

Trudy Norris-Grey Oral History Interview

Access Summary

00.00.00 Gavin Clark introduces the interview and Trudy Norris-Grey.

Gavin Clark introduces himself with the National Museum of Computing and Reading Museum. They are interviewing former employees and customers of Digital Equipment Corporation as part of the 60th anniversary of DEC opening their first office in the United Kingdom. It is the 28th of May, and they are online. He is talking to Trudy Norris-Grey.

00.00.18 Family background and education.

Gavin asks Trudy about her basic details and Trudy confirms her name and being born in Swansea in the 1960's. She states that she was one of eight children which she feels is relevant to her professional career. Her parents were self-employed, always busy and undertaking multiple jobs to provide for the family. She had a happy childhood. When she was looking for work it was a male dominated professional environment, but she comments that they will probably come back to it later. Gavin asks about her education. She went to Bishop Vaughan School which was a comprehensive school across the road from where she lived. She describes herself as a pluralist, studying many different subjects but when she came to her A 'levels she studied sciences and the arts, French, maths and politics, the British Constitution. Gavin comments that the subjects are quite diverse. Trudy explains that she didn't get the results she expected with her A 'levels. She went to the Polytechnic of Wales in Pontypridd to study a HND which was a Higher National Diploma. She then went on to study a degree in Business Studies which was a burgeoning subject at the time. People weren't quite sure what it was but with family who were self-employed it was something she knew she wanted to study.

00.02.32- Employment

Gavin moves on and asks Trudy about employment. Did she know what type of job she wanted? Trudy says no but she had had a happy childhood. Trudy states that she wanted to earn money and be independent as well as being financially independent as there was a shortage of money in her home growing up. She was open to offers. She didn't have role models to look to but noticed that an extended family member who was an accountant seemed to be earning more than most. When she left South Wales she applied for a trainee role in a company called Racal who were the origins of Vodafone. It trained her as an accountant, and she mentions that it gave her a good foundation in accountancy as companies require people to record books of accounts.

00.03.47 Family Life

Gavin asks Trudy to recap on her family life. Her childhood was happy. Trudy explains that she was number seven out of eight children, there were five boys, three girls. There was a twenty-year age gap between the oldest and the youngest. She states that it taught her the ability to get on with lots of different people with different agendas, you didn't always get

‘natural airtime’, it helped with being independent and collaborating with others. It gave you respect for other people. Her parents were always busy working to provide a bit more, but her mother held education as being important. Although her mother didn’t always understand the importance of education, she always encouraged her to study. When she failed at A ‘levels her mother encouraged her to continue, and it was the last time that she failed an exam. It was a good life lesson. Her father always worked hard. He was a strong character and was protective over his family. Trudy comments that her parents never had peace and quiet. Trudy thought they would want peace and quiet. Gavin recaps that Trudy came from a large family and asks what the world was like at that time. Trudy recalls that when she left South Wales for the last time in the 1980’s it was a time of the recession with very few good jobs; especially for women. She was tall and thought she was seen as intimidating because of that and it was a patriarchal society. A few years before it was the time of the miners strikes, and she used to do homework by candlelight. It was industrial where she lived. If she looked out of one window of her house, she saw the Brecon Beacons, if she looked out of the other, Swansea, which was the most polluted place in Europe. The pollution was caused by the smelting industry that left its slag heaps. It was industrial but is beautiful now. It was a place that was industrial, hardworking but happy.

00.07.23 The development of Racal and the role Trudy had in Vodafone

Gavin moves on to recap that Racal was her first full time job in accountancy. Trudy confirms that it was called that, but Racal Vodafone became a subsidiary of Racal. Trudy states that she worked at the Head Quarters, and it was huge conglomerate. It had divisions from avionics to modems and at one time it included DECCA the record company and it developed the opportunity to go into mobile telephony from what was used on the battlefield, and it is now Vodafone. She recalls becoming part of the financial team that set up the books of accounts for the company that was Racal Vodafone. She remembers stories from the entrepreneurs who formed some of the groups of companies. One was Sir Ernest Harrison who was the head of the company. He loved racing and handed out the large mobile phones that were ‘bricks’ to people on the racecourse. These people wanted to be in touch with base, had the money needed and part of her job was to ring the phones the next day to ask how they like the phone. The real reason was to get an address for invoicing. It was a time of being a go getter. Trudy mentions that there were a lot of ‘skunk works’¹ at the time, some worked, some didn’t, and this one did work. The company HQ was in Bracknell, it moved to Newbury and now has a Head Quarters in London. It became a large employer, and she was fortunate to learn a lot from a back-room role that could have been a boring back-room finance role.

00.10.00 The move to Digital

Gavin recaps that Trudy was at Racal, Vodafone Racal and asks how this led to moving to DEC. Trudy explains that she always had a plan to move back down the M4 when she qualified but it takes a long time to qualify as an accountant. She was approached by a head-hunter about a job at Digital Equipment Company. Trudy mentions that she didn’t

¹ ‘Skunk works’ – a small secret department in a company that is given the opportunity to develop new ideas or projects.

know who they were or what they did. She did her research, the company seemed exciting, the pay was very good, and they didn't seem to mind that she was female or the fact she had a provincial accent. She got an interview. In the interview they didn't ask her about her school and university. They asked about her potential, her adaptability, her resourcefulness, how she worked in a team, her resilience and were interested in her as a whole person not part of a process. The people she met through the interview process were nice. They seemed approachable and so she stayed in the Thames Valley and joined Digital. Gavin asks what role she had. She confirms she joined as a financial analyst. Her role was to interpret the books of accounts and interpret them to understand them better. It was interesting. It was a kind of audit and helped you understand the business better. It wasn't the be and end all but it allowed her to understand the business. They called her their financial analyst partner. They wanted her to be an integral part of the business not have you on the side.

00.13.03 The Interview Process for DEC

Gavin recaps that Trudy didn't know much about DEC until she did the research and asks where the interview was and who interviewed her. Trudy confirms that there wasn't the internet, she had to research DEC, and they had offices all over Reading, so she had to look up DEC in Yellow Pages to see where it was as there was Kings Road, and it was off Basingstoke Road. There were offices in Acre Road, Rose Kiln Lane and training facilities in Highfield Park. There were engineering offices, manufacturing and a headquarters in DEC Park 1 and DEC Park 2. There were many other offices and Trudy turned up at DEC Park 1 which was in Imperial Way. It was a windowless room. She went into a room which had an upper mezzanine floor. It wasn't an office but there were shops in an office environment that she walked past. A bank, a dry cleaner and pop-up shops in front of the huge restaurant in DEC 1. When she was in reception, she could smell the food being cooked that day or the bacon and sausage butties. She could smell those smells in reception. Coming from Racal there were none of those facilities, there was a status structure. There was a three-tier status structure in the restaurant. The restaurant there was structured, and this was a lot more egalitarian. To answer the question about the interview, Trudy states it took place in a windowless office but after the office it was like an Aladdin's cave. There were very fancy cars in the car park, Mercedes, BMWs and Porsches, it was packed. It was difficult to get a parking space and difficult to get out. It was said that Reading Council would not ease the congestion and allow a slip road onto the M4, so it backed up. However, she had had her interview, she had an approachable boss, it wasn't an easy interview, but it had felt easy going. It had felt inciteful and decisive and she got a job offer two days later.

00.16.41 Moving to DEC

Gavin asks how Trudy felt about it. Trudy responds that it was daunting. She was happy where she was but felt she could be happier and could achieve more, and she had to resign. She was ready to take a risk. She had mixed emotions. She felt excited as she had her career in front of her, more than the career she has today. Gavin asks about her first day. Trudy mentions that she was welcomed and given a badge right away. She cannot remember the employee number she was allocated. It had a nice welcome, her desk was ready, her colleagues were around, and she had an onboarding training session in her first week. She

didn't know what an onboarding session was. She said it was a while before she found a company as forwarding thinking as Digital. It took her two decades to find another company as forwarding thinking as them. Gavin asks what onboarding was. Trudy explains it was the company telling them what to expect. It was to answer questions, to take details so she could be paid, explaining the systems that were important, showing an organisational chart. What products they sold, how that fitted in, what customers they had. Case studies on partners who were important to the business. Trudy thought it was arranged by HR, she thought they organised it but people from the business came in to discuss it and that made you become part of the culture. You were imbibed by the company that was inclusive. There was no hierarchy, and it was useful for when they needed to know people in the future who could help as you knew who to ask. It was inclusive, helpful and took away fear that they had of not knowing anyone. It also gave the opportunity to ask questions and if the person next to you asked a question you hadn't thought about you got the answer.

00.20.27 DEC as a forward-thinking company

Gavin comments that it was a different company to Racal; it had a different management practices and workplace culture. Trudy confirms that this was the case. She had had an internship at BP in Harlow while she was studying her degree, and it wasn't there either. Trudy considered at the time that BP was a top performing company and didn't have it and they were an investor in people. Trudy comments that Digital was interested in workplace and management theories. They weren't just interested in academic practices they brought it into the workplace. Gavin asks if the UK management and leadership brought it into the workplace. Trudy responds that the UK leadership 'walked the talk' and her belief was that these ideas came from the US, from Maynard in Boston. The US knew they didn't have the right ideas. They would take UK staff on secondment, those who worked in the field for one, two or three years, they would learn from them and then would return. Programmes would then be developed.

00.22.24 Onboarding at DEC

Gavin moves on to ask more about the onboarding and the first day and environment. Trudy had mentioned DEC 1 being open plan and the shops. It was called 'The Street' and was open plan which was a new management plan. Trudy confirms that it was called that, and it was cavernous. It had a very long walk to DEC2 which is where the engineers were. It took time to walk but she says that you always met someone. It didn't have windows so if you wanted privacy you went into your managers office, but it was windowless. As it was open plan you often heard people chatting or giggling, they would convene to get things done. There was a 'hubbub' It was a purposeful hubbub. Trudy always got into work early. The restaurant was open all the time. People queued in the restaurant for a sausage or bacon sandwich. That was nice. Some stayed to talk, it was social and purposeful. The restaurant was at the other end of the building and was big. It was a good way of catching up with people. Gavin asks if she walked into management people such as Geoff Shingles. Trudy nods and says all the time. Trudy states that there is an adage saying that you manage by walking about, and they would be seen and would engage. As a junior you would feel a bit scared, but you would smile. Geoff, Alistair or John Covey or John Barrack, all these people

were approachable but busy. Gavin asks if this helped the business being to approach them, the culture or with ideas. Trudy states that it helped all three. They were always looking for new ideas. You didn't stop them and mention the ideas but if your manager thought you had a good idea they would mention it to them. They loved people using their initiative and were always looking out for talent. It was part of the culture. They were looking for talent to grow the business. They looked at the benefits and cons for the business. Ideas could be put forward and you were trained to do the research for the benefits and trained to research the stakeholders. They collaborated to get the best results. The managers were talented to get the best results for the business. The emphasis was always around the customer and if it was around the customer then you always got their attention. Trudy gives an example. They didn't have a revenue bonus scheme for the salespeople and their competitors did. The focus was all about the customer and making the customers more successful and to make the customers boat go faster. There was a pervasive mutuality that if you grew the customer then it grew the business.

00.28.29 Measuring customer satisfaction

Gavin moves on to say that he had heard that there was no bonus until the end of the 1980's so how did they measure things like customer satisfaction and engagement? Today we are fascinated by measurables such as 'big data'. How did they measure it? Trudy states that it was the job of the sales manager and account manager to get a proforma signed by the customer stating the level of engagement and comments. Gavin asks if this letter would say that they were happy with this service. Trudy states it would confirm the level of engagement and meetings. That they had felt properly supported by Digital. They could confirm areas for improvement. Gavin comments that this is amazing going out to the customer to ask for this.

00.30.07 Innovation, customer satisfaction and management

Trudy agrees that it was amazing and comments that it involved the account manager having a good relationship with his account. They were expenses. A lunch could sometimes 'oil the wheels' but customers were savvy. If customers wanted to get a message across they would. It was substantive feedback not numbers driven. Gavin asks about Geoff Shingles; he asks if Trudy had formed impressions of him at meetings or as he walked across the campus. Trudy stated she had as he was important, a bigwig. Trudy continues to say that he was approachable. They had sales meetings, kick off meetings where he would present. You could see he was approachable. You know when a person is approachable. He was intuitive, perceptive and was able to join the dots before other people did. It was impressive. There was a secretarial structure. The managers had private secretaries who were protective of their bosses. To get a one on one with the manager you had to get through the secretary. They were treated with awe. The secretaries also had eyes and ears for opportunities. They would screen ideas and had direct access to Geoff. In every interaction, walking in 'The Street', being part of an audience or a meeting, Geoff was always engaging. He was never dogmatic, never rude when Trudy was around and was a great leader.

00.32.53 DEC Culture

Gavin moves on to ask about the workplace culture. He states that DEC was known for 'doing the right thing' and for management advancing employees and through programmes. Gavin asks if Trudy saw it or experienced it. Trudy said she had a huge investment made in her and it started from the onboarding. The leadership team led by example. It emphasised them to do the right thing. Trudy had several programmes. One was for the senior leadership team. It involved being off site for three separate weeks. Twenty individuals were selected from across the UK. The first week was understanding how Trudy operated as an individual. The next week was how others worked and how she could better operate with them and improve. The third week was pulling all the knowledge and information together. She felt it was impressive and said to her husband that she felt she was eighteen again with all the investment. It was investment in her to enable the business to perform better. Today she sees the same programmes being rolled out, but this was produced thirty years ago and was innovative. Another programme she remembers well was an executive education programme at Insead in France. It was for a select group. It was a course on how to get the best out of people. What tools were available to you and how could they be used. Another tool was to take a group of five or six people and have executive team to sponsor to undertake a project that would benefit the business. They also invested in great speakers at DEC park. Trudy recalls Tony Buzan the mind mapper whose tools she still uses today. Charles Handy the shamrock organisation, the empty raincoat, it was how industry was going to change. Charles Handy was ahead of his time with outsourcing activities. These were ahead of their time. Trudy recalls time management courses, interview and recruitment courses, presentation courses and she benefitted from them. There were a lot of others. Not only was this an investment in terms of money it was a huge investment of time for those who attended and the managers who followed it up to ensure that it was understood, assimilated and deployed. Trudy says it was fabulous.

00.37.31 Trudy's own personal development

Gavin asks about the investment in Trudy. She joined the company as a financial analytical role then headed a channel finance group with moving into frontline sales with becoming a UK board manager with components and peripherals. Gavin asks how she got to that position. Was she coached through the process, or did she see the role and think it was the role she wanted or pushed along in directions. Trudy says it was the latter which she feels a little embarrassed about. The company saw her potential more than she did and she was quieter socially and more subdued. There was another great leader Ian Smith who she worked with in the channel finance group who saw her potential and encouraged her to move to the front end of the business. He joked to her to come over to the dark side as he recognised that she would be great with the customers. He saw her potential and encouraged her. It was for both of their benefit. He noticed her, interviewed her, found a role for her and coached her. She grew with him and learned a lot about customers at the front end and the products. Trudy also learned about mutuality with customers, 'spinning like a top' to the benefit of the customer. Another good moment was when the CEO Geoff Shingles was replaced, he was looking for an executive assistant. This role would go to good places, she had enjoyed working for Ian, but this new person Chris wanted her. She told Ian she didn't want to go. Ian took her to one side and said it was a good opportunity and that

she had to go. Trudy mentions that was impressive, she took the role and became a board member for the UK organisation running the components and peripherals division. While it wasn't a huge company in the business it was profitable and sizable. Gavin comments that she was the first female board member. Trudy confirms that she believes she was. She didn't recall there being other female board members. Areas such as finance, HR and marketing which traditionally had females in roles didn't have one. These were leaders who had your best interests at heart who would coach you, equip you, sponsor you even when you didn't know you wanted it yourself.

00.41.26 Trudy's career path and social mobility

Gavin asks if they can recap as they have moved a long way into her career. He mentions that in the beginning she describes the cars outside and being offline and her social mobility and background. With her role she moved socially, and he mentions a red Mercedes. Trudy became eligible to have a company car and describes a huge dot matrix printout with the details of the cars, their value and their band for the job roles whether they were in her band or not. With her family background Gavin comments that this was new to her. Trudy continues to say that she could see the cars that fell into her job band and her first company car was a red Mercedes. She drove the car to her home and the next morning as she woke up, she caught her father looking around the car as if it had been stolen. It was a new thing for South Wales for her gender and age. Of course, he was proud, but it was a big deal and at the time it was a conspicuous consumption. It showed you were doing well. Trudy continues that she came from a lovely family with no money. There was never pocket money or an allowance and here she was coming home in her twenties with a Mercedes. Towards the end of the 1980's, especially in the tech world, things got a lot better for a lot of people. In Reading and the Thames Valley there were a lot of 'yuppies' (Young Upwardly Mobile Young People). There was an acronym for no kids yet, DINKIES. She had disposable income, evidence that she was doing well and was growing as a person in her role which on reflection she felt was more important, especially for the role that she had after DEC. She was able to buy a home at the age of 25 or perhaps younger which is completely different to today. At the time house prices and mortgage prices went up so quickly that you had to move fast to make the most of equity and mortgage capability. She was one of the Yuppies and didn't know what one was and didn't expect to become one. After Wales she went looking for the money and the more successful you were, the more money there was. You didn't have to chase the money it followed you. In DEC you were rewarded but not excessively. The tech industry was and still is a good payer, more so in the UK than the US.

00.45.22 DEC at Reading

Gavin asks Trudy to tell him about Reading. He recaps that Trudy mentions the social mobility of the 1980's and Yuppies. He asks her to tell him what Reading was like at that time. Gavin asks if she went out to clubs and bars with colleagues and friends. Trudy recalls that there was no Oracle Mall. It was bitty. She couldn't remember the name of the street, but it was where John Lewis is. That was it. Trudy would go to the cinema; she couldn't remember the name of it, but it wasn't very good. Her socialising in pubs took place around the ones near DEC. That was where she would go. There was a bar at the Post House which

was opposite Imperial Way where employees went. It was constantly full of DEC. Either because of employees or because account managers went there. You didn't have to go far across the motorway, but you did have to navigate the motorway, the exit from DEC was terrible but they went to Swallowfield and Heckfield was a particular place they went to. It was convenient, a five- or ten-minute drive away. Far enough to decompress, you could have lunch or a liquid lunch. She went there a few times, but it was largely occupied by males. She couldn't remember the exact name of one pub but there was one that men called the 'two tuns' and it referred to the landlady who pulled pints there.

DEC provided prolonged and repeat business to pubs as people went there frequently and stayed for a long time. When Geoff Shingles moved the board to Shire Hall there were not pubs round it, so you didn't see the board in them because they were in a different location.

00.48.18 The town of Reading

Gavin asks about Reading again and asks whether it was affluent, it is indie, there are a lot of shop fronts in Reading, and it has a different feel. Does Trudy recall it being affluent? Trudy can't recall it being affluent. She states that people from DEC would have lived around DEC. They would not have lived around Reading town centre; they would have lived in nicer areas in villages with Thatched roofs. They would have lived in villages in areas of Berkshire, Hampshire, Wokingham in nice houses. They would have been 'better heeled' than Reading. If people wanted services they would travel, not necessarily to Bracknell. There was an ice rink and facilities there. Trudy did not recall Reading as being 'well heeled'. If you looked at DEC you went down Basingstoke Road, you tried to find somewhere to park and there were a couple of nice shops including a fine furnishings shop called 'Holmes' which closed despite the people in the area being able to afford it. Basingstoke Road was not 'well heeled' at all and Gavin comments that the area still has challenges today. He moves on to ask Trudy about the house she bought in the Reading area. Trudy states that she bought a house in Bracknell but quickly moved to Finchampstead. She moved a couple of times there but stayed within the area. It was twenty minutes from the office, easy access and a nice rural location.

00.50.18 DEC social life

Gavin returns to the social life at DEC and mentions that there were pubs but were there other team activities that DEC employees did. Trudy confirms that there were pubs, but she couldn't remember other activities, she thought that most DEC employees went to the pub then it was family life. She didn't recall other activities that they did.

00.50.54 DEC corporate values and the culture for women

Gavin then moves on to recap that they have discussed the corporate values in DEC and the alluded to being a woman in the technology sector having come from Racal Vodafone. Gavin asks about being a woman in the technology sector. The technology sector today still has issues in its structure of recruiting women. It seems to have more female optimisation today than in the 80's. What was it like then in a finance technology field for you? What was the track record in Reading for hiring and retaining women and giving them a place in supported programmes? Trudy gives an example of what a day could be like for her. There could be

meetings where she was the only female where it was difficult to get her voice heard. She gives an example of one manager who asked her to stop making tea and coffee for everyone in an important meeting as he said she was reinforcing what people could think of her in a social value. At the end of the meeting Trudy thanked him. The manager said that she should use her height as she was tall. He also told her to use attributes that she had as she was softly spoken and to get her message across. Trudy states that you did get coaching like that.

00.52.42 Corporate life in DEC for women

Trudy continues and says that in the finance function it was much more male dominated than in the sales function which was a surprise, and she felt there was a 'boys club'. People like Ian Smith really challenged and encouraged her to reach her potential. One day she was waiting to see Ian, he had someone in his offices, so she sat at a secretary's desk outside to wait. The person came out and said, 'hey darling you get me a cup of coffee please?' She forgot what putdown she gave but Ian came out of his office, heard what she said and told her that he would have loved to have sold tickets for it. He would never do that again. Trudy explains that it was that type of environment, it was largely male. She states that there were some good people there but gives another example. She had all her children when she was in DEC. For her first child she was allowed two weeks full pay, just two weeks and allowed six weeks off in total including time before. The four weeks were at reduced pay. That was six weeks, and Digital was better than some companies. Fitting family in that timescale was hard physically and emotionally. She was lucky enough to be able to afford a nanny and was able to go back to work financially. That was not the case for everybody and there was no paternity leave. They lost a lot of women when they started their family journey. There is still a lot of attrition in retention in the tech world but that was one of the main reasons.

00.55.39 Was DEC better or worse than other companies?

Gavin asks if Trudy thought that DEC was better or worse than other companies, she has mentioned that it was better than other companies. Did she think that there was an effort to make it better at a structural level rather than a management level? Trudy states that she believed that was the case as there was the mention of a creche. She didn't know as she didn't use it but it would have been leading edge as it would be for all, and it would have been expensive and innovative as the company would have paid the rest. This was something new as it was thirty years ago. It was innovative. Trudy mentions shopping being delivered. That is not something new nowadays but at the time they tried. Trudy asks whether it was better than its competitors? She believes it was but there is a big however, the difference between two weeks pay and six weeks partial pay is on the margins as it is nominal. Trudy says she believes that if Digital was still here, they would have tried to make it better, certainly with the leadership that there was under Ken Olson.

00.57.17 Doing the 'right thing'

Gavin asks about the concept of doing the right thing, was Trudy aware of it as she has mentioned it a couple of times and did it become part of the brand? Did it make DEC a

trusted brand? Trudy confirms that it did make partners and customers trust the brand, but she thinks of the post office scandal. Trudy continues to say that they were not boxed in to their job. If something didn't smell right, they were encouraged to ask questions. If something was wrong and you normally felt if it was then you were not in a box. You were encouraged to speak up and you generally knew if something was wrong. You were encouraged to speak up. If you felt something was wrong, it was ok to ask the question and it would be ok to put your head above the parapet. Gavin asks if there was ever tension with customers over doing the right thing? It is one thing to do the right thing with customers but another to do it in a company. Was there ever tension with doing the right thing from a sales perspective. Trudy gives an example of the service department. People would work all hours to ensure that customers were back online. If a bank in the high street needed equipment delivering say on a Sunday, they would close the street as a crane would be needed to deliver it to the branch office. If there was a delay, it was a big problem. People would work around it. They would work out something such as taking it somewhere else. Trudy continues that there were challenges with delivery of kit. There was a denied parties list of organisations or industries that they could not sell to. People were there to address and solve problems. What happens with that is that when delivering kit to a bank you get a grateful customer. Trudy asks whether that answers the question?

01.00.28 Recording breaks up and sounds watery

01.00.30 Customer experience in DEC

Gavin recaps that it does answer the question, the customer came first, the customer didn't come second in the business. It was a mutual relationship in the business. Trudy confirms that it was the case and that it was a partner business model, and the partner would be part of it. Working as a collaboration was natural even if it was external. Some partners did have to work in financial matrixes that operated in boxes. She has another example and won't give the partners name. A partner was really pushing to get something done for year end, it wasn't the thing to do, and she told them that and they folded as they knew it was how they worked. They had given it a go, and it hadn't got them anywhere.

01.01.58 Leaving DEC

Gavin moves on to say that all good things come to an end and Trudy moved to Sun Microsystems. What caused her to move on. Trudy states that she didn't want to leave but there was a change in leadership and a downturn in the business. There was a redundancy programme, and her department became part of that. She thought it was time anyway as she had been there ten good years. She was out of work for no time as her credentials from DEC stood on their own. She became the first female leader of a major tech company in the UK. She hadn't thought of it when she had accepted the job of being the first female leader until someone pointed it out to her. She has no doubt that it was because of the investment in her and those around her telling her to wake up and smell the coffee that helped her achieve her career. Trudy states that she is forever grateful for her time at DEC and the people there.

01.03.37 How DEC managed redundancies and what led to them

Gavin recaps that Trudy was part of a restructure, and her role was removed. He comments that he has covered Sun in the past. He asks Trudy where she was when she heard that DEC had been taken over by Compaq and the HP. How did she feel about it? Trudy mentions that she was sad as it was a great and trusted brand but pleased that it had survived in some form. The products survived as that is what was bought, that and the people and the IP. Trudy continues that she could be cheeky and say that she has a good pension coming from DEC that was managed by HP but that would be trite. It was disappointing. It reminded her about strategy. Digital created all these wonderful products, but they decided not to go into the PC markets which proved to be a consequential decision. It then allowed a decision to let Ken step down which had an impact. It was the stepping down of the old guard and changed measures and different motivators which changed the levels of love in the company. People loved working in the company. Trudy confirms that she loved working for Digital. Gavin asks what happened in the time that Ken stepped down. What happened in the UK? Trudy states that from a financial side things did have to be ruthless but that it was ruthless. People were laid off by email. The human part that Digital, the humanity and humility in DEC and they never made people forceable redundant. It was a management issue. If person was in the wrong job, then it was a manager's responsibility to reassign them to another role. Some people had been there twenty years and were axed by email. Trudy recalls being in one meeting and being asked to draw up a list, a large list. One of the new leaders said, 'he needs to go, he has a beard'. Trudy doesn't know whether that was an attempt to lighten the situation. It didn't, it was almost heartless from a company that was full of heart.

01.07.10 Redundancy and staff leaving

Gavin comments that certainly wasn't the DEC way and Trudy agrees. Trudy states that it was sad as when people saw what was happening other people left too. It opened the floodgates. There were forced redundancies and those who were left and went voluntarily.

01.07.38 Legacy for the world left by DEC

Gavin states that DEC has gone, its technology has gone and asks what was the legacy that DEC left with Trudy and the wider world starting with the wider world first. Has DEC left a technology legacy? It doesn't matter if it hasn't. What does Trudy think? Trudy confirms that she does think that it left a legacy if you think of companies such as Oracle or Microsoft, it took the technology and built on it. Trudy disagrees that its system is not in place, she believes they are, especially the fax era, the last item that Trudy sold was a PDP 11. It was first introduced in 1972; people were still purchasing it in the late 1990's. It had the ability to be trusted and reliable. In answer to Gavin question, so many people moved on to new organisation, Microsoft was just building in the UK when Trudy left. It had a huge impact. A lot of people went there from sales and engineering. She feels that people are going back to doing what it is right. They are returning to do the right thing and getting the training, that is a big one. Its products, Altavista was the first search engine and other things are built on that. Dot matrix printers, Trudy mentions that she was in an airport a couple of months ago and they were still using a Digital dot matrix printer. Around the world you will see DEC equipment, but it is becoming rare, but it is in evidence in new companies.

01.10.14 Legacy for Trudy left by DEC

Gavin continues that Trudy had a successful career and went to work for Sun Micro Systems, Oracle and Microsoft. Trudy is the ex-chair of Wise Campaign,² chair of UCAS³ and the Institute of Engineering and Technology. She now lives in Seattle. Trudy has come a long way from Swansea. How would she describe the influence it has had on her today. She states that it has been massive. It has developed her, encouraged her, championed her, sponsored her and she still uses some of its role models today. It gave her guts, resilience, the ability to carry on delivering and every day she never ever forgets about the customer and its down to DEC. It considers collaboration and partnering. If she considers Microsoft, it is partner led business. The path was trodden before Microsoft. It was learned by DEC. If she thinks about what Digital did for the community back then, they did matched funding for charity, pound for pound. It wasn't 50%, 29%. She gave a cheque to Macmillan for three thousand pounds. That was because they had helped her father and Digital said it was part of the community here is a cheque. They sponsored a ballet, gave money to the Tate. They were altruistic. They were a business; under Ken they were 'par excellence' and they had a lot to learn under that leadership. Gavin asks if these are themes that are carried out through her work? Wise, UCAS and ET are very much community organisation with missions to help generations. Did this feed back into the culture, does DEC feed back into her work? Trudy says that these are all charitable organisations, and she is delighted to take what she has learned to help others. What she hasn't talked about is Digital taught her to think about unmet needs. It is ok to think about what you are going to do for the customer today, but you must think about what you are going to do for them tomorrow to make them successful. There is a constant quest for innovation. Altavista was a skunk works; it is ok to do a skunk works. It is ok to fail at them, you will get some success from them to help you blossom, survive and thrive. The sad thing about Digital was that they failed despite all these fabulous ingredients failed because of strategy and not to be dogmatic. She includes that in her work. What she learned from Digital was to be a lifelong learner and that is a philosophy that she takes into her work. Gavin states that he thinks that is everything. Trudy thanks him for doing the interview as she never thought it would be subject matter. As she prepared, she tried to get her memory back in gear. She loved going to work. How many people can say that? There was a small bit of stress, but it was on the margins. It was one of the last companies she loved going to work in, and she thanks him for helping remind her of that. Perhaps in some small way they can pass on these small messages.

01.15.17 The interview finishes

² Wise Campaign – women in science, engineering and technology.

³ UCAS – University and College Admissions