

Extracts about Wolverton

Fred Price

Holidays

(Wife) You never had anything for holidays when we were first married but if you had the fortnight, a week or a fortnight you never had anything, you never had a halfpenny. You'd got to save all the year round for when he was at home. If you had a holiday you'd got to save double.

Yes, how did you manage to save?

You'd got to save.

(Wife) It wasn't much but we used to save enough just... We used to go Ramsgate or Margate, hadn't we when our boy was small?

That was when half the people of Wolverton used to take the spuds and the peas and the stuff in a sack.

(Wife) You used to take your own food...

...and the landlady used to cook.

(Wife) Most people used to go away for a meal like that.

That was two pound a piece, you'd get used to your free pass, used to run all the special trains from there.

(Wife) You used to be able to travel free same as you can now, is it four? Four times a year.

They'd run a special you see to Blackpool...

(Wife) They'd put a board up outside the station where all the specials were running to and what times they were going and what times they were coming back the next Saturday so you'd know if you were going to Blackpool or Ramsgate, Ramsgate and Margate were mostly the places at that time. So you knew you could travel however many kiddies you'd got. You knew you could go and come back free, so what you done in between was up to you.

The veg were grown in the allotments?

That's right.

(Wife) You used to take your own and then give 'em to the landlady of wherever they were and cook

'em. They only used to charge just so much a week then hadn't they?

Two pound down so about four pound for your lodging.

Meals

You had an old tin can there with a lid on the top to make your tea in at the mess room. They used to have some old hot water there and you used to pull an old handle down and mash it of a morning and fill it up after dinner. They used to have old steam ovens where some of them used to take the old Clangers they used to call them, old puddings.

They used to take old clangers and put them in, in the old tins and you'd have the number of your seat, stick that in. Now and again you'd get some old boy he didn't like the dinner he'd got. He'd pinch somebody else's.

The number of your seat, what seat in the canteen?

Oh yes, yes. There used to be long desks right through and they used to have a board as high as that through the middle so you couldn't see what the bloke next to you'd got over the top.

(Wife) They used to have potatoes one end, suet pudding, potatoes one end the meat and that in the middle and then plain at the end and treacle on that bit. I remember that. You used to have bacon and onion roll. If they hadn't got no meat it'd be 'tater one end and 'tater the other not much meat in 'em.

Start age and wages

We started in at fourteen to learn our trade. If your father didn't work in there you didn't get in there, well it was a job to. When we started in there they used to allow us four files a month and if they wasn't worn out the foreman wouldn't give us another one. When I started I had twelve and eleven pence a week, used to get sixpence a week pocket money out of that. When we used to go home at night on the train, we used to have an old train with boarded seats and a candle in the window. They wouldn't let us ride on the other trains because of our clothes were too dirty.

What they did

Anyhow the Works progressed again and they got back in running order again. The old lifting shop at