



Jonny Wiseman (West Midlands Railway) and Selina Graham (High Sheriff of Shropshire)

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## New West Midlands Railway fleet enters passenger service

A brand new West Midlands Railway (WMR) train fleet has welcomed its first passengers on board today (Monday 17 October).

Passengers – plus a small band of railway enthusiasts - climbed aboard the Class 196 train at Shrewsbury railway station shortly before 7am for the maiden journey to Birmingham New Street.

The train – 196101 – was officially named “Charles Darwin” by the High Sheriff of Shropshire Selina Graham at a special ceremony last week.

It is one of 26 trains which make up the Class 196 fleet, whose features include intelligent air conditioning, plug and USB chargers at every seat and extra storage space. The trains offer 25% more capacity than the fleet they replace.

Jonny Wiseman, WMR customer experience director, said: “I am delighted to see our Class 196 trains carrying passengers for the first time today.

“With smart air conditioning, power points at every seat and extra space on board, I am certain these trains will prove a hit with passengers.”

The Class 196 is the first new fleet to be introduced to the West Midlands franchise for more than a decade and is part of WMR’s £690m investment in new trains and infrastructure.

The fleet will run first on the Shrewsbury Line. Initially a small number of journeys will be run by Class 196s as the new trains are drip-fed into service over coming months. The trains are due to enter service on the Hereford Line next year, connecting Birmingham with destinations including Bromsgrove, Droitwich and Worcester.

The name “Charles Darwin” was chosen for the first train in the fleet by WMR staff following an internal poll. It honours the Shrewsbury-born naturalist recognised as one of the greatest Britons of all time.

For more information visit [www.wmr.uk/newtrains](http://www.wmr.uk/newtrains)

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## About West Midlands Trains

For further information on this release, email [press.office@wmtrains.co.uk](mailto:press.office@wmtrains.co.uk)

West Midlands Trains operates both West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway services.

- **London Northwestern Railway** services operate between Liverpool and Birmingham, and on the West Coast Main Line to and from London Euston.

- **West Midlands Railway** services operate to destinations across the West Midlands via Birmingham New Street and Birmingham Snow Hill.

For more information on these services visit [westmidlandsrailway.co.uk](http://westmidlandsrailway.co.uk) or [londonnorthwesternrailway.co.uk](http://londonnorthwesternrailway.co.uk)

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