

# The Strain of Being Banned From The Train –

Update from Alastair Hignell, Patron of the MSRC.



When I was first banned from using First Great Western trains back in October I tried and failed to get the BBC's consumer programme Watchdog interested in what seemed -and unfortunately still

seems- a perverse decision. Local television, local radio and the evening paper all offered lots of sympathy but no coverage.

However, when my article appeared in New Pathways it was read by a producer on Radio 4's You and Yours programme, which only goes to show that New Pathways is read by all the right people and refreshes the causes other publications do not reach! An appearance on that programme was followed up by the Daily Mirror, Daily Mail,

Bristol Evening Post and Points West, the local BBC television news programme.

No-one could believe that, especially in the current climate of making services accessible to all members of society, First Great Western were hell-bent on imposing a blanket ban on all powered scooters, even if they conformed to the size criteria they impose on powered wheelchairs.

Neither could First Great Western platform staff. An amusing sidebar to the proceedings is that on two successive mornings, as I turned up with a photographer at Temple Meads, I had to persuade them not to put the ramp out, not to help me on the train to London.

They couldn't see a problem, and were more than prepared to use their discretion and a little bit of common sense. Pity their bosses couldn't do the same. And still can't. So far. The fight goes on!

PS: And just to add insult to insult, I received a reminder through the post, asking if I wanted to renew my Disabled Person's Railcard....!"