

Armstrong Powerhouse Second Major Sponsor for Restoration of Unique 4VEP EMU

LONDON, 1st July 2021

The Southern Electric Traction Group announced today that it has reached an agreement with Armstrong Powerhouse to sponsor the continuing restoration of the Bluebell Railway's unique 4VEP Electric Multiple Unit No. 423 417. This comes weeks after a similar show of support from Tom Cairns, founder of RealTime Trains.

3417 has been under long-term restoration at Strawberry Hill depot since 2015. The support of Armstrong Powerhouse will go towards overhauling the brake system of the unit and, alongside the support from RealTime Trains, will mean that unit is almost fit to be hauled on the National Network. The last piece of the jigsaw will be re-certifying the air supply system for the unit. Once completed, the unit will finally be able to leave Strawberry Hill to travel to preserved lines and, when internal restoration is complete, be fit to returned to passenger-carrying service.

Steve Upton, SETG spokesman, said "These are exciting times for 3417 and the SETG. We've been working hard behind the scenes to bring this sponsorship to fruition for several months and are delighted to finally bring Armstrong Powerhouse aboard as supporters of our restoration project. We hope this marks the start of a lasting collaboration."

Richard Armstrong of Armstrong Powerhouse remarked "After many happy journeys on these units as a child, it has always been a dream to see a slam-door EMU work on the mainline again. To collaborate with the SETG is a privilege and we look forward to providing continuing support in making this dream a reality."

Roy Watts, Bluebell Railway Trust governor, responded "This is the second major donation towards the restoration of 3417 in as many months. The dedication of the SETG in bringing this important piece of railway heritage back into public use is exciting to be part of, and the Bluebell Railway is delighted by the work achieved and the generosity of Armstrong Powerhouse."

Notes for Editors:

About SETG:

The Southern Electric Traction Group was founded in 2009 by staff members of South West Trains, based at Wimbledon Park depot. In mid-2014, they agreed a long-term loan agreement with the Bluebell Railway to provide specialist operational and technical knowledge to protect the operational future of 4VEP No. 3417.

The SETG's stated aim is to "Return 4VEP No. 3417 to Mainline Operation."

About Armstrong Powerhouse:

Established in 2008, Armstrong Powerhouse has worked with heritage and mainline operators to bring unparalleled levels of realism to their range of market-leading high-quality add-ons for the consumer computer game, Train Simulator.

About Bluebell Railway:

The Bluebell Railway has owned 4VEP unit No. 3417 'Gordon Pettitt' since January 2009. The unit was named by Gordon Pettitt, former BR Southern Region General Manager and now President of the Bluebell Railway Preservation Society, at a ceremony in June 2004.