

Service Quality Report



Vintage Trains
April - March 2023



Foreward

Vintage Trains runs express steam trains on Britain's mainline railway.

Experience the nostalgic sight and sound of an express steam engine speeding through glorious countryside, whether sampling our fine dining or simply relaxing in our beautifully restored carriages, all offering the sumptuous comfort, charm and character of days gone by





Information & Tickets

We publish a tour brochure each year for our charter day out trains. Full details and booking arrangements are included in both our brochure and on our website. The latter is updated as required with any changes. Our brochure and frequent updates are mailed to our passenger list and to anyone else on request. We also issue press releases and advertise our tours regionally and on social media. We operate a summer programme of our Shakespeare Express train which runs between Birmingham to Stratford upon Avon as a scheduled service. This is advertised and promoted within all the above media and locally in the West Midlands region through the travel trade. Subject to seats still being available on the day, this service offers a 'walk on' tickets with no pre-booking. Our restaurant car service is only available pre-booked. We also operate The Polar Express Train Ride in the period running up to Christmas. This is primarily promoted on social media, but also within all the above media. Bookings are taken through our website, although telephone enquiry and booking is possible. Tickets are issued electronically automatically following a website booking, together with confirmation of reservation, any meals booked, and passenger assistance required. Updates are emailed as required and a final confirmation with a tour brochure is emailed a few days prior to travel. On board our train, our passengers have the service of a Tour Manager and a steward in every carriage. Information is provided either over the train public address system or verbally to our passengers as circumstances require. We provide safety information, route details, and general information about our organisation, locomotives, carriages, interesting features viewable on our journey and attractions at our destination.

Punctuality

Our trains run to times devised by and agreed with Network Rail, our network infrastructure manager. Our charter trains are all individually timed and final timings may not be available until a few days before each trip. However, we strive to provide provisional timings from previous experience of trains run along the same or similar routes where this is possible and not misleading. The times for our Shakespeare Express service are in the working timetable and therefore available annually in advance, subject to minor modification by Network Rail in their bi-annual timetable reviews. The national railway network and all train operators are subject to an operational performance regime with penalties being imposed for delays over three minutes. This incentivises punctuality which is also monitored by our train control systems and measured by the locomotive driver and train guard and every major station against pre-set times agreed with Network Rail. Therefore, any delays occurring are picked up quickly and, where possible, remedial steps put in place to recover time lost or minimise delays. Delays to trains can occur for many operational reasons, so we seek to build in some recovery time in our charter timing requests which allows our locomotives to make up time which, in most cases, is sufficient. However, in the event of breakdown or severe delays for any reason, we keep our passengers fully informed as soon as we receive information from our network infrastructure manager. In our tour information we recommend passengers arrive at their boarding station in good time before advertised departure and remind them that our train will depart at the advertised time and not wait. On our return journey, if we are running early, we may set down our passengers at their destination station earlier than advertised.

Disruptions

In life things do not always go to plan. Our trains are operated in conjunction with national train control authorities which monitor the progress of each train in real time and, in the event of delay or disruption, can offer us solutions or alternatives, including, if necessary, arrangements with other train operators or road transport companies to ensure passengers are returned to their original boarding points. In twenty years of operating many hundreds of trains, we have only been obliged to recourse to such steps twice, once due to third party locomotive failure and once due to poor fuel supply.

We experienced several railstrikes which meant we either cancelled or rearranged tours and refunds.



Cancellation

All bookings are subject to our terms & conditions which clearly set out passengers' cancellation rights and how we approach any changes in itinerary and locomotive traction.

In the event we are obliged to cancel a tour, we offer a full refund or, at the passenger's option, a credit note available for use on an alternative tour.



Cleanliness

An onboard cleaner will ensure all areas of the train are clean and maintained to a high standard. Pre and post train date cleaning of the stock takes place at our depot.



Customer Feedback & Complaints procedure

We will respond to customers' feedback either positive or negative in a timely manner. Feedback can be received in writing via post or email. We encourage feedback in real time so that we can seek to address any issue promptly. Our Tour Manager and train stewards are trained to assist on the spot.

We strive for continuous improvement and seek feedback through providing each passenger group with a feedback form. Please see below (by way of example) the feedback results per train operated in the beginning of 2023 below

Below are onboard statistics for some of our tours:

Return to steam		Highly Satisfactory	Satisfactory
	Cleanliness	78%	22%
	Catering	22%	78%
	Onboard Service	44%	56%
The Shakespeare Express 28/08/2022			
	Cleanliness	54%	46%
	Catering	55%	42%
	Onboard Service	64%	35%
Plymouth 24/08/2022			
	Cleanliness	61%	37%
	Catering	50%	44%
	Onboard Service	68%	30%
The Shakespeare Express 07/08/2022			
	Cleanliness	87%	13%
	Catering	57%	38%
	Onboard Service	78%	22%

The Jolly Fisherman			
	Cleanliness	77%	23%
	Catering	46%	51%
	Onboard Service	79%	21%
The Cumbrian Mountaineer Explorer			
	Cleanliness	70%	28%
	Catering	49%	39%
	Onboard Service	65%	33%
The Shakespeare Express 21/08/2022			
	Cleanliness	71%	29%
	Catering	53%	33%
	Onboard Service	70%	14%

We also successfully ran 74 POLAR EXPRESS™ train rides over 17 days in November and December.

Complaints may be received in the following ways:

- a) Tour Manager
- b) By email
- c) By telephone
- d) In writing

Vintage Trains will aim to respond within 15 working days of receipt. If further investigation is required, a holding letter will be sent, but we will aim to respond for more complicated issues within 20 days.

Telephone calls – if we cannot resolve the complaint at the time of the phone call, we aim to respond within the same timescales as for written correspondence as above.

Confidentiality – we will not share confidential information to any third party without the written consent of the complaint.

Vintage Trains may share non-confidential information to fulfil its own obligations, such as providing information to focus groups and insurers, or to bodies carrying out a statutory duty such as the DfT or British Transport Police.

Toilet Availability

There are emission controlled toilets on all the trains offered. Typically, at the end of each carriage. Toilets are constantly monitored and cleaned by the onboard delivery team.



Tickets

Booking tickets can be done via the website www.vintage trains.co.uk or the telephone 0121 708 4960 Monday – Friday 09.30 – 16.00. We send e-tickets to customers, and these are automatically generated instantly after booking. Customers without the facility to receive emails will have their tickets and all relevant information sent by post.

