



GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY

LOUGHBOROUGH, LEICESTERSHIRE

PRESS INFORMATION

Celebrating 40 years of preservation in 2009

Date: 30th March 2009

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GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY BUYS **LOUGHBOROUGH GOODS OFFICE –** **EIGHTY SIX YEARS SINCE IT WAS LAST** **OWNED BY THE GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY!**

HISTORIC BUILDING SAVED WITH SUCCESSFUL APPEAL AND GRANTS

RENOVATION WORK SET TO BOOST LOCAL ECONOMY

The Great Central Railway is delighted to announce the successful purchase of the Loughborough Goods Office.

Eighty six years since it was last in the ownership of the Great Central Railway contracts were exchanged, signed and completed this weekend.

It follows a whirlwind fundraising campaign, on track to make £70,000. Having had a succession of owners in recent years, the building is now in the care of the David Clarke Railway Trust, the GCR's official supporting charity.

"We are thrilled to bits," said the railways president Bill Ford. **"This year we celebrate forty years of preserving this former main line route to London and one hundred and ten years since the railway was built. To be able to bring part of the original Great Central infrastructure back into our care is an incredible feeling. We're very grateful to everyone who has made this possible."**

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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The building has been purchased using grants from Charnwood Borough Council and the Leicester Shire Economic Partnership (via the East Midlands Development Agency). The railway is also grateful to Leicester Shire Promotions Ltd. for their support. To match the public funding and provide a fund to renovate the Victorian structure, the railway launched a one month appeal. Funds are still coming in, but it is currently expected (including gift aid) to reach around £70,000.

The building will provide new office accommodation for the railway and a meeting space. It is also planned to use some of the space at Loughborough Central Station (which will become vacant when the offices are moved), as new display space.

The appeal for funds for the building will remain open to ensure a steady supply of capital for the restoration works.

"Work to renovate the building will begin shortly," continued Bill.
"Wherever possible we will use local contractors which means our stakeholders and supporters grants and donations will not only help the railway, but go back into the local economy. There is quite a bit to do to bring the Goods Office back into service, but now the ink is drying on the purchase we intend to get started."

The building will be named Lovatt House by the Great Central Railway. This recognises the contribution of late company secretary, Richard Lovatt (and of his father Bruce Lovatt before him) to the preservation of the Great Central Railway.

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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 10 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

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for the East Midlands best visitor experience and is a quality assured visitor attraction as designated by Enjoy England.

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