

LEICESTER NORTH

DEC. 2010

NEWSLETTER

NO
35

The Leicester North Newsletter is an independent publication, and whilst every effort is taken to ensure accuracy of information, any discrepancies are not the responsibility of the Great Central Railway.

SEASON'S GREETINGS!

Here we are at the end of yet another fantastic year at the GCR, so as Leicester North Station will again be closed for normal business during December, ("Santa Specials" only operating from Loughborough Central) this Christmas issue is an opportunity to look back over the past twelve months and savour, once again, some of the highlights that have been experienced here, and have been wonderfully used to attract you, our valued visitors, to our station.

January was the month for the Winter Gala and we were looking forward to the visit of Black 5 No 45231 and Jubilee No 5960 "Leander", and eagerly awaiting the first steaming in preservation of 3F No 47406. Also the new fares structure was announced (the first for nearly seven years.)

February was the month when we were able to proudly announce that we had won the GCR's "Best Station Competition", and reporting on the success of the Winter Gala, the highlight for our station being the decision to double-head the first train, then leave a loco behind ready for the next arrival, thereby creating a bit of interest between trains, and relieving what is normally a barren trackbed, a decision that was greatly appreciated by many visitors.

March saw the report of yet another visit by the wrong sort of people, and which resulted in damage to our roof which Les valiantly dealt with in atrocious weather. Work had also commenced on preparing a channel for electric cables for a proposed upgrade to our communications.

Also, during a "Mini Gala" we were able to finally see the recently restored "No 47406 0-6-0 T "Jinty".

April's issue announced the recent visit of AI Pacific No 60163 "Tornado" in its final livery of Apple Green, and what a magnificent sight it was.

We were also announcing that **Leicester City Council** were in possession of the abandoned "Chaos" development, and had set aside £400,000 for completing the site, tendering and security costs.

May saw the announcement of a new venture the "Golden Oldies Weekend", where we were promised the appearance of two replica engines "Rocket" and "Planet", plus other visiting locos. Unfortunately, owing to lack of watering and coaling facilities we were not able to savour the full programme, but possible developments in the future may solve that problem. For the second year running we performed an extensive leaflet drop around the village, and even further afield, to publicise the forthcoming "Wartime Weekend."

June produces the main highlight of this station's calendar, the annual "Wartime Weekend", and as usual, we took on the appearance of a station in occupied France "Le Birstall". It is surprising how many of the younger generation are attracted to this event, which is very gratifying, as the atmosphere generated by it does serve to put over the conditions that many were forced to live with back in those terrible times, and probably is more effective than any number of school history lessons.

July saw us, once again, in evidence at the local **Birstall Village Gala**, with a stall and photo exhibition, which attracted a number of visitors, many of whom were unaware of our stations existence (lack of road signs by the local authorities, I'm afraid.)

August featured the GCR's "Mixed Traffic Event", which was marred somewhat by poor weather. The maintenance team were stretched somewhat by going a little further from their normal area to "strim" long grass at the Fielding Road crossing which was impeding vision for local walkers.

September September's issue announced the opening of Lovatt House, which was a wonderful achievement for our railway, bringing under GC ownership once again, a lovely old Victorian building from which the railway could once again be run, and also be a new revenue earner.

And our maintenance team, busy as usual doing their bit to enhance the appearance of our station.

Also we were pleased to announce our newest volunteer, Matthew Swain who we hope will encourage more of the younger generation to consider joining us in the future.

October This issue contained information about the welcome return of BR Standard Class 8 "Duke of Gloucester" which had previously visited the railway in 1987, and which attracted much interest again, and which, in company with Gresley 4-4-0 "Morayshire" and K4 2-6-0 "Great Marquess" No 61994 made the "Steam Railway" Gala a success.

This more or less brings us up to date, with **November** once again providing very handsome ticket receipts for the Bonfire Celebrations at Quorn & Woodhouse, reinforcing the view, yet again, that this station can contribute substantially to the railway's income when allowed to. During our period of closure, work will continue in other ways with much needed repair work being undertaken on the roof of our building and general maintenance.

The work on the development "next door" continues as I write, so early 2011 may, at last, see the premises occupied (watch this space) so all that remains is to thank all our regular visitors for their support, (spread the word), and to wish you all a

Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year!



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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".

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LEICESTER NORTH STATION

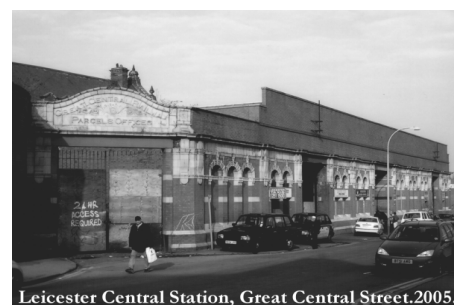
The original station that used to stand on this site was known as BELGRAVE & BIRSTALL, but, by the time that the present Heritage Railway had reached this far south the buildings were in such a sorry state, owing to vandalism, that the decision was taken to rebuild. To have rebuilt to its original specification 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 in the Waiting Room.)



If you are wondering how the original station used to look, see the above photograph. It was a typical GCR station with the usual "Island" platform, accessed via a flight of stairs from the bridge. If you look to the left you will see where the original staircase descended from the bridge (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 photo of the original station on the wall of our waiting room.

Pre Beeching the railway continued south, the next main station being Leicester Central, from there continuing on to Whetstone, Lutterworth, Rugby and finally terminating at London St. Marylebone.

Please remember to sign our Visitor's Book which will be found on the desk in the Waiting Room!



Leicester Central Station, Great Central Street.2005.

Forthcoming Attractions on the GCR

November 27-December 16: Santa Specials
December 25: Christmas Day Trains
December 26-January 1, 2011: Christmas Holiday Trains

If you wish to be kept informed about L. Nth. this newsletter (and back issues) is available online. Go to www.gcrailway.co.uk click on 'About Us', scroll down to 'Press Releases' and you will find it.

Leicester North Arrivals & Departures every Sat. and Sun. from 6th November to 2011 Notification Except Special Events.

'Special' timetables apply on 'Gala Days', 'Ivor The Engine' events etc!

Arrivals
10.12. 10.44. 11.44. 12.44. 1.56. 2.44. 4.12.
Departures
10.15. 11.00. 12.00. 1.00. 2.10. 3.00. 4.25.

Leaflets advertising 'Drive a Train Experiences', Dining Trains etc available from Waiting Room!