

English Regional Transport Association (ERTA)

~ ERTA, starting in Bedfordshire and now continuing across the regions, advocating the advancement of select public transport solutions! ~

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<p>http://ertarailvolunteer.blogspot.co.uk/</p>	<p>Newsletter No. 5</p>	<p>February 2016</p>	<p>90p where sold</p>
<p>ERTA... the voluntary association which likes to help others, as well as <u>just</u> ourselves!</p>			

Bedford-Olney-Northampton 'Cobbler Line' bounces back as in "We will fight and fight again!"



Caption Above: The remnant of the Brackmills Branch, showing the extensive residential development to the left and right. Elements in Northampton want to put a road down here which may not cater for the railway of any description but will bring traffic, noise, congestion, pollution and mayhem to the junction with London Road, stacking back to St James' Park – is this the best option for Northampton's future? ERTA believe having a rail link retained and reopened to Bedford would serve the areas better.

Although every word on the front page was sincerely meant it provoked a response whereby members felt that we should not write off the reopening and in fact, talk of the end of the potential for reopening was premature.

This is welcome support but must translate into more people whether locals recruited and translating to Area Reps – which our constitution outlines – or an over-arching officer who can coordinate efforts and head up the taking of the project to the next stage ‘official recognition and acceptance’.

Secondly we had this “I can confirm that the Campus plans do not impact upon the rail corridor.” Mr Steve Boyes, Director – Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning, Northampton Borough Council. This text was emailed just as things closed for Christmas, but offer us a ray of hope that the old trackbed, where rails would be re-laid, will not be developed over as we may have feared. However the nature of the St James’ link road, whether single carriageway or dual carriageway will impact the trackbed potentially and so naturally we are fire-fighting there to ensure the railway corridor is protected, with or without a road. Railways can be bridged, but need gradient distance to bridge roads. On the one hand there are a few individuals who moot a light rail system for Northampton, whilst campaign groups see a conventional railway to Bedford as the optimum hope to deliver the best results. Northampton is roughly half way between London and Birmingham and the 21 mile gap between Northampton and Bedford would link at least 4 airports (Birmingham, Coventry, Luton and Gatwick) on one railway system potentially. A meeting is being called at The Two Brewers Pub, 34 High Street, Olney MK46 4EB on Saturday 20th February 1pm.

Thirdly the on-going carnage and mayhem on the A421, M1 Junctions 13-15 corridor and associated road links to and from and across country means that official heads are turning to solutions, but the media block we face in some quarters, denies the rail voice and some others are not contracted to chirp up or put heads above parapets - £40 000 p.a. and a “we promote, we don’t ‘campaign’” Yet campaigning is behind many things being done or improved which Joe Public enjoys benefits off. The 1960’s has its critics but the birth of existential concern based on trends of demand and consumption and adverse effects of pollution, informed public action to try and stem it. Some dismiss it as ‘green movement’ or ‘New Age’; but any study of The Bible shows a counsel against waste, irresponsibility and an emphasis on sharing and equality to make things go further in scarcity areas.

Thus the recent string of accidents along the A421 shows us that despite being upgraded at many £millions, it carries a high volume of mixed traffic and is not a safer road per se. The English Regional Transport Association (ERTA) supports the provision of an East-West Railway between Oxford-Bedford and Cambridge and it is with regret that this project seems bedevilled and is taking so long. Clearly a high call for amateurs, but professionals cost more and if at the end of the day projects cannot be delivered in a timely manner whilst development goes in; the result is congestion until the railway is rebuilt offering a choice for people and goods.

On another related front, access to and from Bedford Midland Station is also bedevilled with traffic congestion, be it A428 Bromham Road, Shakespeare Road/A6 and Prebend Street from the A421 and A6 South. The problem with Network Rail’s approach seems to be one new station for the town based at Midland Road and another further north to serve the new bypass or even Oakley. The problem with these stations is that they do not add up to putting development on a sustainable foundation. Rather as night follows day, more development goes in, that means more cars and congestion patterns are grown and repeated.

What we need is for Network Rail and Bedford Borough Council to support a new Northampton-Bedford rail link which with a new station at Olney would cut queues along the A428. If they develop on the Midland Main Line, they draw that growing commuter traffic across Oakley Bridge with all its mayhem consequences. The public should be better consulted and ideally the railway should be built with stations along it, spreading access out.



Caption Above: To the left is Oakley Junction, to the right the A6 Bypass. It is believed Network Rail and Developers are looking at new stations north of Bedford. ERTA says they should install the flyovers and build the new station off the Midland Main Line heading West to cream off A428 and subsequent development growth along a sustainable corridor. See article for details.

Conclusion: our campaign and persuasive powers are dependent upon a growing membership, increased funding and people willing to commit 1 hour per week and offer to help in some way. If it depends merely on yours truly, stretched as we are, it is likely to fall short. Please consider what you could do and let us know.

Diary and Noticeboard

Our new website is being constructed and news of its address and other details will be notified in due course. We hope it will act as a platform to inform, inspire and draw new members and funds to help us in the resourcing of the effort and associated costs.

February

We have booked the upstairs room at The Two Brewers Pub, 34 High Street, Olney MK46 4EB T. 01234 711393 for 1pm Saturday 20th February 2016.

Discussing Bedford-Olney-Northampton rail link, welcoming support and offers of help to improve the campaign, pooling skills, time, talent to best use and working together in a spirit (ideally) of cooperation.

April

ERTA National Rail Reopenings Meeting:* Thursday 7th April 2016 19:30-21:30 pm Upstairs Room, The Calthorpe Arms, Grays Inn Road, London:
http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Restaurant_Review-g186338-d1043968-Reviews-Calthorpe_Arms-London_England.html

* The ERTA National Rail Reopenings Committee is open to all genuinely interested in seeing rail reopenings, new builds of conventional passenger and freight 'mixed use operational' rail capacity across the English Regions, similar to the progress made in Scotland where several lines have been reopened/rebuilt and have exceeded expectations of use take up.

Since we last wrote...

Our committee members have been involved with: Meetings with Milton Keynes, Northampton Borough and Bedford Borough representatives including asking questions and flagging up East-West Rail East of Bedford, A Kempston Retail Park halt on the Bedford-Bletchley Rail Line as well as Bedford-Olney-Northampton. Our suspicion is that from a Local Government point of view and indeed Whitehall, they see rail as 'big fish' and so have a 'one rail development per area' approach which stacks up multiple calls over decades – out living the promoters and exponents and whether the thing itself survives or is transferred – is constantly out of reach, like an adult who will not share holding a ball with a child. So we have East-West as the priority breaking down to Oxford-Bedford 2025*, Bedford-Cambridge in some shape or form 2030* and THEN Bedford-Northampton

March

Amphill Station Forum: Wednesday 9th March 7pm The Albion Pub side/sports room, Dunstable Street, Amphill T. 01525 791 935 Rally support and bringing people together for an Amphill Railway Station.

Please send for more details to ERTA Membership Secretary:

Mr Simon Barber, 20 Fitzherbert House, Kingsmead, Richmond, Surrey, TW10 6HT T. 0208 940 4399 E. simong.barber@o2.co.uk

ERTA... *it's what its members make it!*

Saturday 19th March 1pm at The White Hart Pub, Market square, Biggleswade, East Beds
The ERTA East Beds Transport Forum will convene.

<http://www.whitehart-biggleswade.co.uk/find-us>

Consolidation

Facebook has insisted that separate accounts to delineate between private life and campaigns must be commuted to one account holder and presented as 'pages' instead. This has caused chaos in the translation with little or no recourse to mop up spillages 'un-linked accounts hanging loose 'out there''. However you will find ERTA pages on:
<https://www.facebook.com/RichardPill24c> Please do send friend requests and if we recognise you, you will be welcomed. Likewise, please tap into our Blogspot and let us have feedback as well as offers of volunteer support.

<http://ertarailvolunteer.blogspot.co.uk/>

Our team is growing and we extend a warm welcome to people helping us with record keeping, diagrams, web development and much else.

'consideration'. *Note: these dates are our own and are speculative and subjective based on how we discern the thinking – oh to be proved wrong by 'sooner than later' for all projects to be pursued equally and inter-connectively – alas!

Such an academic stance may be resource led in a time of austerity – but the spend on the roads and the poor results of accidents, carnage and mayhem – should inform a sea-change, again the contract, block-replicate and University 'Maths, Beeching and popularism' outputs of graduates into the industry without shop-floor working to get other applications instilled means you have no-one speaking up for rail as a whole hardly and solutions like "Lets speed end to end times up for commuters by cutting out some stations on some services" translating to a 10 minute wait on the cushions, as trains cannot get into Bedford! No aesthetic design piling stations on existing lines can solve constraint, only new capacity and that is exactly what Bedford-Northampton offers. Meeting the people who will do the new website and getting terms underway as well as a new helper with I.T. trouble shooting and diagrams which is welcome.

Writing to the new proposers of a rail served depot at Blisworth, splashes in the letters page of the Northampton Chronicle and regular articles in the MK and NN Pulse Magazine.



Nostalgia. Above: Mid 1990's Class 47 loco awaits the clear road hauling a Network Southeast train to London from Oxford.

Disclaimer:

This newsletter seeks to give vent and coverage of news relating to the windows, efforts and activities of the ERTA for members and wider sympathetic potential reach and ranges of others. It may not necessarily be precise ERTA policy always, but seeks to include the spirit thereof. If you feel anything is 'out to lunch' and worthy of a correction, please do let us know and/or why not write a letter permitting us to publish your observations, facts or counter claim. ERTA editorial reserves the right to restrict responses to the first 150 words, as space is always at a premium. All pictures are the Editors unless otherwise stated.

_____ Fill In, Tear Off and Send with Your Subscription Please help us recruit more members! _____

ERTA, come to our local Forums and offer time and talent as you may?

Tick if a New Member: _____ Tick if renewing as an existing member: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____ Tel/Mobile: _____

If you wish to renew your membership, please indicate category:

New Member: £5 for the first year _____

Business/Corporate/Sponsor/Benefactor: £20.00 _____

Fully Waged Adult/Family/Individual £10.00 _____

Concessions: £5.00* _____

(*Students, Low Income Households, or on any kind of Benefit/Pension or Disability)

Signed: _____ Dated: _____

Please send completed form to ERTA Membership Secretary:

Mr Simon Barber, 20 Fitzherbert House, Kingsmead, Richmond, Surrey, TW10 6HT T. 0208 940 4399

E. simong.barber@o2.co.uk **ERTA... it's what its members make it!**