



GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY

LOUGHBOROUGH, LEICESTERSHIRE

PRESS INFORMATION

Celebrating 40 years of preservation in 2009

Date: 24th August 2009

Contact: Tony Sparks, Project co-ordinator
07767 610029

MEDIA CALL: Thursday 27th August at 10.20am
Loughborough Central Station, Great Central Railway,
Great Central Road, Loughborough, Leics, LE11 1RW

HERITAGE RAILWAY STATION'S BRAND NEW LIFT OPENS FOR BUSINESS!

**Grant aid pays for new lift, new wheeled access toilet
and passenger improvements as well.**

It's a case of 'going up!' at the Great Central Railway. The award winning Leicestershire line's main station finally has a passenger lift. The new development is being declared 'ready for business' this week in a ceremony which will bring together the grant funders who paid for it. The improvements have been completed in time for a visit by Thomas the Tank Engine this weekend.

A generous £20,000 grant awarded by The Veolia Environmental Trust through the Landfill Communities Fund allowed work to go ahead on the project. Money also came from East Midlands Airport Community Fund, The Bruce Wake Trust, TST Services and the Charnwood disability Forum. The balance of the money came from the railway's own supporting charity, The David Clarke Railway Trust.

Tony Sparks, a GCR director who oversaw the project said, **"Already the lift has allowed people to visit us for the first time. Rather than being faced with a flight of steep steps after the booking hall, passengers can chose to use the lift. It works well for families with pushchairs as well and people who use a wheelchair."**

The lift will finally mean visitors who need wheeled access can arrive at the heritage railways front door, without a long diversion along busy roads to the back gate.

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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In addition to the lift, a wheeled access toilet has been installed, a baby change facility added and a third cubicle in the ladies toilet installed. In total the development represents an investment of around £65,000 in the station.

The work has seen significant changes to the Victorian railway station which opened in 1899. However, as it is a listed building, everything has been carried out sensitively to avoid spoiling the atmosphere.

Bill Ford, president of the Great Central Railway said, "We'd like to thank everyone who has committed grant aid funding to this project. Its enabled us to leap forward into the 21st Century! With Thomas here this weekend the timing couldn't be better."

The Executive Director of The Veolia Environmental Trust, Margaret Cobbold, added, 'The Trust works to support community and environmental projects across the UK. Assisting schemes to improve access is one of the priorities of the Trust and the Landfill Communities Fund and I look forward to seeing the project completed.'

The installation of the lift comes as the Great Central Railway celebrates forty years of preserving the former main line route to London.

ENDS.

WORDS: 427

The media are invited to the short informal ceremony which takes place at the Great Central Railway's Loughborough Central station, at 10.30am on Thursday 27th August 2009.

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.

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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.

The Veolia Environmental Trust has been supporting community and environmental projects for over ten years. Under the Landfill Communities Fund, landfill site operators can donate a percentage, currently 6%, of their landfill tax payment to these projects.

Since the Trust was established in 1997, Veolia Environmental Services (UK) plc has supported it by contributions of over £37 million for more than 900 projects.

The Trust has helped fund a diverse range of projects, including the repair of woodland footpaths, the renovation of community halls and the installation of playgrounds and play areas. For more information, or to find out how to apply for funding, visit the Trust's website www.veolitrust.org.

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