



## **GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY**

LOUGHBOROUGH, LEICESTERSHIRE

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### **PRESS RELEASE**

#### **ELLIS TEA ROOM GETS LARGER**

#### **Successful GCR family facility extended to cope with demand!**

**Thirty five thousand pound project supported by  
Leicestershire Council Grant**

Visitors to the Great Central Railway's Rothley station in November can see the award winning tourist attractions latest project underway. The popular Ellis Tea Room is being extended to cope with demand!

The tea room only opened three years ago, in a building converted from a former grain store at the station. Since then it has become a 'must visit' destination for travellers on the GCR's steam trains, and during weekdays a valuable village meeting point. However, with only 26 seats it quickly became full during busy gala events - a victim of its own success.

**“As soon as the doors opened at Ellis Tea Room we knew we had a hit on our hands,”** said Kate Tilley, GCR’s Marketing Manager. **“So much so, we had to start thinking about an extension quite early on. We're delighted to have been able to put thirty five thousand pounds of funding in place and builders are now at work. They will almost double the length of the building giving us an additional 20 seats.”**

The majority of the funding for the thirty five thousand pound project has been provided by generous supporters of the Great Central Railway through its dedicated charity, The David Clarke Railway Trust. However ten thousand pounds has been made available by a Leicestershire County Council 'Inspire' Visitor Development grant after a successful application. Kate added, **“The grant made a tremendous difference to us, enabling us to take it from a plan to reality. We are very grateful to the County Council.”**

The project manager is GCR Director Tony Sparks who oversaw the original conversion of the building three years ago. **“We've taken great care here. First time around we had an original building to convert, this time we have to extend it sensitively without detracting from its heritage. It isn't listed,**



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**but the station buildings at Rothley, right alongside, are. The finishing details will reflect the original structure, but a stepped design will indicate where it finished and the extension starts. I had made contingency plans back in 2008 in case we needed to extend the tea room, but I didn't expect I'd have to put them into action so soon!"**

Even though work is well underway, Ellis Tea Room remains open for business. It will close only briefly to allow the final remodelling to take place. Visitors to Rothley station for the ever popular Edwardian Christmas event in November will be able to see the progress for themselves.

**"We're thrilled to bits that Ellis's is getting 85% bigger", concluded Kate, "but we can't promise the same for its delicious cakes!"**

ENDS

WORDS 457

### 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](http://www.gcrailway.co.uk)

Additional information can also be obtained from the Booking Office, Loughborough Central Station, (Daily 9.00 - 5.30) on 01509 632323

### 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.



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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.