

From Ventnor



No matter it was a distance of a mere kilometer and a half from Ventnor to Ryde, the Isle of Wight Pemmican Club – whose members numbered two hundred and a half – steadfastly refused to walk from one village to the other. Having just bested the Islet of Langerhans in the All Bloody England Meat Pie Competition, they felt that they merited a ride on a bloody train! But none was scheduled for two days. The Club's meatballpark ranger, who was also a train spotter, had an idea. He and some mates prized open the Bushwicke Railroad tender that sat rusting on the southbound spur and removed about a bushel of coal dust, which they carried to the main north-south rail line and poured all over the tracks – as bait. Then they all scrambled inside the water tower to hide. Within minutes, a locomotive that had been grazing near the train shed slowly approached on the freight line spur. It whipped its cowcatcher around this way and that, searching for a trap. Finding none, it stuck its nose in the coal dust, and immediately lost all sense of vigilance. It rolled over and wallowed drunkenly in the dust. And that's when the Wighters struck. Racing from their hiding place, they swarmed all over the locomotive and commandeered it. With great effort, they righted the massive iron horse. Then they all clambered aboard and prepared for the journey to Ryde. But the train was too small to accommodate everyone, so those with the flimsiest purchase were kicked off. Eventually, the locomotive was able to proceed down the tracks, but so overburdened was it that the trip took three days. By that time, the regularly scheduled train had arrived in Ventnor, picked up the two dozen left-behind Pemmicaners, and whisked them comfortably and speedily to Ryde, well ahead of the others. There's a moral here, but I don't think it has anything to do with meat pies.