

ALC/R15

14th. June 1976

Dear Reverend Awdry,

I was very pleased to be able to speak to you on the phone last week. Our project was instigated by the Milton Keynes Development Corporation and our brief is to produce a play about Wolverton called 'All Change'. The Development Corporation wanted us to feature Wolverton because, like Milton Keynes is today, Wolverton was a new town 130 years ago.

The history and fortunes of Wolverton go hand in hand with those of the railway companies who have had their works at Wolverton—firstly the London and Birmingham, then the London and North Western and finally the London, Midland and Scottish.

The discipline we use in creating the script for the play is the one of only using primary source material. This means using peoples living memory - recording people's experiences on tape • newspaper articles - chiefly we use the Northampton Mercury and Herald since they are local and cover all the period we feature in our story -and official records - in particular we use documents from Parish Records, county archives and the transport archives. Secondary sources are very useful to M1 as they give an indication of the events that are an important part of Wolverton's history. We then seek out documentation of these events in primary sources.

I have outlined below some pointers we have to these developments and the questions we are asking to help us fill in the story:

McConnell was making important changes in the design and building of locomotive engines* In particular the 'Bloomer' engine. Could you outline these developments and direct us to some sources of information on them?

Up until Bury's resignation, engines had always been rented from Bury's company and only repairs were carried out at Wolverton. It was under McConnell's direction that Wolverton became a depot where engines were

designed and built for the railway company. Did Bury's bankruptcy terminate the supply of engines to the company or were there other reasons for the building and development of engines at Wolverton? Could you give us some indication of what these reasons might be ?

Despite the value of McConnell's contribution to the building and development of engines, the board forced McConnell to resign in 1862. So Wolverton flourished as a locomotive building depot for a very short period. In 1864, the board decided to remove all locomotive building work to Crewe and to remove the carriage building work from Saltley to Wolverton. This caused a lot of Wolverton men to go to Crewe to continue their work and there was a large influx of Saltley men into the area.

Was McConnell making developments at Wolverton that were out of line with the board's ideas for the development of the company as a whole ? Was his work at first encouraged by the board and did he only later find himself at odds with the board?

Could you give us some guidance as to what the issues were that led to his resignation and the board's decision to remove the locomotive building work to Crewe?

These are some of the questions in our minds. If you could guide us or refer us to any sources of information it would be a great help to us.

All our researches become the property of our school and community library.

We have copies of several documents from the transport archives in London. For instance, copies of Creeds and Stephenson's reports on the direction the line should take. We would be very happy to send you copies.

Yours sincerely.

Margaret E. Broadhurst

researcher for ' All Change '