

English Regional Transport Association (ERTA)

~ A membership-based association seeking reopening of select rail lines making for a better environment. ~



Patron: Sir Edmund Verney + Others welcome of professional, business or other acumen and of good standing.

~ Making a contribution towards retention and improvement in better public transport. ~



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Chairperson for Executive Committee and External Representations: Vacancy exists – offers welcome to entertain. Must be a member first. **Bedford-Northampton Rail Link Reopening Project Officer and a Webmaster:** Seeking reliable and enthusiastic volunteers – please contact Mr Simon Barber: T. 0208 940 4399, E. simon4barber@gmail.com

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90p where sold

Northampton: The need and opportunity is still there to be grasped, but will any take responsibility?

Photo right shows ERTA Member Mr Richard Pill manning the joint venture stall at Northampton Market on Thursday 5th July 2018. He's been catching the 06.55 No. 41 Bus from Bedford to Northampton to sell the ERTA Bedford-Northampton Booklet amongst other things. Market Traders have shared with Richard their view and feeling, marked by takings, that footfall and spend is down. Empty shops, now closure of the large Marks and Spencer's, House of Fraser and Debenhams possibly in the firing line, makes for a gloomy town centre picture of decline and yet Northampton has a buoyant population. County Council went bankrupt and now looming is decisions on whether the County will be split into 2 Unitary Authorities or just one for the whole County, which stretches from Brackley in the west to Oundle/Peterborough in the east. Better rail links would deliver more footfall and spend to these town centres minus the congestion roads only solutions serve up with ever increasing demand for land for ever more parking. The future is in the balance!

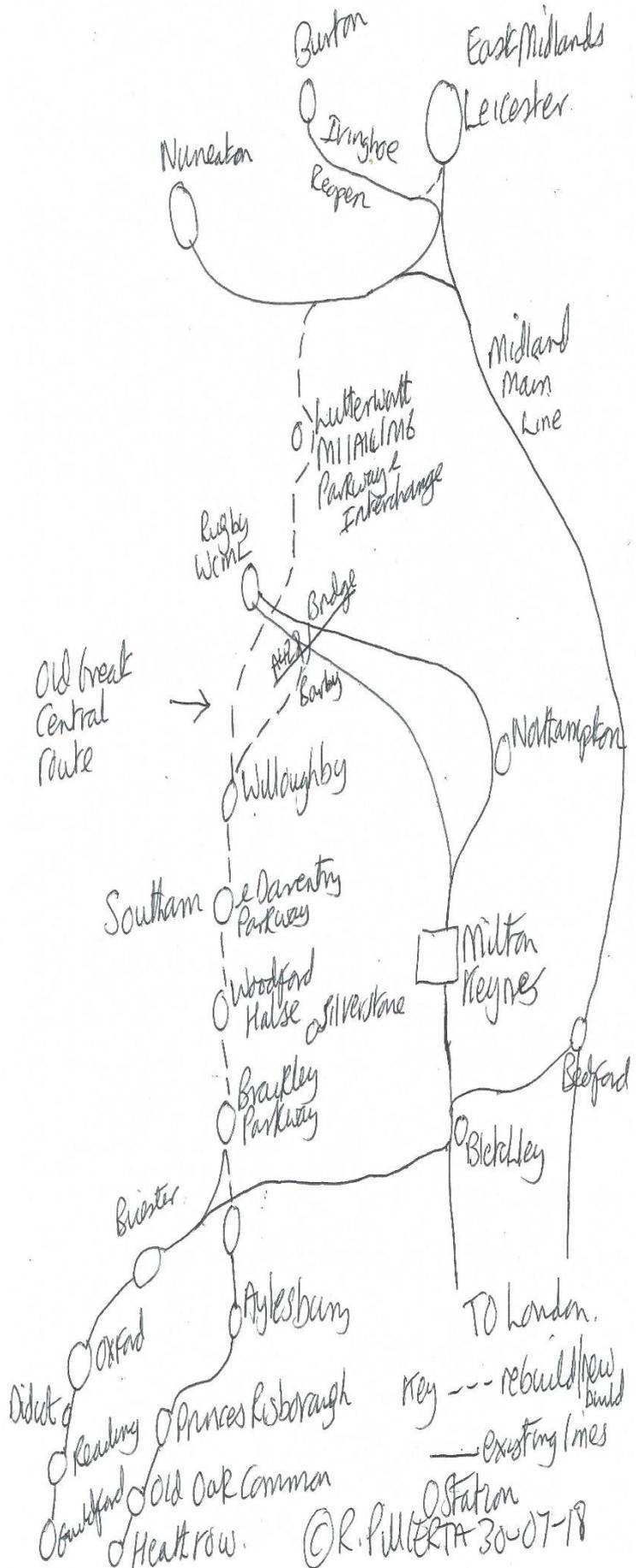


News and Notes

<p>AGM Report: Members of ERTA gathered at The Tavistock Function Room, in Tavistock Street (A6) Bedford. It had been another tough year with every new member hard fought for and won.</p> <p>Key decision was that membership would rise by £2 to £12 per annum. That is only £1 per month. Our main cost is printing, but leafleting is a relatively cheap and efficient way to get our message across = why so many others and political parties use it still!</p> <p>Email simon4barber@gmail.com</p> <p>For a set of the accounts and membership details if interested, minutes are available.</p>	<p>The Executive Committee for 2018-2019 consists of seven people: Richard Pill, David Ferguson, Tony Bush, Michael Hustwait, Simon Barber, Colin Crawford and Leonard Lean. It meets about 3-4 times per year and is responsible for the oversight and management of the association and its affairs.</p> <p>We are still seeking a webmaster or pool of I.T. keen and competent people to help with web updates, expansion and making more of our on-line presence. Members may attend or raise issues at EC meetings but do not have voting rights. Affiliated groups may send a representative for liaison purposes with voting rights.</p>	<p>Dates:</p> <p>GUILDFORD FORUM – SATURDAY 6 OCTOBER 1.00pm food and social 2.00 – 4.00pm business Rodboro Buildings 1–10 Bridge Street Guildford, Surrey, GU1 4RY E simon4barber@gmail.com</p> <p>And CENTRAL LONDON FORUM – MONDAY 29 OCTOBER 5.00pm – 8.00pm The Metropolitan Bar 7 Station Parade Marylebone Road LONDON N.W.1 5LA</p> <p>Anyone interested please contact Simon Barber: T 020 8940 4399 E simon4barber@gmail.com</p>
<p>The Cobbler Line Railway Reopening Committee ~ Seeking the reopening/rebuild/new build of the missing rail link between Bedford, Olney and Northampton with realignments and deviations where blockages exist. ~ ~Part of the English Regional Transport Association (ERTA) campaigning for better public transport by empowering people to help themselves for the benefit of local communities. ~</p>		<p>For more events and notices please see https://ertarail.com/events/</p>
<p>Report: ERTA has established the Cobbler Line Railway Committee which hopes to meet 3-4 times during 2019 and act as an accessible place for supporters to come together and work together at finding professional interest and backers to invest in studies to make the case for reopening in an updated manner to court the interest of investing in reopening the line and Government support. We get mixed messages. On the one hand Olney seems disinterested to dead against a railway, underestimating the benefits a railway can bring to a location minus the cars and parking demand. On the other the unbelief, symptomatic of a more serious 'spiritual' vacuum whereby beyond what we see at the end of our noses is either 'otherly' or doesn't exist! What a long way from what Olney, apart from Pancakes is famous for – the man of faith who wrote Amazing Grace, John Newton! Others deride our map of Olney with the Handley Alignment shown, to avoid development blocking the original alignment, both now blocked by piecemeal ribbon development, whether inadvertent or deliberately plotted we leave for others to speculate, the result is the same. Since the early days of the campaign 20 years ago, it was suggested by some Lib Dems that we should aim for a further outer route north of Olney Sewage Works and now that is all that remains except for compulsory purchase and demolition to make way for a railway. However, no party or agency or council has bothered to invest in any engineering appraisal as to how do-able this is given gradients, given the need to clear juggernaut lorry height over A509 and Lavendon Road (B565) and reconcile the western old trackbed flank west of Yardley Road somewhere, with the eastern flank picking up across the valley of the River Great Ouse east of Clifton Reynes. It is left to us, we have neither money nor professional access and so the matter is 'academic'! But linking Bedford with Birmingham direct and Northampton with Bedford and Luton Airport is still a worthy goal and the feed to and from the East-West Rail east of Bedford, all the more.</p>		

Great Central Report: Richard Pill

is composing a report bringing together our strands of thinking on the project. Basically what we wish for is a rebuilding cum new building along a corridor from off the Leicester-Nuneaton Line onto the old Great Central, down parallel to the M1 and deviating around expanded Lutterworth with Park and Ride Station and possible rail-road transfer facilitations as that is where the A14 from Felixstowe, M1 from London and M6 to West Midlands meet amidst a rail desert (market share!), to Rugby with new viaduct over M1 and across the West Coast Main Line. Heading south to Willoughby, Woodford Halse, new deviation to the east of Brackley with new Park and Ride Station to intercept the busy A43 trunk (runs between Northampton, M40 and Oxford et al) and would bring rail access within a short bus link to the Silverstone circuit and orbit which is a rich vein in support industries in a 20-mile radius and popular venue a rail head could tap into surely? From Brackley to Calvert area with links to the East-West Rail to Oxford and Aylesbury. Aylesbury to Heathrow via Princes Risborough and Old Oak Common and Guildford from Oxford via Reading for example as well as the plethora other connections such as Didcot for Swindon, Reading for Basingstoke and Southampton and so forth. Guildford of course links with our third proposal for a Guildford-Cranleigh-Horsham rebuild for access to Gatwick from the south and via a new curve from the Brighton Main Lines to the Redhill-Tonbridge lines for access to Kent and the Channel Tunnel. This would give London orbital capacity and avoidance options for passenger and freight movements.



Simon Barber's Column – Matlock Forum – Reopen Peak Rail Call!

Matlock Forum -Three ERTA members (Tony Bush, David Ferguson and I) had travelled up to Matlock on Friday,29 June and had spent two nights at a B & B in the town where we all attended the ERTA Matlock Forum which was held in the afternoon of Saturday,30 June at the Crown Pub (a Wetherspoons) in Matlock. Eleven people altogether came to the meeting, including the three ERTA members.

Practically all the attendees who were not ERTA members lived in or around Matlock and had seen our Press Release which had appeared in the Matlock Mercury. We chiefly discussed the Peak Rail, and it emerged that there are about six disused tunnels along that route, of which one contained a disused private halt for Haddon Hall (the Duke of Rutland's seat near Bakewell); also at least one of these tunnels is now used for a cycle-path. The chief problem with the tunnels is the vibration which had been an ingredient for track subsidence suffered by that line during its last few years prior to closure. Another ingredient for that line's track subsidence was that the ballast consisted of millstone grit, which was (and still is) an important locally-produced material. Other issues include replacing a bridge over the A6.

One of our Matlock-based attendees planned to organise another Matlock meeting later in the year, and also another attendee will be a useful contact since he works for the railways specialising in tunnels. We had all agreed that collaboration between people such as businesses (particularly quarry companies), landowners, local authorities, and transport pressure groups is essential.

Over the whole week-end both David Ferguson and I had distributed a stock of ERTA flyers relating to the re-opening of the Matlock – Buxton railway, and among the places we had both distributed included the Peak Rail bookshop at Matlock Station, our very good B & B and several shops/restaurants etc. in the town and, of course, all our meeting attendees. On Sunday both David and I travelled on the Ecclesbourne Railway where we had also distributed some of these flyers. However, Tony had to go home on Saturday after our meeting.



Caption Above: In splendid sunshine, 2 members of the ERTA Executive Committee Messrs Tony Bush and David Ferguson stand at Matlock Station following the meeting. ERTA is supporting an umbrella group to bring people together **for** the railway.

Caption Below: Whilst ERTA supports the existing steam preservation, we also want the whole line reinstated and for scheduled passenger and freight operations as part of a through line to commence at the earliest possible date for a variety of good reasons!

