

Service Quality Report

April 2024 - March 2025



Photo by Robert Green



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

Experience the nostalgic sight and sound of a historic heritage express steam or diesel locomotive speeding through glorious countryside, whether sampling our fine dining in Pullman or simply relaxing in one of our beautifully restored carriages, all offering the sumptuous comfort, charm and character of days gone by.





Information & Tickets

We publish a train brochure each year for our charter day out, as well as The Shakespeare Express. 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 emailed to our passenger mailing list and to anyone else upon request. We also issue press releases and advertise our trains regionally and on social media. The Shakespeare Express operates weekly on Sundays from July to the end of August, with departures from Birmingham, Derby, Leicester, Stratford, and Worcester. Additionally, we offer limited services on select days from March to November. Our trains are advertised and promoted within all the above media and locally in the West Midlands region through the travel trade. Additionally, these trains appear in West Midlands Railway Summer Timetable. Subject to seats still being available on the day, this service offers a 'walk on' tickets with no pre-booking. Our Pullman dining car service is only available pre-booked on all trains that we operate. We also operate THE POLAR EXPRESS™ Train Ride, mostly on weekends, from November to 23rd December. These trains are promoted on social media, but also within all the above media. Bookings are made through our website or by phone. 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 route guide attached is emailed a few days prior to travel. On board our train, our passengers have the service of a Train 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, from Birmingham Snow Hill, 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 communication to customers 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 operate 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 severe weather has not affected our trains, customers have been affected, especially those who travel by train to board our train.



SHAKESPEARE EXPRESS

Cancellation

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

In the event we are obliged to cancel a train, we offer a full refund or, at the passenger's option, a credit note (issued as a gift card) available for use on an alternative train.



Photo by Robert Green

Cleanliness

We have a full-time dedicated cleaner who ensures 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 or by phone. We encourage feedback in real time so that we can seek to address any issue promptly. Our Train 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 to 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 2024 and beginning of 2025.

The Great Western 10th & 11th May		Highly Satisfactory	Satisfactory
	Cleanliness	72%	28%
	Catering	71%	29%
	Onboard Service	82%	18%
	Would you recommend Vintage Trains to a friend or colleague? (Likely/Not Likely)	96%	4%
The Shakespeare Express 7th April			
	Cleanliness	68%	32%
	Catering	92%	8%
	Onboard Service	84%	16%
	Would you travel with us again? (Yes/No)	81%	19%
The Shakespeare Express 26th May			
	Cleanliness	74%	26%
	Catering	85%	15%
	Onboard Service	75%	25%
	Would you travel with us again? (Yes/No)	97%	3%
The Cathedrals Express to Hereford or Cardiff 22nd June			
	Cleanliness	87%	13%
	Catering	84%	16%
	Onboard Service	92%	8%
	Would you recommend Vintage Trains to a friend or colleague? (Likely/Not Likely)	89%	11%



**The White Rose to York & Scarborough
6th July**

Cleanliness	96%	4%
Catering	69%	31%
Onboard Service	81%	19%
Would you recommend Vintage Trains to a friend or colleague? (Likely/Not Likely)	83%	17%

**The Shakespeare Express
25th August**

Cleanliness	77%	23%
Catering	100%	0%
Onboard Service	100%	0%
Would you travel with us again? (Yes/No)	100%	0%

**The Mayflower
27th September**

Cleanliness	75%	25%
Catering	100%	0%
Onboard Service	100%	0%
Would you recommend Vintage Trains to a friend or colleague? (Likely/Not Likely)	96%	4%

**Express Train to Lincoln
7th October**

	Highly Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Cleanliness	71%	29%
Catering	92%	8%
Onboard Service	100%	0%
Would you recommend Vintage Trains to a friend or colleague? (Likely/Not Likely)	92%	8%

We also successfully ran 63 POLAR EXPRESS™ train rides over 14 days in November and December.



Complaints may be received in the following ways:

- a) Train 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 to 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 the train. Typically, these are located at the end of each carriage. Toilets are constantly monitored and cleaned by the onboard delivery team.



Tickets

Tickets can be booked 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 and the final timings and seating arrangements will be confirmed with the customer by phone.

