

Network Rail partners with Thomas & Friends™ to teach children railway safety

December 6, 2018



Network Rail has teamed up with the world's most famous blue engine and preschooler favourite, Thomas the Tank Engine™, to teach children how to stay safe on the railway.

The Stay Safe with Thomas story book sees the mischievous Thomas putting himself and his friends in danger, instead of staying safe. He learns valuable lessons on the dangers of ignoring red lights at level crossings, leaving gates open to allow animals on to the tracks and standing too close to the edge of a platform.

Network Rail, along with British Transport Police, hopes the story book will encourage parents to discuss rail safety with their young children, in the same manner that they teach them about other dangers they may encounter when out and about.

"The railway is full of both obvious and hidden dangers" said Nicola Dooris, community safety manager at Network Rail south east.

"By offering parents an engaging and fun way to talk to their children at a young age about safety on the

railway, we hope children will grow up knowing the dangers and keep themselves and their friends safe.”

Nicola launched the new book with the help of Lord Mayor of Canterbury, Cllr Colin Spooner, by reading it to the children at Choo Choo day nursery in Whitstable, Kent.

Cllr Colin Spooner said: “It was an absolute pleasure to read to the children at Choo Choo nursery and reinforce the rail safety message in a way they can understand.

“By starting to explain the rules to children at this early age, I hope we can teach them how to stay safe now and when they start using the railways in the future.

“This is a fantastic example of Network Rail being proactive and taking its message out into the community where it can have maximum impact.”

The launch of the story book follows the You vs Train campaign, run by the rail industry and the British Transport Police (BTP), which targeted older children and teenagers to warn them the railway isn’t a playground.

The number of young people taking risks on the railway track has doubled in the South East since 2014. In the last 12 months alone, seven young people under the age of 18 lost their lives and a further 48 people have suffered life changing injuries across the UK.

Superintendent Susan Peters said: “We are delighted to be collaborating on this initiative, our focus is keeping people safe and working with such a well-known children’s television character is exciting.

“This Thomas the Tank engine story book gives us an engaging and accessible way to ensure essential safety messaging is reaching young children. Although BTP runs activity through the year to educate the public of the seen and unseen dangers in and around the railway tracks, we hope that being able to discuss this subject through the use of these books will make our safety messages go further.”

Network Rail and the British Transport Police (BTP) are distributing copies of the book to local libraries, nurseries and doctors’ surgeries across the country. A free, electronic version of the book is available to download at www.networkrail.co.uk/thomas