**Type**

Sound: .WAV

**Duration**

00:49:48

**Project**

Pass It On – Oral History Project for the Chichester Festival Theatre

**Recording Date**

29 January 2014

**Recording Location**

Board Room, Football Club, Chichester

**Interviewees**

Brian Wingate (speaker, male)

**Interviewers**

Alison Cunningham (speaker, female)

**Abstract**

Brian Wingate born Chichester 1949. From age twelve when theatre was being built became avid autograph collector. Comments on seeing Princess Alexandra driving to Chichester Festival Theatre (CFT) to lay foundation stone. (03:00) Remarks on seeing celebrities arrive on first night of theatre, including John Mills and family. (05:20) Mentions watching firework display that night. (06:00). Describes first visit to a play, ‘Uncle Vanya’ in second season. 06:30 Mentions seeing and collecting autographs from all the actors in the early years. (08:00 – 09:00). Mentions seeing famous visitors to theatre, including Greta Garbo, Charlie Chaplin, Cary Grant, Gregory Peck, Montgomery Clift, Gloria Swanson. (10:30) Comments on local resentment of theatre because of demolition of nearby houses, believed to be caused by theatre. (16:00-17:00). Mentions difficult times under Ruth MacKenzie’s time as Director (19:00) Brief description of the then theatre restaurant, and other outbuildings, before Minerva theatre was built. Remarks that Minerva had a more friendly atmosphere. (24:00) Comments that restaurant managers would alert him to famous guests, including Anthony Quinn (29:00) Anecdote of meeting Lady Bird Johnson, wife of President Johnson of USA, and her daughter, guests of Earl of Bessborough (31:40) Anecdote of Jeanette Landis, actor in ‘The Workhouse Donkey’, flirting with him.(37:30) Remarks on pleasant greetings from Maggie Smith (40:00) Anecdote of Maggie Smith filming at Shepperton Studios by day and arriving by helicopter to play ‘Desdemona’ at night. (42:00) Remarks that Noel Coward would come to CFT and Princess Marina would come separately, but they would sit together. (44:00-45:00)