

BRINGING THE BEAT BACK★TO★ BRADFORD

Oral history transcripts



David Lowe

Recorded on 17 March 2022 by Stephen Goodfellow.

David

My name is David Lowe, born Shipley, 1947.

Stephen

We're here to gather your feelings and memories of your time at The Gaumont, I believe it was at the time. I believe you were one of the organists there?

David

I was indeed, I was the house or resident organist from 1965-67. All that started by going to church with my mother and hearing the organ, so from a very early age I wanted to play the organ. The root to playing the organ was to join the choir aged 7, and piano lessons aged 9, then I finally started on the organist in 1962 when I was 15. So it wasn't actually very long before I discovered the Wurlitzer organ – and that came about when I was finding organ music on the radio. I was quite surprised to find organ music on the live programmes, on Wednesday morning at 10am as well as other times. And I thought why would they play organ music, bearing in mind I'm thinking of church organ music. And of course it was different, it was a cinema or theatre organ.

My mother said 'oh yes, there's one at the Gaumont in Bradford'. Then not long after that she said there was an article in the paper about the new manager called David Wilmot – who actually went on to manage the London Palladium.

[My mother said] 'It says he's an organist, why don't you get in touch?'

So I did and I got to speak to the great man, he very kindly invited me down when they weren't showing films. He let me play the organ for three hours, astonishing. I thought I like this! I asked if I could go again and he said 'don't make a nuisance of yourself' or something.

Which put me off slightly but not much. He was then replaced by Peter Davis, and that point in 1965 – the organist who'd been playing at the Gaumont - a guy called David Hamilton who was a friend of David Wilmot, and who I got to know later – he had gone. So there was no organist.

To cut a long story short, I was invited to audition and to start playing organ interludes initially as preludes on a Sunday afternoon. These were advertised and announced from the stage, I came up on the lift with the spotlight and the whole thing, it was done very professionally. You can imagine what a thrill that was. It went down very well.

Stephen

Can you tell me a little bit about what happened immediately before your audition and how you were set up to play?

David

What happened was we had a meeting of the Cinema Organ Society, I think in the July of 1965 and I think it was then when I got to meet Mr Davis and he said I would have to do an audition. I put together 15 minutes of suitable music and he sat on the front row behind the console with the chief projectionist.

I played my piece and he said 'that sounds alright, what do you think Harry?'

And Harry said 'Yes, that'll be ok'.

I asked if we could use the lift and he said 'you see that large switch there, turn it on'.

So I lifted this big lever and that switched it on. There was a switch on the console,

[He said] 'if you operate it, it should go up'.

And it did – oh greats stuff.

Harry turned to Mr Davidson and said, 'I expect he wants the bleeding spotlight as well'.

But he was only joking as there was no question of not having the bleeding spotlight, and so that's how it went. As I said people applauded, and on that basis, Mr Davis said 'well would you like to do a proper organ interlude, well do 6 of those on a Sunday night'.

Stephen

Could you explain what an organ interlude is, as not many people know about them?

David

When these cinemas were built, people went for entertainment, not just the films, particularly in the larger houses. So at the Gaumont as the New Victoria when it opened in 1930, and at the Leeds Odeon, as the Paramount and other major movie houses. There would be a very large orchestra, and an organist who would play on organ interlude. 10 or 15 minutes with slide on the screen very often, possibly with a theme and maybe a sing-along. Then you would have a stage act and finally some films, a newsreel, a cartoon, a short and the main feature and second feature.

All that sort of eventually dwindled, in an automated economy so the orchestra got smaller and smaller. I remember my father told me this. Until they ended up with just

the organ. But you know organ music, brass band music and music in general was very important to the people of Bradford. So there's no surprise the organ was kept on and in fact organists were employed all around the UK right into the 1970's. So it wasn't any surprise that the organ was used every day right through the war. Then in 1946, Rank who managed the Odeon and Gaumont chain dispensed with most of their full time organists, but, the cinema managers could if they wished retain a part time organist. In the case of our favourite theatre it was Arnold Loxham who was the Sunday organist prior to me. He went off to the Leeds Odeon in 1962, David Hamilton played then until 1965 and I took over until 1967. I went to London and took a job with Silver Blades High Street Limited. The organ was then played by David Hamilton again who came back to Bradford and some other organists as well.

Stephen

Could you tell me about your experiences on the organ?

David

Absolutely, goodness me I was nervous I can tell you until I got playing. There was always that anticipation when you're sitting on the console in the darkness waiting for the credits and the curtains to start rolling and waiting for the spotlight to hit you. Setting the stopwatch to whatever time it was I was supposed to play, ten minutes, twelve minutes, fifteen minutes, very often it was ten. Sometimes there was a theme to it, and you'd get the projectionist to put different colours perhaps. Occasionally we used slides, I didn't do that very often. I tried to choose music that fitted in with the theme of the film, so I'd do a little research on that as well. It was great to have a film where you'd have perhaps an adult audience, or family audience. Playing for the Beatles films was more of a challenge, there little bit of ice cream carton throwing in my direction. But the chief of staff would be stood close by the console and he would fend off, but that was very unusual for the most part. The organ interludes were very well received, with applause and sometimes cheers.

At least one or on more than one occasion, Mr Davis said 'we have a film that's going to attract a certain kind of adult audience, why don't you try a sing-along?' And today that would be laughed at. A sing-along in a cinema? But you know what, it worked. 'My Old Man's a Dustman', the popular sing-along songs which were still popular since the war. Which I could play all those of course. And it got people singing. It was amazing when I look back on it. The other films that attracted big houses were the Bond films and for some reason a film called The Trap. I watched it recently on the television and why that attracted 3,000 people I don't know.

Stephen

Tell me about some of the musical pieces you played for some of these modern films?

David

It was very possible in the sixties to play music that was either from films or perhaps even pop tunes of the day. It was very easy to play those. I was very lucky as I had, and still have a very good ear. So I could listen to a pop record and, for example Gerry and the Pacemakers, Cilla Black, anything by Matt Munro etc. I could just play them without the music. Although, I did go to Woods and get music sometimes. So in my organ interludes I very often would play 2 or 3 pop tunes and maybe finish with those. I'd start with a march, play something a little bit slower, a bit of Latin American possibly 'Girl from Ipanema' was popular then. And it was all good stuff.

What I should say is there was a real challenge with our favourite organ, because the organ chambers were something like 90ft above and behind. So the sound of the organ - it was a pipe organ not electronic, with 600/800 pipes - the sound went from there and hit the back of the balcony and came forward and hit the screen, then went back hit the back of the stalls and circular, then came back and finally hit the organist. There was some time delay.

Stephen

I gather there was an elaborate system going behind the screen and the top above it?

David

Right above the stage up in the fly there was a horn we called it, because the sound went out of the chambers backwards and round underneath then out through the grill. It mixed very well up there.

We're 90ft above the stage and it went out sort of backwards and this big void, which was probably about 10ft high and the length of the chambers, and round and then came out underneath. The sound couldn't come out directly because it would have gone into the false roof. It mixed well that way. If you were sat in the balcony you heard the organ quite well. I must say the acoustics were amazing. I know that because I remember being up in the circle or balcony, and I digress slightly - there was somebody down at the organ console talking and I could hear every word crystal clear. You had to be careful what you said in that place. The acoustic was amazing. Maybe they were better for music and so forth than for the films.

Anyway I once said to the projectionist when I went to see them 'This organ used to be amplified at one time so it was a lot easier to hear it.'

[He said] 'Oh yes that's true.'

I said 'So how does it work?'

'You see that switch over there, that says organ P.A. and organ film or something, if you turn that it will put the amplification on.'

I asked 'Well doesn't it work anymore?'

[He said] 'Yes it does'

So I said 'Why do you never use it?'

[He said] 'Because you never asked'.

I think that was a test actually. So they said if you wanted to use amplification you had to go put the microphone in yourself – which was of course 90ft high up a ladder and crawling along some duct boards. I was determined so I did that. And then the sound of the organ also came out through the PA speakers round the auditorium. That went on for a little while. Then one day I was riding up on the console, there was always a slight delay changing the switch from the film to the organ and it boomed out of the screen speakers which was right in front of me, and I nearly fell off the organ bench. So I went up to see the projectionist and said 'that was fantastic, what did you do?'

And so the projectionist turned to the young lad and said 'what switches did you operate?'

And he only operated the one and not the other.

So I said 'it was better, a little bit muffled but for me it was great.'

So the organ was amplified. But I have seen photographs, early photographs of the auditorium, showing the organ console and some large speakers in what I always thought was the orchestra pit. Whether there ever was an orchestra in there I don't know. I suspect the organ was amplified that way.

So it was happy days and some of the things I was asked to play for were special occasions. So we had children's foundation film shows, one or two preview showings. And I also had forgotten but a friend of mine reminded me, we used to have some midnight showings which I played for as well.

We had some stage shows. One of them was the Cinderella Club, which we did multiple times, which I think was run partly by the Telegraph & Argus I believe. They had a special show each year for all the poor children of Bradford, how they were selected I don't know. So two or three thousand poor kids would come into the theatre and make a hell of a din.

Arnold Loxham liked to play the Wurlitzer for that because he always had, but I was invited to play with my group – which today we'd call a band. We played on stage, so that was a big thrill for me and I bought an electronic organ of course, and we played on the stage and we didn't have much amplification but it filled the place – it was amazing, happy days.

Stephen

The Cinderella Club is a real institution in Bradford going back to the 19th century, when they had their shows did they have celebrity guests or was it ice cream and a film and music? Could you tell us a little bit more?

David

I don't remember celebrity guests, but I'm not saying that didn't happen. They certainly had a very good film show, and ice cream by the bucketful I expect. And the manager Mr Davis at the very least he would come on and do some entertainment for the kids with some party pieces of his own which I had to accompany. They were quite funny at the time.

There was a short period which the children's shows which had left the Gaumont and gone to the Odeon and came back, but I can't remember why that was unless the Odeon had closed by then. I played for those as well, that must have been late '67. But of course I went to seek my fame and fortune in London after that. Mr Davis regrettably left before I left, to run a shop actually. The next manager was a very, very nice chap, all the managers were, they welcomed me when I came back from time to time to come in and have a play.

I really have very happy memories. It was playing at the Gaumont that set me on the road to some kind of musical success, because I was discovered, auditioned for the ice rink and played there. This was in January '66 or December '65, when Silver Blades Ice Rink opened in Bradford and they were looking for an assistant organist. The House Manager Peter Bird heard me play at the Gaumont. Did he come especially? I will never know. I was summoned up to the manager's office and

Mr Davis said 'This is Mr Burton from the ice rink'

'How do you do?'

'He wants you to play the organ at the ice rink?'

'What kind of organ is it?'

'A Hammond'

Well I knew how to play a Hammond organ as they had them in the clubs.

[I said] 'I don't really want to play at the ice rink.'

Mr Davis said 'You will be playing the organ at the ice rink.'

He had already assured Mr Burton I would be playing the organ at the ice rink, and if I didn't that was probably bye bye to the Wurlitzer. So I went up the road and auditioned at the ice rink, and I found I could play for ice dancing. It was something apparently very few people could do playing to a metronome.

So I became Assistant Organist at the ice rink and I played there a lot because the resident organist came and went.

I was still at school by the way during all of this. Then I went to Bradford University in '67. Then I got a job as organist at the number one rink in London which was Streatham and eventually Musical Director, started broadcasting for the BBC and doing a bit of radio and television work, and bit of film work as well.

Stephen

So you had around three years at the Gaumont?

David

Yes - 1965 to 67.

Stephen

Are there any big highlights you can think of now that when we were talking earlier you skimmed over?

David

Playing for those major films is the thing that I really remember.

And also something I had forgotten until you prompted my memory – we had a special concert which Mr Davis kindly facilitated for all the blind people in Bradford. They came and filled the stalls downstairs, and I would play a concert, fairly informal. They just loved it. It was very humbling in some ways.

Of course, I explained about the organ and how it worked, and then we let those that wanted to, we opened the door so they could get into the orchestra bit and feel the keys, which probably some people would have said 'you shouldn't let anyone touch it' but why not, why not?

It was the same if any kids were interested. I remember I was always encouraged, therefore any kids interested in anything I'm interested in the answer is 'yes, what would you like to do?'

The blind concert that was really something. There was a young blind chap in his twenties who used to come help with his sighted friend, I think it was his Uncle actually. His Uncle actually made me a music gaslight, which are in those photographs that I've got. That was nice, they just used to come on Sunday morning.

When I was organist at the ice rink, one of the really keen skaters was Colin Sutton, Colin L Sutton. Who unfortunately passed away 7 years ago, who had an excellent website called Bradford Timeline. It had a load of stuff on there about the New Victoria and Gaumont. Colin immediately latched onto me and said 'Wouldn't it be great if we could record the Wurlitzer and use it for the dance club at the ice rink.' Make a change from the Hammond. Nothing wrong with the Hammond, just it would be different.

So he came down and did that, I recorded some of the ice dances with the permission of Mr Davis who was very very pleased. All he said was can you announce it 'This is the Wurlitzer organ of the Gaumont'.

He used to like it to be called the Gaumont theatre, not the Gaumont cinema. 'Gaumont theatre, how can I help you?' When they answered the phone.

Do I have that recording somewhere, probably not. I wish I had. What I do remember about that, when you play ice dances you had to play to a metronome and the metronome is ticking away down there in the console. And in that vast theatre you'd think there's no way a recording would pick the metronome up. It certainly did, click click click – it didn't matter. That was the acoustics, amazing acoustics.

Stephen

Thank you very much, it was lovely to chat to you and record your memories.

David

Thank you very much indeed, thanks Stephen.

Eileen Hughes

Recorded on 21 April 2022 by Stephen Goodfellow.

Eileen

My name is Eileen Hughes. I'm from Batley. And I was born on the 30th of the fourth 1951.

Stephen

That's lovely. So, you're here today to tell us about your visits to the Gaumont, as it was then, in particular, going to see a little known band called *The Rolling Stones*. So just tell us about it.

Eileen

Well, I'm a big fan of The Rolling Stones so the first time I ever went to see them, I was 13 years old, still at school, and came into Bradford on the bus with my best friend who was also a Rolling Stones fan. And we didn't get tickets early. So we were sort of in the middle of that theatre, small venue. Small capacity and really, really noisy screaming fans. This was the first time which was September 26th 1965. It's like a memory date for me, it's like an anniversary. That's what it is. And my friend and I used to celebrate that every year.

Stephen

I think you told me about the support group that were on.

Eileen

Yeah, at that time they always had a few bands on or a solo artist. And when this particular band came on called The Yardbirds, I thought it was The Rolling Stones, just because of the likeness between the lead singer Keith Ralph and Jeff Beck as a guitarist looked like Mick Jagger, so I was comparing two Rolling Stones to The Yardbirds. Then I thought no it's not, no it's not them. But they didn't do if they did half an hour I wouldn't think playing at that point top of the bill, that might have been about it, that first, I think it would have been 'It's all over now' was their hit at the time when I first went to see them at that concert. That first one.

Stephen

Do you remember any of the other songs they did?

Eileen

No, they'll have done, well I don't know, I don't know. When I listen to albums now and I think those really early, you know that first LP were mainly covers of other people. And they had a track on called 'Tell Me' that they actually wrote, but apart from that there were covers. So, they'll have done some of that.

Stephen

So, it's interesting isn't it that probably your memory is more of the emotional impact rather than the musical, is that fair?

Eileen

Yeah. Yeah, it's difficult actually, thinking that. Probably in awe of seeing this band that I love in the flesh. Whatever they played probably then it were irrelevant.

Stephen

Was there a lot of noise?

Eileen

Yeah, really noisy. But you could still hear what they were playing.

Stephen

Oh, you told me that it's not like today when they have massive towers of equipment.

Eileen

No very, very basic. On stage they'll have just had an amplifier and that were it plugged in where you've got to watch where wires were running. That's how it was, original. It were raw. Yeah.

Stephen

You went to see the Stones again a year later when you were a bit more experienced at going then.

Eileen

Yeah. Went with a few, four schoolfriends really and we'll have come in to get those tickets. Saw saw the advert in a Rolling Stones monthly magazine and then come straight to Bradford to ask when these tickets are going on sale. And then come back a few weeks later well or how many weeks later, to get the tickets and then come back again in hopefully ensuring we had a front row at that point come early which we did on that October the fourth 1965 concert.

Stephen

So you had come in to find out when the tickets were on sale, go back to Batley, come back to Bradford to buy them and repeat the whole process.

Eileen

That's right, go down that little side street, look just for reminiscing, and I've done that all these years even just coming into Bradford I've always got to cross over and go look at the building. I love the building and I've got a great photograph in black and white that

was obviously they saw these five young girls with a Union Jack with 'Up with the Rolling Stones' written on it and they took a photograph.

Stephen

Who took the photo?

Eileen

From my memory the Telegraph and Argus. I've got the original copy. I can't remember going but I probably did go to Telegraph or Argus office to see if I could buy one. So I don't know.

Stephen

Had you seen it in the newspaper?

Eileen

No I can't remember seeing it in the newspaper, but obviously I've had that newspaper but I haven't go that.

Stephen

Because you showed me a newspaper.

Eileen

Yeah, on those two concerts on that day the Telegraph and Argus brought out a special edition with the Rolling Stones on the front covers and then individual photographs of them inside which I still got. It's interesting to see everything else that's on the inside there and on the back and how many theatres and cinemas there were in and around Bradford that you had no idea, when now you know, but I can't wait to come back when this venue opens, and hopefully to see live music there again. And I'll be reminiscing again and hopefully I'll go down that side street and just see if it's changed.

Stephen

But it wasn't just the Rolling Stones you saw there, you saw some other bands too.

Eileen

Yeah, I've got four of the tickets. Now one of the tickets it's got *The Animals* name on and my friend and I at school, there was a charity and it was an auction and these tickets were part of or one of the prizes was the tickets to see *The Animals* at the Gaumont in Bradford. So we had to bid and we got these tickets, but we paid more than what the value of the ticket was at that time.

Stephen

So what did people think about that?

Eileen

Well I could see other so called friends weren't very happy because there were other people interested, but we actually got them. And there were other concerts, they'll have all been 60s pop groups. Because there's actually no names out printed on, I haven't actually found out. Maybe PJ Proby, he was a poor substitute for Chuck Berry that obviously didn't come for some reason. And maybe one of the others was Gene Pitney and maybe the Walker Brothers, I remember the Walker Brothers.

Stephen

So you were a regular at the Gaumont.

Eileen

Yes, yes. And I would say from 64 maybe to 67, I don't know after that. I haven't got tickets. I don't know, they don't say the year on these tickets. But I don't think I were coming into Bradford then I think I was going to Leeds.

Stephen

Maybe a little bit older and a little bit more adventurous?

Eileen

Yeah then I went to London, 69 I was in London at the free Hyde Park Rolling Stones concert.

Stephen

That's lovely Eileen. I think just about covers your memories. But I was going to ask is there anything maybe that's just come to mind now, that you wanted to just add to what you said.

Eileen

Them concerts have sort of mapped my life. In music, the love of music and don't get me wrong, I'm not just Rolling Stones, I love music. And it gets me through my life. It motivates me nearly every day, but it started sort of that teenage 13-year-old. And when I think, where I were, I used to go to Manchester to see Jimi Hendrix, or when I think of my age and travelling, no, because of the love of that music, I did it. And obviously, I were allowed to do it.

Stephen

Yeah, that's something that maybe, parents would be less keen to do.

Eileen

You know, way back. Way back then. Yeah. Going to concerts on my own at 13. Yeah.

Stephen

That's, that's probably a nice way to finish off.

Eileen

Yeah.

Stephen

Thank you very much, Eileen. It's been lovely talking to you. And we'll just stop the recording.

Maureen Dowling

Recorded on 23 April 2022 by James Proctor.

Maureen

My name is Maureen Dowling, born November 1946 in Tyersal, Bradford.

James

So we're going to talk about what you knew as the Odeon building, but you knew it before as the Gaumont. Should we talk about when you were an audience member first. What do you remember?

Maureen

Just the once. I just remember coming to see Chuck Berry, and The Animals, who were the support act at the time.

James

As far as you remember it was the two of them. Chuck Berry was the headline?

Maureen

Yes.

James

You said The Animals played?

Maureen

'House of the Rising Sun'. But at that time, nobody had heard of them by that.

James

Were you impressed by them?

Maureen

Yes, very, but that was the only time I actually went to the Gaumont as a spectator.

James

Were you seated?

Maureen

Yes, we were seated.

James

For Chuck Berry, would there be the screaming that we saw for the Beatles?

Maureen

No, no.

James

Were you a fan of his?

Maureen

I wasn't a fan of his. No, but just thought it's nice to see somebody live.

James

Was he good?

Maureen

It was alright.

James

You don't sound too impressed. Okay, so that was when you were an audience member. But then later on, after it closed as the Gaumont. Tell me about what happened then.

Maureen

And then it came back as a twin cinema. And I just got a newborn baby. And obviously wasn't working. So decided that I should really try and get a part time job, an evening job. So that when my husband came home from work, he could look after the baby and I could go out to work. They were recruiting for staff for the twin cinemas, so I went along for an interview. I seem to think it was St. George's Hall, but I'm not absolutely sure. And there are quite a lot of people there. But I was told that I hadn't got the job. I presumed they had enough.

James

Was this in advance of opening?

Maureen

This was in advance. This was obviously earlier on in 1969. But then, a few weeks later, I got a telegram, which I still got, but I forgot to bring, it has the date on because not many people had telephones in those days. And there was a telegram boy that delivered telegrams. You usually only got a telegram when you got married, people used to send telegrams. So, it was the only way that you could deliver news quickly. I just got a telegram inviting me for another interview at the Odeon this time. I got the job, worked as usherette, Monday to Friday evenings.

James

And how many usherettes would there be? You said you're struggling to remember the names, roughly how many would there be?

Maureen

Some obviously worked during the day because there was cinema showings during the day. And then you had your evening staff, and then weekend staff. So there are quite a few usherettes that showed people to the seats. In the dark you had your own torch which you held down towards the ground.

Then in the intervals, when the film were finished, then you sold ice cream. You had a tray with your ice cream and you stood at the front. Obviously there was a middle part in Odeon 2. You got the front. Then there was a walkway, and then some more seats further back. You stood there while people came up, and then once the film started again, then you walked around in the dark up and down the steps in case anybody decided they wanted an ice cream. So it was quite dangerous walking down the steps.

You worked in both screens. Some nights you worked in Odeon 1 cinema, sometimes in Odeon 2.

The opening was pretty important, they had a special opening. I think Mr. Mann was the manager and Mrs. Wilkinson the Manageress. So I think we'd been there in the afternoon just for another little practice of what we had to do, and we were given money to have our hair done.

James

Fabulous. Do you remember what uniform you wore?

Maureen

I can't remember. But we did wear a uniform, we were very smart.

As far as I remember, it was invited people for Odeon 1. The dignitaries, important people. And I seem to remember that each lady was given a rose. Maybe just for Odeon 1, because I was in Odeon 1 that particular night, for the showing of 'Funny Girl'.

James

I've seen the photograph, of the Grand Gala opening, outside of the Cinema. And it's got Funny Girl on the sign.

Maureen

Yes, the ones that came to Odeon 1, the films tended to stay a while. Whereas Odeon 2, it was more like a cinema where they changed the films more regularly. So Funny Girl

stayed for quite a few weeks.

James

Aside from the opening, were there any other special occasions that you remember?

Maureen

Just the one with Richard Dunn.

James

Let's talk about that. Because you brought a photograph which we've scanned, would you like to describe the photograph?

Maureen

It was when the first 'Rocky' film came out. And it was being showed in Odeon 2 I think, I'm not sure. And Richard Dunn, who was the Bradford boxer who fought Muhammad Ali, he was invited to come to a special showing they were going to have before it opened. And so he came, and I was working that day. And just a few of us, sat with him had our photograph taken with him.

James

And was Telegraph & Argus that took the photo, was that published in the paper?

Maureen

I'm not sure, possibly. Obviously, there was somebody famous there so they took the photograph. It was after we 'd watched the film, we were just sat outside as they were looking at the film.

James

In the photograph, there's Richard Dunn in the middle, isn't it? You're as we look at the photograph to his right to the left of the photograph. There is another usherette on the other side of him. He's got the reel of film, holding it and then behind him there's publicity for 'Rocky', with picture of Sylvester Stallone

Maureen

We also had T-shirts.

James

What's on your T-shirt?

Maureen

Rocky is a Knock Out. And I wore that for a number of years later as I have other photographs when I'm wearing the T-shirt.

James

Do remember any other films that were particularly big queues for or that caused a bit of a splash?

Maureen

Not really, no.

James

And any other particular memories of your work there? Was it fairly standard each night or there any nights that were different for any reason?

Maureen

Not really. Eventually I went to work in the ice cream room where I filled the trays up for the usherettes to take out. That was a bit of a promotion, it meant I didn't have to walk up and down the stairs. They came up with their trays and money and I had to cash up.

James

Did you still get to see all the films?

Maureen

Once we finished work, so it was usually just the endings of films that we used to see.

James

Did you get a discount to come as a customer?

Maureen

Yes, we did. Our family could come. I think we perhaps got a pass, so our family could come. Once a week somebody could come and use the pass. So I was very popular with friends.

James

So you started on the opening night in 1969, which we know was 21st of August. And then how long did you work there?

Maureen

Well, I had another baby in July 1970. So obviously, I left just before she was born.

James

And then you came back?

Maureen

And then I came back for a short while, yes.

James

You had the photo of Rocky and that was 1977.

Maureen

Yes, I must have come back for a while. But sometime after 1977 I left.

I was invited back to my profession. One of the night sister at St. Luke's was a regular customer. She used to come in, during the day sometimes to watch a film and used to come for an ice cream where I stood.

James

Did she know you?

Maureen

Yes, because I trained already at St. Luke's. She knew I left in 1968 when I had my first child. In those days, there was no maternity leave, you left. And so by this time in 1977 she decided that it was time that I went back to nursing, so she persuaded me back.

James

That was the end your usherette career?

Maureen

Yes.

James

Fabulous Maureen and that's been really, really great. Thank you so much.

Maureen

Thank you.