

LEICESTER NORTH

JUNE 2009 NEWSLETTER

No. 18

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

"We've Been Together Now, For Forty Years!"

Depending, of course, whether you are a "half full" or a "half empty" type of person, the recent fortieth anniversary weekend could have been to celebrate forty years since the final fatal swing of the infamous Dr Beeching's axe, or the forty years celebration of our line's rescue by a dedicated and visionary group of enthusiasts back in 1969.

I'm of the latter category and whilst the words of the old song, above, may have absolutely no meaning to many of the younger generation, it will I'm sure, be recognised by many, if not all, of those who, like myself, remember the "Glory Days" of steam and who were a part of it in one way or another.

Whichever way you look at it however, the event was something different, and in regard to this station, provided us with some additional experiences that were not normally seen here.

The first day commenced with a visit of class 27 D5401 hauling the Travelling Post Office (TPO), which is not normally seen this far south, and attracted some interest.

Later in the day we were to see the "Windcutter" freight, hauled by 04, 63601, and which, again, isn't usually seen here, but was a welcome sight.



Windcutter wagons at L. Nth, Hauled by GCR "04" 63601 All Photos B. Rowe

The icing on the cake though, was the laying by on our "siding", for want of a

better word, later in the day of 8F 48305, and later 04 63601, and what a difference it made to have something of



LMS 8F 48305,

interest to see, on what is normally a barren landscape, here, between trains,



GCR "04" 2-8-0 63601

and which could be something that the "powers that be" might consider doing again.

Whilst the Saturday didn't seem very busy here, news is that, all in all, the whole event was a success, compared with the same period in 2008, with takings up, which is good to hear bearing in mind the current economic squeeze.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE!

By the time the next issue is published, results of the feasibility study being undertaken by Atkins Consultants, regarding the future development of our railway should be known, and will be included in the July issue.

BUFFET
Special Menu for
"Wartime Weekend"
See Notices in Buffet!

Lineside Photographers

Please note following agreement with the Operations Group and Eric Smith (plus consultations with others) there have been **some minor revisions to the lineside photography guidelines.**

Other revisions include specific notes underlining the fact **Brazil Island** and the viaduct are always out of bounds and reminding photographers to be vigilant in **Kinchley Lane** cutting.

The changes will be published on line on the GCR website as soon as possible, (the current Jan 2009 edition is on line at the moment) and announcing the changes through a special email newsletter.

VISITOR'S BOOK

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

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.

RE-CREATING THE EXPERIENCE

"Wartime Weekend", 13th & 14th June 2009. LEICESTER NORTH STATION Train Arrivals & Departures.

Arr	09:43	10:30	11:15	12:00	12:45	1:25	2:01	2:46	3:30	4:15	4:58	5:43	6:27
Dep	10:00	10:45	11:30	12:15	1:00	1:40	2:15	3:00	3:45	4:30	5:15	6:05	6:40

Leicester North Newsletter

THE GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY (1899-1969)

(A Short History)

With its continental loading gauge, slow curves and lack of grades steeper than 1 in 176, the Great central was years ahead of its rivals 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 those of his rival's.

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 be the government of the day.

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

TELEPHONE NUMBERS LEICESTER NORTH

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LOUGHBOROUGH CENTRAL

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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 rebuild.

To have rebuilt 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**), any donations that you feel able to make, to speed up these proposals would be most welcome, (please use the donation Box which is situated in the waiting Room.)



If you are visiting us for the first time and are wondering how the original station used to look, see the above photo.

It was a typical GCR station, with the usual "Island" platforms, and which were accessed via a flight of stairs that descended from the bridge parapet.

If you face the track and look to the left you will be able to see where the stairs were situated (now 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 photograph of the original station hanging in the waiting room.)

If you look to the right, beyond the "Stops", you can see Leicester in the distance, Leicester Central Station" (see photo below) being the next stop, south of here, from where it continued south, passing through Whetstone, Lutterworth, Rugby and on to London St Marylebone.

From there it was proposed to continue beneath the capital and on to the channel coast.



Leicester Central Station, Great Central Street, 2005.

Forthcoming Attractions on the GCR

June 7: Railwayana Swapmeet, Quorn

June 13/14: Wartime weekend

July 15: Wednesday evening Grid-dle train 'Leicestershire Huntsman'

July 25/26: Summer Steam Gala

August 2: Toy and Train fair at Loughborough Central

August 8/9: Get Some In! National Service and Veterans weekend

