



GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY
LOUGHBOROUGH, LEICESTERSHIRE

PRESS INFORMATION

Winner "Best Tourism Experience - East Midlands" 2007

Date: 30th Jan 2008

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**PRESS CALL: SATURDAY 2nd FEB, 11.00am, LOUGHBOROUGH
CENTRAL STATION, GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY, GREAT CENTRAL
ROAD, LOUGHBOROUGH, LEICS, LE11 1RW**

GREAT CENTRAL MARKS 75th ANNIVERSARY
OF FATAL RAILWAY ACCIDENT AT
LOUGHBOROUGH CENTRAL

**Relatives from across the country gather to remember
(Saturday 2nd Feb)**

Seventy five years ago, in a railway accident whose cause remains a mystery, an express passenger train hurtled through Loughborough Central station and ploughed into a freight train which was shunting into a siding. A fireman who tried to leap to safety was killed.

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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This weekend the Great Central Railway is bringing together relatives of those directly involved to remember and pay tribute. The accident happened on Jan the 31st 1933 close to Empress Road bridge in Loughborough, which is now where the preserved heritage line has its engine sheds.

“This was a tragic accident,” said the modern day General Manager of the Great Central, Robert Crew **“but one which has slipped not only from the minds of the nation, but locally as well. We are welcoming the relatives of the fireman who was killed and also the engine driver who heroically tried to slow down his train and prevent the accident from happening. They’re going to tour the site at Loughborough, see where the accident happened and then take a ride along the Great Central to see it as it is today”.**

The accident involved an express train from London to Bradford hauled by a Great Central class B2 locomotive no. 5423 “Sir Sam Fay”, and a freight train working north to Nottinghamshire. As was common practice, slow running freight trains were ‘set back’ into sidings to clear the main line for faster express passenger trains. While this was carried out, signals behind the freight train should present other trains from approaching. It was never established why the Bradford express overran the signals. Driver, Tom Webster, realised there would be a crash as he came through Loughborough station. He could see the freight train shunting ahead of him and managed to slow his train down to around 30 miles and hour when it smashed into the freight train. The fireman on the express, 37 year old Francis Tarron from Sheffield leapt from the engine but was killed. Passengers on the express train were not injured, nor were the driver and fireman of the freight train.

Expected to attend the commemoration are the family of Francis Tarron and Tom Webster. Much was made of Webster’s heroism in the Loughborough Monitor and Herald at the time. He had warned Tarron not to jump and remained in his cab trying to stop the express.

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“What makes this accident so vivid today is the fact that all the structures survive. Empress Road bridge might not see express trains roaring towards Nottingham, but it still watches over the engines leaving our current sheds,” continued Robert. “Meanwhile, the signalbox, right next to the bridge, from where the signaller on the fateful day watched the accident unfold is still there and still controlling train movements around Loughborough. It will be a solemn commemoration, but it is important to remember.”

The story of the accident and the investigation that followed is described in a booklet written by local railway enthusiast Alan Godber, and published in 2006 by the David Clarke Railway Trust, the Great Central’s supporting charity.

ENDS

WORDS 533

THE PRESS AND MEDIA ARE INVITED TO ATTEND AND MEET THE FAMILIES AT LOUGHBOROUGH ON SATURDAY MORNING. PLEASE GATHER AT 11am

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Details on the above and all forthcoming events can be found on the Great Central Railway's extensive website: www.greatcentralrailway.com

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 railway's 109 year history.

Trains run every weekend of the year, bank holidays and daily in the summer. In addition, First Class

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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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