From the General Manager

Last weekend was notable for three things. First, we had another very successful Peppa Pig weekend - many thanks to everyone who worked so hard to achieve this. Which brings me onto the second thing - the Arctic weather which made the event so demanding for all involved, including visitors - hopefully not too many caught a cold. The patience of family visitors queuing with their children to see Peppa and George in the intense cold was greatly appreciated and we hope that they still managed to have a good day out.

The third noteworthy event at the weekend was a hundred miles away at the North Norfolk Railway and was I'm afraid really bad news. If you weren't already aware, the Standard 2, 78019, which had been hired out for a gala event, was on the receiving end of a heavy shunt from another loco. Damage was sustained by both locos and 78019 is to be returned to Loughborough at the earliest opportunity. Initially we will need to assess the damage fully but, potentially, we may find ourselves without one of our most useful locos.

Straight onto 8.30 am Monday morning, the King made its debut, albeit a brief one, as no. 6015 King Richard III - this was courtesy of Great Western Society, the loco's owners. Anyone venturing out for photos on this fiercely cold day, would have been well rewarded! The run down to Leicester was in conjunction with Sir Peter Soulsby (Mayor of Leicester) meeting the Vital apprentices as part of the UK wide National Apprenticeship Week. Incidentally we are optimistic that the loco may return to its 6015 guise for a weekend in April - watch this space.

Looking forward to next weekend, Sunday will see an unusual working: this is the Branch Line Society's "track bash" charter train. Then, straight onto Easter Bunny Expresses and the Easter Vintage Festival!

Richard Patching
**Projects news**

The Loughborough canopy continues its inexorable way towards full completion. Now that we are on the last phase, work is concentrating on coupling up with the work that we originally started with on phase 1a adjacent to the Gents toilets all that time ago. It shows how close we are. The sigh of relief was heard all over the station once we had completed the gritblasting, and the primer paint added, and we had the chance to see what metal remained. Our Consulting Engineer visited last week to make a report on what repairs were needed, and indeed the corrosion was the least that we had encountered all through. Indeed, with the fabricators on site this week, the repair work will have been completed by the time you read this! So it is all downhill now with painting due soon, and timber work well underway. No more dagger boards are needed as we manufactured what we needed at the start of phase 3a. Craning back of restored steelwork will occur shortly.

Thoughts are now turning towards what needs to be done to make the station presentable for any celebration that might occur once our wonderful canopy is completed. To this end we have shot blasted the water tower and will give it a new paint job. We did not want a big rusty lump adjacent to a shiny new canopy. Other improvement works will soon start with more pavings attended to, a sagging platform wall rebuilt, and pointing to windows and doors revamped. I don't know how he finds the time, but David Putt reckons that he'll refresh some of the paintwork as well!

One problem that is exercising our minds is some form of treatment to the earlier-applied paintwork to the dagger boards at the London end of platform 2, and which already looks grubby. Conversations with manufacturers’ paint laboratories have failed to source any kind of silicon-based paint, so I am looking elsewhere. Suggestions gratefully received!

In closing my report this week, I would like to salute the projects work achieved by our friends on the Bluebell Railway who last week completed the rail connection through to East Grinstead. Well done to them! A film is available on their website.

So it seems that our Bridging the Gap scheme might become one of the last great heritage projects to achieve. If the Bluebell can do it, so can we!

*Tony Sparks*

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**Friends of Great Central Main Line - Witherslack Hall Firebox Stay Appeal Raffle**

By now, you should have all received, with the latest copy of the Main Line magazine, your raffle tickets in aid of the above appeal. We have had a fantastic initial response so far, but still have a long way to go to reach our target of the £12,750 needed to complete the purchase of all the required firebox stays.

Please try and sell your tickets and return stubs and monies to me at the address shown on the books. Every ticket sold will help return the Great Central Railway’s very own locomotive to steam. Thank you in anticipation

*Andy Fillingham - Draw Promoter*
**Branch Line Society! GCR Track Visit – 17 March 2013**

Our friends at the Branch Line Society will be chartering a special train on Sunday 17th March 2013. Departing at 08:00, and due to conclude by 12:00, they are delighted to offer what is believed to be the most comprehensive “track bash” of GCR infrastructure. It is intended that either a 2 or 3 car DMU formation is used. The proposed route is as follows:


As usual a track map, stock list and souvenir ticket will be provided to aid enjoyment of the day. Note that passengers will be required to sign a short disclaimer as a condition of participation in this event.

The event will operate at a fare of £22 per person for members of the Branch Line Society, £27 non-members. To book your place, please forward a cheque payable to “Branch Line Society” to Kev Adlam, 53 Kemble Close, Wistaston, Crewe. CW2 6XN, providing an email address where possible. Any queries should be addressed to Kev Adlam preferably by email to kev.adlam@branchline.org.uk or by telephone 20:00 to 21:00 Monday to Friday on 01270 662396. The fixture is expected to fill quickly so do please book promptly if you are interested. An opportunity for a supporting fixture in the afternoon is being pursued, and if successful further details will be provided.

*Richard Patching*

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**FORTY YEARS OF MEMORIES – 23 March**

Forty years have passed since the first Open Day at Loughborough Central. David Putt looks back at a random collection of pictures taken over these amazing years.

The people, the locomotives, the rolling stock, the stations, the track and the signals have all played a role in creating the Great Central we know today.

This presentation will take place at Lovatt House, Wharncliffe Road, Loughborough on Saturday 23rd March 2013 at 7.30pm. Admission is free but a collection in aid of the Loughborough Canopy Fund will be taken.
**EASTER VINTAGE FESTIVAL – Fri 29th March through to Mon 1st April**

Join us as we celebrate the good ol' days of steam. Experience a country fayre at Quorn station with steam powered gallopers and big wheel, traction engines, live music & beer tent, craft stalls and visiting locomotives. It’s good old fashioned family fun and for just £30 for a family of 5, it’s good old fashioned value too!

On Friday night Quorn gates open again at 6.30pm with a knees up in the real ale tent with live music from The Roosters, playing no-nonsense covers of classic songs from the “golden age” of pop music, the sixties, the seventies and the eighties. To purchase tickets (£5pp or 10 for £40) please call into the marketing office (opposite the booking office) or call 01509 632315. The vintage fairground rides will also operating into the evening and we will be serving hot food. Join us for a boogie, a pint and a ride on the gallopers!

For more information visit [www.gcrailway.co.uk](http://www.gcrailway.co.uk)

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**A ROYAL BANQUET WITH KING RICHARD III - Friday April 19**

In honour of the sensational discovery of the body of King Richard III in Leicester, the Great Central Railway is hosting a Royal feast.

In surroundings fit for a King, the award winning heritage line's luxurious Pullman Dining Train, revellers will be greeted by court room style entertainment 'More the Merrier', red wine and mead, before boarding the train through one of two elegant bar cars. The banquet itself will be served in five removes (courses) each with a medieval theme.

The train will depart from Loughborough Central for the sixteen mile return journey to Leicester on Friday April 19th.

What’s more there will be real steam Royalty in charge. Currently visiting the railway is a Great Western King Class locomotive, No. 6023 King Edward II. Wearing a striking blue livery, special permission has been obtained from its owners to rename it as No 6015 King Richard III. This long scrapped classmate of No. 6023 will live again in memory of the rediscovered monarch!

Kate Tilley, marketing manager of the Great Central Railway said, "This will be a grand night out. A King class locomotive in charge of an Umber and Cream Pullman train is itself is a rare treat. Being able to mark such an important discovery at the same time makes this a unique occasion which we hope diners will look forward to being part of."

Tickets for the King Richard III Pullman Dining Train can be booked by calling the Great Central Railway booking office on 01509 632323. They cost £57 per person and include train travel, entertainment, welcome drinks and a five course dinner. The themed menu is online at the railway’s website [www.gcrailway.co.uk](http://www.gcrailway.co.uk)
AWARD WINNING SWITHLAND SIDINGS COMPLEX OPEN TO VISITORS AT SPECIAL GREAT CENTRAL GALA

Visiting Engines to star at three day event 26th to 28th April 2013.

It’s the three day steam dream railway enthusiasts have been waiting for. For the first time since the completion of the award winning signalling at Swithland Sidings, the Great Central Railway is opening the area to the public. With guest locomotives and a super intensive timetable, the unique spectacle of steam locomotives passing each other, running into loops and shunting in sidings will unfold. There won’t be a dull moment!

The gala will feature passenger and freight running on the award winning Leicestershire heritage line, and also the first few yards of the newly laid Mountsorrel branch line. Visitors will be able to stay all day in a special viewing at Swithland, closer to the action than has ever been allowed before. Such intense action was once common place on Britain’s Railways but can now only be seen on the GCR.

The list of locomotives expected in action is also impressive. After an extended stay, GWR ‘King’ class No. 6023 King Edward II will put on a farewell performance. As the railway waves goodbye to one visitor, it welcomes three others for the first time. London and North Western Railway Webb ‘Coal Tank’ No 1054 will feature on the GCR’s freight trains (subject to contract). Meanwhile the sidings at Swithland will be shunted by two diminutive locomotives. Bagnall 0-4-0s Alfred and Judy were built with very low cabs and short wheelbases to cope with low bridges and tight curves on the Cornish branch lines they once worked.

Completing the motive power line up are engines from the GCR ‘home fleet’ including Ivatt 2 No 46521, Red liveried LMS 8F No 48624, LMS ‘Jinty’ No 47406 and BR Standard 2 No 78019. In all, eight locomotives are expected in action.

Kate Tilley, Great Central Railway marketing manager said, “We’ve started to see the potential of the new signalling at Swithland Sidings at our recent major galas. However, we know people want to be allowed on the ground there, to see the true theatre of the railways for themselves. It’s going to be a very exciting event and with the ‘King’, some guests, and so much to see, it is certainly not one to be missed. Children will be delighted by Alfred and Judy and they will right at home shunting at Swithland.”

Hot food will be available at Swithland during the three day event. Passengers will be able to reach Swithland using a complimentary shuttle bus from Quorn and Woodhouse station. When changing trains at Quorn, look out for demonstration high speed mail drops and locomotives being turned on the new turntable.

On additional unusual attraction is a narrow gauge locomotive. Tallyllyn Railway No. 3 Sir Hayden will be on display at Quorn and Woodhouse station. Usually found running trains in Wales, the locomotive is coming back to Leicestershire where it was built at Henry Hughes Locomotive and Tramway Engine Works Ltd in Loughborough (the site is now occupied by the Brush Works). The locomotive will be posed alongside two large diesels also built locally as part of a ‘Made In Loughborough’ display.
The railways’ family tea rooms and bistros will all be open during the event. Timetables and fares will be available at the Great Central Railway’s website closer to the event.

All locomotives and attractions appear subject to contract and availability.

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**No.3 SIR HAYDEN GOES BACK TO ITS BIRTHPLACE**

Talyllyn Railway’s Locomotive No.3 Sir Hayden is going on its travels in April, when it is due to be moved to Leicestershire to appear at the Great Central Railway’s Swithland Steam Gala between 26th and 28th April 2013. Here it will be displayed in the yard at Quorn and Woodhouse station along with a Talyllyn publicity and sales stand staffed by volunteers from the railway.

This is an appropriate venue for the locomotive to visit as it is very close to the original works where it was built in 1878. These were the works of Henry Hughes’ ‘Hughes’s Locomotive & Tramway Engine Works Ltd.’ in Loughborough, which later became the ‘Falcon Engine and Car Works’. This in turn was taken over by the ‘Brush Electrical Engineering Company’ in the early twentieth century.

No.3 was the third of three identical 0-4-0’s built by Hughes for the 2ft 3ins gauge Corris Railway, being rebuilt as an 0-4-2 in 1900. It continued to serve the line until it closed in 1948. In 1951 it, along with Corris No.4, was purchased by the embryonic Talyllyn Railway Preservation Society for the Talyllyn where it has worked ever since, although it has returned to the Corris on two occasions in the last few years. It was named Sir Hayden on the Talyllyn after the long-time owner of the line before it was preserved, but often appears as its alter-ego Sir Handel from the Skarloey Railway.

Currently No.3 is based at the Corris Railway where it has been displayed since its boiler certificate expired last year. The Corris Railway Society have agreed to release the locomotive early from a leasing agreement in order for this visit to take place. While the locomotive is away from Tywyn it is also planned to visit other venues, details of which will be released in due course.

Richard Patching, Great Central Railway’s General Manager said ‘Although it will not be in steam it should prove to be a unique attraction during the gala, along with, hopefully, another standard gauge diesel Loughborough locomotive, plus the other attractions at the station including the working turntable.’ All Talyllyn members are also entitled to privilege ticket rates during the gala, upon production of a valid membership card.

A spokesman for the Talyllyn commented ‘Our thanks must go to all those who have made this visit possible and enabled No.3 to return to its birthplace. Particularly we would like to thank the Corris Railway Society for being so gracious in releasing the locomotive to us. We hope that it will prove to be a great attraction during the gala.’
**Greenacres Goes Vintage**

The Greenacres facility will be hosting its first Vintage Fayre (as part of the GCR's Vintage Festival) on Sunday 31st March and Monday 1st April from 10.30am – 4.30pm, admission is free and there will be a variety of stall holders displaying and selling vintage clothes, jewellery, handbags, textiles, china ware, confectionery plus much more.

To help keep the children entertained we will have a bouncy castle, face painter and colouring tables on site plus the vintage ice-cream van providing lovely treats.

There will also be live music from La Bellaukulele on the Sunday and The Harmony Bells will be singing for us on the Monday.

The Platform Café will be open all day serving lovely home-made food so we hope you will pop along to see what's on offer.

Or if you are interested in hiring a stall for the day please get in touch on the number below as we still have a stall space left due to a cancellation.

077785 12275

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**King Richard comes to Leicester North**

Fondly known as ‘The Blue King’, King Edward II no. 6023 has recently been transformed into the King Richard III no. 6015 as a way of paying tribute to Richard III, whose remains were discovered in a car park in the city centre in August.

Members of the public, GCR’s Bill Ford & staff, Vital Apprentices and Vital Directors along with the City Mayor paid the popular locomotive a visit during ‘National Apprenticeship Week’ on Monday 11th March when the locomotive took its first journey in this guise from Loughborough to Leicester North station.

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**Shed News**

I have been joined in the South yard by a team mainly formed from the younger members of staff, who have set about the tender of the 8F 48305 like a set of wolves on a carcass. In short order the tank has been removed from the frames and placed on sleepers, and the wheel-sets dropped from the frames and are being cleaned for assessment. The difficult bit is going to be getting at the tender tank floor which needs replacing, ideally the way would be to invert it, but a Stanier tank has rounded tops and so would be most unstable. I shall watch with interest!

In the firebox of 73156 I have been able to assess the situation following the welding in of the new rear laps, which we regard as probably the most significant stage remaining on the renovation of the loco. Glad to say that the NDE man has ultrasonic-ed the welds and proclaimed them A1, so I then gingerly took out the bolts clamping them up to see how the holes had lined up. You may remember that I set the new strips of copper 3/16” away
from their anticipated final position using undersize bolts, expecting the weld contraction to pull them back into line. Give or take a 1/16' this is what has happened, and as I have to enlarge the holes by more than this, the result will be a straight hole. If only everything went as well! I took advantage of a short spell of warmer weather last week to mark out the patch cover over the superheater header, which is now complete and fits with holes tapped in the smokebox.

Gervase has emerged from the shed like a butterfly from a chrysalis, and on Monday was raising steam for its first run for a long time. Before this could occur the bicycle chain that drives it was fitted, and it was weighed and the spring heights adjusted as necessary. Another one out of the door.

Gervase being lit in Loughborough MPD on Monday – the reflections show just how glossy the paint finish is! David Mathews

To fill the space thus vacated, David Wright has brought in from the cold the boiler of his own Austerity 3809 to be next to the Buckingham group’s 3890, or are the numbers the other way round? David’s has ominous markings on the back head which suggest that the bottom 2/3 are destined to be cut off and discarded, in fact he tells me that he already has a new section on the way from Israel Newton. Amazing what you can buy on e-bay these days!

Locos for the weekend, not decided by Monday, but could well include the Blue ‘King’. David Mathews
From Lee Myring

Good Afternoon

Yesterday I took my Mum and 7 other family members to Rothley cafe for the Mother's day afternoon tea (£12.00 per couple).

As with my Stag Do last year the food, service and value was outstanding! Everyone had a lovely time and will all be visiting for food again! Me and my wife go the cafe every weekend and really enjoy whatever we eat!

Please pass on my thanks to all involved!!

Cheers
Lee Myring

If you have any news or photos you’d like included in the weekly newsletter, please forward to martin.ward@gcrailway.co.uk by 10.30am Wednesday. © GCR Plc. 2013