



GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY

LOUGHBOROUGH, LEICESTERSHIRE

PRESS INFORMATION

Date: 23rd May 2010

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THE TRAIN NOW APPROACHING... WAS LAST SEEN LIKE THIS 180 YEARS AGO.

‘ROCKET’ and ‘PLANET’ TO PASS ON DOUBLE TRACK FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE 1830s

It’s a double dose of history for twenty first century travellers. The Great Central Railway in Leicestershire is set to recreate a once everyday scene not witnessed in the UK since the 1830s. A replica of Stephenson’s famous ‘Rocket’ steam locomotive is to pass a replica of ‘Planet’, the design which superseded it, on a double track railway.

The award winning heritage line is bringing together seven elderly machines for a special gala event, taking place over the Spring Bank Holiday from the 28th to the 31st of May. If the replicas are counted as being the same vintage as their counterparts, the combined ages of the engines in action is close to 1000.

Stephenson’s Rocket, one of the most instantly recognisable steam engines in the world, was built in 1829 for a competition. The ‘Rainhill Trials’ was staged by the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, looking for a reliable locomotive to work on the line. Rocket was victorious and similar engines entered service between the two cities. The Planet design followed in 1830 as the Victorians began to fall in love with rail travel.

The two replicas visiting the GCR were built comparatively recently, but have never crossed on a double track railway as they would have done everyday in the 1830s.

Kate Tilley from the Great Central Railway said, **“We’re offering our passengers the chance to be part of this extraordinary re-enactment. Both Planet and Rocket are visiting the railway with special train of open carriages, so it will be a true Victorian commuting experience. The replicas are very elegant locomotives which will really be a sight to behold from the train**



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as they approach each other.”

The line up of engines taking part showcases an incredible century of evolving design from the 1820s to the 1920s and includes:

- Furness Railway number 20, built in 1863 and now the oldest working steam locomotive in Britain.
- The tiny ‘Beattie Well Tank’ built in the 1870s,
- The replica of ‘Planet’, an engine built in 1830 by Robert Stephenson (visiting from the Manchester Museum of Science and Industry.) It is the 180th anniversary of the design which operated on the Liverpool and Manchester Railway
- The famous replica of Rocket, (owned by the National Railway Museum) the 1829 built winner of the Rainhill trials, again designed for the Liverpool and Manchester Railway.
- Sole surviving original Great Central Railway freight engine, class O4, built in 1912 for moving coal across the Pennines.
- GNR class N2 designed by Nigel Gresley and built in 1921 to work stopping trains out of Kings Cross.

The line up is completed by 1890 built ‘Sir Berkeley’, a small engine which was supplied to a firm of engineering contractors called Logan and Hemmingway. They were involved in constructing the Great Central Railway’s London Extension and Sir Berkeley worked on the site of Nottingham Victoria station in the late 1890s. The engine is returning to railway it helped to build for the first time.

ENDS

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PRESS CALL:

If you wish to attend the special gala event which takes place on the 28th, 29th, 30th and 31st May 2010, please confirm by calling Kate Tilley on Tel: 07515 596835
Seats can be arranged on the replica trains.

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