

Rail industry hosts safety day for 200 North East schoolchildren

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Network Rail and industry partners have joined forces to deliver a rail safety event for primary school children at the historic Locomotion museum in Shildon.

The event took place on Wednesday, 24 and Thursday, 25 May and saw 200 children from primary schools in and around Darlington visit the iconic museum and learn all about railway safety.

The children took part in educational sessions and workshops which covered a wide range of topics. These included how to plan a journey and use trains safely, as well as how dangerous trespassing on the railway is and why it is really important never to do so.

They also designed rail safety graphics which will be entered into the [Backtrack Anti-trespass competition](#), which is organised by the Community Rail Education Network and will be used in rail education lessons and assemblies across the country.

The children also spent time viewing the British Transport Police's (BTP) operational vehicles, and observed a drone in operation. All of the sessions took place in and around Locomotion's Main Hall, which

houses historic rail vehicles.

The sessions were delivered by a range of rail industry partners, including Network Rail, BTP, Northern, CrossCountry, The Railway Children Charity and Bishop Line Community Rail Partnership.

The event was supported by volunteers from London North Eastern Railway, TransPennine Express, International Service System, Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership, Newcastle College's Rail Academy and Weardale Railway.

Northern also arranged for some of the children to arrive and leave the venue by rail, helping them to gain experience of travelling on the railway, and to understand how the information which they have learned can be put into practice.

Rob Merry, Community Safety Manager for Network Rail's East Coast route, said: "We're really passionate about spreading the railway safety message, so we're absolutely delighted to have taken part in this event.

"Over the past few days, the children have learned how to stay safe whilst travelling on trains, as well as the dangers which trespassing on the railway has. The event has been a great success, and we look forward to holding more days like this in the future, helping to reach even more children."

Mary-Anne Snowdon, Inspector for the BTP, said: "What better venue to host this event than Shildon's Locomotion Museum, where children can really get to grips with learning about the railway, as well as our vital safety messages.

"The children were incredibly receptive to the presentation and, with the help of our drone, really seemed to grasp the dangers of the railway and how to stay safe.

"Events like these are key to reaching a young audience and making railway safety lessons fun and accessible."

Simon Heritage, Deputy Head Teacher at Gurney Pease Academy, said: "This was a fantastic day, superbly organised and thoroughly enjoyed by the pupils and staff. Hopefully we can come again next year. Many thanks to all involved."

Photo credit: Network Rail