

Service Quality Report

April 2023 - March 2024



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 mailing list and to anyone else upon request. We also issue press releases and advertise our tours regionally and on social media. We operate a summer programme for 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 November and December. This is promoted on social media, but also within all the above media. Bookings are made through our website, although telephone enquiry and booking are possible. Tickets are issued electronically automatically following an online or telephone booking, together with confirmation of reservation, any meals booked, and information about passengers who require assistance. 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 a minimum of 20 minutes before at their boarding station 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.

Whilst the railstrikes have not affected our tours, customers have been affected, especially those who travel by train to board our train.



SHAKESPEARE EXPRESS

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

We have a full-time dedicated cleaner and onboard cleaner who 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 email customers who travel with us an opportunity to complete a survey as part of our commitment of continuous improvements in delivering and improving our onboard service. Please see below (by way of example) feedback results from some of the trains we operated in 2023 and beginning of 2024.

Tour		Excellent	Poor
The Shakespeare Express			
26/03/2023			
	Cleanliness	74%	0%
	Pullman Dining	58%	0%
	Serving Staff	75%	0%
	Stewards	100%	0%
Celebrating the Centenary of the introduction of the famous Great Western Castle			
	Cleanliness	54%	0%
	Pullman Dining	40%	0%
	Serving Staff	36%	0%
	Stewards	96%	4%
The Shakespeare Express 18/06/2023			
	Cleanliness	63%	13%
	Pullman Dining	10%	20%
	Serving Staff	20%	20%
	Stewards	80%	20%
The Whistling Ghost to Minehead			
	Pullman Dining	57%	7%
	Serving Staff	63%	4%
	Stewards	100%	0%
The East Anglian Explorer			
	Cleanliness	71%	13%
	Pullman Dining	27%	20%
	Serving Staff	69%	0%
	Stewards	100%	0%



The Jolly Fisherman to Skegness			
	Cleanliness	52%	0%
	Pullman Dining	64%	0%
	Serving Staff	56%	11%
	Stewards	100%	0%
The Shakespeare Express 23/07/2023			
	Cleanliness	82%	0%
	Pullman Dining	67%	0%
	Serving Staff	83%	0%
	Stewards	94%	6%
Harringworth Viaduct			
	Pullman Dining	55%	0%
	Catering Staff	57%	14%
	Stewards	96%	4%
Express Train to Lincoln			
	Cleanliness	71%	2%
	Pullman Dining	29%	4%
	Serving Staff	89%	0%
	Stewards	98%	2%

We also successfully ran 63 POLAR EXPRESS™ train rides over 14 days in November and December as well as 14 Shakespeare Express tours.

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 complainant.

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.vintagetrains.co.uk or the telephone 0121 708 4960 Monday – Friday 10:00 – 14.00. 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.

