



PRESS INFORMATION

RECORDS TUMBLE - EXTRAORDINARY SCENES AT STEAM RAILWAY GALA

Great Central records best weekend in 39 year history as four star engines draw unprecedented crowds

Visit from legendary general managers son tops the celebrations.

Four big names equals three days of record crowds. An estimated seven thousand passengers travelled over the Great Central Railway during its recent Steam Railway Autumn Gala. It's a record for the line - its busiest ever weekend since preservation began in 1969.

The previous best attendance was set at this years War Weekend when 5000 people visited the railway. It's thought at least another thousand people were on the line side watching the procession of trains.

Bill Ford, president of the Great Central Railway said, **"This was a wonderful one off. With Britain's brand new main line steam engine Tornado, Oliver Cromwell, Leander and Lord Nelson coming together we really fulfilled our main line double track image. We'd like to thank everyone who turned out to support us. We've got to work on what we can do next year now!"**

At one point on the middle day of the event Leicestershire police closed the road leading to Quorn and Woodhouse station as so many cars were queuing to get into the site. Seven coach trains ran full to standing during the days and the Saturday night steam show (featuring a 'night mail' run with Leander) was attended by a record crowd.

The beer tent entered the spirit of the event with four specially brewed ales Tornado, Cromwell, Nelson and Leander! The LMS design was the first one to sell out...

Remarkably, the son of legendary GCR general manager Sir Sam Fay was at the event, celebrating his 100th birthday. His Honour Edgar Fay QC was able to enjoy his father's legacy from the comfort of the preserved lines dining train. Fay senior ran the GCR between 1902 and 1923.

"Thanks are owed not only to our team who burnt the midnight oil to plan, timetable, promote and staff the event, but also to owners of the visiting engines and the National Railway Museum," concluded Bill. "The event marks the last passenger trains with Tornado at the Great Central Railway and I'd like to pay tribute to the AI Steam Locomotive Trust who have been a professional, diligent and excellent group of people to deal with. I wish them every success for the future."

City of Truro is due to arrive at the Great Central very soon for a brief stay. It is the last visitor of the "Year of Express Engines" at the railway. During its visit it is hoped to team it up with Oliver Cromwell and if possible, Leander.

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