



GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY

LOUGHBOROUGH, LEICESTERSHIRE

PRESS INFORMATION

Celebrating 40 years of preservation in 2009

Date: 1st June 2009

GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY REPORTS **THIRD ANNUAL PROFIT**

**BUMPER PASSENGER NUMBERS PUT RAILWAY £41,000
IN THE BLACK FOR FINANCIAL YEAR**

The Great Central Railway is reporting a third annual profit. The award winning Leicestershire heritage line's shareholders will receive the news in their report, ahead of the annual general meeting on June 27th.

The profit of £41,000 is for the financial year which ended on Jan 31st 2009. As the railway has previously announced, bumper passenger figures were recorded in the second half of 2008 because of a visit by Britain's brand new steam engine "Tornado". The GCR played host to Tornado as it began its operating career. Thousands flocked to Leicestershire to see the new engine first.

The railway was also part of a partnership to restore celebrity engine "Oliver Cromwell". This project reached a triumphant conclusion last year and brought yet more visitors to the line.

Great Central Railway chairman David Morgan said "I am naturally delighted to report the third annual profit and we hope shareholders will find other good news in our accounts. Most significantly levels of historic debt continue to be dramatically reduced as we look forward to a stable future for the business. We continue to contribute to the wider Charnwood economy by bringing visitors to the area."

The lines income was helped by its new tea room, "Ellis's" which opened in May 2008. It has recently marked its first birthday, recording a turnover close to £80,000 in twelve months. "Ellis's" has full wheeled access. As part of its commitment to develop better family facilities to further improve visitor numbers, the railway is currently installing a lift between street level and platforms at Loughborough Central station. New toilets are also being added at the station.



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“Share sales have been very strong in the last year and I would like to publicly thank everyone who continues to invest and support us, David continued. “We are a not for profit company so money the business generates is put straight back into the railway, rather than paying a dividend for shareholders. We are fortunate to have so many people who share the vision of our main line steam railway.”

The railway has had good fortunes so far in 2009. At the start of May passenger numbers were ahead of 2008. Meanwhile useful income is being generated by non passenger train activity. Recruits from the Army are the latest to use the line for training purposes. Several filming contracts have been hosted.

David sounded a note of caution, “2009 is an uncertain economic time and there is no room for complacency. We must work hard to continue to attract passengers and there is no guarantee we shall do as well again this year. Costs have to be kept under control and we have a growing commitment to maintain our heritage infrastructure, besides developing new facilities. Our volunteers and staff put in many long hours and are essential to our success. I’m sure they will be buoyed by the news of a third profit.”

The railway is currently participating in an economic development study with partners Charnwood Borough Council. Consultants are examining options to extend the line to see how it can generate more benefits for the local area and play a wider transport role. The study is expected to be conclude and report before the end of the year.

ENDS

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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



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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.

BRITAIN'S ONLY DOUBLE TRACK, MAIN LINE HERITAGE RAILWAY

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