

HS2 launches national vote to name Warwickshire Tunnel Boring Machine

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HS2 has launched a [national vote](#) to name the project's third Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM) which is set to create a one-mile twin bore tunnel under Long Itchington Wood in Warwickshire.

Three names have been shortlisted from over 180 entries submitted by people in Warwickshire, who were asked to nominate the names of women closely associated with the county. The vote is now open, with the online competition running until the end of June. The names are:

- Anne – named after Anne Hathaway, who was the wife of the country’s most famous playwright William Shakespeare. She was born in 1556 and her childhood home nearby in Stratford-upon-Avon was bought by the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust in 1892 and turned into a museum. Suggested by a resident from Nuneaton.
- Dorothy – named after Dorothy Hodgkin, who in 1964 became the first British woman to win the Nobel Prize in Chemistry. Her discoveries included confirming the structure of penicillin, and her work with insulin paved the way for it to be used on a large scale for treatment of diabetes. She died in 1994 in Shipston-on-Stour in Warwickshire. Suggested by a student at Warwickshire College Group.
- Mary Ann – named after Mary Ann Evans, better known by her pen name George Eliot, who was an English novelist, poet, journalist, translator and one of the leading writers of the Victorian era. She was born in Nuneaton and her novels, most famously ‘Middlemarch’, are celebrated for their realism and psychological insights. Suggested by a pupil at North Leamington School.

HS2’s Civils Director Mike Lyons said: “The naming of this TBM marks a crucial milestone for the project, with the tunnel under Long Itchington Wood the first significant piece of Britain’s new high speed railway to be built in the Midlands. The 170 engineers working on the TBM during its construction and assembly are amongst the 16,000 people employed by the project.

“I’d like to thank people in Warwickshire for suggesting a great selection of interesting and inspiring women who have such a close connection with the county. I look forward to finding out who the British public choose as the winning name later in the summer.”

The Long Itchington Wood TBM will begin tunnelling under Warwickshire later this year and will be operated by HS2’s main works contractor for the West Midlands, Balfour Beatty Vinci (BBV). The 2,000-tonne tunnel boring machine, which has been manufactured in Germany by Herrenknecht, will be around 10 metres wide and will take around five months to complete the first bore of two parallel tunnels.

Balfour Beatty VINCI’s Managing Director Michael Dyke said: “With the Tunnel Boring Machine set to start its critical journey later this year, we’re delighted to have engaged with the local community in Warwickshire to uphold the engineering tradition of naming the 2,000-tonne machine, after a notable woman.

“Alongside HS2, we’re now calling for members of the public across the UK to choose one of the three carefully selected names – and play a role in this key milestone, for Europe’s largest infrastructure project.”

The Long Itchington Wood tunnel avoids disrupting the ancient woodland located above the tunnelling works. Once the first bore is complete, the TBM will be extracted at the South Portal before being transported by road back to the North Portal to commence the second bore. The final section will become a ‘green tunnel’ – also known as a cut and cover tunnel – where a soil ‘roof’ is built around the tunnel entrance to integrate the portal into the natural landscape.

This is the third HS2 tunnel boring machine that will be put to a public vote to name it, with the first two machines already tunnelling under the Chilterns. They were named after two famous local

Buckinghamshire women: Florence Nightingale - the founder of modern nursing who spent many years living in Buckinghamshire; and pioneering astronomer and astrophysicist, Cecilia Payne-Gaposchkin, who was born in Buckinghamshire.

The national vote will close at the end of June, with the winner expected to be announced later in the summer.

[Click here to vote.](#)

Photo credit: HS2 Ltd