



GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY
LOUGHBOROUGH, LEICESTERSHIRE

PRESS INFORMATION

Winner "Best Tourism Experience - East Midlands" 2007

Date: 15th February 2008

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**GREAT CENTRAL LINES UP "BLOCKBUSTER"
MAY / JUNE PROGRAMME**

**THE MAIN COURSE FOR
"THE YEAR OF EXPRESS ENGINES"**

The Great Central Railway has announced provisional dates for the launch of Britannia Class, no. 70013 "Oliver Cromwell" into traffic and the arrival of the newly built Peppercorn class A1 locomotive, no.60163 "Tornado" for testing.

"It's fitting that 40 years on since the end of steam we can bring together the engine which finished British Steam in 1968 – and a brand new one which heralds a new dawn," said General Manager Robert Crew. "We're announcing the following event dates in good faith – but we do hope people will understand they should check what's running before setting out to visit us. We're working very hard with all our partners in the restoration of Oliver Cromwell and the entry into service of Tornado. Everyone is committed to putting on the best shows possible and if the programme needs to change we'll be making announcements as soon as we can."

- Oliver Cromwell is expected to steam in mid April, with a formal launch set for the bank holiday weekend , 3rd, 4th and 5th of May. Tornado will arrive around the same time and will be on static display around Loughborough shed.

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



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- On the following weekend, **11th and 12th of May** Tornado and Cromwell will both be hauling trains, with the GCR planning an Eastern Region themed event. Tornado will not be hauling passenger trains at this stage.
- The weekend of the **17th and 18th May** should mark Tornado's debut on passenger trains. Subject to successful completion of mandatory trials, The A1 Steam Locomotive Trust's covenanters will be invited to specially reserved trains ensuring they are the first to ride behind the project they've supported. The Trust will contact covenanters in due course with further details.
- On the night of **Sunday 18th May** there will be a special first class dining train hauled by Tornado. For every covenanter who books a ticket, the GCR will donate £10 to the A1 Trust. Please contact the booking office for details. Covenanters who take up the offer will also be offered complimentary tickets for the following day – Monday 19th May.
- **Monday the 19th of May** is a red letter day in railway history. Tornado will be running on general passenger services. It's thought the engine will make at least 5 round trips during the day with a high capacity carriage set. Other trains will be running and readers of Steam Railway Magazine will qualify for a discount on their ticket price when they present a current copy of the magazine. At the moment the railway is unable to say if the other locomotive running on this day will be Oliver Cromwell.

Tornado will stay at the Great Central until late June. Both the railway and the A1 Trust are looking to add extra events to the programme, including a run with Railway Vehicle Preservations famous Travelling Post Office set.

Both Oliver Cromwell and Tornado will undergo 60mph test runs while at the GCR. The railway respectfully reminds enthusiasts the railway

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has to remain strictly closed while these tests take place as an HMRI requirement.

"We have one more piece of exciting news", concluded Robert, "The chance to be one of the very first people to drive Tornado on our double track main line. This is literally a moment when you can book a place in history"

A strictly limited number of slots are being offered to take the regulator of Tornado. Participants will enjoy a full day at the railway, including preparation and disposal, riding behind it and one return trip of 16 miles driving and another round trip on the shovel. Prices are likely to be around £2400 – £2500 per person and current thinking will see the experiences happening in June. **ALL DETAILS, INCLUDING DATES, TIMES, PRICES, AND EXPERIENCE CONTENT HAVE YET TO BE CONFIRMED.** To make a non committal expression of interest in this extraordinarily exciting chance to experience new steam, write to Bruce Pollard, Commercial Manager, Great Central Railway, Great Central Road, Loughborough, Leicestershire, LE11 1RW

More details for all of the above events, including times and fares will be made available on line at www.gcrailway.co.uk closer to the time.

Meanwhile the Leicestershire based heritage railway is looking forward to welcoming GWR superstar City of Truro on it's first ever visit to the Great Central in November.

ENDS
WORDS 741



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FURTHER INFORMATION:

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 30 years, and is manned by around 700 volunteers and a small team of permanent staff. Originally 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 109 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.

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