

## **NYMR Junior Volunteers Week 2009**

This year we held the event from 20<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> July, a move which gave us far better weather than that experienced last year and which produced only minimal disruption to our activities. Attendance was excellent with fifteen Juniors taking part on the middle three days, thirteen on the Monday and eleven on the Friday. Juniors came from as far afield as Hertfordshire, Bradford, York, Beverley, Darlington and Guisborough as well as Pickering, Goathland and Scarborough. A team of ten supervisors each spent at least two days helping everything to run as smoothly as possible.

The week started at Goathland Station with a safety briefing, followed by a tour of the site, including the up-siding and the area behind the tank house. The Juniors were then split into two teams, by age, with the older group working on repainting the ornamental signs and buffers by the tank house, the younger group in the meanwhile painting some of the platform garden edging. After lunch the older group had a go at the garden edge painting as well as weeding and cleaning the station approach. The five younger Juniors, having changed into their uniforms, spent a while learning about platform duties and then put the training into action. Very smart they looked, too.

Tuesday morning at 10.05 saw everyone on platform 2 at Grosmont, dressed in old clothes and boiler suits. During a shed tour, hosted by Ray Stewart, everyone had the chance to climb into the cabs of Repton and Sir Nigel Gresley. The team then set to cleaning the out-of-traffic Super D, first with rags and polish, later cleaning the motion with paraffin and oil. While all this was going on, Robson Hewitson, himself a Junior Volunteer at the MPD, gave some of the team the chance to clean out the smokebox and to find out what it was like to climb into the firebox. In the afternoon, after finishing the loco, Craig Binns provided hands-on experience of how to clean coaches, both inside and out. Just before we set off for home from Grosmont Station, the crew of the loco waiting to pull our train allowed a group of the younger Juniors onto the footplate, where they also got the chance to put a couple of shovelfuls of coal onto the fire, an unforgettable experience. Whether they had anything to do with the subsequent very slow progress up the gradient near Darnholme we will never know. Needless to say, the end-of-week feedback put Tuesday at the top of everyone's list, with pleas of 'can't we do at least two days at the shed next year.'

Wednesday saw a complete change of dress, with everyone looking their best for a day to be spent 'front of house,' working with the public. Four teams helped to man the catering trolleys, with Gill, Carole and Lewis, two teams carried out on-board collections for the Bridge and Wheels Appeal and two teams attempted to sell Guides to the Line, also on-board. Back at Goathland Station, further teams were trained in and carried out platform duties, while several Juniors helped in the shop and tearoom. In the afternoon we also managed to fit in a signal-box tour for the younger Juniors, thanks to Alistair Dalglish who was able to prove to them just how much strength, not to say technique, is involved in moving those points and signals. Several he-men of both sexes will have to wait at least one more year before mastering that art. By the end of the day, the Bridge and Wheels Appeal was £182.73 better off and £243 of Guides had been sold.

Dry stone walling might seem an unusual theme for the older Juniors on Thursday morning but the railway does have miles of dry stone walls, especially in the Goathland area and it has to be maintained. Those pesky sheep and the occasional thoughtless photographer

manage to damage sections each year. As a result, volunteer Richard Simpson spent the morning showing the team how to take down the remains of a wall and how to rebuild it. Following his advice and instructions the Juniors managed to reconstruct about three metres of wall by lunch. Back up the line Alastair Dalgleish had another team of Juniors wire-brushing and then applying primer paint to a hopper wagon in the down sidings at Goathland. After lunch some of the 'stone-wallers' joined this gang, while two of the girls set out to prove that they could hammer nails in straight just as well as boys as they repaired several section of fencing by the path heading towards Darnholme. Towards the end of the afternoon Ivan gave the older Juniors a signal box tour and their chance to prove their strength against the toughest levers that Goathland Signal Box has to offer.

An innovation this year was the barbeque, held on the Thursday evening. Despite some sharp showers as it was starting, the event was appreciated by all. Colin Dobson manned the cooker in the mess coach, John Bennett set up and presided over the barbeque, his own, and Alastair Dalgleish was the impromptu assistant chef. We are all in their debt. We must also not forget Jess from Australia who donated two huge blocks of chocolate which disappeared very rapidly at the end, as well as Lisa who prepared the tearoom for our invasion, despite a trying afternoon.

Friday morning saw some of the Juniors finding out about guarding skills, courtesy of Dave Tibbett and Alastair Dalgleish, while others worked as TTI's checking and punching tickets. One more catering trolley trip was also undertaken. After lunch things began to wind down, as we finished the afternoon with a safety test to see if they had been listening carefully during the week. At this point the Juniors were also asked to provide some feedback on the week's events.

With such a large group it was not possible for everyone to do everything. Inevitably some missed out on certain activities. This was reflected in a few of the feedback sheets. Loco cleaning at the MPD came out top of everybody's favourite list. Many commented that they enjoyed working with the public, for example in the shop and booking office, on the catering trolley, selling guides to the line and on platform duties. There was some feeling from the younger male participants that they should not have to work with girls in future. The younger girls seemed to feel the same way about the boys. Strangely, none of the older group came up with that idea.

It became clear during the week that some Juniors excelled at certain activities. Jack Clarke, Callum Jackson and James Ball all seemed to have the knack with dry stone walling. Phillip Akester and Duncan Jackson looked the part and the model of efficiency when on platform duties and TTI work on the train. Abbie-Gayle Bevan and Katy Ball painted garden edges and knocked nails in to fence rails with aplomb. Callie Bowes fitted smoothly behind the shop counter. Daisy Marflitt is a natural when it comes to getting covered in coal dust; there seems to be a future here for her on the footplate. Sam Lightwing looked so comfortable in a loco firebox that he is now hoping to start as a cleaner at the MPD. Oliver Clarke seemed most at home while crawling around a wagon chassis covered in paint, both the wagon and Oli that is. Robert Morgan was able to use his new 'accompanied PTS' training on the lineside while dry stone walling, which was a great help to all of us. Luke Taylor, once upon a time toasted as the premier salesman of the Junior Volunteers, was thoroughly outshone by Adam Towers who found his calling in life selling line guides.

The week would not have been possible without the time and support given by the team of adult supervisors. Not only did they supervise the activities, they took part themselves and improvised when, occasionally, things did not quite work out as planned. Our grateful thanks are due to: Ann Lane, Colin Dobson, David Idle, John Bennett, Malcolm Collins, Julie Henderson, Nicky Ball, Steve Maltby and Steve Moorhouse.

The other people so far not mentioned, who also deserve our thanks for their ideas, unstinting help and time are: John Bruce, Paul Brown, Clive Goult, John Fletcher, Simon at the MPD, Les and Margaret Smith, Ros Breuer, Bev Dalglish, Martin Trent and David Hardwick. It is well worth mentioning that the task of organising the week's activities was made all the easier by the way in which everyone who was asked to help in any way readily agreed and supported the venture, in many cases doing far more than was originally envisaged.

Looking forward to next year, we have come to a number of conclusions based on our experience. The maximum number of Juniors that we are likely to be able to cater for is around 20. This will inevitably mean that places next year will be limited. It will also be necessary to recruit another four to six supervisors to provide a couple of days support each, if we are to maintain the 2:1 supervision ratio which we think is essential. We would also like to provide the same type of program as this year for Juniors who have joined the group after the 2009 event but tackle longer, more in-depth tasks with the 'old hands.' Several ideas for the latter have already been discussed but we would welcome further suggestions.

In the meantime, don't forget the regular monthly sessions, which you can read about in Volunteer Viewpoint, elsewhere in this magazine. If you would like to join us as a Junior Volunteer or as an adult supervisor or have ideas to share please get in touch with Julie Henderson at Park Street or Roger Swift at Goathland Station. You can also find contact details and other information at [www.goathlandstation.org.uk](http://www.goathlandstation.org.uk).