



## **GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY**

LOUGHBOROUGH, LEICESTERSHIRE

### **PRESS INFORMATION**

**Date:** 10th November 2010

## **THE BANBURY CROSS!**

### **GREAT CENTRAL WINTER GALA BOASTS FOUR VISITING ENGINES AND A BANBURY THEME**

**THREE DAYS: 28TH, 29TH, 30TH JANUARY 2011**

### **AUTOCOACH WORKING FOR THE FIRST TIME AT THE GCR**

**Four visiting engines and an autocoach make the GCR's Winter Gala one of the first must see steam spectacles of 2011. The theme of the gala is Banbury in the late 50s, allowing an exciting variety of motive power to take part.**

First of the three visiting locomotives are GWR 2-8-0 No. 3850, travelling to Leicestershire from the West Somerset Railway (it's first trip away from its normal operating base). While the GCR has often hosted 2-8-0s from other big 4 companies, this will be the first time its double track metals have been graced by a Western example. The locomotive is expected to be painted into BR black livery in time for this event, the first time it has worn this colour scheme and will be a natural pairing with the GCR's famous 16T mineral wagon train.

The second visitor is GWR 2-6-2 Prairie tank No. 5526 from the South Devon Railway. The locomotive will visit with an autocoach.

LMS Jubilee Class No. 5690 Leander is also returning to the GCR for a Winter visit, having been very popular at 2010s Winter Steam Gala. Finally, K4 No. 61994 The Great Marquess will make its final appearance at the GCR at the gala, following a successful extended visit which began in October 2010.

Four locomotives from the GCR's home fleet will join the line up, including GWR Hall No. 4593 "Pitchford Hall", with up to eight locomotives expected to be in steam in total during the three day event.



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Bill Ford, President of the Great Central Railway said, "Our gala team have pulled out the stops again, producing yet more firsts for what is sure to be an incredible event. From a marvellous selection of locomotives, to the chance to sample an auto train on our double track, it's hard to pick a highlight. As a key junction where region's overlapped, the Banbury theme gives us licence to showcase all sorts of classes. The GCR was of course connected to Banbury, allowing it to be used as a through route for cross country excursion traffic, so it feels like a natural fit for one of our galas."

The Friday of the event is expected to see three locomotives in traffic with the full fleet deployed over the Saturday and Sunday. Details including fares and timetables will be available on the GCR website closer to the event. A gala programme will be available.

**ENDS**  
**WORDS 439**

#### **FURTHER INFORMATION:**

Details on the above and all forthcoming events can be found on the Great Central Railway's extensive website: [www.gcrailway.co.uk](http://www.gcrailway.co.uk)  
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 celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2009, and is manned by around 700 volunteers and a small team of permanent staff. Preservation of this section of the Great Central Railway began in 1969. The route was originally part of 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 111 year history. Around 100,000 visitors a year come to the railway from all over the world.

Trains run every weekend of the year, bank holidays and daily in the summer. In addition, First Class Restaurant Car Services provide famous dining experiences course, whilst passengers travel between Loughborough and Leicester. Childhood engine driver dreams can come true with a Drive a Train Experience. We also run a number of family events, including 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.