

LEICESTER NORTH

NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2011

No. 38

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

“INTO THE SECOND QUARTER!”

Hello, everyone, nearly a quarter of the way through the year already! How time flies! (especially when you're having fun.)

Those of you read the last issue of this newsletter will remember that I said that we could almost certainly look forward to more unusual locos putting in an appearance on our railway, well, we didn't have to wait very long, did we? Who'd have thought that one day we would be able to see, and indeed travel behind, a RED 8F?

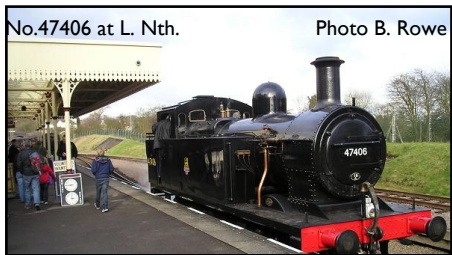
On a visit from the **Churnet Valley Railway**, (first time on the GCR) this loco may cause purists to shudder, but is, non-the-less very striking in it's unusual livery.

Appearing in its pre-nationalisation number 8624, it subsequently became 48624.

As many will know, the Stanier 8F 2-8-0 was a very popular type. Introduced in 1935 it was an immediate success, powerful and versatile, (often, in emergency, used to haul passenger trains, riding well at speed, in addition to its normal freight role.)

Only 126 had been built by 1939, but World War II saw the number vastly increased (852 by 1946) until, in 1943, it was decided to introduce a less expensive (but more basic) loco the "Austerity" 2-8-0 and 2-10-0.)

It is believed that eight of these locos survive in preservation, one of which, No 48305 has it's home, here on the GCR.



No.47406 at L. Nth.

Photo B. Rowe

“Mini Gala”

It was nice to see LMS "Jinty" No. 47406 still doing sterling work during this event, and judging by the number

of passengers each time, is as popular as ever.

(The accompanying photo of it was taken during one of the brief dry spells.)

Poor weather didn't help this event. However there seemed to be quite a good number of visitors who were prepared to brave the rather damp and dismal February conditions.

Well did the old rhyme call it "February Fill dyke."

The accompanying photo of 4-6-0 "Black Five" No. 45305 taken on the same day was taken during one of the (much longer) wet spells.



"Black 5" No. 45305

Photo P. Edeson



1960s Gala

Friday - Monday, March 25-27

The GCR's 1960's mixed traction "biggy" promises to be really impressive with 8F No. 45160 repatriated from Turkey putting in an appearance, with "red" 8F No. 48624, both newcomers to our railway.

GWR 2-8-0 No.3850, which appeared at the Winter Gala will also be running. No. 1450 with autococh (also GWR) will be making a final appearance.

LMS Black 5 No. 45305 will also be operating, and finally, diesels Class 20 D8098 and Class 45 D123 completes the picture.

All we need now. To "Gild the Lilly" so to speak, is a run of decent weather.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Volunteers urgently needed at this station, in all departments please see station master for details

Regular visitors will notice immediately, on entering our station, that the totally incongruous telecom mast just inside our station fence has been removed. It had been out of commission for some considerable time and did, somewhat, detract from the "1960's" ambience that we try to maintain here at Leicester North Station.

Of course, it will mean financial loss to the GCR, so we hope that visitor numbers will increase and make up for the

reduction in revenue.

However, its removal does go some way to indicate the speed of obsolescence

these days, having lasted just a few years, in stark contrast to much of what we see operating



"Going ...Going"

week in, week out on our tracks, locos eighty, ninety, even a hundred years old

The roofing and ceiling repairs to the waiting room that were not completed at the time of the February's issue should also be finished soon.

Unfortunately we had a return visit from the "wrong" type of visitor's recently, who, apparently, collect chain link fencing, so two panels of our perimeter fence have had to be replaced, money that could have been put to better use.

Mike, our maintenance team organiser is progressing satisfactorily from his knee operation, so hopefully, he will be returning soon to direct operations on the "Maintenance and Repair" front, although unless the weather begins to improve drastically there is little point in attempting to do much outdoor work.



RE-CREATING THE EXPERIENCE

Leicester North Newsletter

THE GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY (1899-1969)

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

0116 261 0946

LOUGHBOROUGH CENTRAL

01509 230 726



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 in the Waiting Room.)



If you are wondering how the original station used to look, see the above photograph. It was a typical GCR station with the usual "Island" platform, accessed via a flight of stairs from the bridge. If you look to the left you will see where the original staircase descended from the bridge (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 photo of the original station on the wall of our waiting room.



Pre Beeching the railway continued south, the next main station being Leicester Central, from there continuing on to Whetstone, Lutterworth, Rugby and finally terminating at London St. Marylebone.



VISITORS BOOK

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

Forthcoming Attractions on the GCR

- March 5/6: Meet Peppa and George
- March 6: Quorn Swopmeet
- March 13: Charnwood Borough Council Guided Cycle Ride
- March 25-27: 1960s Gala
- April 1: Casino Fatale, James Bond Pullman Evening
- April 3: Mothering Sunday Luncheon
- April 9/10: Mini Steam Gala; Gloucestershire & Warwickshire Appeal Event
- April 22-25: Easter Steam Special
- April 29: Murder Mystery Evening 'Signal to Murder'
- April 30: Guided Walk with Charnwood Borough Council
- May 14/15: Greater Great Central Diesel Gala

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 Arrivals & Departures every Sat. and Sun. from 5th February to 27th March 2011 Except Special Events.

'Special' timetables apply on 'Gala Days', 'Ivor The Engine' events etc!

Arrivals

10.12. 10.45. 11.45. 12.45. 1.57. 2.45. 4.13.

Departures

10.15. 11.00. 12.00. 1.00. 2.10. 3.00. 4.25

Leaflets advertising 'Drive a Train Experiences', Dining Trains etc available from Waiting Room!