

LEICESTER NORTH

NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2011

No. 41

This Newsletter is an independent publication, and whilst every attempt is made to ensure accuracy of information, any discrepancies are not the responsibility of Great Central Railway

“THOSE WERE THE DAYS!”

Quite often, visitors to our station enquire about the route that the railway followed after travelling south from Belgrave & Birstall Station.

When told that the next station was Leicester Central, many are unaware of its location, and sometimes ask whether there is any trace of it to be seen today.

This is only to be expected I suppose, as only those of a “Certain Age” will remember it when it was just one of three main railway stations that our city boasted

Truly though, a photo that is full of interesting detail, and as I have said before, how useful a station it would have been, had it not fallen foul of “You Know Who.”



“GOLDEN OLDIES” GALA

This event, held recently, was quite a success, even though there were several mechanical problems that had to be dealt with rather speedily before it could commence, but our railway's slogan “Recreating the Experience” works both ways,

embracing both the positive as well as the negative, (after all, I would imagine that in the pioneering days mechanical failures were a regular occurrence), however with rather uncertain weather over the period of the event attendances apparently were healthy, and the entire event

was deemed a success once again, with many donning period costume and entering into the spirit of the Edwardian age.

As was the case last year, owing to a lack of coaling and watering facilities at this station, much of the action occurred further north.

This was our railway's second such event of the type, so will perhaps be a part of our railway's “Year” from hence forth.

Photo below by Paul Edeson



WARTIME WEEKEND

June already, so our annual “Mega Event” is about to explode and what must be the highlight of our year almost upon us.

This event enables each station along the line to participate, by hosting various attractions ranging from singers, artists, medal & militaria displays, military vehicle & ordnance exhibitions etc.

It is anticipated that this years offering will be even bigger than before so we hope that you will be able to be present.

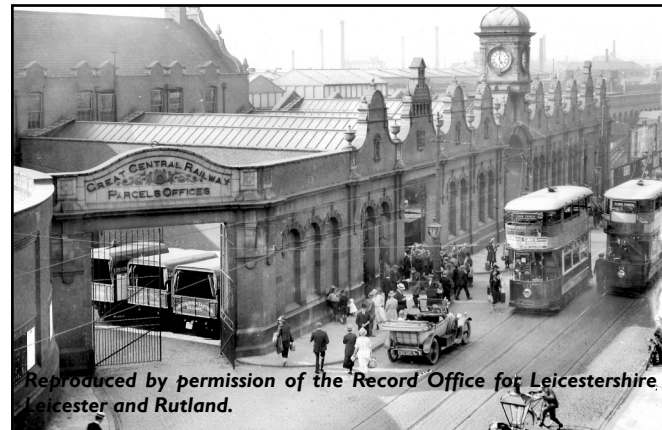


BITS & PIECES!

Still no news regarding the future of the “Green Acres” site adjacent to our station, although regular visitors will have noticed that the rather unsightly container that was situated halfway up the approach slope has been removed, giving some hope that things are moving (also, of course, freeing up a little more car parking space) but as soon as more information is received we will let you know, so we must continue to hope that whatever transpires, that it will be of benefit to us.

Weekly maintenance continues, with strimming, mowing, and all the 101 things that need to be done around the area and within it.

We are still awaiting some response to our appeal for top-soil so that work can commence on creating three new flower beds down at track level, to enhance our station even more.



Reproduced by permission of the Record Office for Leicestershire Leicester and Rutland.

I approached the Records Office in Wigston and asked if they would allow us to display the photo, above, and they were kind enough to agree, so in future it will replace the rather sad image of what remains today of the station, and which has adorned page two since we started publication of this newsletter.

Incidentally, copies of this photo can be obtained from the Record Office, which is situated in Wigston.

It was originally taken in 1925, and not only gives some indication of what a popular station it was (two trams picking up/setting down) but also how up-to-date it was with motorised parcel vans in evidence, when the LMS and others were still using horse drawn vehicles (although I have a suspicion that they could have been ex WD WWI surplus vehicles that had been taken advantage of.)

RE-CREATING THE EXPERIENCE

NEWSLETTER!

This newsletter is now available “online”.

Please go to: www.gcrailway.co.uk
Click on “About Us”, scroll down to “Press Releases” and you will see it.

Leicester North Newsletter

THE GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY (1899-1969)

With its continental loading gauge, slow curves and lack of grades steeper than 1 in 76, the great Central was years ahead of its rival's routes into the capital.

Add to the aforementioned the plan to continue under London, and then. After travelling south, to traverse the English Channel via a Channel Tunnel, one can see that it would have been a wonderful asset to the nation.

Who knows how much further it would have developed by the present day?

The Great Central Railway (London Extension) was the brainchild of the Victorian Industrialist Edward Watkin, who envisioned a rapid rail link to the continent that would have been far superior to those of his rivals.

Unfortunately, by the 1950's the national network was under acute threat from road transport, which was reaping the benefits of the new motorways that were being constructed, and which was also suffering from a serious lack of investment by the government of the day.

This, coupled with the fact that many of the areas served by the GCR were also covered by other lines, which had always resented the GCR (considering it to be an interloper) made it inevitable that it would be the first to go, under the "Rail Rationalisation Plan", the now infamous "Beeching Plan".



LEICESTER NORTH STATION

The original station that used to stand on this site was known as BELGRAVE & BIRSTALL, but by the time that the present heritage railway had reached this far south the buildings were in such a sorry state, owing to vandalism, that the decision was taken to re-build. To have re-built to its original specification would have been prohibitively expensive, so the present station is something of a compromise, (plans are, however, in the pipeline to make many improvements) so, if you feel that you would like to help to speed up these proposals by making a donation, please use the Donation Box that can be found in the waiting room.



If you are wondering how the original station used to look, see the above photo. It was a typical GCR station with the usual "Island" platform, accessed via a flight of stairs from the bridge. If you look at the bridge you will see where the staircase descended to the platform (the aperture has been bricked up)

The present station is sited a little further south than the original.

The two intermediate stations ROTHLEY, AND QUORN & WOODHOUSE, still being intact will give you a better idea, although there is a photo of the original station on the wall of our waiting room.



Leicester Central Station, Great Central Street, 2005.

Pre-Beeching the railway continued south, the next station being Leicester Central, from there continuing on to Whetstone, Ashby Magna, Lutterworth, Rugby Central, Charwelton, Woodford & Hinton, Brackley Central, and then, travelling on GC/ Metropolitan metals finally terminating at London St. Marylebone.

Please remember to sign our Visitor's Book, which will be found in the Waiting Room.

Forthcoming Attractions on the GCR

Murder Mystery! "Full Stop Murder"

Friday 17th June

Father's Day Luncheon,

Sunday 19th June.

Murder Mystery "The last Connection"

Friday 24th June.

Enthusiasts Event

Blackstone Birthday bash

Sat. 25th-Sun 26th.

Pullman Fine Dining with Hercule Poirot

Friday 15th July.

TELEPHONE NUMBERS LEICESTER NORTH

0116 261 0946

LOUGHBOROUGH CENTRAL

01509 230 726

Train Times At This Station (2011, WEEKENDS, 2 APRIL to 29 OCTOBER)

"Special" timetables apply on Gala Days, "Ivor the Engine", and other events. Please check on actual day of event	ARRIVALS								Leaflets advertising "Drive a Train Experiences", Dining Trains, etc are available in waiting room		
	10.12	10.45	11.45	12.45	1.30	2.07	2.45	3.48		4.30	5.13
	DEPARTURES										
	10.15	11.00	12.00	1.00	1.45	2.20	3.00	4.00	4.45	5.25	