

JOURNEYS

Ah what vision those two words bring to mind! Right up to the fifties the dozen resorts between Folkestone and Bournemouth were the mecca for all holiday makers from anywhere south of Birmingham. The towns all developed with the spread of the railways a hundred and fifty years ago, and many had their theatres and pier head pavilions built at the turn of the century.



HASTINGS

EASTBOURNE

may recollect the famous Tramcars. These strange vehicles — which were actually single deck bus bodies mounted on dust cart chassis — travelled sedately up and down the promenade. The usual arrangement was for visitors to Tramcar in the windward direction and then to stroll back with the wind behind them.

Currently the Corporation are undertaking the complete refurbishment of the North Pier Pavilion. Strand are supplying stage lighting, stage drapes and refurbishing the seating as well as installing a new Environ fluorescent dimming system for the houselights. Strand Sound are of course providing the sound system.

This is a pleasant building, designed in the twenties, oval in plan and shaped rather like a giant jelly mould.

When I knew the Pavilion during my boyhood coloured bulbs outlined its generously curving roof, but these have been removed, presumably because of the difficulty of replacing them as they burned out. When they were installed sophisticated lighting control was unknown. Today a Strand ENVIRON daylight sensitive system would gradually, through the dimmers, turn on the lamps as daylight faded, and then, gradually turn them out at a pre-determined time. Thus no thermal shock to the lamp filaments and with the top set of the dimmer down a few per cent below maximum, a very long lamp life indeed would result.

Incidentally, I once visited a large auditorium in the north of England where part of the house lighting consisted of a large ring of exposed 100 Watt lamps set high in the ceiling. There was no access for relamping from a roof void, so to replace a blown bulb scaffolding had to be rigged from the sloping auditorium floor, bridging over the

fixed rows of tip up seating.

After a few epic struggles the house manager decided to rely on the concealed troughs around the perimeter of the auditorium, while gradually the centre circle of lamps burned out as the years passed. Three stubborn lamps remained infuriatingly alight. Naturally they were not equidistant. And for some reason they could not be disconnected without a major upheaval to the wiring.

The manager, a man of Yorkshire resource, finally lost patience. One morning he took his stance at the back of the building with an air gun, and the three final lamps were finally extinguished with three well directed lead pellets.

Worthing — Pier Pavilion

- Four Altec 9846-8A loudspeakers.
- Two Altec 511B horns.
- One Rank Strand Sound MMS1 audio mixer 20 into 4, in custom desk. Incorporating: Microphone patch, amplifiers, electronic cross over and equalisers.
- Two Foldback wedge monitors.
- One Rank Strand Sound Intercom system (six outstations).
- One Show relay system with stage manager's paging microphone.
- One Inductive loop system (Deaf Aid).



The Congress Theatre,
Eastbourne.

Portsmouth Guildhall.
Now splendidly
isolated from the
traffic.



From Worthing westward to Portsmouth, historic home of the Navy. The Guildhall, a noble building with vaguely French renaissance overtones, stands in the centre of a complex of ultra modern glass clad office buildings. Visually this setting provides a fine contrast and one is able to enjoy the building without cars and lorries circling round its base. It must today look very much again as its architect, round about 1910 I guess, would have intended.

Interesting, once again, to realise that when the Guildhall was built there was no question of the human voice un-amplified not being considered sufficient. This was still true when I remember going to Drury Lane back in the fifties to see the first London production of "The King and I" or "South Pacific" or something similar. As a vicious critic remarked, "Last evening Miss ... shook her voice at us like a tiny fist."

Twenty five years later I went to see "A Chorus Line" and heard every word of dialogue — a very dubious pleasure in that instance.

Portsmouth — Guildhall

- Six Altec 9846-8A full range loudspeakers.
- One Rank Strand MMS1 12 into 4 audio mixer supplied in custom console.
- One Custom 19-in rack fitted with power amplifiers, Graphic Equaliser and Intercom power supply.
- One General paging amplifier.

So, Strand Sound goes on adding to its range of products for theatre and auditorium. The acquisition of the Altec agency adds both capability and reputation to a Strand offshoot that in five years has come a long way.

Their motto? "O.K. for sound!" — naturally.



"Lustrous wood panelling, white dappled marble — and Altec speakers". The interior of the White Rock Pavilion.

