



GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY

LOUGHBOROUGH, LEICESTERSHIRE

PRESS INFORMATION

Celebrating 40 years of preservation in 2009

Date: 10th August 20098

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YOUR CHANCE TO EXPLORE SECRET GREAT CENTRAL HISTORY (AUGUST 15th 2pm to 5pm)

Former Goods office building open to view restoration work in progress

It's been off limits since it was built in 1895. Now the Great Central Railway Goods Office on the corner of Great Central Road and Wharncliffe Road in Loughborough is being opened to all for the first time.

The building was recently purchased by the Great Central Railway, after a successful fundraising appeal and support from Charnwood Borough Council and the Leicester Shire Economic Partnership (part of the East Midlands Development Agency).

The open afternoon is being held on Saturday August 15th between 2pm and 5pm. The building is very close to the main entrance of the Great Central Railway at Loughborough. It is a one off chance to see how restoration work on the building is progressing.

Tony Sparks, a Great Central Railway director, part of the team co-ordinating the renovation of the building said, **“So many people generously contributed to the appeal, not only were we able to buy the building, but also immediately start on repairs and renovations. This is a chance for people to tour the inside to see what we've achieved so far. We think it is the first time ever it has been open to the general public. You'll be able to see the building as a blank slate before contractors arrive to really push the restoration forward.”**



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The building was built a couple of years before the Great Central Railway opened in 1899. It served the company and later British Rail until it was sold into private ownership. Recently it has stood empty but despite its long history, some original Victorian features remain inside which volunteers found once they'd removed modern fittings. Having now been bought by the GCR again it has 'come home'.

Money has continued to arrive for the appeal and a sum close to £100,000 has been raised. The Great Central Railway will use local contractors where possible in the next phase of the work on the building.

After restoration it will serve as a new administrative headquarters for the railway. It has been named 'Lovatt House' in recognition of late GCR company secretary Richard Lovatt who gave much of his life to the service of the preserved railway.

This weekend will also see a special combination of tank engines working together. GNR N2 no 1744 and LMS Fairburn Tank no 42085 are steaming together for the first time ever after being restored in Loughborough's engine shed.

The Fairburn tank is on an extended visit from its home base, the Lakeside and Haverthwaite Railway. When repairs (which have included new side tanks) are complete the engine will work passenger trains at the Great Central Railway until around November 2009. The Gresley society's N2 has been a long term resident at the GCR. It returned to steam in June 2009.

ENDS. WORDS 485

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

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 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 railway's 110 year history.

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

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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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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