

The Night Train

In the 1950s a lot of goods were moved by rail and quite a large proportion were at night, some were interesting and some were mundane and not worth mentioning. One regular trip into London many stokers and drivers will remember. Although I am unable to remember the exact timings the story is true.

We would leave Redhill in the evening at about 2030 hours and set off with a heavy load of mixed goods to our first droop off point at East Croydon. At various points we would be held in a siding en route to facilitate passenger trains passing. At Norwood Junction we had shunting duties which meant we took off several wagons and added others before proceeding into south London.



Photo: Jason Gurr

Now we come to the interesting bit; at about 2200 we had usually finished our duties and we would wait for the right of way out onto the main line, we never minded waiting because there was live entertainment to view. This was in the

form of a young lady that would strip off slowly and right in front of the window with no drawn curtains. This young lady would fold everything with care and take her time because she knew we were taking interest.

Every Stoker and most Drivers in Redhill would talk about this regular entertaining evening at Norwood Junction. We still had our shift to complete and when the signals were in our favor we set off with our cargo. Somewhere near Bricklayers Arms we would deposit our train then take the engine into Bricklayers Arms Shed.

All we had to do was report to the Shed Foreman and take a slow walk out on to The Old Kent Road then up to the Borough, we always stopped for a chat at Joes; who was a street trader for a cup of tea. Then walk round to London Bridge and ride home as passengers on a late night train.