# Lavender Line appeals for funds after rare 1962 train carriage vandalised



On a recent Saturday evening, the Lavender Line heritage railway near Isfield, East Sussex, found itself the unfortunate victim of vandalism when a group of young people reportedly trespassed onto the premises and severely damaged a vintage train carriage. This incident occurred on May 3 and left volunteers shaken, with extensive damage reported, including smashed windows.

The train carriage in question, a model dating back to 1962 and operational until 2004, was undergoing restoration—a project in which the railway volunteers had invested countless hours. Amanda Matthews, a dedicated volunteer, highlighted the significance of this piece of history, noting that "very few" examples of this model remain. Emotional and practical support from the community has been crucial in the wake of this incident, leading volunteers to establish a fundraising page. Their aim is to raise £2,000, with plans to apply the funds not only towards necessary repairs but also towards enhancing security measures to prevent future occurrences of such vandalism. “We now need to raise funds to help with the restoration as well as improving our security system to stop it happening again,” read the fundraising page.

In a broader context, the Lavender Line’s experience mirrors a troubling trend observed across heritage railways in the UK and beyond. Other lines have also reported significant vandalism incidents, which have prompted them to rethink their security strategies. For instance, the Swindon and Cricklade Railway recently bolstered its security by installing a professional CCTV system in response to a spate of vandalism, including acts of arson and graffiti. Bill Poling, the Chair of Trustees, expressed his gratitude for community support, emphasizing the need for heritage preservation and the importance of volunteers being able to focus on restoration instead of constantly addressing vandalism-related repairs.

Across the Atlantic, similar incidents have occurred. The West Chester Railroad in Pennsylvania faced destruction on July 28, 2023, when nine teenagers vandalised a vintage locomotive, leading to repair costs exceeding $16,000. Such actions have pushed many heritage railways, both in the UK and the US, to seek donations from the public in order to cover restoration expenses and enhance security measures.

Moreover, the impact of vandalism on heritage railways extends beyond just financial implications. For example, the Bodmin and Wenford Railway in Cornwall has dealt with recurrent acts of vandalism this year and has launched its own appeal for community donations to restore graffiti-covered vehicles. Similarly, Scotland’s heritage railways, including the Waverley Route Heritage Association, have grappled with repeated acts of criminal damage, leading to increased vulnerability and financial strain on preservation efforts.

The Lavender Line, much like its counterparts, stands at a crossroads, needing community engagement and support to ensure that such heritage sites do not become casualties of wanton destruction. As volunteers work tirelessly to preserve these pieces of history, their calls for assistance extend to everyone who values the legacy and charm these railways embody. In a world increasingly focused on preserving history and cultural legacy, the need to safeguard these treasures has never been more pressing.

As the appeal for donations continues, the Lavender Line remains hopeful for a resurgence of community support that can restore their damaged carriage and enhance security measures, ensuring that the stories of yesteryear remain safely on the tracks for future generations to enjoy.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/25197473.volunteers-appeal-support-rare-train-smashed-near-uckfield/?ref=rss), [[2]](https://www.swindonadvertiser.co.uk/news/23614741.swindon-heritage-railway-vandalism-sees-security-beefed/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/25197473.volunteers-appeal-support-rare-train-smashed-near-uckfield/?ref=rss), [[2]](https://www.swindonadvertiser.co.uk/news/23614741.swindon-heritage-railway-vandalism-sees-security-beefed/), [[3]](https://www.phillyvoice.com/west-chester-railroad-vandalized-teens-heritage-locomotive/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.phillyvoice.com/west-chester-railroad-vandalized-teens-heritage-locomotive/), [[4]](https://www.voicenewspapers.co.uk/news/bodmin-heritage-railway-launches-appeal-after-train-vandalised-641839), [[5]](https://www.scotsman.com/news/transport/vandals-and-landslips-hit-heritage-railways-in-borders-and-boness-2956768)
* Paragraph 4 – [[6]](https://www.sussex.police.uk/news/news-search), [[7]](https://www.steamheritage.co.uk/museums-and-attractions/entry/lavender-line)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/25197473.volunteers-appeal-support-rare-train-smashed-near-uckfield/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.swindonadvertiser.co.uk/news/23614741.swindon-heritage-railway-vandalism-sees-security-beefed/> - The Swindon and Cricklade Railway has enhanced its security measures following a series of vandalism incidents, including arson and graffiti. Collaborating with Tops Security, the railway has installed a professional CCTV system to deter future crimes. Chair of trustees, Bill Poling, expressed gratitude for the support, highlighting the importance of protecting the railway's heritage and ensuring volunteers can focus on restoration projects without the distraction of repairs due to vandalism.
3. <https://www.phillyvoice.com/west-chester-railroad-vandalized-teens-heritage-locomotive/> - A group of teenagers vandalised a vintage locomotive owned by the West Chester Railroad in Pennsylvania. The incident occurred on July 28, 2023, when nine teens entered the property and caused significant damage, including smashing windows and a windshield. The estimated repair costs exceed $16,000. The nonprofit organisation is seeking donations to cover the expenses and is working with local authorities to identify the perpetrators.
4. <https://www.voicenewspapers.co.uk/news/bodmin-heritage-railway-launches-appeal-after-train-vandalised-641839> - Bodmin and Wenford Railway in Cornwall has launched an appeal for donations after a recently restored Class 121 'Bubble Car' locomotive was vandalised with graffiti. This incident marks the third act of vandalism the railway has faced this year. The organisation is urging the community to report any anti-social behaviour and is seeking financial support to restore the damaged paintwork and maintain the vehicle's heritage.
5. <https://www.scotsman.com/news/transport/vandals-and-landslips-hit-heritage-railways-in-borders-and-boness-2956768> - Heritage railways across Scotland have faced significant challenges due to vandalism and landslides. The Waverley Route Heritage Association at Whitrope suffered repeated trespassing and damage to vintage trains and museum exhibits. The Doon Valley Railway in East Ayrshire reported graffiti on a wagon and damage to fencing by trespassers. Additionally, the Bo'ness and Kinneil Railway experienced landslides that prevented reopening, leading to a £100,000 emergency appeal for repairs.
6. <https://www.sussex.police.uk/news/news-search> - Sussex Police have issued an appeal for witnesses following a report of criminal damage to trains by a group of boys at Isfield station on May 3, 2023, at about 4pm. The police have liaised with the railway operator and are urging anyone with information to report it to Sussex Police on 101 or online, quoting serial 1299 of 03/05.
7. <https://www.steamheritage.co.uk/museums-and-attractions/entry/lavender-line> - The Lavender Line is a heritage railway based at Isfield Station, near Uckfield in East Sussex, England. It offers a two-mile round trip through the Wealden countryside, operating steam and diesel locomotives. The station serves as the headquarters and engineering base, providing a family-friendly atmosphere and a glimpse into preserved railway history.