

## ***The Miners Line* – Song Notes**

**by Jack Harris**

This song derives mostly from the interview with Pat Cann, who worked for Miners Cosmetics in the mid-70s. In all honesty, I was hindered at first by how boring she considered the work to be - not a lot of grist there for what is, essentially, a celebratory project! But the Miners brand had a story of its own, which came through in the interview, and which gave me more room to manoeuvre.

I was taken with the history of the product, and how a close-focus human story could work within it. Miners was originally a supplier of makeup to the London theatre; later it moved into affordable fashion makeup, where we have the 60s, Carnaby Street, greater social freedoms for young women etc. This led me to a single person: an older man who'd grown up a theatre addict, and was proud of the role his local factory had in making those shows "sparkle and shine". From there, I was able to trace the trajectory of a life lived in tandem with the Cox Lane site. His daughter ends up working there, she grows up around 'Swinging London', using the new Miners products herself etc. I was playing here on the idea of the 'line', in both the sense of a production line and the line of a family, history etc.

Moving into the 60s/70s, as it were, also allowed me to draw on Pat's interview directly: the Mary Quant bottles with their daisies on the side; taking orders on an A3 sheet; the wicker basket full of factory seconds; nice, novelistic details that (hopefully!) add presence to the story.

Lastly, just because I know what the internet is like, I'm aware that Edith Evans gave her famous delivery of Lady Bracknell's 'handbag' line in the film version of *The Importance of Being Earnest*, never on stage.

## ***The Miner's Line – lyrics***

I saw Edith Evans on the Palladium Stage  
Along with a couple noted stars of the age  
“A handbag!” the crowd went wild  
That’s how it all started when I was a child

There were Terrys and Cusacks, Redgraves by the score  
In Rattigan and Priestly, in Ibsen and Shaw  
I was young then, you could call it my prime  
It all came together in the light of the lime

And what made those faces sparkle and shine?  
The paints and the powders from the Miners Line

Now my Edith goes to work everyday  
At the Cox Lane site just over the way  
She fills out the orders on a big A3 sheet  
The shades change colour every day of the week

It’s a long day for a young girl but the perks are just fine  
A basket full of seconds from the Miners Line

Now me and Mrs still go to the shows  
A night out now and then in our old party clothes  
Used to take the children to the pantomime  
The dames did their faces with the Miners Line

But these girls today, they only want one thing  
To feel a little fancy when they shimmy and swing  
On Greek Street and Dean Street it’s all Rhythm and Jazz  
You take along your top girl when you’re out on the razz

It takes a few quid just to have a good time  
And a little slap of makeup from the Miners Line

Now there’s daisies on bottles in the old V&A  
And kids paint their faces in a whole different way  
If I can’t keep up, hey, that’s no worries at all  
It’s a big bright world and there’s room for them all

In the pubs and the clubs let them sparkle and shine  
It started way back this way on the Miners Line