



Jan Chaudhry-van der Velde and Vic Hall

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## Train honour for Watford Junction legend Vic Hall

A railwayman who has been helping passengers in Watford for more than 50 years had a train named in his honour - on the day he finally hung up his whistle.

Vic Hall, 66, dispatched his final train at Watford Junction this morning (Wed 7 Aug) before being given the surprise honour by London Northwestern Railway (LNR) colleagues.

Vic, from Harrow, started work at Watford Junction on 4 August 1969 as a 16-

year-old boy for what was then British Rail. He has worked at the busy commuter station ever since, including through the dramatic remodelling of the station in the 1980s.

Vic Hall said:

"I was just 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."

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

As a special commendation, a current London Northwestern Railway train - a Class 350 (350375) - was renamed "Vic Hall" at a special ceremony hosted by LNR managing director Jan Chaudhry-van der Velde.

Jan Chaudhry-van der Velde said:

"To have worked on the railway for 50 years is a remarkable achievement but to have worked in the same location for that long is incredibly special.

"Vic is a much-loved feature of life at Watford Junction, who is respected by his customers and colleagues alike. He will be sorely missed but we wish him a very long and happy retirement."

Vic said he had helped many VIPs through the station in his time at Watford Junction, with comic Norman Wisdom and Coronation Street actor William Roache among those to have visited.

A bachelor, Vic says he is looking forward to spending his retirement globetrotting to travel on trains in different countries - with Germany his next stop.

He said: "It is what I love to do most of all. I have given all my working life to the railway so I don't see why I would stop in retirement."

Dozens of colleagues past and present were among those to attend Vic's farewell ceremony along with dignitaries including Karen Collett, deputy mayor of Watford Borough Council.

As a parting gift, colleagues were quick to inform Vic that even when factoring in weekends and holidays over his career, he has spent more than 11 years of his life on Watford Junction station.

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## About West Midlands Trains

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- **London Northwestern Railway** services operate between Liverpool and Birmingham, and on the West Coast mainline to and from London Euston.
- **West Midlands Railway** services operate to destinations across the West Midlands via Birmingham New Street.

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

The West Midlands Trains franchise started on 10 December 2017 and will run until 2025/26.

West Midlands Trains operates 1,300 services a day, manages 150 stations and provides over 70 million passenger journeys a year. Over the course of the franchise, West Midlands Trains will be investing £1 billion into the rail network to deliver new trains, improved routes and station upgrades. This will include 400 new train carriages across the network and space for an

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The franchise is a joint venture between Abellio (70.1% share) and East Japan Railway Company / Mitsui & Co., Ltd (29.9% share in a 50:50 split). Abellio is the international passenger transport subsidiary of the Dutch national railway company, Nederlandse Spoorwegen. In the UK, Abellio operates ScotRail and Greater Anglia train services, Merseyrail services in a joint venture with Serco and buses through Abellio London. For more information visit [www.abellio.com](http://www.abellio.com)

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