

husband's father worked in the railway stores offices. He used to have a pony and trap. People liked walking more in those days and my husband when he was a lad started in the offices as well. He used to go with his father. Then after his father retired he went on a push bike.

Houses

They were better houses in Wolverton. There was a passage from the front door and a front room, a back sitting room and a little kitchen, I think. Probably three bedrooms so there were different grades of them.

How did people used to cope with the bedrooms like a lot of these little houses only had two bedrooms?

Well I suppose some of them only had two. I don't know how people did manage really. It was the same in the villages, wasn't it. You often hear somebody saying; 'Mrs so and so had fourteen children in that cottage.' I mean where did they sleep then in only two bedrooms? But you see, you've to think by the time the eldest one was ten, if it was a girl, she went out to service. Very often they slept with grandparents or neighbours or elderly neighbours who'd got a spare bedroom. I think they were parked out because you can deduce that sometimes from census returns, you don't know they may have actually been living with them, but certainly sleeping there on census night.

Mrs Pinfold

Working in the pub

Was it hard work pulling the pints?

No not really because I only went in the bar during the rush time when the men come out of the Works dinner time and then again at half-past five till six o'clock. Then they all got on their bikes or buses and off they went. When I first went there it was the old tram and then gradually they got the buses. They hadn't got the buses like they got it organised now.

Yes, so you remember the busy times as being lunch-time and the first hour after work for the men?

When they used to come out at half-past five, they used to be thirsty and gasping for a pint. I don't know if they had a cup of tea in the afternoon then. There used to be the mess room opposite and dinner times they could always go in the mess room for their dinner. Those that preferred to come and have a pint and bread and cheese and pickles were in the bar.

My husband always used to go along to the bank on Thursdays and get change for... I can't tell you how much now, round about a hundred pounds I should think – in pounds and ten shillings and that was all put up that silver in envelopes, stacked and set on a tray overnight ready for the Friday dinner-time when the men come out with their pay. They all wanted to change their money, to get their money changed for their wives. Some of the wives used to come up and meet them for their money and go shopping round Wolverton market.

And so once they had broken the note they could give their wives what they wanted. What time did they actually get over to the pub?

The Works, when the whistle blew we all had to be on duty behind the bar, half-past twelve, same as the whistle blows now, half-past twelve to half-past one. Then they were working again, go into work at half-past one and come out at half-past five, finished.

Bill Rowledge

McCorquodales

So what was it like in 1917?

Well it was hard work, I do know that. I was thirteen, yes. I left school at thirteen and I started there in 1917. That was a year before the war ended. I know we had to work hard and there was times when work was very short in them days and sometimes we worked a three-day week, four-day week. There was many a period then when you worked three days a week. You get no money for it. You couldn't sign on the unemployment and sometimes they'd stand some of the apprentices off for a month at a time. You never got no money for it.

How much did you earn when you were working?

At seventeen, nine shillings a week, nine shillings a week I was earning. I got married in 1932 and I was top wage earner then and I was earning three pound seventeen and six a week. When I got married, that was in 1932 and I was able to have this house built then.

Times

When I first started we used to go, some mornings we used to go at half-past six, break at eight o'clock for half-an-hours breakfast then work till lunchtime.

I've heard about, of all these hooters going all the time, Railway ones and McCorquodales ones?