



GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY
LOUGHBOROUGH, LEICESTERSHIRE

PRESS INFORMATION

Celebrating 40 years of preservation in 2009

Date: 6th October 2009

HEAVY METAL GIANTS SET TO ROCK LEICESTERSHIRE THIS WEEKEND.

Big engines at the Great Central Railway for major gala event, thousands of visitors expected to flock to the area.

9th, 10th, 11th October 2009.

Some of the biggest railway engines in the UK will be at the Great Central Railway this weekend. The award winning Leicestershire line is staging one of the countries biggest Autumn steam gala events, with seven engines in action.

The line up of locomotives includes three visitors which its hoped will bring thousands of people into the area.

First of the guests is a mighty '9F' locomotive named "Black Prince". It's joined by an engine which is visiting the Great Central from Yorkshire, a 'WD', built as part of the war effort which served in the liberation of Europe. The third guest is a 'Fairburn Tank', on a very rare trip away from its home base in Cumbria.

Fans of the famous Britannia class engine "Oliver Cromwell" are also in for a treat. The locomotive has returned to Loughborough from its exploits on the national rail network. With three other machines from the GCR 'home fleet' also in action, it will be the first time this combination of engines has been in steam together.

GCR president Bill Ford said, "This line up will draw in thousands of visitors to Charnwood. It's a very exciting selection of engines and we are privileged to welcome our visitors. We're calling it the heavy metal show as these are some of the biggest engines you can see in action in the UK."

The event lasts three days, with a warm up on Friday featuring three engines, followed by a weekend using the Great Central's unique double track network to its fullest. As well as passenger trains, visitors will be able to thrill to the rumble of

BRITAIN'S ONLY DOUBLE TRACK, MAIN LINE HERITAGE RAILWAY
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freight trains and be amazed by the non stop postal drop. On Saturday the trains will run into the evening for a special twilight show with the Great Central Railway's in house band playing along.

There's also the chance to take a tour of the Mountsorrel branch line project, a former industrial railway which connects to the main GCR route. This line is being rebuilt in a community project.

The gala event is presented in conjunction with "Steam Railway" Magazine, the country's leading railway preservation title.

Full gala details including the fares, timetables and other attractions beside the engines are available at the Great Central Railway website: www.gcrailway.co.uk.

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

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