inaud] one. I went to Norwich where I worked for the Ordnance Survey. I worked

for Sheffield Council. I even went on to Sunderland and worked for Nissan. Nissan

actually introduced me to Microsoft Word, because I was writing my reports in

longhand, and they didn't have typists. So I was given a desktop, with Microsoft

Word and Windows 3.2, and I had to teach myself to type, and typed my own reports.

[00:36:15]

In October 1986 you worked for F International. Can you tell us a little bit about your experience there?

I joined F International because I was aware it was a company aimed at helping women to find work. And they did. They found me two consecutive jobs. In both cases they were very short, and they were fairly local for once, so I was living at home. But at the end, they didn't have anything for me, because they aimed [inaud] people [inaud] general were married with children, so they were doing part-time work. But I had a mortgage, and certain family responsibilities, I needed more full-time work. So they accepted my apologies, I have a very nice letter from them, and moved on. I actually did...

[inaud] remember the interviewed Shirley?

I never met Shirley. I was aware of her, and I've certainly sat in on a number of the presentations she's done since, and I did hear some of her life story on the radio. I didn't realise she had come from Czechoslovakia originally. But I did [inaud] know that her real name was Stephanie, and she had abbreviated it to Steve.

Like you did with...

[inaud] gave me my idea, I don't know, but it was the same thing. And it had the same purpose, to fool the men.

Do you remember Ann Moffatt[sp?]?

[pause] No. [pause] Not really .

[00:38:12]

So you excused yourself, and you moved with your career. What did you do?

Well, I was registered with a few agencies. I actually went to NCC, which is in Manchester, hoping they would actually give me an on-site job, but no, they were the ones that sent me far away, so, that wasn't a brilliant idea. [pause] I went up to

Lytham St Annes[sp?], and I worked at the Department of Works and Pensions. And that contract was actually extended a couple of times. I also had some work for ICL.

[00:39:00]

What machines and programming languages did you use at the time?

Once I had moved into analysis, the machines and the languages became fairly irrelevant. It was a case of identifying what the business needed, and plotting out them into chunks of doable work, and putting it together as a presentation. Sometimes I was part of a team, sometimes it was just me. One of the things I do remember is that in some companies, the communication between different departments, although data was passed between them, the communication wasn't very good, and I couldn't always pin down where one department talked about one thing, and another department talked about something else. I realised all the time[?>] [inaud] was actually the same data, just they used different language in different departments. And that seemed to be fairly common in most of the companies I worked for. I don't know why. And I know they talk now about communication in the Civil Service, and I did find the Department of Works and Pensions was particularly bad, but this communication problem, [inaud], part of being a business analyst was to try and make a link between it all, and get them all to sing from one hymn book. Which I attempted to achieve, hopefully successful.

[00:40:45]

So, you ended your career as a freelance in November '90- - in December '97. So...

Yes.

What are the most relevant....

..contracts[????????]. And I had had a blackout, and [inaud] falling , I had presumably put my arm out because I ended up with a broken arm. That had to be repaired. And then I had another three blackouts, and the third time I queried, why is it happening? And the hospital were not terribly useful. They didn't even register I had had more than one, which made me wonder about medical records. And did an

ECG, and, no . So I went to see my GP, and he said, ‘Oh, it’s the change of life and you’re depressed.’ He put me on antidepressants. And I read what the antidepressants did, and I thought, I’m not driving with that in my bloodstream. I gave myself six months off. I picked up with the Open University, and realised I was having trouble reading. I went to the opticians, and there was a bulge in the back of my right eye, which turned out to be a tumour on my brain lining. So that was the end of my career, because, I was successfully operated on, it was benign, it was non-cancerous, but I had five years when I couldn’t drive. And if I couldn’t get a job that didn’t involve commuting,[????] and as I was recovering, my mum collapsed on me. So I then became Mum’s carer, and the next thing I knew, I was 60, 2008. And my career was finished.

[00:42:55]

What [inaud] proudest achievements of your career?

Pardon?

What are the proudest achievements of your career?

[pause] I enjoyed all the different careers, because there were different businesses to learn about. [inaud] I included places like Railtrack[sp?], and I went to Provident Personal Credit{??} which was in Bradford. And of course ITSA was up at Lytham St Annes, and one of the things that was, I had assumed was where you had a GP surgery with a computer, that they were like the Department of Works and Pensions, it was a national system. I didn’t realise they weren’t. And each GP surgery initially started with their own personal computer kit. I mean IT is desperately needed by the NHS, especially when you’re dealing with all these different possible problems that you have in health. I wouldn’t like to try drawing the database for medical problems in the body. But I enjoyed working with data, and data analysis, and did that [inaud] few places.

[00:44:21]

What activities have you pursued after leaving the IT industry? [pause] What activities have you pursued after leaving the IT industry?

Well I actually joined the Manchester branch, once I wasn't moving around, I joined the Manchester branch BCS committee, and I was Treasurer with them for eleven years. So I've always been going in to the Manchester University to attend the branch meetings. And [inaud]... I also joined the Computer Conservation Society, because they have a Manchester branch, and I attended their meetings. [pause] Unfortunately computers are the be all and end all of my life, so I've got my home kit , and I, I do voluntary work. And more recently, I've joined the museum in Manchester, and I, [inaud] baby [inaud] once a week at the moment. So, two of us [inaud] switch her on, and talk about computers to the general public. Unfortunately, I think I became a computer geek, and I can't get away from it. And of course my social life was up and down. Each of the different places where I worked, I made friends, and most of them I'm still in touch with, but usually through social media. More locally? Yeah, I did join U3A, but, it didn't really have anything there that I was interested in, so I dropped out. And now it's, I'm just back to the computing, and following what the BCS does, and watching stacks and stacks of presentations that have been done during lockdown.

[00:46:15]

How do you think IT [inaud] society in the next ten years?

Oh crikey. The impact it's had on the last dozens of years has been dramatic. The next ten years is unimaginable. I certainly never thought I would find myself with a computer in my pocket, mobile phone. It's powerful, more powerful than many things I've worked with. Where they can go from there, I don't know. I spent a number of years joking about, it's only a matter of time before they start microchipping babies, and then it was pointed out to me that some companies microchip their employees, so that they can open doors, and they can get discount at the restaurant. I thought, well, that's the end of that good idea Christine [laughs], if employers are doing it.

[00:47:13]

What advice would you give to someone willing to pursue your career today?

It's exciting, it's interesting, and it's a challenge. The object of it[?] is to know what you need it to do, and to get it to do it the way you want it to do it. And the problem is, [inaud] doing all this AI, which is very clever, unfortunately it's all being done by men, and AI, because it's a learning system, it actually learns the ideas of the people that develop it, it needs a much wider based background. So we need more women.

[00:47:55]

So, have you got any special advice to women?

It's a job you can do even when you're married, and even when you've got children. And you [inaud] work from home, although a lot of jobs had come that way. I just found it very interesting, it's absolutely fascinating. And it's a challenge to find the next thing that can be done with it. I'm always looking for new ideas. One of the specialist groups I joined within the BCS was the Primary Health Care specialist group, which to my surprise has got a lot of GPs as members, and I only found this out when I went to the first AGM, which was held in a big manor house in the Staffordshire area. And they do two presentations of people working, trainees and qualified people [inaud] work that they had achieved. And one of the presentations I had sat in during lockdown was the GPs amongst them who were involved in setting up the early stage computers for their own surgeries back in the Eighties, where they were using the off-the-shelf computers, and whatever language those computers used. And some of them have gone on to create businesses that have expanded their particular software, and it's now used by more than one GP surgery. [inaud] just interesting to learn of all the different things that's gone on. And, it's a challenge. I *will* beat this computer. [laughs]

So, thank you Christine, it's been a real pleasure talking to you today. Thank you for your time.

Take care.

[End of Interview]