



GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY

LOUGHBOROUGH, LEICESTERSHIRE

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PRESS RELEASE

THE SOMERSET AND DORSET RAILWAY COMES TO THE GREAT CENTRAL

SPECTACULAR LINE UP OF STEAM ENGINES FOR FOUR DAY AUTUMN GALA

Presented in association with STEAM RAILWAY MAGAZINE

6th to the 9th of OCTOBER 2011

The Great Central Railway's legendary Autumn Gala brings the glorious West Country to the Midlands this year. Eight locomotives will take part in a festival of steam which for the first time will last four days!

An S&D locomotive 7F 2-8-0 No 88 should be the guest star, along with Southern Railway West Country No. 34007 'Wadebridge'. Neither have visited the Great Central Railway before and will bring with them a flavor of the Somerset and Dorset Railway which was closed in the 1960s.

However a late addition to the line up sees Southern Railway King Arthur class no 30777 "Sir Lamiel" back to GCR for the first time in many months. It offers the exciting prospect of seeing Wadebridge and Sir Lamiel passing each other on GCR's double track and recreating the BR "Southern Region steam" scene.

Richard Patching, GCR's General Manager said, "**Our Autumn Galas get better and better. Once again we are proud to partner with the leading magazine, 'Steam Railway' to present an incredible show. For the first time the gala has been extended to four days. We'll prove the letters 'S' and 'D' really stand for Spectacular and Dramatic! We'll have non-stop mail drops, a mixture of freight trains and of course a very busy timetable of passenger trains passing on the double track. Interestingly, just as the S & D went from double track to single in places, we have just the same sort of arrangement south of Rothley station, so we are uniquely placed to capture the atmosphere of this long lamented railway.**"

Five locomotives from the current home fleet of Great Central Railway should also join the line up, including sole surviving GCR freight locomotive, O4 2-8-0 No 63601. This locomotive will turn 100 years old in January next year. With GWR Hall, No 4593, "Pitchford Hall" on the roster and LMS 3F 0-6-0 No 47406 there will be a perfect mix of motive power which once worked over and around the Somerset & Dorset.

BRITAIN'S ONLY DOUBLE TRACK, MAIN LINE HERITAGE RAILWAY
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The GCR's gala event could be the first to feature the recently installed turntable at Quorn and Woodhouse station which is nearing completion. A new fifty seater cafe has also opened at the station giving a perfect vantage point to watch passing trains.

All locomotives and attractions appear subject to availability.

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 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.