



**GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY**  
LOUGHBOROUGH, LEICESTERSHIRE

**PRESS INFORMATION**

*Winner "Best Tourism Experience - East Midlands" 2007*

Date: 7<sup>th</sup> May 2008

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**MEDIA INVITE: 10.30am on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May**  
**Great Central Railway, Great Central Road,**  
**Loughborough, LE11 1RW**

**RAIL MINISTER TOM HARRIS STEAMS**  
**INTO LEICESTERSHIRE FOR**  
**GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY VISIT**

**MP will formally rededicate "Oliver Cromwell"**  
**to mark historic loco's returns to steam.**

**Engine brings visitors from Canada all the way**  
**to Leicestershire.**

**A special ceremony is taking place at Leicestershire's award winning**  
**heritage railway this weekend with guest of honour, Parliamentary**  
**Under Secretary of State for Transport, Tom Harris MP.**

The minister who is responsible for railways will join other invited VIPs to formally rededicate BR Standard 7, no. 70013 "Oliver Cromwell", as it returns to passenger service. The historic engine triumphantly returned to steam at the Great Central during the Bank Holiday

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**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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weekend following a four year rebuild costing hundreds of thousands of pounds.

Robert Crew, General Manager of the Great Central Railway said, "We're delighted to welcome Tom Harris to the railway. He'll unveil the locomotive nameplates, marking its return to passenger service. It sets the seal on a long hard job well done by our volunteers and staff."

Rail Minister Tom Harris said, "I am proud to announce that Oliver Cromwell has departed the museum hall and is back on track. I want to pay tribute to the volunteers and staff at Great Central Railway, whose tremendous efforts made the locomotive's return to passenger service possible. Although our efforts are focused on designing a rail network for the future, it is important we remember the history we are building on."

Oliver Cromwell is famous for its place in railway history. In 1968 it heralded the end of an era, hauling Britain's last steam train – "The 15 guinea special". Since then, while being part of the national collection based in York, it has been on display at a museum in Norfolk. In a partnership deal it has been overhauled and on Saturday May 3rd 2008 hauled its first passenger train since the infamous end of steam special.

Robert Crew continued, "The return of Oliver Cromwell has really captured imaginations. The bank holiday weekend was extremely busy for the railway. We even had two visitors from Canada who had travelled to Leicestershire just to see the engine. Fortunately our team had it ready on time!"

The partnership who made Oliver Cromwell's comeback possible is made up of the National Railway Museum, the readers of Steam Railway Magazine, 5305 Locomotive Association, Loughborough Standard Locomotive Group, the Friends of the National Railway Museum and the Great Central Railway

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Generous support for the Cromwell campaign has come from Bressingham Museum, 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.

At the end of May, Oliver Cromwell will head to the National Railway Museum in York to be part of an exhibition, "1968 and all that". Afterwards it will return to Loughborough for further testing and trials. In August it will haul a recreation of the 15 guinea special, 40 years after the original train ran!

ENDS

WORDS 498

**MEDIA CALL:**

The media are invited to the ceremony. Please arrive at 10.30am for a 10.50am start. Photographs with Mr Harris and the project partners (plus of course the locomotive) will be available.

**FURTHER INFORMATION:**

Details on the above and all forthcoming events can be found on the Great Central Railway's extensive website: [www.greatcentralrailway.com](http://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**

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

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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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