



GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY
LOUGHBOROUGH, LEICESTERSHIRE

PRESS INFORMATION

MEDIA CALL - MEDIA CALL - MEDIA CALL

Friday 10th June, 10am,
Great Central Railway, Loughborough Central Station
Great Central Road, Loughborough, LE11 1RW

For more information, please see the end of the release.

Date: 6th June 2011

Contact: Kate Tilley, Great Central Railway
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Christine Brown, Wartime weekend event co-ordinator
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**500 SCHOOL CHILDREN ARE EVACUATED FROM
LOUGHBOROUGH**

Operation Pied Piper recreated as a dramatic curtain raiser to Great
Central Railway's biggest ever Wartime Weekend event

10th, 11th and 12th June 2011

The Great Central Railway is helping more than 500 children experience what it was like to be a World War Two evacuee. School children from all over Leicestershire will arrive at the railway on Friday 10th of June and board steam trains for a return trip into history.

They'll also learn about rationing and enjoy 1940s dancing lessons as well as a host of other activities along the railway's line. It's part of the first day of the Great Central Railway's annual Wartime Weekend event. Around four thousand people are expected to visit the award winning Leicestershire attraction during the three day event.

Christine Brown, the wartime weekend event organiser said "**The weekend will give visitors the real chance to experience what life was like in wartime**



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Britain. While children today thankfully don't have to experience the desperate uncertainty of being evacuated by train to stay with people they didn't know, this will give them something of a flavour of what it was like. They'll also be able to learn about other aspects of life in Britain as it entered the war."

Almost than 3,000,000 people, mostly young children were evacuated from towns and cities within days of the outbreak of war. This was Operation Pied Piper, which had been planned in advance, as the government expected the Germans to begin widespread bombing of built up areas.

The Wartime Weekend event will also feature period entertainment, displays of military vehicles and 'visiting dignitaries' including Winston Churchill at stations along the line. At Rothley station there will be a replica of a crashed Messerschmitt fighter plane.

As always, remembrance is at the heart of the event. On Sunday morning there will be a church service and on Saturday and Sunday afternoon a poppy drop from a vintage aircraft will involve the Royal British Legion.

On Saturday and Sunday Hundreds of re-enactors will bring the stations and trains to life wearing period clothes, giving twenty first century visitors the closest experience to time travel they can get. Period music and singers will be appearing throughout the weekend along with cameo scenes invoking the warring forties.

A busy timetable of steam hauled passenger trains will operate on both days. At Quorn and Woodhouse there will be a memorabilia market alongside a real ale tent. Also at Quorn, the railway's brand new tea room, Butler Henderson, a one hundred and forty thousand pound investment, will open for the first time.

ENDS
WORDS 437

PRESS CALL DETAILS

Join some of the 500 evacuees at Loughborough Central Station (and travel on board the trains) at 10am on Friday 10th June. Please confirm attendance by calling Kate Tilley on the above numbers.



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Loughborough Central Station is situated on Great Central Road in Loughborough, just off the A6 half a mile from the town centre. Please use the post code LE11 1RW for your sat nav system.

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 celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2009, 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 111 year history. Around 100,000 visitors a year come to the railway from all over the world.

Trains run every weekend of the year, bank holidays and daily in the summer. In addition, First Class Restaurant Car Services provide famous dining experiences course, whilst passengers travel between Loughborough and Leicester. Childhood engine driver dreams can come true with a Drive a Train Experience. We also run a number of family events, including 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.