

## Pauline Transcript

### Theatre Royal History, Shows, Brownies, Paul McCartney

My name is Pauline Woodward, I was born in 1951. My roles have varied, and next year I think it's coming up to 40 years since I first started. I left to have a baby and came straight back and I've been here ever since. So, when I first started it was a lot of usher work and door work. The roles were very different then, obviously. And now I tend to spend most of my time on the kiosk with the sweets.

(What has been the most memorable experience?)

I suppose the biggest one for us as a theatre was probably when the Queen came. There was a big coverage of that and yeah, pictures that are on the wall outside of when she came. I mean, there's been lots but I would say that probably is one of the important ones.

(Have you ever had any unusual experiences at the theatre with cast members or anyone interesting?)

No, no. Apart from just basically speaking with a lot of them. When you first come when you're younger you get very smitten with people. And you sort of want to meet them and you want the autographs and I did all that when I was younger, I'm not quite so bad now. Audience members are very different. Because when Paul McCartney came once and, there was great excitement when he was seen outside and "do you know whose outside?!", "oh he's coming in!". Everybody sort of wants to see them because they're not used to theatre work so they're not used to being around people where as we tend to get different cast every week so you get used to seeing different people.

(So could you give me your favourite theatre of all time?)

Theatre? No. I've done so many. Shows I can, but not theatres. Theatres, you go and you tend to take it in. It's the magic when people come into the theatre and you try to make their evening as nice as it possibly can be so they pick up the theatre magic as well.

(And in your opinion how has theatre changed in Brighton?)

The main thing I think, since I first came, is that the dress is very different. The ladies used to wear long dresses mink stoles, the men used to come in in evening suits and black tie, nobody wore shorts to the theatre or anything like that so I think that's probably the biggest change.

(What was your first theatre experience here that you remember?)

Everything was cheaper! The ice creams and the programmes were cheaper. We did have an experience, we used to have a night in the theatre that was for

brownie groups. And we took their interval orders for the ice creams. And we got them all ready and boxed up and all the boxes were labeled. And one poor usher fell down the stairs and the ice creams came out at the interval and it was like, which ice creams belongs to which box! And we had a few minutes and part of it was funny and we were laughing but the other part was a mad panic to get them all back in the right boxes.

(I can imagine it's quite a nice atmosphere)

Yeah, it's like you have a second family, and because I've been here so long, we've had lots of second families because people leave and you get new families but they're just always lovely people to work with. You have a family at home and then you have another family here.

(Do you have like a particular performance that you have a biggest memory of)

Down here I think the first one that really hit me was '*Blood Brothers*'. I was a young mum and I was bringing up a family, so for people who haven't seen it and without ruining it that's part of what it's all about and I think that's why it affected me like it did. And If I see it now, it would probably still affect me the same.

(Is there anything else you'd like to tell people about your experience of theatre in Brighton?)

It's a big question. People say to me "what is it that keeps you there?" and we talk about the magic of theatre so deep down I think it must be. When I first came here I could never imagine myself 40 years later still being in the same place. It's just a lovely place to be I think - You meet loads and loads of people, we have regulars, and they used to come in and they used to talk to you and when I was having my second baby, they came in and they gave you a present for the baby. It's very close knit. And we still get regulars now, we still get regular people and I even get people come in and say "Gosh are you still here?" "You've been here years!" and so they've obviously kept coming. But there is just something about theatre, and the magic of theatre. There's just something about it. What else can I say?