

# LEICESTER NORTH

## NEWSLETTER

MAY 2011

No. 40

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

### ONWARD, EVER ONWARD!

It came as a bit shock to realise that this publication has reached its 40th edition. What started as an experiment back in April 2008 has proved to be a popular means of keeping people up-to-date with what is happening at this end of the GCR..

Looking back over the almost three and a half years of its existence shows a remarkable period of development and progress by our railway.

Since issue number one such a lot has happened.

Here at Leicester North we have seen new platform lighting erected, a twenty foot container installed to help alleviate the lack of storage space that we were suffering from before, the re-siting of the booking office and then, the cherry on the cake, our new canopy, an addition that has completely transformed the station.

Along the railway as a whole this period of time has seen a lot of improvements with the "Ellis Shed" at Rothley coming on-stream (shortly to be enlarged) The Loughborough Goods Office purchase and restoration, a Pullman train introduced, the re-steaming of "Oliver Cromwell, and the successful running-in and proving trials of "Tornado", not forgetting, of course the restoration completion and entry into service of the "Jinty."

With the proposed new café at Quorn & Woodhouse rapidly becoming reality, the shortly to be erected turntable also, and the Mountsorrel Branch-line nearing completion the list seems endless, and in the words of a little notice situated on our "Up' platform **"The best is yet to come"**.

Who knows what will be in place when another three and a half years have elapsed?

The tantalising prospect of an eighteen mile long steam railway between here and Ruddington (with double tracking extending to this station) and its correspondingly extended No. 1

platform and signalling are not just a pipe dream, but even at this moment are being discussed and options explored.

The recent failure to obtain the hoped for grant has not diminished the enthusiasm to continue with other options (I heard it described as "Plan B".)

There is one sure way to hasten future developments, both here and along the railway as a whole, and that depends on you, our faithful visitors.

Whilst we have a few more publicity outlets, word-of mouth is the best way of increasing visitor numbers, so take a few leaflets, tell your friends, families and relatives about us.

If you can display a poster, say in a local shop, ask us for one!

There is still a vast untapped visitor potential in the Leicester area, if only word could be got out to them.



It is always nice to welcome new volunteers to our station, so here is Karolyn Jean Knoll, from the USA, with her boyfriend David (a volunteer from the early days of this station) she will be with us until September



(hopefully!!!) as a Booking Clerk. We hope that she will enjoy her stay with us and take home some fond memories of our railway.

Whilst on the subject of volunteers, and carrying on from the previous item,

not only is "spreading the word" a good way to encourage people to visit us, but becoming a part of it is worth considering, as it brings with it certain privileges

too, so have a word with us if you feel that you can spare a few hours weekly or monthly.

Please have a word with our station master who will be pleased to give you all the information you require.

#### MAY'S EVENTS

A new venture will be the "Greater Great Central Diesel Gala", where both preserved sections of the GCR will be "connected" by a bus link, giving a truly extensive line up of diesel motive power.

This, our southern section will be represented by: D8098, D5830, 37198, D123, D1705. Plus the possibility of further guest locos.



The last event of the month will be the repeat of last year's very successful "Golden Oldie's Gala, where some of the oldest surviving steam locos, or reproductions of same will be operating along the line.

Unfortunately, owing to lack of coaling and watering facilities it may not be possible to savour a number of the locos operating, here at Leicester North. We had hoped that after last years disappointment extra facilities would have been in place for this years event, but with other more pressing developments under way it was not possible. (See "Latest" overleaf)

RE-CREATING THE EXPERIENCE

#### NEWSLETTER!

This newsletter is now available "online".

Please go to: [www.gcrailway.co.uk](http://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".

### LATEST

662 Martello, built in 1875 has been confirmed today as the 7th locomotive to star at the Golden Oldies Gala. She is the first 'Terrier' to visit the GCR and will be seen for the first time in the preservation era in BR black livery! The loco, which is arriving at the Great Central on Thursday 5th May is expected to be the star of the 4 day spring bank holiday event.



## 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.



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

- May 14/15: Greater Great Central Diesel Gala
- May 20: Murder Mystery Evening 'Timetable to Murder'
- May 21-22: Meet Fireman Sam
- May 27-30: Golden Oldies Gala
- June 5: Quorn Swopmeet
- June 10-12: Wartime Weekend
- June 11: Wartime 'Allo 'Allo Pullman Supper
- June 17: Murder Mystery Evening

### 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	<b>ARRIVALS</b>								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
	<b>DEPARTURES</b>										
	10.15	11.00	12.00	1.00	1.45	2.20	3.00	4.00	4.45	5.25	