

LEICESTER NORTH NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2011

No. 39

This Newsletter is an independent publication, and whilst every attempt is made to ensure accuracy of information, any discrepancies are not the responsibility of Great Central Railway

THE COLOUR OF THE MONTH IS "RED"

Sometimes, especially during the early part of the year, it is difficult to know how to start with a new issue. I sit staring at a blank screen without a single idea in my head, and then, out of the blue, (this time actually by e-mail) comes something to get the pistons moving. It was a photograph of an unusual visitor to this, your local station. No, not a Lesser Spotted Whoozle Bird, (although the bird life at this station, owing to its location, is often very prolific and varied) but a bright shiny "Classic" Midland "Red" coach, of, I believe, 1970,s vintage.

Although it was not a bird, my imagination immediately took flight, and I visualised it shuttling between Leicester North Station and a resurrected Leicester Central Station (what an attraction that would be!)

Those of you who read issue No 36, (January), will know what I'm on about, (still available online.)

It's still not too late to write to the Mercury, or local City Council members to protest at the state that it has been left to degenerate

and start the ball rolling to rescue it and use it for the benefit of our railway.



Photo, J. Casengina.



At long last we seem to be emerging from what has been a very cold and dismal weather pattern, and at last some colour is appearing along our embankments, with Daffodils putting on a brave show, and the promise of much more variety as the seasons progress.

Unfortunately grass and weeds also like the milder weather, so the annual battle has begun again in earnest.

Shortage of staff is not helping the situation, so, if you are of a gardening bent and like a challenge, you will be most welcome (see Mike Dunk who is usually here on Wednesdays and Saturdays.)

Since the last issue, we are pleased to announce that **John Casengina** has now been passed out as a **Platform Inspector**. Unfortunately we still are in desperate need of more volunteers (in all departments) so if you feel that you would like to give us a try, please don't hesitate to contact the station master, or ring; 0116 2610946 at weekends.

Let's not forget that each time the station is unable to open owing to lack of staff, revenue is lost and future improvements and developments to this station are delayed.



The recent Peppa Pig event (new to the GCR) appears to have been a great success.

Certainly ticket receipts at this station were very healthy, and appear to have been replicated all along the line so I think it is safe to assume that the event will be repeated.

The 1960's Gala, whilst not blessed with particularly good weather gave us our first glimpse of the "Red 8F" No. 8624 which seemed to attract a lot of interest from the usual gaggle of photographers (or should they now be termed digital imagers?) who made a beeline to our "No 1. "UP" platform, and was certainly an impressive sight (though perhaps not for the purists.)

I understand that this loco will remain with us for some time.

We can only hope that now that the clocks have gone into "Summer Time"

that the weather will take the hint and do the same, because no matter what the event, good weather always swings it, particularly for those bringing children.

Looking ahead we have the "Gr8 Escape Gala" and the "Great Easter Sale" to look forward to, so



"Red" 8F No. 8624 Photo J. Casengina

there is still plenty in the pipeline to encourage you to keep on visiting us

(dates overleaf.)



Those of you who have been pondering about the reason for the concrete sleepers that have been lying in little heaps between the tracks for so long will, by now, be realising that they are not, after all, a promise of the eventual commencement of the extension to this station of "double tracking" (sorry), but, as is now obvious, will be transformed into three more flower beds to further enhance our station's environment.

If anyone is able to point us in the direction of enough (preferably free) topsoil to fill them, we would be most grateful, so that work can commence on preparing them for planting.

Again, Mike Dunk is the chap to have a word with.

RE-CREATING THE EXPERIENCE

NEWSLETTER!

This newsletter is now available "online".

Please go to: www.gcrailway.co.uk Click on "About Us", scroll down to "Press Releases" and you will see it.

Leicester North Newsletter

THE GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY (1899-1969)

With its continental loading gauge, slow curves and lack of grades steeper than 1 in 76, the great Central was years ahead of its rival's routes into the capital. Add to the aforementioned the plan to continue under London, and then. After travelling south, to traverse the English Channel via a Channel Tunnel, one can see that it would have been a wonderful asset to the nation.

Who knows how much further it would have developed by the present day?

The Great Central Railway (London Extension) was the brainchild of the Victorian Industrialist Edward Watkin, who envisioned a rapid rail link to the continent that would have been far superior to those of his rivals.

Unfortunately, by the 1950's the national network was under acute threat from road transport, which was reaping the benefits of the new motorways that were being constructed, and which was also suffering from a serious lack of investment by the government of the day.

This, coupled with the fact that many of the areas served by the GCR were also covered by other lines, which had always resented the GCR (considering it to be an interloper) made it inevitable that it would be the first to go, under the "Rail Rationalisation Plan", the now infamous "Beeching Plan".

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GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY
 LOUGHBOROUGH, LEICESTERSHIRE

LEICESTER NORTH STATION

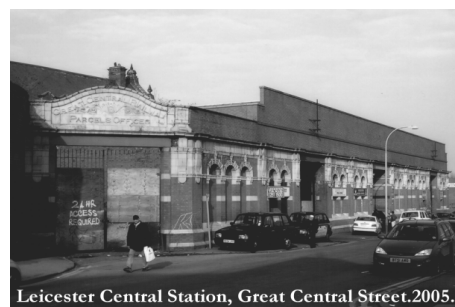
The original station that used to stand on this site was known as BELGRAVE & BIRSTALL, but by the time that the present heritage railway had reached this far south the buildings were in such a sorry state, owing to vandalism, that the decision was taken to re-build. To have re-built to its original specification would have been prohibitively expensive, so the present station is something of a compromise, (plans are, however, in the pipeline to make many improvements) so, if you feel that you would like to help to speed up these proposals by making a donation, please use the Donation Box that can be found in the waiting room.



If you are wondering how the original station used to look, see the above photo. It was a typical GCR station with the usual "Island" platform, accessed via a flight of stairs from the bridge. If you look at the bridge you will see where the staircase descended to the platform (the aperture has been bricked up)

The present station is sited a little further south than the original.

The two intermediate stations ROTHLEY, AND QUORN & WOODHOUSE, still being intact will give you a better idea, although there is a photo of the original station on the wall of our waiting room.



Pre-Beeching the railway continued south, the next station being Leicester Central, from there continuing on to Whetstone, Ashby Magna, Lutterworth, Rugby Central, Charwelton, Woodford & Hinton, Brackley Central, and then, travelling on GC/ Metropolitan metals finally terminating at London St. Marylebone.

Please remember to sign our Visitor's Book, which will be found in the Waiting Room.

Forthcoming Attractions on the GCR

- April 3: Mothering Sunday Luncheon
- April 9/10: Mini Steam Gala; Gloucestershire & Warwickshire Appeal Event
- April 22-25: Easter Steam Special
- April 29: Murder Mystery Evening 'Signal to Murder'
- April 30: Guided Walk with Charnwood Borough Council
- May 14/15: Greater Great Central Diesel Gala
- May 20: Murder Mystery Evening 'Timetable to Murder'
- May 21-22: Meet Fireman Sam
- May 27-30: Golden Oldies Gala
- June 5: Quorn Swopmeet
- June 10-12: Wartime Weekend

Train Times At This Station (2011, WEEKENDS, 2 APRIL to 29 OCTOBER)

"Special" timetables apply on Gala Days, "Ivor the Engine", and other events. Please check on actual day of event	ARRIVALS								Leaflets advertising "Drive a Train Experiences", Dining Trains, etc are available in waiting room		
	10.12	10.45	11.45	12.45	1.30	2.07	2.45	3.48		4.30	5.13
	DEPARTURES										
	10.15	11.00	12.00	1.00	1.45	2.20	3.00	4.00	4.45	5.25	