



GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY
LOUGHBOROUGH, LEICESTERSHIRE

PRESS INFORMATION

Celebrating 40 years of preservation in 2009

Date: 12th October 2009

FOUR THOUSAND PEOPLE HEAD TO GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY FOR AUTUMN 'STEAM RAILWAY' GALA

Eight locos in steam on Saturday 10th October

The Great Central Railway is celebrating today after thousands of visitors flocked to its Steam Railway October Gala. The event, held over the 9th, 10th and 11th of October saw around four thousand visitors make tracks for the award winning Leicestershire line.

On Saturday 10th of October, 8 locomotives were in steam at one point, the most in action simultaneously for many years. Among the mighty guest engines was railway artist David Shepherd's 9F, 92203 "Black Prince".

Takings for the three days of the gala grossed over seventy one thousand pounds. While not a record amount (that was set in 2008 when the brand new steam locomotive Tornado pulled its first trains at the Great Central) it is tens of thousands of pounds ahead of the same event in 2007.

Great Central Railway president Bill Ford said, **"It's great news. A real boost for us and for the area too. Lots of our visitors came from across the country and stayed for more than a day. The line up of engines, which we dubbed 'the heavy metal show' clearly captured imaginations. We've already started making plans to put on a great show this time next year."**

Other visiting engines included Fairburn Tank no 42085 and WD 90733 (making its first ever visit away from its Yorkshire home base). Meanwhile, celebrity end of steam survivor, Oliver Cromwell made a triumphant return to its home base.

The railway operated the event in conjunction with Steam Railway Magazine.

Bill continued, "The tributes we've had from people who visited the gala are a

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reflection on the staff and volunteers who worked so hard to stage it There was a lot of interest in the ongoing projects around the railway with many people taking a bus tour to the rapidly developing Mountsorrel branch.”

ENDS

WORDS 319

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 36 years, 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 110 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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