

The Workers Story – Interviewee Form

Name: Pat Wurmli

Number: WS26

DOB: 8.10.31

Age at interview: 76

Dates at Royal Worcester: 1950-54

Key areas: typing pool, office, drama group

Date of interview: 18.07.07

Interview Summary:

Pat Wurmli (nee Martin) started in the typing pool at RW in 1950, working with a number of other girls under Miss Glover in a long 'brown' room, near Mr Dutton's office. She mainly took dictation and typed letters, often complaints from customers or details of orders. She joined the drama group at RW run by Tony Chiles. She recalls being the lead part in 2 plays. She got married and moved to Switzerland in 1954.

Interview Synopsis (per 5 minute track)

Tracks 1 to 7

1.(0.00) Ident

2. (0.12) Came from Brighton. Applied for job in tying pool in 1950. Worked with a group of girls in a long, dismal room. 'We had a lot of laughs'. She was interviewed by Mr Dutton. His office was at one end, then the long room, then Mr Jimson's secretary's office, and then Mr Jimson's office. About 10 girls in all, including Pat Preece who was gorgeous and chased by then men in the office. The men came in to have letters written. Says the letters were exciting and sent all over the world. She remembers doing 'Bills of lading' – triple layered with a wax front which you put on a roller – very difficult to amend if you got it wrong. Her direct boss was Miss Glover. Lots of letters referred to problems with oval casserole lids or delays in services.

3. (5.04) They used type writers and dictaphones. They would go to whoever's office they were called to and take dictation. Mentions John Lance and Jim Edgar. Pat mainly worked for Miss Glover and Mr Dutton. She loved going to the painting department. Remembers the bottle kilns. Pat met one of the Doughty's and remembers her discussing the problems of firing a bird on blossom. 'We were proud to work for them'. The day started at 9, then they went for meals in the canteen which was also used for dances and drama. Says that Tony Chiles (?) started the drama group.

4. (10.05) She was involved in 2 plays in about 1952, one about manglewurzels and the other was like 'Private Lives'. They were both performed in one evening and she was the female lead in both. There were about 10 in the cast, and they rehearsed in the canteen. She says the plays were well supported. The drama group didn't last long. Describes Tony Chiles with 'his wild fair hair' – he was like a professional director. Goes on to describe dances in the canteen. They had records not a live band, and

chairs around the room. Danced the Quick Step, Foxtrot and Waltz. There was always a table of soft drinks. Says it was an opportunity for the departments to mix together.

5. (15.08) 1951 – recalls Princess Elizabeth’s visit. She went down the wrong alleyway, and was the only one who actually saw her pass by. Says she was very small and had exquisite skin. Doesn’t recall the dinner afterwards. Talks more about the typing pool. She mentions Dorris, a tiny girl with a huge and embarrassing laugh. Describes the room as ‘brown’ with brown linoleum. It was a long brown room with typists on either side. One person checked the letters before they went out – this was her job by the end of her time there. There were office boys, men from other departments coming in, and Miss Glover ‘a white haired tornado’. Mr Dutton spent hours dictating letters as he’d pause and stare out of the window. Recalls playing a trick on a young office boy with a whoopee cushion.

6. (20.08) Talks about Christmas, and getting drunk (they weren’t used to drinking) and they all brought something in to eat. Says it wasn’t an exciting job, but they were proud to be part of the factory. There was one phone in the room, answered by Miss Glover. Mentions Mr Simmonds the Art Director as ‘quite a lad’. Pat says not much changed in her time – 4 years. She left to get married and says her leaving do was very sad.

7. (25.06) She moved to Lucerne in Switzerland, but came back a year later to Bristol and then back to Worcester, but by then had a baby and didn’t come back to the Porcelain.