

THE EDITOR'S

PORTSMOUTH

WORTHING

FOR this trip the editorial barouche was first directed toward Hastings. This very pleasant town has had a fairly uneventful life since the Norman invasion in 1066. In fact not a great deal of any interest occurred until 1981, when Strand Sound installed a complete new sound system in the White Rock Pavilion.

This very pleasant building, constructed in the mid twenties, has many fine qualities. It enjoys excellent sight lines because, even though it has a flat floor, it is of moderate size, seating 1200 in balcony and stalls, with a gently raked stage. The front elevation has coloured bas-relief roundels of remotely heraldic aspect. Within is lustrous wooden panelling on the walls and white dappled marble on the floors and stairs. Nestling in the "Corner" — actor's left — is the new Strand Sound amplifier rack, while the sound desk was made portable so that it can be used "out front".

Above the proscenium hang three cubes, with others of their fellows to each side. These anonymous but obviously substantial housings contain Altec speakers which convey everything from the most sibilant

whisper to the most brazen crescendo.

The White Rock Pavilion Installation

- Five Altec 9846-8A loudspeakers fitted with up rated drivers.
- One Rank Strand Sound MMS1 mixer in flight case.
- One Custom 19-in rack with amplifiers and Equalisers.
- Two Foldback wedge monitors.
- Two Foldback side-fill loudspeakers.

It was Chesterton who, remarked how typical it was of life's frustrations that the age which had nothing worth saying had invented the loudspeaker.

Pausing to examine a large stone which is displayed on the promenade and on which William the Conqueror is supposed by tradition to have enjoyed his first picnic on English soil, I travelled on by the coast road westwards towards Eastbourne.

My destination was the Congress Theatre, a somewhat anonymous structure in the 1960's office block style which occupies a site next to

the Devonshire Park Pavilion, where the excellent Mr Clarkson Rose and His Rosebuds provided summer entertainment for visitors during many a past summer.

This visit reminded me that I was involved in a fairly dramatic episode in relation to the Congress Theatre some seven or eight years ago when their present Strand MMS memory lighting control system went in.

We had delivered the desk, and checked that it was working. It was the day of the opening night of the summer show, featuring Cilla Black, I remember, when an urgent call came through. The pin patch couldn't be used because the special gold plated pins couldn't be found!

Your Editor arranged with the theatre's Technical Manager that they would meet each other half way between Brentford and Eastbourne to effect delivery of the lost necessities. The Felsham Manor Hotel, an East Grinstead hostelry which we both knew, was made the rendezvous point.

As the Editorial equipage glided into the car park from London an orange MGB roared in from the

Eastbourne direction. A discreet hum and the Editor's electrically powered window descended. Through the figured walnut trimmed opening I passed over the vital package. The M.G.'s window jerked down in a series of frantic winds and a hand grabbed the vital offering. Neither car actually came to rest. And that's how they brought the pins from Brentford to Eastbourne.

Back to 1981. Now the Congress Theatre is another home for Altec speakers and other Strand Sound goodies.

Congress Theatre Installation

- Eight Altec 9849-8A full range loudspeakers.
- Two Altec 511B MID-HIGH frequency horns driven via an electronic cross-over.
- One Rank Strand Sound 12 into 4 "Concert Mixer" with four three microphone sub mix modules, and two foldback channels.
- Two Custom 19-in racks fitted with power amplifiers, Graphic Equalisers and electronic cross-overs.
- Two Foldback wedge monitors.
- One Dual Channel eight station Ring Intercom.

Back into the car. Inspired by the thoughts of fine quality sound that my journey was inducing, I turn on my excellent Radiomobile valve car radio — still as good as the day it left Cricklewood in 1963 — and by its mellow accompaniment on over the cliff top road towards Worthing. A pause in the delightfully named Peacehaven, where sustenance — cheese omelette and a pot of tea — is ingested and then on to Worthing, the "Sunniest Town on the South Coast". Some of my more mature readers, who may have visited the pre-war Worthing in their childhood



Worthing — the North Pier Pavilion. "This pleasant, twenties building".

"This very pleasant building" — the White Rock Pavilion, Hastings.



"Nestling in the Corner" — the new portable sound desk. The amplifier racks lurk behind. The various conduits and switches prove this isn't a studio shot!

