



GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY
LOUGHBOROUGH, LEICESTERSHIRE

PRESS INFORMATION

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Contact: Richard Patching, Commercial Manager: 07515 597055
Great Central Railway

THE GR8 ESCAPE SURPRISES CONTINUE!
Over £16,000 raised for GWR's emergency appeal!

In order to properly record the Gr8 Escape Event, the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway's Chairman, Malcolm Temple, along with their Fundraising Coordinator, Alan Bielby, travelled to Loughborough on May 9th to receive Great Central Railway's giant cheque for their donation. The great surprise was the value of the cheque! The GCR had previously indicated a value of 'at least £7,000'; however the final figure was £9,149.68! Clearly all the stops had been pulled out to raise this sum and the GWR are extremely grateful for all the efforts made to raise this amount.

Bill Ford (GCR President) spoke of the **"marvellous working relationship which had developed between the volunteers of both railways over the course of the event"**. He added **"it was particularly good news to hear how the GCR's initiative with the Gr8 Escape weekend had proved a catalyst to a whole series of such events and special trains across the country in support of GWR"**.

In this respect, Dinmore Manor Locomotive Limited for example has just donated £500 towards the appeal, expressing pleasure at their 2-8-0 no. 3850 being a participant at the Gr8 Escape event.

Malcolm Temple commented: **"With the £7,000 raised by the GWR's own efforts during the event, the total of over £16,000 has allowed the GWR to start its slip investigation works and so find out just how much the repairs will cost. Initial results are expected in mid-June and only then can the full extent of the problem facing the GWR be determined. Fingers are crossed that the cost will be much less than the very lengthy Gotherington slip and, with the continued support of our friends, we can dare to contemplate repairs in time for next year's operation."**



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(See photos attached which show Bill Ford (GCR President) left and Malcolm Temple, right).

ENDS
WORDS 297

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 celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2009, 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 111 year history. Around 100,000 visitors a year come to the railway from all over the world. Trains run every weekend of the year, bank holidays and daily in the summer. In addition, First Class Restaurant Car Services provide famous dining experiences course, whilst passengers travel between Loughborough and Leicester. Childhood engine driver dreams can come true with a Drive a Train Experience. We also run a number of family events, including 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 award-winning and entirely volunteer-run Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway (The Honeybourne Line): www.gwsr.com celebrates its 30th anniversary in 2011. Because of its Winchcombe embankment collapse it will operate as two separate railways during 2011: a steam operation between Cheltenham and Winchcombe and a diesel multiple unit service working out of Toddington,



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between Hailes Abbey and Laverton, on a newly-opened extension that takes the line over the 15 arch Stanway viaduct. Services start from Toddington on 2 April and from Cheltenham on 22 April, after completion of the earlier Gotherington embankment failure repair.

The railway aims to open as much as possible of the former Great Western

Railway main line between Stratford upon Avon and Cheltenham and is on course to reopen part of its Toddington to Broadway extension, as far as Laverton, this year. Its ultimate aim is to reach Honeybourne where Network Rail is making provision for the GWSR at its Honeybourne station on the Worcester-Oxford line.