

that time they used to turn out eight to ten coaches out a day. Now I think they only turn out about ten coaches out a week. The men who worked up the road vehicle shop they used to do all the carts, all the level crossing barriers. The wheelbarrows used to be cut out and they used to get four pence halfpenny for putting a wheelbarrow together. That's all they got, and they used to get about four pound for doing them big old crossing gates. But the best money we had was three pound a week and that was before I started in there. Tradesmen used to get a guinea and the labourer used to get fifteen shilling and all the tradesmen used to come out of a Friday when they'd drawn their money. When I come out you'd see the old tinsmiths and people come out in their boiler suits and all the woodworkers that used to come out in their aprons. I used to wear a white apron. They used to double it up and come out and go over the old, over the pub, the Engineer. There used to be as many as a hundred pints on the counter, all ready drawn. That's when old Pinfold kep' it. You used to give him a pound and they used to give you nineteen shillings and sixpence back in a paper bag. Still they were good old days. You could get a pint then for four pence and a lump of bread and cheese.

What did you actually do in the Brass room, what was your job?

We used to do everything. We used to pile all the castings up, turn all the castings. We used to have to do silver soldering, braising, soldering everything. All the lavatories up with copper pipes. We used to get twenty five shilling for fitting a lavatory up. We used to get a pound a berth for a sleeper.

At that time of day in our shop they used to do nearly everything. They used to do brass plating, copper plating, silver plating and then the chromium plating come in, matt nickel plating, oxidising. We used to do everything in there. All the brass work used to be put in pickle vats as we used to call it where you used to dip it and put it through the old soda wash first to get the sand out. We used to put it in sulphuric acid and nitric acid and wash it off and dry it off in sawdust. That used to fetch it up like gold that. Then we used to have to file it all up and get it going. Used to do all the steam gauges, Bracken gauges, Westinghouse gauges, everything.

Did you stay in the same shop all the time?

I had fifty year and nine month in the same shop.

How many men worked there?

How many in our shop then? Well there were roughly I think ninety brass finishers and I dare say

there were two dozen polishers.

How many men in the Works when you first started?

Ooh as it built up after I'd been in there sometime when the mass production started, I should say there was six thousand men in there.

Lillian Johnson

Women working

You know I've been very interested in how women found things when they were living here. I know that at one time there wasn't much employment for women at all because McCorquodales wasn't built until about the 1870s, you know, to allow some sort of work. I was wondering what life was like for instance when you were first married?

Well, yes well it'll be sixty-two years now since I married and of course it was unheard of for women going to work, unless of course they were widows. Sometimes those with big families would go out to work. Unless of course you had a relative that kept a shop and went to help them in that way. Their usual work was what I call jolly hard work, doing all the scrubbing and cleaning in larger houses, you see. There wasn't the scope for women, you see and even teachers were not allowed to teach if they married.

To tell you the truth there wasn't much employment that I wanted. I started out as a pupil-teacher but I didn't go very far with it because the money was so poor. I started with half-a-crown a week. It doesn't seem believable does it? So I branched out. I went to London and I was in London five or six years before I married and I was married as I say in my teens.

Dorothy Warren

Walk to work

It's a good five miles from Yardley Gobion to Wolverton by road if you go through Stony Stratford and there were no conveyance at all, no push bikes or anything. Five miles to get there for six o'clock in the morning is a long way to walk.

Do you think quite a lot of people who lived in Yardley Gobion did actually work in Wolverton?

Oh yes, we have talked at different times about these men getting up and walking to Wolverton. If it was foggy sometimes they had to wander round. They couldn't find the stile to get out of it onto the canal bank, all sorts of things like that. My