

LEICESTER NORTH

NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2009

No. 16

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

"FORWARDS!"

At last the clocks have gone forward one hour, so, theoretically at least, we should be able to look ahead and expect better weather, weather that hopefully will coax people from the comfort of their homes and out to the GCR once again.

The rather inclement conditions that we have had to endure recently, however, have not discouraged many hardy individuals from braving the elements and sampling some of the delights that have been on offer here on your local heritage railway.

The recent **60s Gala** was a success, with takings up on the same time last year, so we seem to be bucking the trend at the moment, taking into consideration the current economic squeeze that is afflicting the nation.

The **Q6** illustrated on this page (a photo which clearly shows the completed "phase one" of our new canopy) put in it's final appearance after what has

Continuing with the theme "Forwards", here at Leicester North things have been happening, which we hope will result in a raising of the station profile in terms of publicity, both locally, and in the wider area. The completion of a dedicated **Leicester North Publicity Leaflet** (thanks due to Tom Ingall, and the DCRT) is being distributed around the locality, (a number being accepted by the Leicester Information Bureau in Town Hall Square), and others being offered to several local attractions, will help to make more and more people aware of this station, and indeed the railway as a whole.

With the monthly **Leicester North Newsletter** now being available as a download from the official GCR web site our station is finally awakening from a long sleep, and should, very soon, be as popular as other stations along the line, and although not boasting the attractions of those stations, we do have the advantage of a very large catchment area on our doorstep, and therefore the possibility of attracting many visitors to us.

Our buffet is awaiting the results of the Environmental Health Authorities, to see whether we can comply with the present strict guidelines that will enable us to sell a range of Sandwiches in addition to its normal range of offerings (including Ice Cream) and which will initially be available during Gala Events only, but if sufficient interest becomes apparent, will be extended to normal weekends too, so please avail yourselves' of this facility (if you want it to continue.)

Don't forget to avail yourselves of our normal offerings that are on sale every operating day, and may be added to from time to time.

Welcome!

We extend our welcome to **Stuart Riley** who has joined the "Happy Gang" here at Leicester North, and hope that he will soon get used to our funny ways!

Don't forget, **Volunteers always welcome!**

Loughborough Goods Offices Appeal!

The above Appeal has been successful, so after eighty six years, the property is once again in GCR hands and should prove a valuable asset to the railway.



The building will prove invaluable by providing proper office space where staff and volunteers can work, also a place where meetings can be held, but above all this, it will mean the GCR being run from an original GC building.

VISITORS BOOK

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

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.



been a very successful visit, and attracted a lot of interest all along the line.

The imminent **Tank Engine Gala**, 11th - 13th, is a new venture, and with the possibility of the appearance of the newly GCR overhauled **Fairburn Tank** (from the Lakeside and Haverthwaite Railway) and an **N7** tank from the North Norfolk Railway, along with the last appearances of **GWR Large Prairie No 4141**, (before withdrawal for its mandatory ten year overhaul), promises to be very interesting, and could set the scene for a repeat effort some time in the future.

RE-CREATING THE EXPERIENCE



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THE GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY (1899-1969)

(A Short History)

With its continental loading gauge, slow curves and lack of grades steeper than 1 in 176, the Great central was years ahead of its rivals 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 those of his rival's.

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 be the government of the day.

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

TELEPHONE NUMBERS LEICESTER NORTH

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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 rebuild.

To have rebuilt 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**), any donations that you feel able to make, to speed up these proposals would be most welcome, (please use the donation Box which is situated in the waiting Room.)



If you are visiting us for the first time and are wondering how the original station used to look, see the above photo.

It was a typical GCR station, with the usual "Island" platforms, and which were accessed via a flight of stairs that descended from the bridge parapet.

If you face the track and look to the left you will be able to see where the stairs were situated (now 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 photograph of the original station hanging in the waiting room.)

If you look to the right, beyond the "Stops", you can see Leicester in the distance, Leicester Central Station" (see photo below) being the next stop, south of here, from where it continued south, passing through Whetstone, Lutterworth, Rugby and on to London St Marylebone.

From there it was proposed to continue beneath the capital and on to the channel coast.



Leicester Central Station, Great Central Street.2005.

Forthcoming Attractions on the GCR

April 11-13: Tank Engine event

April 25/26: Diesel Gala

May 2-4: Days Out With Thomas

May 9/10: 40th Anniversary of closure of the GCR

June 7: Collectors' fair and toys and trains

June 13/14: Wartime weekend

July 25/26: Summer team Gala

August 2: Toy and Train fair at Loughborough Central

August 8/9: Get Some In! National Service and Veterans weekend

August 29 -31: Days Out With Thomas

September 12/13: Diesel Gala