



GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY
LOUGHBOROUGH, LEICESTERSHIRE

PRESS INFORMATION

Winner "Best Tourism Experience - East Midlands" 2007

Date: 29th April 2008

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ICONIC LOCOMOTIVE STAGES COMEBACK
THIS WEEKEND (3rd, 4th, 5th MAY)
AT GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY

**“Oliver Cromwell” ready to run again exactly four decades
after making railway history**

Visitors to the Great Central Railway in Leicestershire this weekend will witness railway history in the making. After an overhaul costing well over a hundred thousand pounds and four years of hard work, Oliver Cromwell, an engine which became a national celebrity in 1968 is coming back to life after decades asleep.

“It’s going to be a huge weekend for the railway,” said General Manager Robert Crew “and we are expecting to be welcoming passengers from all over the country. Oliver Cromwell is a large engine – and getting it fully restored to operational condition has been a huge task. This weekend all the effort will pay off as visitors will be able to ride behind it again. However, this is far more than ‘just another restoration’ because the engine has become a significant national icon. Exactly four decades ago it

BRITAIN’S ONLY DOUBLE TRACK, MAIN LINE HERITAGE RAILWAY
Great Central Railway, Great Central Road, Loughborough, Leicestershire, LE11 1RW
Tel: (01509) 230726 Fax: (01509) 239791



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hailed British Railway's last steam hauled train before diesels took over forever."

The engine which is almost seventy feet long was built by British Railways in 1951. It is a member of the Britannia Class which, when built, represented a new era of investment for the railways after the second world war. However, steam didn't have much of a future because in 1955 BR decided diesel and electric engines would take over. So, Oliver Cromwell gained a place in history and hearts by pulling the last ever steam hauled train in 1968.

The train was called the 15 guinea special because that was the price of a ticket – that works out at £15.75p – which was a princely sum, but the train was still packed because of the occasion. Fortunately the story doesn't end with the engine going for scrap because Oliver Cromwell was saved for the national collection. It has spent the years since 1968 at a museum in Norfolk, but hasn't steamed since the early 1980s. In 2004 a new partnership deal brought the engine to the Great Central in Loughborough for restoration to full working order.

"The work has been done and the engine is ready to go," continued Robert. **"It is a hugely significant moment for steam lovers, for people who remember the 60s and for anyone who wants to get up close to a real giant from a bygone age. We've had the support of so many people to make this happen. There are red letter days ahead for the GCR and for Charnwood as well, as attention is focussed on what we can achieve in Loughborough."**

In case of last minute hitches, visitors are urged to check the GCR website for details (www.gcrailway.co.uk) before setting out to visit.

The partners involved in the restoration are, The National Railway Museum, Steam Railway Magazine and it's readers, 5305 Locomotive Association, Loughborough Standard Locomotive Group, The Friends of the National Railway Museum,

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Bressingham Railway Museum and The Great Central Railway. Generous support has come from Welbeck Sixth Form Defence College, Cromwell Tools, 4c Systems, The Main Line Steam Trust and The David Clarke Railway Trust and Mr Bill Ford, President of the Great Central Railway.

After steaming at Loughborough, Oliver Cromwell will be heading to the National Railway Museum to appear at a special '1968' show, featuring other steam survivors, before returning to Loughborough in June. In mid August, exactly 40 years after the end of steam on the national network it will haul a recreation of the 15 guinea special.

ENDS

WORDS: 590

PRESS ADVISORY: PASSENGER TRAINS SHOULD BEGIN ON SATURDAY WITH OLIVER CROMWELL AND WILL ALSO RUN ON SUNDAY AND MONDAY. WE ARE EXPECTING TO STAGE A FORMAL LAUNCH WITH A VIP POLITICIAN ON SATURDAY 10th MAY – DETAILS TO FOLLOW NEXT WEEK

Images to accompany this story can be downloaded from www.greatcentralrailway.com

Follow the links "More" and "News" to the press gallery section

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Details on the above and all forthcoming events can be found on the Great Central Railway's extensive website: www.greatcentralrailway.com

Additional information can also be obtained from the Booking Office, Loughborough Central Station, (Daily 9.00 - 5.30) on 01509 230726

NOTES

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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 30 years, and is manned by around 700 volunteers and a small team of permanent staff. Originally 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 109 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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