



## PRESS INFORMATION

**BRITAIN'S ONLY DOUBLE TRACK, MAIN LINE HERITAGE RAILWAY**  
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# **SEVEN ENGINES IN STEAM AT MASSIVE GREAT CENTRAL WINTER GALA** **(Jan 30<sup>th</sup>, Jan 31<sup>st</sup> and Feb 1<sup>st</sup> 2009)**

**Thousands expected to visit Leicestershire line.**

**The Great Central Railway is preparing for its first major event of 2009. The Winter Steam Gala will see seven engines in action this weekend, including three from the National Railway Museum. Three thousand visitors are expected over the three days of the event, providing a boost for the local economy.**

The railway is turning the clock back with a '1968' theme. This was the year that steam was finally shunted into the sidings. A number of the engines featuring at the gala were running close to the end of steam. Topping the bill is "Oliver Cromwell", the engine which was involved in pulling British Rail's last ever steam train. It was restored to operation at the Great Central Railway last year.

Bill Ford, president of the Great Central Railway said, **"This is set to be an excellent show. With freight trains and demonstration postal drops there will be plenty of 'railway theatre' to entertain the crowds. This event is very important for us as it sets out our stall for the year. We hope it will bring in thousands of visitors, which isn't just good for us, it's good for the local economy as well. Many of our guests stay overnight and enjoy two, or even three days at the gala. We're delighted to be welcoming former footplate men as well."**

Sharing the limelight is an engine, which has been brought to Leicestershire especially for the event. The 'Q6' is based in North Yorkshire and spent its working life pulling coal trains. At the gala it's being paired with the Great Central Railway's set of coal wagons recreating a once common scene. The Q6 is visiting the GCR for the first time ever.

The Great Central Railway band has also been rehearsing for the event. They're playing a two night stand in the beer tent at Quorn station. Specially brewed real ales will be available, named after the engines!

Full fares and timetables are available on the railway's website. Two and three day tickets will be available and anyone purchasing a runabout ticket will receive a free gala programme while stocks last. On the Saturday and Sunday of the event there will also be a rare chance to see inside the GCR carriage sheds at Rothley.

Bill concluded, **"We really raised the bar at the recent October Gala, so we're looking to match the excitement of that event if we can!"**