

West Midlands Trains

Business Update

October 2019



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West
Midlands
Railway



London
Northwestern
Railway

Operated by West Midlands Trains

Train named in honour of Vic's 50 years of service

Watford Junction platform assistant Vic Hall had a day to remember after a train named in his honour - on the day he retired after 50 years at the station.

Vic dispatched his final train at Watford Junction before his London Northwestern Railway colleagues surprised him with a party – and a train named in his honour.

The dedicated railwayman started work on 4 August 1969 as a 16-year-old boy for what was then British Rail.

He has worked at the busy station ever since, including through the dramatic remodelling of the station in the 1980s.

Vic said: "I was so keen on trains I think I just turned up and they let me help. I was doing anything and everything, from cleaning the windows to looking after the platforms.

"Coming to work has always been a pleasure for me because I love the trains. I have been fortunate to work with a fantastic set of colleagues over the years and I will certainly be back regularly to visit."

Vic received retirement gifts including a signed "Watford Junction" platform sign and a model of his favourite engine - a now-scrapped Class 50 named "Implacable".



London Northwestern Railway managing director Jan Chaudhry-van der Velde congratulates platform assistant Vic Hall on his retirement.

Positive messages at Tamworth station



Vicky Cropper of LNR, left, with partners at the unveiling of new artwork at Tamworth station.

Artwork and photographs with positive messages of wellbeing have gone on display at Tamworth station to help create a brighter more welcoming space for passengers.

The pieces of art have been put up along platforms, in waiting areas and on bus shelters to help people feel happier when travelling through the station.

The artwork has been designed and created by people who have received treatment at the George Bryan Centre in Tamworth. They worked with local artist Andy Nash in partnership with the Arts for Health team at Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust.

Vicky Cropper, head of stakeholder and community for London Northwestern Railway, said: "We are committed to making our stations as accessible and welcoming as possible and this innovative project has our full support.

"Our £1 billion investment includes more, modern, trains, better stations and work to improve access to our network. The message is clear - everyone is welcome to travel on our railway."

It's the 'Bear Necessities' as staff back Watford hospice



LNR revenue officer Rasa Jucyte with charity fundraisers from Jury's Inn Watford.

Kind-hearted LNR staff showed their support for efforts to raise money for Scope and The Peace Hospice in Watford.

Fundraisers from Jury's Inn used the LNR service from Watford Junction to take teddy Leo for a day trip to London.

Our team happily posed for photos to mark the occasion.



LNR revenue protection and security manager Amos Ballard.

Railway communities all aboard for **£1.7m** projects fund

Customer & Communities Improvement Fund

Communities in the West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway networks have put forward dozens of suggestions for innovative schemes which should receive a share of a new £1.7m fund.

The Customer and Communities Improvement Fund (CCIF) has been created as part of the operators' drive to improve the wider station environment.

The Fund will run every year for the next six years so schemes which need a little longer to plan their projects will have another chance next year.

The Fund offers bidders, including individuals, charities, local authorities and community groups, the chance to apply for a share of up to £1.7million.

Following a judging process, cash will be awarded to not-for-profit schemes – big or small – which will be delivered between April 2020 and March 2021.

Andy Camp, commercial director for WMR and LNR, said:

"We have demonstrated our commitment to improving the experience of our passengers through our £1billion investment

in the network and this Fund we will make a difference to

the economic prosperity and social footprint of our communities. We have a superb breadth of organisations and community groups across our network and we are excited to hear ideas for how this Fund can improve neighbourhoods."

Examples of schemes which may be considered include educational schemes such as railway safety; schemes providing information to communities around stations eg. wayfinding; projects to bring disused buildings on or near stations back to life; schemes promoting sustainable modes of travel such as walking and cycling

Bids received will be judged by the West Midlands Trains Community Investment Panel which will pass recommendations to the Department for Transport, which will make final approvals before funding is released.

The bidding window for 2020/21 grants is due to close on 7 October 2019. See www.wmr.uk/ccif or www.lnr.uk/ccif



Grand Rail Collaboration to benefit passengers

Rail industry bosses have come together in a ground breaking deal, the first of its kind in the country, to drive up standards for rail passengers in the West Midlands.

The new West Midlands Grand Rail Collaboration will tackle performance, simplifying fare structures, improving the quality of trains and stations, sharing busy track capacity efficiently and delivering timetables to improve reliability.

The GRC brings West Midlands Railway together with four train operating companies, Network Rail, the West Midlands Rail Executive, Vintage Trains, Transport Focus and the Birmingham Centre for Railway Research and Education.

Mayor of the West Midlands Andy Street, who is also the independent chair of GRC for 19/20, said: "Rail patronage in the West Midlands is growing faster than the rest of the UK and the GRC will tackle the challenges this presents effectively."



West Midlands Railway managing director Jan Chaudhry-van der Velde, third from left, with partners.

December timetable preparation

Following the biggest timetable shake-up in over a decade in May 2019, planners at West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway have been preparing for a smaller set of changes which will come into effect in December.

The timetable is expected to include an additional hourly weekday shuttle between Birmingham New Street and Birmingham International as well as five extra Sunday morning services between Rugeley and New Street.

Three additional weekday services from Euston to Watford Junction are also being lined up to come into operation.

On Sundays, through services from Liverpool Lime Street to London Euston will be introduced and one service per hour from Euston to New Street will be extended to Stafford. All timetable changes are subject to approval by Network Rail.

As with the May timetable, we will be on trains and at key stations across the network helping people with their journey planning and explaining how the latest round of improvements will help them.

This will be supported by Whistle Stop Tour events at stations where passengers can provide feedback on their routes.

Free travel to university open days a big success

In our last edition we reported on our exciting new initiative to help prospective students attend university open days on our network.

More than 1,000 passes were issued to support students in travelling to events at the University of Worcester and the University of Birmingham.

Further events are planned with these universities this autumn.

Any other university on the WMR / LNR network which would be interested in piloting the scheme can contact jon.harris@wmtrains.co.uk

Hundreds of penalty fares issued in clampdowns

Hundreds of ticketless train travellers using Birmingham New Street were given penalty fares on a day of action.

West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway revenue protection officers joined forces with other train operators to check tickets as passengers made their way in and out of the station.

In total 206 penalty fare notices were issued and 39 people were referred for prosecution. A similar operation centred on Moor Street and Snow Hill resulted in 170 penalty fares and four prosecutions.

Steven Fisher, head of on board experience for WMR, said: "Operations like this reassure the 97% of passengers who make sure they have a valid ticket that we are tackling the issue head-on."



Revenue officers from multiple train operators at Birmingham New Street.

Station Alliance aims to reopen disused buildings



West Midlands Railway customer experience director Richard Brooks, second from right, joins Station Adopters at pilot station Stechford.

High Street retailers and coffee shops could get the chance to set up in station buildings across the West Midlands Railway network.

It is among measures being considered under the pioneering West Midlands Station Alliance agreement - promising passengers cleaner, brighter and more welcoming facilities.

Stations piloting the new initiative include Bromsgrove and Hall Green while some pilots will cover paired stations in the same area such as Smethwick Galton Bridge and Rolfe Street.

Further measures being considered include introducing more shelters, safer crossings, improved toilets and waiting rooms.

Detailed plans are now being drawn up for of the pilot stations, which are: Bromsgrove; Cannock; Rugeley Town and TV; Kenilworth; Nuneaton; Dudley Port and Coseley; Droitwich Spa; Kidderminster; Oakengates and Wellington; Smethwick Galton Bridge and Rolfe Street; Selly Oak; Stratford and Stratford Parkway; Hall Green; Bournville; Marston Green and Tile Hill; Tame Bridge Parkway; Stechford.

Primary school benefits from cycle scheme investment

Children at a primary school in Birmingham are feeling the benefit of a West Midlands Railway scheme to install thousands of cycle spaces on the rail network.

WMR is installing thousands of dedicated cycle spaces at dozens of locations, including Yardley Wood station, as part of its commitment to sustainable travel.

The modern cycle racks, covered by CCTV, replace older-style secure lockers which have been donated to nearby Chilcote Primary School in Hall Green with the support of locker owners Transport for West Midlands.

Andy Camp, commercial director, said: "The community is at the heart of our business and I am delighted we have found such a good use for these lockers."

"Our cycle programme is introducing thousands of spaces across the network as we continue to work with partners across the industry to encourage sustainable transport methods."



Chilcote School deputy head teacher Mark Cross with Michael Byrne, from West Midlands Railway.

Bulldozers move in as dramatic revamp of Kidderminster station draws closer

Demolition work is now under way at Kidderminster as the station prepares for a dramatic revamp which will double the size of the main building.

The bulldozers moved in over the summer to clear the existing station building ahead of the foundations being laid for the new glass-fronted structure.

Richard Brooks, customer experience director for West Midlands Railway, said: "The new station will improve the experience for passengers and provide a real boost for the local economy.

"The finished project will create a more welcoming gateway for the Severn Valley Railway and the wider local area."

To mark the occasion, representatives from the partner organisations involved in the project - including Worcestershire County Council and the Local Enterprise Partnership - gathered at the site.



Mark Lawton, from the WMR stations team, with partners at Kidderminster.



West Midlands Railway head of stations Brenda Lawrence, right, with, from left, Malcolm Holmes of West Midlands Rail Executive, West Midlands Mayor Andy Street and Councillor Waseem Zaffar of Birmingham City Council.

Funding for three new stations in Birmingham

A campaign to resume passenger services on the out-of-use Camp Hill Line in Birmingham has received a £15million funding boost from the Department for Transport.

West Midlands Rail Executive and Transport for the West Midlands are leading the project to bring stations at Moseley, Kings Heath and Hazelwell back to life.

The Camp Hill Line has not served passengers since the 1940s but West Midlands Mayor Andy Street has set his sights on reopening the stations in time for 2022 when Birmingham will host the Commonwealth Games.

Planning applications for the three stations are expected to be submitted by the end of this year with construction work hoped to be under way in 2020.

Jewellery Quarter backs 'Adopt a Station' scheme

Friends of the Jewellery Quarter station in Birmingham came together to film a promotional video encouraging more groups to come forward to adopt a station.

Fay Easton, head of stakeholder and community for WMR, said: "Station adoption makes a real difference to rail users and provides a valuable sense of community for the volunteers who get involved.

"Jewellery Quarter is a great example where the plans for the station are exciting and innovative."

If you are interested in adopting a station operated by either West Midlands Railway or London Northwestern Railway, please contact Fay or Vicky Cropper (LNR) - using the contact details on the back page of this newsletter.



Fay Easton, from WMR, second from right, with representatives of the Friends of Jewellery Quarter station.

Designs are unveiled for long-awaited redevelopment of University station

The future look of one of Birmingham's busiest stations has been unveiled.

The popular University station, which serves the University of Birmingham and the nearby University Hospital, is in need of increased capacity.

The station was originally designed to cater for around 500,000 passengers a year but now handles around 3.5million - a figure which is continuing to rise.

The redevelopment project is being led by the West Midlands Railway Executive and Transport for the West Midlands.

Over the summer WMRE and TfWM unveiled station designs which include:

- a new station building with access to both platforms
- a bridge over the canal to create a direct link with the university campus
- widened platforms and canopies along the platforms
- improved links with bus stops

Public consultation on the designs closed last month with further details expected to be unveiled soon.



The revamped University station in Birmingham will include a new bridge.



Online film celebrates homeless project

A heart-warming promotional video by a Bromsgrove homeless charity made film stars out of two members of the West Midlands Railway family.

Phil Hobson and Sandra Clifton found their inner George Clooney and Jennifer Lawrence to star in a YouTube film by The Basement Project.

The project was honoured as part of the WMR 'Cross City Heroes' scheme and to celebrate the founders recorded their mascot 'Brian the Basement Bear' (above) using WMR services.

In the film cuddly toy Brian is seen purchasing his ticket before boarding the train. To view the clip in full, log on to <https://bit.ly/2ZgquEe>



Senior conductor Phil Hobson.



Customer service advisor Sandra Clifton.

COMING SOON - Station Liftshare - wmtrains.liftshare.com

Cakes mark 180 years of Tamworth station

A grand celebration marking 180 years of Tamworth station raised hundreds of pounds for LNR's charity partners the Alzheimer's Society.

It was on 12 August 1839 that officials from the Birmingham and Derby Junction Railway first opened the station and it has continued to serve passengers ever since.

LNR staff found their inner 'Bake Off' to make cakes for the charity cake stall, including a train-themed version brought in by customer service advisor Julie Hollands.

A raffle featuring prizes donated by local businesses helped add to the charity coffers and staff were also on hand to give out goody bags to children passing through the station.

Duty station manager Honor Evans said: "I have never been to a birthday party for a train station before but it was a fantastic occasion and the team did a great job."



Station staff at Tamworth celebrating 180 years of services.

Rail Minister praises crew after birdstrike



Rail Minister Chris Heaton-Harris, inset, praised the LNR conductor and driver after a bird strike damaged the windscreen, above left.

A bird-strike incident on a London Northwestern Railway service prompted praise for two staff members from the newly-appointed Rail Minister.

Chris Heaton-Harris, MP for Daventry, was one of those on board the 1215 departure from London Euston to Crewe on Thursday 15 August.

Unfortunately the service struck a crow while travelling at approximately 70mph in the Tring area, causing significant damage to the driver's cab windscreen.

The service was able to continue to Bletchley where passengers were switched to a different train in order for the damaged unit to be sent to the depot for repairs.

Taking to Twitter, Mr Heaton-Harris said: "Kudos to the conductor on the 1215 @LNRrailway service out of Euston. A smashed windscreen meant everyone on board had to swap to a different train at Bletchley and she ensured this was executed quickly with some humour."

The LNR members of staff involved were senior conductor Florence Peprah and driver Graham Jenkins.

Volunteers spruce up Bletchley flower displays



Network Rail volunteers join Bletchley Station Adopters to spruce up the station.

Volunteers from Network Rail teamed up with Station Adopters at Bletchley to give the flower beds a fresh lease of life.

Sophie Morris, from the LNR stations team, said: "The volunteers transformed an overgrown and abandoned flower bed to an absolutely beautiful display. The compliments were arriving within minutes!"



Performance update

Period 4 - 23 June - 20 July

Period 5 - 21 July - 17 Aug

PPM

81.6%

MAA

86.1%

PPM

75.9%

MAA

85.4%

Reliability - 94.7%

Reliability - 91.4%

- PPM (Public Performance Measure) is the % of trains arriving within five minutes of advertised times.
- MAA (Moving Annual Average) is the average PPM over the last year to date.
- Reliability is the % of trains that ran for the whole of their journey.



Our performance has remained challenging following the introduction of our May timetable, coupled with a series of incidents across the network which caused significant disruption.

We are working on solutions in a number of areas to help alleviate some of these issues and improve PPM.

Regarding specific issues over the summer, failures of overhead line equipment at Birmingham New Street and Rugeley Trent Valley on two dates led to severe disruption, as did a points failure at Stechford on July 23.

Leaf fall timetable introduced

A special timetable to combat delays caused by fallen leaves will be in place on the Cross City line in Birmingham from the middle of October.

The weekday timetable will operate from Monday 14 October until Friday 29 November 2019, affecting services from Lichfield, through Birmingham New Street, to Redditch and Bromsgrove.

Some trains will have an amended stopping pattern in daytime hours, with normal operation resuming by 1600.

The timetable is focused on providing a normal level of service for commuters travelling to and from Birmingham city centre, with every train arriving at New Street before 0930 unaffected.

Trains heading out of the city after 1600 will also call at all stops as normal.

The leaf fall timetable involves missing out some stops on the route to help deal with slippery rail conditions.



Autumnal weather creates significant challenges for train drivers, as wheels and rails can often become coated with a hard residue. As a result, trains often need to slow down to adapt.

The stations with amended calling patterns are Wylde Green, Chester Road, Erdington, Gravelly Hill, Bournville, Kings Norton and Northfield.

Passengers are advised to check their journeys before travelling.

Engineering

Ledbury to Hereford

Sat 14 Sep until Sun 20 Oct

Replacement buses between Ledbury and Hereford on Saturdays and Sundays. Not all weekends affected.

Barnt Green to Redditch

Sun 6 Oct, Sun 13 Oct, Sun 20 Oct

Rail replacement buses between Barnt Green and Redditch on three consecutive Sundays through October.

Liverpool South Parkway to Crewe

Sat 2 Nov and Sun 3 Nov

Rail replacement buses between Liverpool South Parkway and Crewe on the first weekend of November.

For the latest information check nationalrail.co.uk

About us - West Midlands Trains

We operate over 1,300 train services a day over our West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway networks, manage 149 stations and provide over 75 million passenger journeys each year. We are investing £1 billion into our rail network to deliver new trains, improved routes and station upgrades. This will include 413 new train carriages across the network and space for an extra 85,000 passengers into Birmingham and London at peak times.

Central to our delivery of rail services are the communities we serve. We are looking to improve integration, sustainable travel and developer engagement as well as expanding our community rail partnerships. We also hope to increase the number of adopted stations and regenerate station environments while making the railway accessible for everyone.

If you ever have any questions or feedback on what we're doing in your area, please contact:



Fay Easton

Head of
community &
stakeholder,
WMR

fay.easton@wmtrains.co.uk



Vicky Cropper

Head of
community &
stakeholder,
LNR

vicky.cropper@wmtrains.co.uk



Jon Harris

Integration,
accessibility &
development
manager,
LNR & WMR

jon.harris@wmtrains.co.uk

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