

Junior Volunteers Week 2011

2011 was our fourth and most ambitious Junior Volunteers week yet. Thirty-three Juniors, drawn from all three groups, took part from Sunday 24th to Friday 29th July. Overall, the week was a success and an achievement that all who took part can be proud of.

Briefing

The week started on Sunday 24th July with a briefing in the Reussner Learning Centre at Pickering Station at 12 noon for the supervisors who were to run the activities with the briefing for the Juniors starting at 1pm. The 33 Junior Volunteers who took part were split into two groups.

Group A consisted of 9 Juniors who had not taken part in Junior Volunteers Week 2010. They were provided with experience of a wide range of activities, all essential to the maintenance of the railway and the raising of funds to keep the railway running.

Monday was spent in at Levisham Station. First off was the essential PTS type track briefing from Bryan Orange. During the rest of the day, groups tackled brash and log gathering/stacking, painting sections of box van panelling, and levelling ash ballast.

Tuesday saw everyone smartly turned out ready to help with the catering trolley and to sell Guides to the Line, half-a-day on each experience. Those who sold Guides in the morning definitely had the easier task, although by the end of the day the total was a very creditable £256. The extra help with the trolleys and buffet were appreciated by the staff.

Wednesday was spent at Grosmont. In the morning the group visited the MPD. First off was a tour of those parts of the site that were accessible on a weekday, followed by a session cleaning the frames, wheels and motion of the Super D. Just before lunch all the Group were able to climb onto the footplate of Charlie Wood's Whitby black 5 and help the fireman build up the fire as well as find out about some of the controls and finally try the whistle. After lunch and some polishing of the Super D tender, Wednesday's activities finished with a session of carriage cleaning led by Craig Binns.

Thursday, was walling and fencing day. Richard Simpson led the group in the orderly demolition and reconstruction of two sections of dry-stone wall above Beckhole village. After lunch the group worked to erect further posts and rails to the fence at Goathland Station begun so magnificently by the Group B fencing team.

Friday started at Goathland Station with a session on Wagon Restoration, led by Alistair Dalglish. The Juniors worked on a bogie flat wagon in the down sidings. After lunch, the group were given a tour of the signal box, which was much enjoyed by all. The only downside was the safety test. To everyone's relief high marks were achieved by all, proving that the Juniors had been listening to Bryan on Monday. The day finished with everyone helping Anthony in the tearoom to stock up all the shelves.

Group B consisted of 24 Junior Volunteers, most of who had had attended in 2010 or were part of the MPD Group. Early in 2011 this group were presented with nine different activities, ranging from one to five days in duration. The aim of these extended tasks was

to train the Juniors in roles which are essential to the maintenance and running of the NYMR and to provide an experience which would inform and shape their future with the NYMR. Each of the tasks had an element of instruction. Junior Volunteers were asked to select activities which would make up a five day plan of their own choosing. All participants dressed appropriately for each occasion, looking very smart indeed when necessary. Junior Volunteer supervisors were on hand at each location to provide the necessary support and training.

Catering

After the success of the catering option last year we were once again given the use of the Great Northern Saloon and Ryedale Carriage to serve teas, coffees and cakes to first class passengers. The juniors were organised on a rota basis to make sure that everyone had the opportunity to take orders, serve food, clear away dishes and wash up! They were supported by a small number of adult and assistant supervisors who served hot drinks. The juniors proved invaluable as “ambassadors” for the railway and were able to tell members of the public about various points of interest along the way, the engines and the work of the junior volunteers specifically. Although we were not too busy, the day for the juniors remained a long one but we had no problems with motivation and enthusiasm.

By the end of the week, we were pleased to find that we had taken a total of £1,012. In addition approximately £43 was donated in tips which will help fund future activities.

Retailing

Juniors taking part worked in two shops, Pickering and Goathland. A range of activities was undertaken. Everyone enjoyed the experience of working behind the counter, learning how to operate the barcode reader and till, give the correct change, package the goods and interact with customers. Everyone also had a turn at pricing goods, stocking shelves and many of the other activities essential for the smooth running of a retail outlet.

TTI & Guarding

This activity was only open to Juniors aged 14+ who had passed the PTS test. One day was spent with a TTI training on the job, the second day being spent with a guard, under instruction. TTI trainees had previously been issued with fare tables and were expected to take on all aspects of the job. Guard trainees assisted the guard throughout the day, including checking the stock, vacuum tests, control of the train and the checking of seat occupancy. All who took part said that the experience had been very worthwhile, with one Junior commenting: 'The highlight of my week was definitely Monday. We found that the guard was an excellent teacher and he went through everything he was doing with us. He also let us do a lot of different things which were very important and he put a lot of trust in us.'

Loco Cleaning

This session was designed as a three-day event so that Juniors would be able to experience a wide range of cleaning tasks. It was only open to those aged 14+.

Day 1 - At the start of the session the group was split up so that the assistant supervisors could play a full part in the organisation of the Juniors. One group spent the morning lopping vegetation between Armstrong Oilers and the bracket signal in order to improve sight lines for train crew. Another group spent some time levelling ash at the back and side of the wheel drop building in order to improve accessibility. During the afternoon the Q6 was given a wipe down before it went into service. Many bags of polystyrene waste were also brought down from the top of the tunnel for disposal at the MPD.

Day 2 - The 4am start, while not to everyone's liking, was at the very least an interesting experience. After a cup of tea and a piece of toast followed by a minibus ride to Grosmont, the group was split into three. The less experienced lit up the Super D, three more experienced juniors lit up George Stephenson and two lit up Eric Treacy under the eye of the rostered cleaner. Later in the morning, after a proper breakfast and a rest, the charge cleaner, provided some very welcome tuition and advice to the group and we also had the wheel drop demonstrated to us.

Day 3 – Some of the juniors and junior supervisors took the initiative and organised their own activity and starting time. For example, the group working on the diesels started much earlier having agreed directly with trainers and supervisors, a group got on with the bonfire mid morning and the two younger juniors turned up before 12.00 and helped with the ash spreading. Later in the day some Juniors helped whitewash the NELPG shed pit, worked on shelving for Hartland's container and cleaned Joem. Those working with diesels particularly had a very constructive session, learning how to drain and refill axle boxes, greasing brake gear and correcting problems with loco door catches. Towards the end of the afternoon, Clive Goult came down to see the Juniors to thank them for everything they had done during the week. At the end of the shift everyone went for a well earned lemonade or coke outside a local hostelry in order to relax and review the week.

Fencing

The task was to commence the enclosure of an area behind Goathland tank house to form, eventually a public picnic area. To this end it was planned to erect a post-and-rail fence faced with pickets.

Day 1 - We began by dividing into 4 teams, each with a Junior, an assistant supervisor and an adult supervisor. Each team then dug one post hole to a depth of 60 cms. By lunch 4 posts were in position, correctly aligned and bedded in. After lunch, rails were affixed to the new posts and a start was made on nailing pickets to the rails using a 10 cm wide former to ensure consistent angles and spacing between the pickets. By the end of the day more than half the fence had been erected and we were well ahead of schedule.

Day 2 – The second day began as Day 1. The onset of drizzling rain later did not deter the diggers but some supervisors retreated to shelter under an adjacent tree! By lunch 2 posts were in place and a start had been made on affixing rails. After lunch the last two posts were set in while more rails were sought. Once these had been fixed more pickets were nailed in.

Day 3 - The team soon got to work painting the fence that had been erected the previous day. After lunch we completed the painting and commenced the digging of two more post holes so as

to extend the fence up the south side of the grassy area. With additional materials rushed in, two more posts were in place by 4.30pm.

All the juniors worked hard, with interest and enthusiasm throughout the week. Both Juniors and supervisors can be proud of a very smart and tidy looking end result

Wagon Restoration

All Juniors really got stuck in with the tasks given to them. The box van chassis was nearly finished ready for rubbing and grinding down by the end of day 1. The shed was tidied and cleaned up then they watched as the brake van was moved out of the shed onto the line for the first time in two years. On day two everyone helped again with the rust removal on the box van and then started rubbing down the PW crane ready for painting. On day three (Friday) many of the Juniors and supervisors were tired. It had after all been a very busy week. Before lunch more work was carried out on the box van and crane. After lunch, the Juniors walked up to Newbridge signal box for a look round and to try their hand with the levers, etc. Many thanks to Ian and Pickering Wagon Group for the three-day experience, which was enjoyed by everyone, Juniors and supervisors.

Platform Duties

The team working at Platform Duties were certainly in the running for the award of 'Best Dressed Juniors and Supervisors of the Week.' The supervisors provided a varied diet of activities, based around Goathland platform each day, talking to or helping passengers getting on or off trains, timetable queries, help with running errands for the Booking Office, Shop and Tearoom, cleaning plaques etc. Trips to Grosmont to examine the rather different environment there were also covered as were signal box tours to Goathland, Grosmont and Newbridge boxes.

Signal Maintenance

Tuesday took us to New Bridge to support Craig Donald and his son on a "painting the Forth Bridge" task – but this time "only" painting the crossing gates at New Bridge! We were regaled with tales and video showing the rather worrying speeding habits of the drivers using the crossing and adjacent accommodation crossing and warned that there was far more danger from road vehicles than the railway – although we did retire to safe positions when trains passed us. By 4.30pm we finished painting the gates and support frameworks and in the case of the two Juniors, painting themselves as well.

Selling Guides to the Line

Three groups all started at Goathland and the books and floats were there for us to pick up. Each group was provided with a list of trains giving a continuous shuttle back and forth between Grosmont and Pickering so that no two groups would be on the same train, and no train would be missed out. The numbers of guides sold was very satisfactory, raising £345. All six Juniors worked hard and can be pleased with the results for their efforts.

Social Activities

A barbeque was held at Goathland Station from 5pm to 7pm on Thursday 28th July. The venue allowed everyone to stretch their legs and find space to move around and talk. The event can be judged a success and is expected to be the model used in future years.

The Supervisors

The Supervisors, without whose hard work, professionalism and sense of humour the week would not have been a success, were: John Ball, Nicky Ball, Lindsay Barber, John Bennett, Malcolm Collins, Colin Dobson, David Griffiths, Anne Lane, Steve Maltby, Steve Marritt, Sam Kendall, Steve Moorhouse, Bryan Orange, Mark Pennington, Richard Simpson, Roger Swift, Chris Towers, Martin Trent, Chris Vincent, Sue Vincent and Ian Wallis.

This year we also had the help of seven assistant supervisors; 16 and 17 year olds who themselves used to be Junior Volunteers. It was particularly encouraging to see these young people taking on the training of the next generation of Juniors. They were: James Ball, Robson Hewitson, Sam Lightwing, Robert Morgan, Kathryn Pennington, Josh Smith and Luke Taylor.

The efforts of the Juniors, supervisors, assistant supervisors and everyone who worked with us or assisted in any way all helped to make Junior Volunteers Week 2011 both successful and enjoyable for everyone.

Roger Swift with contributions from John Ball, Nicky Ball, Katy Ball, Lindsay Barber, Colin Dobson, Steve Maltby, Steve Marritt, Bryan Orange, Richard Simpson, Josh Smith and Ian Wallis.