

Summary - Anne Edwards

Born in 1945, Father worked in County Hall recruiting teachers and Mother was a stay at home mum as most women were in those days.

Earliest memory was seeing the pantomime in Kingston when about 5 or 6 years old in a theatre that became a cinema later.

As a child didn't go to the cinema a lot as the family didn't have a lot of money, remember seeing Disney films, Snow White and the Seven Dwarves around 1950, usually went with Mum as Dad worked five and a half days a week and visited his parents on Sunday, not a lot of time for going to the cinema. Only remember Disney from younger days, not interested in cowboy films.

As a teenager went to cinema maybe once a week as a treat as didn't have a lot of money to spend, living in Thames Ditton by this time remembers visiting the Odeon and seeing Guns of Navarone. No Elvis pictures as wasn't keen on him! However memories of the Regal Cinema and the Bill Haley film Rock Around the Clock when people ripped up the seats. Travelled into Kingston by bus and was able to go to the cinema with a group of friends.

Which cinema we went to depended on what films were showing, never went to the Kinema as it was a bit of a dive! Remember after the war there were loads of war films and recalls watching events on Pathe News and a visit to the Odeon in Surbiton where there was a pigeon flying round inside.

How has cinema changed? Thinking of the Light Cinema in Addlestone which has reclining seats and a pizza restaurant.

Became an usherette at the Odeon after answering an advert in a local paper in 1964, worked selling ice creams and drinks and showing people to their seats with a torch, wore a uniform which must have put on in a room somewhere, but really doesn't remember that. Worked only days no evenings. Earned £3.00 a week but any losses on the ice cream tray were taken out of wages. Prices very difficult to work out, ice creams were 1'10 and drinks another price, at school studied English, Latin and History, first week lost more than a pound

from wages.

Worst aspect of job, heavy tray; best aspect being paid for something fun to do, got to see Beatles film A Hard Day's Night five times in a shift.

When Laurence of Arabia was showing the heat was turned up because the management wanted to sell more ice creams.

Cinema buildings, mainly art deco, all the ones Anne went into had an entrance door with a desk in the middle of the floor with ticket machines, except the Odeon which had two entrance doors. Granada was bigger than Regal or ABC. Odeon was a nice building with a dance school above.

Staff at Odeon, remembers seeing the manager and the projectionists at work, the other usherettes were older and did the job to earn extra money.

Opportunities for women, apart from usherettes not a great deal, there were a few women projectionists but never met them.

Opportunities for gay and lesbian people, never had any recollection of gay and lesbian people working in cinemas, but back then it was illegal and never portrayed on film.

Saturday nights, only worked days during the week never worked Saturday evening or morning never went to Saturday morning pictures.

Can't remember dealing with any bad behaviour at the Odeon, remembers Surbiton Odeon the lights changed colour on the curtain just before the film which seemed to keep everyone amused.

Advertising for films mainly posters outside the cinema and in local papers, back then mostly by word of mouth.

Did working in cinema change her life? Yes, she met her husband who was a projectionist at the Odeon and was married for 53 years.