

SOUTHERN RAILWAY SERVANTS' ORPHANAGE
IN ASSOCIATION WITH
THE SOUTHERN RAILWAY HOMES FOR OLD PEOPLE



WOKING, SURREY

The Southern Railway
SERVANTS' ORPHANAGE

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HOMES FOR OLD PEOPLE
WOKING SURREY

NINETEEN HUNDRED AND FIFTY FIVE



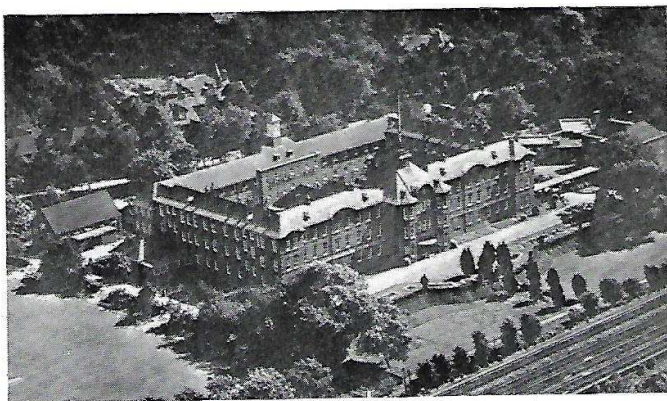
The Southern Railway Servants' Orphanage

President: C. P. HOPKINS, ESQ.

FOUNDATION

The Home was founded in 1885 by the late Canon Allen Edwards, M.A., Vicar of All Saints' Church, Lambeth. The Vicar took a special interest in the large number of railwaymen who lived in his Parish and supported and encouraged them in their efforts to help each other in times of adversity. His attention and sympathy were drawn particularly to one case when a family of small girls were made orphans and homeless by the death of their father. At his own expense the Vicar rented a house in Jeffreys Road, Clapham, engaged a housekeeper and took the children under his "wing." A few months later, during a "Social Hour" after one of his services for railwaymen, Canon Edwards suggested to some of the men from Nine Elms Station that they should take over and develop the "Home" which he had started. The idea was adopted enthusiastically and the house was soon accommodating a maximum of ten girls. Expansion into neighbouring property followed until altogether four houses were filled with boys and girls. The demand for accommodation continued to grow and the urge to improve the Homes was so insistent that, early in the twentieth century, the decision was taken to build a Home for the maximum number of children likely to become the orphans of the employees of the London and South Western Railway. The main block of the present Home at Woking was erected and opened in 1909 with room for a maximum of 150 children.

The formation of the Southern Railway created a demand for more accommodation and a new wing was added in 1935 to provide for an additional 90 children. A single storey Hospital block was built in 1930 and a Gymnasium was built in 1932. A nearby house was acquired and opened in 1946 as a nursery for children under five years of age.



PREMISES

The Home grounds cover nine acres of land adjacent to the railway near to Woking Station. The main building is three storeys high and is in the form of a rectangle with an Assembly Hall spanning the centre. The dining hall, kitchen, dayrooms, washrooms, workrooms, library, studies, stores and offices are on the ground floor. The first floor and the second floor are used for dormitories (24 beds each), bathrooms, playrooms, wardrobe rooms, and staff bedrooms. The elder boys and girls enjoy the privacy afforded by individual cubicles in the dormitories. A staff bedroom is situated next to each dormitory. Six staircases give access to the upper floors. The building is centrally heated but most of the dayrooms also have open fireplaces. Spaciousness, light and airiness are a feature of the premises.

ADMINISTRATION

The Southern Region is divided into sixteen geographically convenient areas, with a District Committee in each. The District Committee is chosen from Railway employees working or living in the area. The Committee's main duties are the raising of funds, recommending children for admission and watching over the After-Welfare of children who have passed through the Home. The District Committees send representatives to Woking to form the Board of Management of the Orphanage, which has complete control of the Institution. A General Purposes Committee, consisting of twelve members of the Board and three ladies chosen by the Board, carries out the detailed management of the Home. A Finance Committee



and Central After-Welfare Committee also are appointed by the Board. All the Officers and Committees of the Board are elected annually.

FINANCE

The main income of the Home is derived from voluntary contributions made by the staff and employees of the Southern Region. The usual contribution is 2d. or 3d. per week which, by arrangement with the British Railways, is deducted from wages and remitted each month to the Orphanage Bank Account. Normally no appeal is made to the general public other than by local "Flag Days" organised by some of the District Committees and by Collecting Dogs operating at some of the larger Stations. Donations and subscriptions from the general public are however warmly welcomed.

CONDITIONS OF ADMISSION

Any child whose parent is, or was at the time of death, employed by the Southern Region of the British Railways, is eligible for admission if the child is in need of a home. The children of employees of the Docks and Inland Waterways at places formerly operated by the Southern Railway Company are similarly eligible for admission.



A child needing a home temporarily because of the illness of one or both parents may also be admitted provided that accommodation is available.

Total orphans and fatherless children whose fathers were railwaymen are maintained free of charge. If a child is motherless, comes from separated or divorced parents, or is temporarily admitted, the parent responsible for the child is expected to contribute towards the cost of the child's maintenance.



EDUCATION

The education of the children is not carried out at the Orphanage. The children go out to school as they would from their own homes. Thus, they are not isolated but meet and associate with other children. The majority attend the local County Primary and Secondary Schools, whilst children with aptitude for higher education attend the County Grammar Schools and Technical Colleges. Special rooms are reserved for the use of children who are required to do homework.

In the event of a child being mentally retarded fees may be paid for the maintenance of a child in a special school, or the child may be maintained at home with the mother.

The preparation of the children for taking their places as citizens after leaving the Home and the inculcation of decent ethical standards receive the personal attention of the Matron and Secretary-Superintendent.

RELIGIOUS TRAINING

Each child attends the Church of the denomination specified by the parent. All the children go to Sunday morning Services and any who wish can attend the Sunday evening Services, but no pressure is placed on the children to go to Church more than once on a Sunday. Morning prayers are said by the Secretary-Superintendent or



Matron at a general assembly of the children after breakfast each day excepting Sundays. There are two Honorary Chaplains representing the Church of England and Nonconformist Churches who come and go at will among the children and are members of the Board of Management. Roman Catholic children are brought up in their own faith.

MEDICAL CARE

A Visiting Medical Officer is responsible for the medical care of the children. Consultants are called in whenever necessary. Use is made of the services offered by the Clinics associated with the local schools. A fully qualified nurse is in charge of the hospital.

DIET

No attempt is made by the Board to confine expenditure on food to a pre-arranged figure. There is no set repetitive diet and every effort is made to introduce variety. The staff eat with the children and of the same dishes.

GENERAL CONDITIONS

The boys and girls are divided into sections grouped according to age. The nursery and junior children are in mixed sections.



Approximately 20 children are in each of the senior sections and 15 in the juniors. Men are in charge of the older boys. Joint activities between the boys and girls is encouraged. Every endeavour is made to promote freedom of occupation, speech and personal judgment *vis-à-vis* with the life of a child in an ordinary well-run private family. The children go out for walks, outings and go shopping on their own, and, except for the juniors, are not escorted to school. Children of twelve years of age and over are permitted to own and ride bicycles. Friendships with other children outside the Orphanage are welcomed and visiting between their respective homes is encouraged. If any of the children wish to join they may become members of any of the Youth Organisations operating in the district.

Each "Dayroom" is equipped with wireless and easy chairs. The children manage their own pocket money but usually avail themselves of facilities for "banking" with the staff. Letters are not censored but many letters are voluntarily shown to the staff because of the friendly relations which exist between the children and the staff. The library is available to the children at all times, excepting when the television set is in use. Each section takes turns in using the library for television entertainment.

The children go home for the summer holidays. A summer holiday home is arranged for any child who has no relations. The children



may also go home for the Christmas and Easter holidays if they and their parents wish them to go. The children and staff usually go away camping for a week in the Whitsun holiday.

The children's parents and relations are invited to visit them once a month. If the visit cannot be made on the Saturday afternoon set aside for this purpose the parents may visit on any other day convenient to them. The opportunity is then taken by the staff to discuss matters of mutual interest with the parents whose co-operation is sought in the upbringing of the children.

AFTER-WELFARE

When a child leaves the Orphanage full particulars are sent to the appropriate District Committee and to the local children's officer. A Welfare Sub-Committee of the District Committee watches over the interests and welfare of the child until the age of 21 years is reached. Assistance is given in finding suitable work if requested by the parent or guardian. When apprenticeships are arranged a supplementary maintenance allowance is paid, if needed.

Every fatherless child is provided with a leaving outfit and is reimbursed for the cost of additional items purchased later until £30 has been expended on the total outfit. The child selects the clothing comprising the outfit. No old boy or girl who gets into difficulties, or experiences misfortune, ever calls in vain for assistance. A reunion is held on the third Saturday in October every year.

The Southern Railway Homes for Old People

President: SIR EUSTACE MISSENDEN, O.B.E.

FOUNDATION

The idea of the Southern Railway Servants' Orphanage sponsoring and running a Home for old railway employees was first mooted in 1939 by the late Mr. H. J. O'Neill who was then Chairman of the Board of Management, but the incidence of the World War caused the proposal to be shelved for the time being. In 1944, the matter was raised again. Constitutional difficulties were solved and the necessary amendments to the Rule Book were made. The Board of Management of the Orphanage, in 1946, constituted themselves the Board of Management of the Homes for Old People.

The house which was to become the first Old People's Home was offered to the Board in January, 1947, and was opened by Colonel E. Gore Browne, D.S.O., Chairman of the Southern Railway Company, on 22nd September, 1947. The House was named "Missenden House" in honour of Sir Eustace Missenden, O.B.E., General Manager of the Southern Railway and Chairman elect of the Railway Executive, British Railways. A second and much larger house,



known as Wynberg, was opened on the 1st November, 1950, by The Lord Hurcomb, Chairman of the British Transport Commission, in memory of the late Mr. H. J. O'Neill.

PREMISES AND SITUATION

Both houses are situated on the south side of the Railway. Missenden House is in a residential neighbourhood, the quietness of which is pleasantly relieved by the young life to be seen, and occasionally heard, in the County Grammar School for Girls, on the other side of the road. Wynberg is placed directly opposite to the Orphanage and the residents are able to watch and enjoy the company of children. The station and town centre are only a few minutes' walk away from either House, a walk made easy for old people by the flatness of the terrain.

Both Homes stand in good-sized gardens. They have large Sitting Rooms, some being set aside for men and others for women. At "Wynberg" there is a Common Room for men and women and a Writing Room. Both Homes have large Dining Rooms with tables for four. Television and radio sets are installed in both houses. Several of the bedrooms contain two, three or four beds, but each resident has individual equipment, e.g. wardrobe; chest of drawers; linen baskets, etc. There are a number of single bedrooms and double rooms for married residents. All the rooms have large win-



dows and all the bedrooms are fitted with wash-basins with hot and cold water laid on. Both Houses are warmed by central heating and open coal fires are available in the living rooms. Brightness is the keynote of the decorations and the furnishing. Easy chairs, rugs, flowers and other contributions to an atmosphere of peace, comfort and security are plentiful. The gardens make a useful contribution of fruit and vegetables to the larders.

ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

The Management of the Homes is identical with that of the Orphanage, being served by the same Board of Management, District Committee system and Executive Officers. A Standing Committee is responsible for the detailed management of the Homes.

The finances of the Homes, whilst operated for everyday purposes with those of the Orphanage, are nevertheless kept distinct in the books of the two Institutions and published annually in separate sets of Accounts.

The income, apart from donations, is mainly derived from two sources, i.e. paybill subscriptions and weekly payments by the residents. The Board of Management allocates each year the income from paybill subscriptions between the Orphanage and the Old People's Homes. The residents are called upon to pay towards their



maintenance, but it is the policy of the Board to leave the residents with sufficient resources to meet their needs for personal amenities, clothing, holidays and incidental expenses.

CONDITIONS OF ADMISSION

Subject to accommodation being available, any retired employee of the Southern Railway or of the Southern Region, British Railways, is eligible for admission; also his wife or widow. A condition of admission for those retiring since the inception of the Homes is that of having been a regular subscriber to the funds of the Institution for a period of years.

Applicants must pass a medical examination, and until provision can be made for infirm residents it is necessary that they shall be in reasonably sound state of health consistent with their age. By arrangement with the Management the residents may bring into the Home certain personal possessions which they treasure, but as the Homes are fully furnished the accommodation for personal property of a bulky nature is limited.

To obviate possible difficulties in settling the affairs of the residents when they die, it is a condition of admission that an applicant must prepare a Will and for the Secretary to know the name and address of the Executor.



GENERAL ARRANGEMENTS

The general arrangements of the Homes are those which might be found in any quiet residential hotel. There are no "Institutional" rules to be observed. The residents are free to come and go and do as they please providing that they conduct themselves properly and do not interfere with the comfort of their fellow residents. The policy of the Management is to foster a family atmosphere whilst protecting the privacy and freedom of the individual.

Apart from being expected to make, or help in making their own beds when they can, the residents are not called upon to assist in any domestic duties. Those who want an occupation and feel they would like to do something towards the house or garden chores are allowed to help as much as they wish. In exchange for their weekly "rent" the residents are provided with accommodation, food, laundry, recreational facilities and any nursing attention not supplied by the State Health Service. An "Amenities Fund" provides for the celebration of special occasions. Each resident may be absent for a total of six weeks in a year without paying "rent."

The diet is plentiful and wholesome and is varied as much as possible.



The residents may entertain their personal visitors in the Home on any day between the hours of 11 a.m. and 9 p.m.