



Service Quality Report

April 2025 - March 2026



Vintage Trains

Vintage Trains operates heritage steam and diesel hauled trains on Britain's mainline railway network.

These trains offer the nostalgic sight and sound of an express steam or diesel engine racing through stunning countryside. Enjoy fine dining or unwind in our beautifully restored carriages, feeling the luxurious comfort, charm, and character of the golden age of train travel.

Our superbly restored express steam locomotives are some of the last working examples of their type, maintained at our historic Tyseley locomotive works and run on Britain's main line, not as museum pieces but as living machines. Selected journeys are hauled by heritage diesel locomotives through some of Britain's most rewarding scenery.

Our stewards, footplate crew and support team are largely long standing volunteers, and their professionalism and quiet enthusiasm create an atmosphere that is both relaxed and distinctive.



Photo by Martyn Osborne



Photo by Andy Parkinson



Photo by Robert Green



Photo by John P Robinson



Photo by Jon Hird

Information & Tickets

Each year we publish a train programme for our charter trains, as well as *The Shakespeare Express*. Full details and booking arrangements are included in both our programme 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, nationally 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-upon-Avon, and Worcester. Additionally, we offer limited services on select days from April to November. These trains are advertised and promoted within all the above media, locally in the West Midlands region and through the travel trade. Additionally, these trains appear in West Midlands Railway Summer Timetable. Subject to seats still being available on the day, these trains offer 'walk on' tickets with no pre-booking. Our Pullman and First Class dining options are only available through pre-booking 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 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.

Onboard, 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.

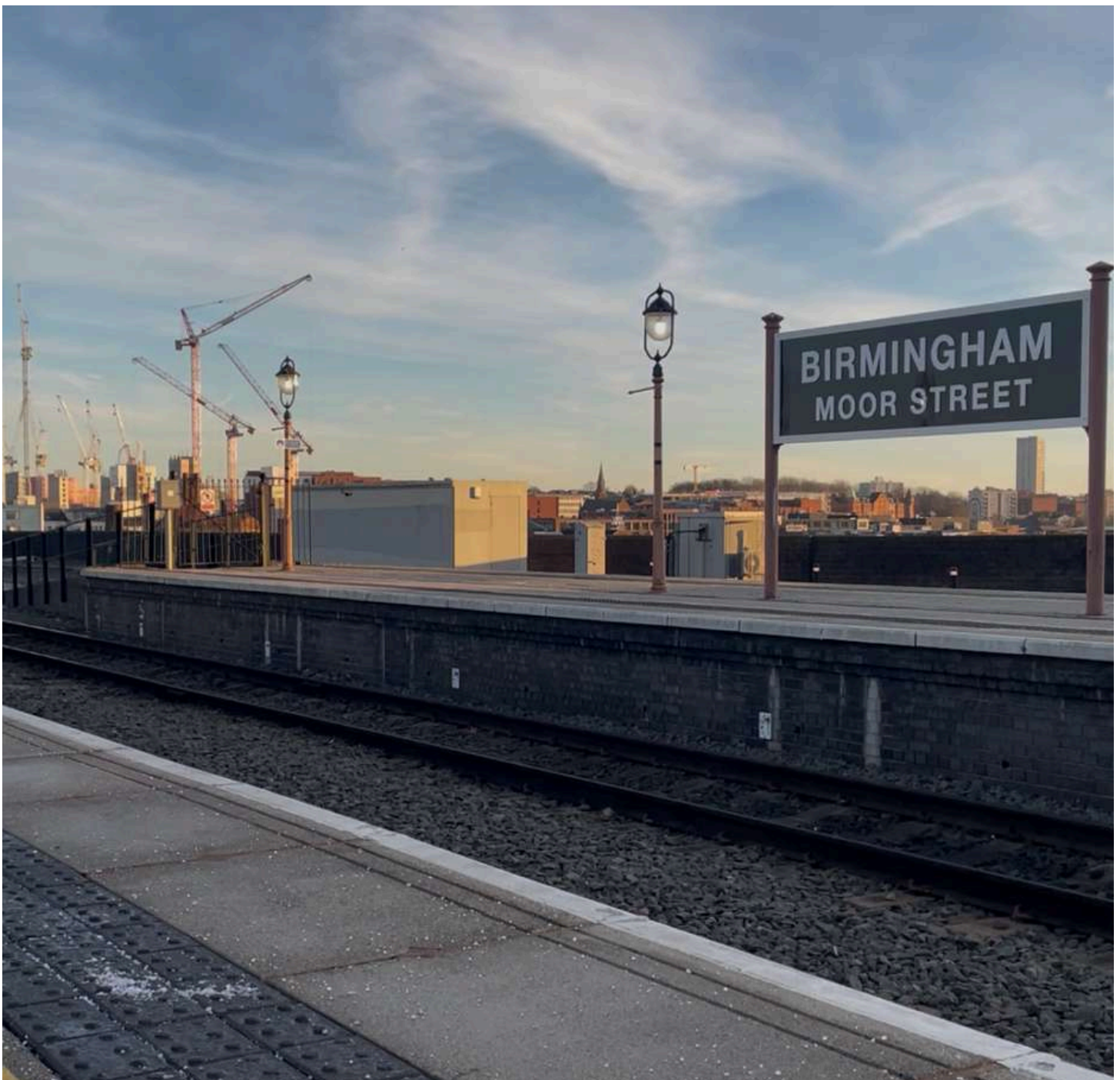
Whilst the severe weather has not affected our trains, customers have been affected, especially those who travel by train to board our train.



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, or the transfer across to another train we are operating.



Cleanliness & Toilets

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.

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.



Photo by Martyn Osborne

Customer Feedback

Any customer feedback received, either positive or negative, is responded to in a timely manner. Feedback can be received in writing, via post or email, by phone or by reviews left on sites such as Google or Trip Advisor. 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.

Following each charter train we operate, customers who travelled with us are emailed a feedback survey, offering an opportunity to share their feedback, and this forms 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 2025 and beginning of 2026

The Shakespeare Express, Sunday 8th June 2025

| Feedback Area | Excellent | Very Good |
|---|-----------|-----------|
| Dining Experience | 63.64% | 36.36% |
| Serving Staff | 100.00% | 0.0% |
| Buffet | 80.00% | 0.00% |
| Train Cleanliness | 82.61% | 17.39% |
| | Yes | No |
| Would you travel with Vintage Trains again? | 100.00% | 0.00% |

The Western Mountaineer, Wednesday 2nd July 2025

| Feedback Area | Excellent | Very Good |
|---|-----------|-----------|
| Dining Experience | 22.22% | 55.56% |
| Serving Staff | 83.33% | 16.67% |
| Train Cleanliness | 84.62% | 15.38% |
| | Yes | Maybe |
| Would you recommend to a friend or colleague? | 82.35% | 13.73% |

The Mayflower, Saturday 6th September 2025

| Feedback Area | Excellent | Very Good |
|---|-----------|-----------|
| Dining Experience | 51.85% | 33.33% |
| Serving Staff | 92.31% | 7.69% |
| Train Cleanliness | 76.71% | 21.92% |
| | Yes | Maybe |
| Would you recommend to a friend or colleague? | 83.78% | 10.81% |

The Blackpool Illuminations Explorer, Saturday 15th November 2025

| Feedback Area | Excellent | Very Good |
|---|-----------|-----------|
| Dining Experience | 25.00% | 62.50% |
| Serving Staff | 66.67% | 33.33% |
| Train Cleanliness | 84.62% | 15.38% |
| | Yes | Maybe |
| Would you recommend to a friend or colleague? | 91.67% | 0.00% |

Flying Scotsman Trains, 14th - 21st February 2026

| Feedback Area | Excellent | Very Good |
|---|-----------|-----------|
| Welcome & Check-In | 46.33% | 25.81% |
| Staff Friendliness & Professionalism | 66.57% | 22.87% |
| Onboard Atmosphere | 53.08% | 21.70% |
| Train Cleanliness | 61.47% | 26.18% |
| | Yes | Maybe |
| Would you recommend to a friend or colleague? | 46.22% | 24.47% |

The Shap Mountaineer, Saturday 28th March 2026

| Feedback Area | Excellent | Very Good |
|---|-----------|-----------|
| Dining Experience | 30.77% | 15.38% |
| Serving Staff | 64.29% | 28.57% |
| Buffet | 43.48% | 30.43% |
| Train Cleanliness | 60.78% | 23.53% |
| | Yes | Maybe |
| Would you recommend to a friend or colleague? | 73.08% | 19.23% |

Complaints Procedure

Complaints may be received in the following ways:

1. Train Manager
2. By email
3. By telephone
4. 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.



Cover: 7029 *Clun Castle* on The Shap Mountaineer 27/09/25 - Taken by David Kippax
Back Cover: 5043 *Earl of Mount Edgcumbe* on The Christmas White Rose, 03/12/25 - Taken by Martyn Osborne

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