



GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY

LOUGHBOROUGH, LEICESTERSHIRE

PRESS INFORMATION

Celebrating 40 years of preservation in 2009

Date: 2nd June 2009

BIG NEWS!

REFURBISHED AND OVERHAULED '4 BIG' UNIT TO STAR IN ITS OWN GALA WEEKEND (4th and 5th JULY)

Looking splendid in all over green, the Great Central Railway's '4 BIG' unit is to star in its own special weekend. On the 4th and 5th of July the four carriage unit which has recently had a complete cosmetic interior and exterior overhaul will make several runs along the line.

It is hoped to have a VIP guest to formally re-commission the unit during the weekend.

The unit arrived in 2005, fresh from finishing its days on the national network. In 2006 it was able to run for the first time in full 'push pull mode' with the National Railway Museum's class 33 (D6535). The GCR doesn't have a third rail so the locomotive is set to become synonymous with the unit as its main motive power.

"The Unit was acquired to be a people mover," said GCR president Bill Ford, **"to help ease overcrowding at some of our most popular special events like Wartime weekend and Bonfire night. Clearly these units never operated on the Great Central Railway, but as a prime commuter vehicle, the Mk I style vehicles are an important part of British railway history. The fact it can run in push pull mode means, just like a DMU we can use our double track to capacity and provide a very frequent service with it. Now it is in all over green livery it really looks superb and I'd like to congratulate everyone involved in the refurbishment."**

The units were seen across the Southern Region but were often found running between London and Brighton. (The "IG" part of their name comes from the London Brighton and South Coast Railway telegraphic code for Brighton.)

When it arrived at the railway the unit was a '4 CIG'. Its buffet car having been removed and replaced with a modern CEP coach. This carriage was sold to another owner and an appropriate buffet car was sourced to replace it. Now a BIG once more, it is ready for passenger traffic although it will be a while before the buffet car



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is open for anything more than light refreshments. Real ale is planned for the 4 BIG buffet for the special weekend.

Normal fares will apply for the weekend (£12 adult runabout tickets), with a special intensive timetable. The 4-BIG could cover up to 66 miles each day - further than London to Brighton! Two steam engines and a further diesel locomotive will also be in action making the weekend a mini gala. More details are available on the GCR website at www.gcrailway.co.uk

ENDS

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FURTHER INFORMATION:

Details on the above and all forthcoming events can be found on the Great Central Railway's extensive website: www.gcrailway.co.uk

Additional information can also be obtained from the Booking Office, Loughborough Central Station, (Daily 9.00 - 5.30) on 01509 230726

NOTES

Voted number 12 on the list of the 50 greatest railway journeys in the world the Great Central Railway is the UK's only double track, main line heritage railway. It's the only place in the world where full size steam engines can be seen passing each other – just as it was when steam ruled the rails. The preserved railway has been operating for over 36 years, and is manned by around 700 volunteers and a small team of permanent staff. Preservation of this section of the Great Central Railway began in 1969. The route was originally part of a main line from Sheffield to London. The 8 mile preserved section between Loughborough and Leicester is fully operational and the 4 stations reflect a different period of the railways 10 year history.

Trains run every weekend of the year, bank holidays and daily in the summer. In addition, First Class Restaurant Car Services provide 4 or 6 course meals, whilst travelling between Loughborough and Leicester or childhood dreams can come true with a Drive a Train Experience. We also run a number of family events, including “Days Out with Thomas the Tank Engine”, Bonfire Night and Santa Specials. The railway has won a number of awards including “independent railway of the year”, and a gold award for the East Midlands best visitor experience and is a quality assured visitor attraction as designated by Enjoy England.

BRITAIN'S ONLY DOUBLE TRACK, MAIN LINE HERITAGE RAILWAY

Great Central Railway, Great Central Road, Loughborough, Leicestershire, LE11 1RW

Tel: (01509) 230726 Fax: (01509) 239791