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West Midlands Railway names iconic train after historic Stourbridge locomotive

A train running on one of the world's shortest branch lines has been named "The Stourbridge Lion" following a community competition run by West Midlands Railway.

The name commemorates an early steam train built in the Black Country town in 1829 which became the first locomotive to run in America.

The newly-named train is the second on the route to receive a feline name after the other shuttle was officially named “George The Station Cat” earlier this year in honour of the well-loved ginger tom cat who lives at Stourbridge Junction station.

Jonny Wiseman, WMR customer experience director, said: “We are proud to be at the heart of our communities and this new name for our popular Stourbridge Shuttle reflects the long-standing connection between the Black Country and the railway. We’re almost coming to the end of Railway 200, a year-long celebration of two centuries of the modern railway, so we felt this name suggestion was a particularly timely reminder of Stourbridge’s industrial history.”

This year, Britain’s railway has been celebrating its 200th anniversary following the opening of the Stockton & Darlington Railway in 1825.

A name plate for The Stourbridge Lion was affixed to unit 139001 earlier this month, following the naming of 139002 after George in August.

The two trains have been running on the line since 2009 and are maintained and operated by Pre Metro Operations Ltd on behalf of West Midlands Railway.

The new names will be seen by hundreds of passengers who make the journey between Stourbridge Town and Stourbridge Junction every day. Taking just three minutes, the route is one of the world’s shortest branch lines.

Following a call for suggestions, the winning name “The Stourbridge Lion” was suggested by a customer and selected by a West Midlands Railway judging panel.

As part of the competition, WMR received a number of requests to honour the life of Ian Clee, a long-serving member of staff at Stourbridge Junction ticket office who died last year following a short battle with cancer. A memorial plaque in Ian's memory was installed at the station earlier this month, next to the ticket office.

About London Northwestern & West Midlands Railways

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