

STRIVING

Newsletter of the South Tynedale Railway Inclusive
Venture for the Education of Railway Staff

May2019

Apologies that this issue is wordier than our usual offering of words and pics but read on and you'll see why. Yes, a very delayed spring striving (it's now summer!) – though not as delayed as the opening of Crossrail, so things could be worse! The excuse is not a points failure or ASLEF action, but that there have been some fairly major changes in the railway's management structure which have resulted in the chief striver having to spend a lot of time sorting things with our older volunteers. However, he hasn't been idle on the striving side and has also been busy with a big revamp of the Youth Development System (YDS). This has been more than a little inspired by his visits to the youth teams of other railways in connection with his work as Heritage Railway Association Education Adviser.

This newsletter is mainly to inform you of the changes.

From now on, instead of three levels of "striver" the YDS is being split into two sections.

- **Shed52C** is now the junior club for 9 – 14-year-olds. (Yes, we're allowing 9 and 10-year-olds in if they are suitably enthusiastic and sensible, which some are!) It has its own (completely revised and updated) website. I'd strongly suggest you explore that if under 14 to see what's now available. However, I'd particularly draw your attention to this: *"There are four types of COHORT day and you can do them as many times as you like. The maximum number of 52C people on one day is two and you will have your own 52C leader with you for the day. You have to sign up to them in advance and if there is competition for places, the people who give good answers to eMIC questions get priority!"* Here is the temporary link, which you may need to copy and paste into your browser. <https://strivingsignaller.wixsite.com/shed52c> This will be replaced by a more permanent link before too long, but in the mean time please do not share it as it is not publicly available.

We will be publishing soon a list of COHORT days and as far as possible, we'd like you to book for some of these although I'm not ruling out a little bit of negotiation, particularly as the dates of half terms tend to be a bit variable.

- **STRIVERS** from now on is the name for our work experience scheme for 14 – 16-year-olds. There is a good legal reason for calling it "work experience" which I won't bore you with now. It's modelled on the kind of junior apprentice scheme that some other railways operate. The emphasis is on (a) gaining experience of railway work with a view to future employment on the big railway or (b) volunteering on a heritage railway. I was particularly impressed by what I was shown at the Severn Valley and North Norfolk Railways. If you are aged between 14 and 16 and want to be part of this, you will be allocated a personal mentor and you will be rostered with your mentor. At the moment, we have mentors for footplate work and signalling. Other departments may follow. You will work a shift alongside your mentor, learning about and developing the qualities you need to be employable. It will be very good for your CV as you make your way in the world.

We fully appreciate how busy teenagers are with schoolwork and many other calls on their time, so you don't need to come that often – but when you do come, you will be rostered with your mentor. That's part of the learning process – how rosters work! All you have to do at this stage is register your interest and get allocated a mentor. Your mentor will arrange your programme and talk to you about the things you will be able to do. If, on the other hand, you are insanely keen and want to live at the railway (not mentioning any names) there's no reason you should not have more than one mentor and do both signalling and footplate work, and whatever else!

STRIVER TRAVEL

Notwithstanding the above, "Striver Travel" is available to all members of YDS and their supporters, so that certainly includes Shed 52C members (see the website)! Last February, we received an invitation to join NELPG Juniors for a "Mutual Improvement Class" at Darlington Locomotive Works, followed by a look round at the P2 under construction. I cannot tell a lie, the MIC wasn't everyone's cup of tea, but it was an interesting "learning experience" in the development of Striver Travel.

We have now received a kind invitation from the Severn Valley Railway Junior Club to visit them. I would really like to take this opportunity up and develop our links with other railways. However, it will take a bit of organisation which I'm more than willing to do if it can be viable and attract enough support. SVR is too far for one day, so I've looked at the possibilities of making it a trip with an overnight stop (or possibly two nights). There are two really nice youth hostels in the area (the legendary Wilderhope Manor and Ironbridge). Both are midway between SVR and Iron Bridge Gorge Museum, so it seems to me a no-brainer to go for a two-day itinerary including SVR and Ironbridge. The first problem to overcome is that SVR want a party of 6 – 8 to justify their calling out people to show us round. That party can, I'm sure, include adults so it's not an impossible ask but I still need to know if it could be viable. So, could you *please* let me know:

- (a) Whether you are interested and how many of you
- (b) Your impossible dates for August or the Autumn half term.

Also, in the offing is exploration of the Settle and Carlisle Railway. More of that soon.

DL3

And on the subject of adults you may have seen in Tynedalesman an announcement about "DL3". It stands for "Dads, Lads, Ladies and Lasses" – the nearest I could get to "political correctness" and our entirely genuine desire to attract more girls! Once again, this is the product of my research visits to other railways. All of them, without exception, have significant numbers of parents as leaders. Quite often, though not always, parent leaders are also working volunteers on their respective railways. This is a position I would very much like us to get into – not least because it's essential for the future success (to say nothing of survival) of the STR to transform footplate crews from Grandads to Dads (and Mums!!) We are planning a DL3 Day for the summer – the idea is that the parent has a Volunteer for the Day experience across the departments whilst their offspring is taken away for an amazing time with Shed52C. Of course, existing striver parents don't have to wait until then. You can start tomorrow! Don't be shy and don't think you're not invited. Why not give it a try?