

# West Midlands Railway names train in honour of Sir Edward Elgar

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West Midlands Railway (WMR) has named one of its newest trains in honour of the region's most famous composer as the operator prepares to roll out the new fleet onto its Hereford Line.

The train - "Sir Edward Elgar" - was formally named during a special ceremony at Worcester Shrub Hill railway station this morning. It is one of 26 trains in WMR's new Class 196 fleet which is being introduced as part of the operator's £690m investment in new trains and infrastructure.

The first trains in the fleet entered service between Birmingham and Shrewsbury in October. Now, following a period of route testing and driver training, the trains are due to begin carrying passengers between Hereford, Worcester, Bromsgrove and Birmingham for the first time next month.

Ian McConnell, West Midlands Railway managing director, said: "I am delighted our passengers in Hereford and Worcester will soon be travelling on these brand new trains. This fleet brings a much-improved passenger experience, including smart air conditioning which adapts to the carriage environment and power points at every seat.

“Communities are at the heart of our business and the fact that our colleagues have chosen to name one of the trains which will serve this new route after an iconic local figure is testament to that.”

Tom Painter, executive director of West Midlands Rail Executive, said: “As a local resident and regular user of the line between Worcester, Hereford and Birmingham, I am delighted to see the introduction of these brand new trains.

“With all their modern features, they will offer customers a journey experience worthy of this beautiful and historic part of central England and the Welsh Marches.”

Andy Street, Mayor of the West Midlands, said: “I’m delighted that more customers will soon get to benefit from these brand new trains, as it’s vital that we have rail services across our region that are fit for the future and able to support our ambitious plans for growth and prosperity.”

Sir Edward Elgar is one of Britain’s best-known composers whose world-famous works include the Pomp and Circumstance Marches and Enigma Variations. He was born in the village of Lower Broadheath, near Worcester, in 1857 and spent much of his life living in the county.

His name was formally unveiled at Shrub Hill station by the High Sheriff of Worcestershire Andrew Manning-Cox this morning in front of invited guests including passenger groups.

Later this year the Class 196 fleet is due to enter service on WMR’s Leamington to Nuneaton route, serving communities including Coventry, Kenilworth and Bedworth.

*Photo credit: West Midlands Railway*