

## A-Z OF CONDITIONS AND INFORMATION

### ACCOMMODATION

No STARS Tour ever leaves the UK without having hotel accommodation pre-booked for every night spent away. The cost of accommodation is included in your fare. In all cases a continental style breakfast is included in the fare. All other incidental charges e.g. telephone, room service, internet, and mini bar, are the responsibility of the individual and must be settled prior to leaving the hotel. Facilities will vary from hotel to hotel. All rooms will have washing facilities, toilet, shower and/or bath. Most will have TV, radio, and telephone. Some will have hot drink facilities, internet, and mini bar.

Our policy is to arrange hotel accommodation either at or close to main railway stations, thus enabling the participant to make early morning or late evening visits with ease. Whilst we take every care to ensure this is achieved, we cannot guarantee the arrangements.

Individuals booking alone will share a twin room (very occasionally that may be a triple). Persons booking in pairs will be allocated rooms together, and more than two booked as a group will be allocated rooms near and together. Single rooms will be allocated on payment of the appropriate single room supplement (prices quoted with tour details), but are subject to availability and allocated on a strict 'first come first served' basis.

STARS reserve the right to charge the Single Room Supplement if any member booked on a STARS tour is not able to or cannot share a twin or a triple room.

### AIR TICKETS

STARS cannot make direct arrangements for booking airfares. Any tour that requires an element of air travel, participants should confirm with STARS that the tour is running before making air bookings themselves. STARS would normally expect to give that confirmation 6 weeks prior to the tour date. We can provide a passive introduction service - do contact us and we will do our best to help.

### ALTERATION

Tours are advertised, in good faith, based on information known at the time the tour programme was formulated. All tours run subject to sufficient support. STARS reserve the right to alter any tour if circumstances arise beyond their control. On all tours, the advertised itinerary will normally be covered. However, STARS reserve the right to omit from the itinerary any installation due to legality or insufficient time. Whenever possible, extra installations may be inserted into the itinerary. Any alteration in the itinerary shall be at the discretion of the tour leader.

### BOOKINGS

To book on a tour you must be a STARS member.

All bookings for STARS tours **must** be made on the official forms provided. Seats are held provided that 1) full fare is received at the time of booking, or 2) a deposit, the amount of which is specified in the tour details, is received at the time of booking and the balance is received prior to the critical date, which is shown in the tour details. Failure to comply will result in loss of the seat. All cheques if used must be made payable to STARS and crossed. A receipt will be issued if a S.A.E. is provided. No receipt will be issued for bookings via BACS. All monies received are protected in compliance with the legislation pertaining to package holidays. A responsible adult (18 years or over) must accompany persons under fifteen years of age. A parent or guardian shall countersign applications from persons who are not a responsible adult.

On Tours participants may by prior arrangements join at locations other than those advertised, including locations outside of the UK. However, joining arrangements cannot be guaranteed

outside of the UK if a sudden and unforeseen change occurs once the tour is underway. The participant must acknowledge agreement to the alternative location by e-mail, letter or fax within 48 hours of the tour departure. Verbal confirmation shall not be acceptable.

Normally the participant shall be picked up and set down at the nominated locations. Occasionally a nominated pick up will be cancelled for reasons such as travel conditions (road closures, road works etc.), change of itinerary, or insufficient bookings. In such cases STARS will contact participants so affected, with as much notice as possible, to agree alternative arrangements. In any case, the participant must acknowledge agreement to change by e-mail, letter or fax. Verbal confirmation shall not be acceptable.

The tour price will not be adjusted for participants who wish to omit day(s) from the original itineraries. Tour participants will need to make their own arrangements for any additional nights but we will assist by naming the hotel(s) we are using with the tour details in our brochure. Finally, for reasons of security and safety, no one will be allowed to join a tour for just a depot or a day irrespective of any willingness to pay.

### **CANCELLATION OF BOOKING/TOUR AND CHARGES**

All STARS tours run subject to sufficient support and the tour will be cancelled should a viable number not be reached. In such an event a decision would normally be made six weeks prior to the first day of the tour. In the event of a participant withdrawing from a UK tour or a UK visit, so long as seven days' notice is given (28 days' notice for tours lasting two days or more), a full refund shall be made, less reasonable expenses to cover postal and administration costs.

In respect of International Tours, cancellation charges are detailed below:

1. Cancellation by Person originally making booking, for whatever reason (except as outlined in points 2 to 4 below): -

**Prior to 42 days before departure date:** Full return of deposit less a small admin charge and any 'up-front' charges already paid.

**28 to 42 days before departure date:** 30% of tour cost

**14 to 27 days before departure date:** 45% of tour cost

**7 to 13 days before departure date:** 60% of tour cost

**0 to 6 days before departure date:** 100% of tour cost

Cancellation by telephone, including messages left on the 24 hour answer phone is acceptable and the date the call is received will be deemed 'the relevant date' for the purposes of Insurance Claim or refund, however, such telephone calls **MUST** be confirmed in writing by letter, fax or email, if you need to provide proof in furtherance of an Insurance Claim.

#### **No cancellation fees are due in the following four circumstances:**

2. Cancellation by Person in respect of a Tour advertised to run in a Large Coach, which subsequently runs in a Small Passenger Carrying Vehicle by reason of the bookings not reaching a viable level to justify use of a large coach. A full refund of all monies paid, by way of un-cashed cheque(s) return, will be made provided the conditions surrounding the **COACH TOURS OPTION SCHEME** are adhered to.

3. Cancellation by Person originally making booking by reason that a surcharge, which is in excess of 10% of the original base cost of the holiday, has been added.
4. Cancellation by Person originally making a booking by reason that a Single Room Supplement has had to be levied by STARS and has not been agreed to.
5. Cancellation of Tour by STARS.

**With the exception of point 2 above the individual may claim either: -**

- a) The appropriate refund of monies paid in connection with the Tour.
- b) The appropriate transfer of monies paid for the Tour, to another STARS tour of their choice.
- c) The appropriate transfer of monies paid for the Tour to be credited in the individual's name, and used as payment or part payment for any future STARS tour to be nominated at a later date.

### **COACHES**

The Small Euro-Coach/Bus has a capacity of up to 16 passenger seats whilst the Large Euro-Coach has a capacity of between 17 and 53 passenger seats.

All the large coaches used on STARS tours are properly licensed Vehicles and owned by Licensed Operators. They are top-flight International touring vehicles. The on-board facilities vary from vehicle to vehicle but all the large coaches have all or some of the following features - toilet/washroom, servery, double glazing, air conditioning, reclining seats, full seat belts, public address, TV/Video, refrigerator. For safety each coach/vehicle has clearly marked emergency exits. Each coach/vehicle carries an extensive first aid kit (at least one of the crew has been trained in first aid), a fire extinguisher, and other emergency kit. On the large coaches you may bring as much luggage as you wish that is reasonable, as this will be stowed in the side lockers, thus not restricting your space. However, on the smaller vehicles there is restricted space and you are asked to travel as lightly as you can. All coaches/vehicles are non-smoking to comply with the Law. On all STARS coach tours the relevant Legislation regarding Drivers' hours is strictly adhered to.

### **COACH TOURS OPTION SCHEME**

Our priority remains to run long distance coach tours in large coaches. However, there have been occasions when we have substituted a large coach with the small vehicle, but only on tours where the bookings do not reach the number viable for a large coach. Whilst this has been acceptable to most participants, there are others who, for various reasons, do not like travelling such long distances in smaller vehicles. The Coach Tours Option Scheme applies to all large coach tours and allows an individual to withdraw from any tour, advertised for a large coach, on which a small vehicle is subsequently used, and not suffer a financial penalty. This is how the Scheme works:

**1. If you wish to participate on the tour whichever vehicle is used.**

Send in your booking form, together with your deposit / fare, in the normal way. Requests for single rooms and preferred seats will be accepted and given priority.

**2. If you wish to participate on the tour ONLY if a large coach is used.**

Send in your booking form, together with your deposit / fare, but you must mark your Booking Form at the top with **"only if large coach"** or in the case of the on-line form as directed. If you submit a form, outside of these requirements, it will be treated as a firm booking and cancellation charges applied if you subsequently withdraw. On receipt we will put your application 'on hold' pending either the 'target' numbers for the large coach being reached or a decision to use a

small vehicle. Your cheque will NOT be banked at this stage. Please also note that until we can be certain of a person's participation, requests for single rooms and Preferred Seats cannot be processed.

**When a decision has been made one of two courses will follow:**

**a) Tour running, as advertised, in large coach**

Your cheque will be cashed and your name added to the passenger list. Requests for single rooms and Preferred Seats will be accepted subject to availability at that time. Use of this option will not disqualify you from entitlement to Members Loyalty Discount provided the criterion is met.

**b) Tour running in a small vehicle**

Your uncashed cheque will be returned to you, and the booking cancelled without penalty.

**COMMUNICATIONS**

Each STARS Tour Leader can be contacted through a mobile phone on the coach (number is shown in the Tour Information Pamphlet) or via the STARS main telephone number.

**CREDIT**

From time to time members may be offered Credit which can be used as a deposit for future tours.

**CUSTOMS**

You are asked to acquaint yourself with what you can or cannot bring in and out of the Countries on the Tour. Persons detained by the authorities for Custom's breeches may be left behind.

**DELAYS**

The Society cannot be held responsible for any delay caused by circumstances beyond our control, e.g. late running of shuttle or ferry, which may have an impact on the following day's itinerary. Nor can we be held responsible for any delays arising from adverse weather conditions, industrial action, road traffic accidents, road works, or breakdown of any vehicle.

**DEPOT VISITS**

STARS policy is to seek permission to visit all depots, works and installations advertised in our itineraries prior to the tour in question. If we receive no reply to our application we will still visit the depot during the tour and endeavour to obtain permission there and then, and if not successful view what we can where practical from public places. In practice such is the reputation and respect for STARS that we are rarely turned down for visits. When we view a depot we usually come away having seen a substantial number of their stock from public places. Whenever possible, extra visits to other locations may be included in an itinerary, particularly to compensate for the loss of another.

We will notify any itinerary changes to you as soon as possible. Most railway administrations make no charge for visits but some do. Permit charges are so infrequent and unpredictable that we have decided it would not be fair to 'mark-up' all our prices to include a charge, which is seldom made. When we are advised by a depot that a charge will be made, we inform each participant of which depot and the extra cost prior to the tour, and allow the participant the option of paying the permit charge or opting out. Admission charges to museums and preservation sites are not included in the fares.

**FARES**

In general, all fares quoted with the tour details are inclusive. Inclusive means -

Hotel charges in respect of bed and breakfast accommodation. It does not include extra hotel

services such as evening meal, bar, mini-bar, pay TV, telephone, room service, and restaurant, which must be paid for by the individual.

Transportation charges, which includes - coach travel, road/bridge tolls and shuttle/ferry charges. Not included are:

- Rail and local period transport tickets. On a number of tours such tickets are presented as optional to allow the participant to use concessionary rail passes and/or 'shop around' for a better deal, or opt out altogether.
- Permit charges.
- Admission charges in respect of Museums and preserved railway lines, or similar private undertaking.
- Any other occasional charges e.g. Taxis.

If costs for these additional charges are specified with the tour details, STARS can obtain the tickets, on your behalf, on payment of the amount required. If no charges are specified with the tour details, you will need to buy tickets during the tour.

STARS operate a Fair Fares Policy in that every participant pays the same irrespective of when they book. We do not overcharge to penalise those who book late, and all fares reflect the costs of providing all elements of the tour and ancillary expenses only. Our position will always be Right Price - First Time. By operating such a customer friendly Fares Scheme we may be vulnerable to any sudden increases in shuttle/ferry, coach or hotel charges, or any unfavourable change in the exchange rate. We therefore reserve the right to alter the cost of any tour by imposing a surcharge in those circumstances. Where the surcharge exceeds 10% of the base cost of the tour, the participant may cancel without penalty.

### **HEALTH AND MEDICAL EMERGENCY**

We take the Health & Safety of all members on Tour seriously. If a medical emergency develops while you are away with us, we will do our utmost to help and assist you.

Those persons taking regular medication should ensure that they have sufficient supply to last the duration of the tour, and any delay. Whilst we would not want to pry into your medical history we do require you to advise us of any physical condition known to you, which affects your mobility or might necessitate emergency treatment. Such information will be treated in the strictest confidence. If you are in any doubt about your fitness to participate you should consult your doctor. The final decision is yours and participation is at your own risk.

### **INSURANCE**

Emergency contact details are mandatory, and must be given at the time of booking any Tour. We advise all participants of Tours to ensure that they are adequately covered at the time of booking by Travel Insurance and that coverage is maintained continuously right up until arrival back home after the tour has finished. This cover should include Repatriation, Illness before and/or during the tour, Medical expenses and Tour Cancellation as a minimum. The European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) formally the E111 should be carried when travelling to Countries within the European Economic Area. Please check that your EHIC has not expired. You can apply for one free here at <https://www.e111.org.uk/>

### **LATENESS**

Latecomers will normally be given just 10 minutes over pick up time. If a problem does occur on your way to a pick up point please telephone the main STARS number, or the number quoted in the Tour Information Pamphlet, to advise us. We cannot be held responsible for anyone missing a tour if it is caused by failure of an outside agency e.g. late train, car breakdown. You need to ensure that your insurance covers you for such eventualities.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

For the railway enthusiast, membership of STARS is a must. Our website, special services and publications will bring you up to date, and keep you up to date. To participate and book on Tours you must be a STARS member. Membership can be made at any time during the year and will start from the beginning of the month that the application was received.

The appropriate Membership Application Form detailing the different types of membership and the respective annual costs can be obtained from the Office or downloaded from our website at [www.stars-tours.org.uk](http://www.stars-tours.org.uk)

## **PASSPORTS**

All participants of International Tours must be in possession of a valid Passport. It is advised that you have no less than 6 months validity on your passport. It is your responsibility to check that you have a valid passport for the Countries visited on the Tour, failure to do so may result in you being left behind.

## **PERSONAL INFORMATION**

A new European Union (EU) data protection law, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), is now in effect. STARS keep Personal Data in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

If you are a member of STARS, you are agreeing for us to keep and use your personal data as set out below.

- We keep your Tour Bookings information for the whole previous year unless you advise us not to by letter or by email.
- We keep your Sales information for the whole previous year unless you advise us not to by letter or by email.
- We keep all Emails and letters of correspondence for 2 years.
- On cessation of your STARS membership we keep your personal details for 12 months unless you advise us not to by letter or by email.

We hold your personal details in a file area that is protected. No local copies of this data exist. This information is shared with 3rd Parties e.g. Carriers, Hotels, Governmental Bodies, and Railway Authorities.

From time to time STARS may contact you about our Products and Services by phone, mobile, letter or email. It is in both our interests that this information is as accurate as possible and would continue to invite you to advise us when there is change. If you wish for a copy of all personal information we have for you please request this by letter or email.

## **PRE-TOUR INFORMATION PAMPHLET**

Prior to each tour we will provide each participant of the tour with an Information Pamphlet which details hotels used on the tour with full contact information; visits authorised (or not as the case may be); any changes in the itinerary; names of STARS Officers; a complete timing sheet and itinerary for the tour; emergency contact number(s) and any other relevant information about the tour.

## **RAIL TICKETS**

You are of course free to purchase your own rail tickets, thereby taking advantage of concessions that you may be entitled to, or STARS can obtain them on your behalf, subject to the appropriate payment being made. It is worth pointing out that in the main, the majority of members elect to travel First Class these days as the coaches are less crowded and you are more assured of having a seat. You can of course travel standard/second class if you wish, although by doing so the party is split in separate coaches.

## **REFRESHMENTS ON COACH TOURS**

Whilst the coach tour is in progress hot and cold drinks and snacks are available on large coaches, and cold drinks are available on all tours together with a selection of confectionery. All can be purchased at UK prices, but usually can be bought either in Sterling or Euros. On most tours, provision is made for a stop at service areas where a meal may be obtained.

## **SAFETY & CONDUCT**

Participants must conduct themselves safely and orderly at all times during the Tour. They must obey instructions of official guides and tour leaders. Those who do not may be ordered to leave the tour or visit at any point, and left to make their way home, at their own expense.

During depot visits running, jumping over inspection pits, unauthorised climbing on locomotives and crossing lines unsupervised is forbidden. In addition attention must be given to the danger from oil and diesel spillages, overhead objects and wires, moving locomotives, and open inspection pits and underfoot obstructions. You **must** wear sturdy footwear on all tours – **ordinary training shoes are not acceptable**. The relevant railway authorities are expecting visitors to wear yellow and/or orange high visibility vests. You are required to bring one with you and wear it when directed to do so. We will indicate what colour vest is required in the tour information pamphlet. Finally, and most important - for safety sake - keep together and obey the instructions of STARS Officers and/or the official guides.

## **SALES**

On all coach tours, a selection of railway books from a variety of publishers, plus notebooks, covers and the like will be available for purchase.

## **THE PREFERRED SEAT SCHEME**

If you wish to participate in this scheme please mark your booking form "double seat preferred" or in the case of the on-line form as directed. Currently the cost is £20 for a double seat. If availability is confirmed the payment will be collected on the tour.

Conditions:-

1. The scheme will only operate on Large Coach tours which are not full. Smaller Coach tours are not included unless they are upgraded to a large coach.
2. The seats will be allocated on a strict 'first come, first served' basis and will depend on availability governed by tour loading.

## **VOUCHERS**

From time to time STARS will issue Vouchers in place of Prizes. These Vouchers cannot be redeemed against catering or future tours. If a member so wishes, the Voucher can be converted into CREDIT held on the STARS Database system for future Book Sales.