



## **GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY**

LOUGHBOROUGH, LEICESTERSHIRE

### **PRESS INFORMATION**

Celebrating 40 years of preservation in 2009

Date: 20<sup>th</sup> April 2009

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## **GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY CELEBRATES** **FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY WITH** **GALA SHOW**

Steam and diesel engines line up to mark  
forty years of preservation progress

First chance for visitors to experience the new Mountsorrel Branch.

**The Great Central Railway marks forty years of preservation progress on the weekend of the 9th and 10th of May 2009. The award winning Leicestershire line will celebrate the ruby anniversary with a gala show. A selection of steam and diesel engines will be part of a festival marking the lines final closure and the achievements since revivalists took over.**

Star of the show will be Southern Railways King Arthur Class engine no 30777, "Sir Lamiel". It's expected the timetable will feature three other steam engines including 8F no 48305, original GCR engine O4 no 63601 and Br Standard 2 no 78019. Diesel traction is hoped to include Class 27 D5401 and Class 47 D1705. They will run a combination of passenger services, freight services and postal drops.

**"We're proud to celebrate forty years of progress," said the railway's president Bill Ford. "The GCR closed in stages. Through trains to London disappeared in 1966 and the track was lifted south of Rugby. The last section to close went in May 1969 when the last train ran between Nottingham and Rugby. Fortunately preservationists had already made plans to save a section of the line. It might have been a few years before the first trains of the 'new GCR' ran, but this is the right moment to mark forty years of work."**

**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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Since 1969 thousands of volunteers have progressively reinstated the closed route, including reopening to Leicester in 1991 and adding double track in 2000. The attraction regularly brings thousands of people into Leicestershire. Besides tourist trains the line also hosts film makers and rail industry testing contracts.

The celebration weekend will start on Friday night with a performance from the Great Central Railway shed band in the beer tent at Quorn. The beer tent will be open all weekend with a selection of anniversary ales on sale. A special train will run from Loughborough to Leicester and it will be totally free - to encourage drinkers to take rail to the ale.

On Saturday and Sunday, besides the trains, there will be a series of extra events. Most excitingly will be a bus shuttle from Quorn station to the Mountsorrel branch line, currently facing a revival of its own. Visitors will be able to walk the route of the branch and meet volunteers working on the project.

The carriage sheds at Rothley will also be open, with Railway Vehicle Preservations Ltd showing off their collection and expertise. At Loughborough there will be a display of photographs from the final days of the railway and the earliest days of preservation.

Anyone with a ticket from the last day of trains in May 1969 will be allowed to travel for nothing throughout the weekend.

**ENDS**

**WORDS 483**

#### **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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