The title of my talk obviously refers to my-self as a woman in what was predominately a man’s world, but 50 years ago when the story began, it was tough for all youngsters. You left school at 15 years old if you were not at a grammar school. Most boys got an apprenticeship and girls usually worked in shops or offices doing menial tasks until they either “got married or got pregnant” in which ever order it happened. Obviously some youngsters went to college or university but this was rare as most children were needed to go out to work to bring in extra income. Somewhat similar to today in most parts of the world as over the last 20 years we seem to have gone back to this same situation.

My talk is a light-hearted graphical, display of trying to get the message across. Simply, that if I could do it – you can do it too. It shows how to take an opportunity and to use it even if “You get your hands dirty or break a nail”. It also shows some age and sex discrimination but nothing that I could not handle. It will show that a young person, boy or girl, can use the opportunities with or without being graduates and just one example will be my own adopted son, who was at 22 years old, a typical young person of today, having left school at 18. Not interested in anything and happy to work in a bar and do little else. I decided to give him a job in my despatch department packing the sales orders of our NDT equipment and accessories. Two years later he overheard me explain how and why penetrant aerosols were used. He finally had shown some interest and a year later with encouragement and training, he has achieved PCN level 11 in MPI and penetrant testing and works for a local NDT service company.

My message will be that young people can aspire to great things given the right education and training but when we have got their interest, we the NDT businesses and professionals have to ensure that the jobs are available. That bit is not so easy, but in an NDT industry which does not seem to have suffered in the world recession, equally it should not be that hard.