



A WMT branded land train will offer a scenic tour of Lichfield on Saturday 7 July

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All aboard for Lichfield Festival as West Midlands Trains becomes principal partner

West Midlands Trains has been announced as Lichfield Festival's new Principal Partner for 2018. The company's support is a vital boost to the Midlands' premier multi-arts festival which brings world-class music, arts and entertainment to the city each July.

Together, Lichfield Festival and West Midlands Trains are keen to encourage festival-goers to travel to Lichfield by train – with frequent London Northwestern Railway services to/from Lichfield Trent Valley and West

Midlands Railway services to/from Lichfield City. Many Festival venues are just a short walk from Lichfield City.

On the first Saturday of the Festival (7 July) visitors will also be able to hop on a West Midlands Trains-sponsored land train, for a free tour around the beautiful city. This will pick up and drop off outside the Garrick Theatre between 10am and 3.30pm.

Events on offer on the Saturday will include the ever popular Festival market with over 130 craft and food stalls, activities and entertainment throughout the day. This includes free puppetry workshops in the Three Spires Shopping Centre from 1pm. From 6pm onwards, the Animal Puppetry Parade will make its way from Bore Street, through the city and on to Lichfield Cathedral, where local young people and Chetham's School Symphony Orchestra will perform Britten's children's opera *Noye's Fludde* (the story of Noah's Ark) and Holst's suite *The Planets*.

Helen Wiser, chair of Lichfield Festival said: *"We're thrilled to welcome West Midlands Trains as Lichfield Festival's Principal Partner. Lichfield Festival is one of the region's leading cultural organisations and attracts around 40,000 visitors annually. This sponsorship is a hugely welcome boost and helps us continue to deliver an exciting and diverse range of events, including the many free, family and community events."*

Francis Thomas, head of corporate affairs at West Midlands Trains said: *"We're delighted to be able to partner with Lichfield Festival this year. It's a fantastic opportunity to get closer to the communities we serve and encourage those attending to make use of our frequent services at Lichfield's stations. We'll be investing £1bn into our services over the coming years, which includes new trains for the Cross City line and improved connections to and from London – both of which will benefit Lichfield significantly."*

This year's Lichfield Festival runs from 4-14 July with highlights including Ballet Cymru's *Cinderella, Hansel and Gretel*, the CBSO and BBC National Orchestra of Wales, *Liza Sings Streisand*, folk singers Kris Drever and Julie Fowlis, comedians Mark Steel and Tom Allen, and restaurant critic Jay Rayner and a series of events celebrating *#ExtraordinaryWomen* through music, theatre, literature and film.

For more information visit www.lichfieldfestival.org

Notes to editors

For further information on West Midlands Trains, London Northwestern Railway or West Midlands Railway call our **newsroom** on **03300 955150**.

About Lichfield Festival

Lichfield Festival is one of the leading cultural organisations in the West Midlands. Formed as a registered charity in 1981, the organisation promotes: The Lichfield Festival – an annual multi-arts festival in July; Lichfield Literature – an annual literary event; ASPIRE – a learning and participation programme of education and community activities leading up to and culminating at each Festival. Further information: www.lichfieldfestival.org

Box office 01543 412121

Facebook: www.facebook.com/lichfieldfestival

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/lichfieldfest>

Customers are advised to plan their journey to and from the festival and check for last trains at www.nationalrail.co.uk

About West Midlands Trains

West Midlands Trains operate West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway services to and from Lichfield's railway stations.

West Midlands Railway operate frequent trains between Lichfield Trent Valley and Birmingham New Street, calling at all local stations, including Lichfield City. For more information follow **@westmidtrains** on Twitter or visit www.westmidlandsrailway.co.uk.

London Northwestern Railway services operate between Crewe and London Euston, calling at Lichfield Trent Valley. Trains operate every hour until on

weekdays and Saturdays and every 2 hours until Sundays. For more information follow **@LNRailway** on Twitter or visit www.londonnorthwesternrailway.co.uk.

West Midlands Trains Ltd. will be running the West Midlands rail franchise from 10 December 2017 until 2025/6. Abellio has a 70.1% share of the company, East Japan Railway Company (JRE) and Mitsui & Co., Ltd. (Mitsui) own the remaining 29.9% in a 50:50 split.

About Abellio

Abellio is the international passenger transport subsidiary of the Dutch national railway company, Nederlandse Spoorwegen. Every day our people provide rail, bus and tram services to 1.7m customers across the UK, Germany and in the Netherlands. In the UK we operate buses through Abellio London, as well as ScotRail and Greater Anglia train services, and Merseyrail in a joint venture with Serco. In Germany we operate Abellio Deutschland, serving communities in North Rhine Westfalia, Saxony, Lower Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, Hesse and Thuringia. Our role in transport extends beyond the journey from a-to-b. With our international heritage and our policy of sharing best practice, not just amongst ourselves, but across the wider transport industry, we provide thought leadership and truly innovative ideas which make a positive contribution to the communities we serve. For more information on Abellio visit www.abellio.com

About Mitsui

Mitsui is one of the most diversified and comprehensive trading, investment and service enterprises in the world with 139 offices in 66 countries as of March, 2017. Utilising our global operating locations, network and information resources, we are multilaterally pursuing business that ranges from product sales, worldwide logistics and financing, through to the development of major international infrastructure and other projects in the following fields: Iron & Steel Products, Mineral & Metal Resources, Infrastructure Projects, Integrated Transportation Systems, Chemicals, Energy, Food Resources, Food Products & Services, Consumer Services, IT & Communication, and Corporate Development Business. Mitsui is actively taking on challenges for global business innovation around the world. For more information, visit www.mitsui.com.

About JR East

East Japan Railway Company (JR East) was established in 1987, when

Japanese National Railways was divided as part of a package of railway reforms. JR East's railway business covers a 7,500 km (approx. 4,660 miles) network in the eastern part of the Japanese main island, including Tokyo Metropolitan area, and provides transportation services, comprising urban, suburban and high speed operations, for 17 million passengers on a daily basis. JR East also undertakes non-transport commercial activities, which account for more than 30% of the total revenue of JR East Group. JR East contributes to passengers and communities it serves by delivering high degrees of punctuality, reliability and comfort and also continues to pursue higher levels of safety and service quality through technical innovation. For more information, visit www.jreast.co.jp/e.

Contacts



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