

English Regional Transport Association (ERTA)

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

	<p>Patron: Sir Edmund Verney + Others welcome of professional, business or other acumen and of good standing.</p>	
<p>Chairperson for Executive Committee and External Representations: Vacancy exists – offers welcome to entertain. Must be a member first.</p>		

<p>Campaigns Coordinator, Executive Committee, Bedford Area Rep. Media Spokesperson and Newsletter Editor: Mr Richard Pill, 24c St Michaels Road, BEDFORD, MK40 2LT T. 01234 330090. E. richard.erta@gmail.com</p>	<p>Bedford-Northampton Rail Link Reopening Project Officer: Seeking a reliable and enthusiastic volunteer – please contact Mr Simon Barber: T. 0208 940 4399, E. simon4barber@gmail.com</p>
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<p>Treasurer, Membership, Delegated Meetings Coordinator and Administration: Mr Simon Barber, 20 Fitzherbert House, Kingsmead, Richmond, Surrey, TW10 6HT T. 0208 940 4399, E. simon4barber@gmail.com</p>	<p>Vice Chairman, Great Central, London and Southeast, Field and Stations Officer, Local Government Liaisons: Mr David Ferguson, 25 Virginia House, 19 Kingston Lane, Teddington, TW11 9HL T. 020 8977 4181 E. daferguson1212@gmail.com</p>
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<p>West Herts. Area Rep: Mr Michael Hustwait, 52 Eastfield Avenue, Watford, WD24 4HJ T. 01923 350726, E. mhustwait@gmail.com</p>	<p>East Herts. Area Rep: Mr Tony Bush, 26 Berwick Close, Waltham Cross, Herts. EN8 7PU T. 01992-701485</p>
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~ Making a contribution towards retention and improvement in better public transport. ~

<p>W. https://ertarail.com/</p>	<p>F. https://www.facebook.com/RichardPill24c</p>	<p>G. https://plus.google.com/+ERTAVoluntaryTransport</p>
<p>ERTA Newsletter No. 18</p>	<p>March-April 2018</p>	<p>Price 90p where sold</p>

<p>The National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) Report gives away its focus and intent in the title: “Cambridge, Milton Keynes and Oxford...” The rail map inside (page 97) the documents shows the obsession is as fast a transit between the two places of Oxford and Cambridge by rail as possible. That is where the good news stops and the bad news begins:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As per the title it leaves Bedford out. 2. Oxford-Wixams Parkway (of some configuration) – Cambridge on completely new build alignment. We challenge people to get an ordinance survey map and try with pencil and ruler draw a straight line across from Marston Vale Railway – Wixams – Shepreth without hitting a settlement or obstacle. 3. Settlements can be one side of a hill which looks tunnel-able the other side 4. There does not seem to be connecting curves onto the line from either direction of the East Coast Main Line disenfranchising East Bedfordshire, Stevenage and Peterborough. They depart from the Steer Davis Gleave trajectory north of Sandy, bypassing Blunham of 20 years ago. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Marston Vale Railway truncated at Wixams – 4 miles south of Bedford. Midland Main Line we have been told has no spare capacity south of Bedford Midland Station – so if using that piece of the Midland Main Line where will these trains fit in? 6. The whole dynamic appeal of the local Marston Vale line is that it serves Bedford Midland Station (interchange) and Bletchley (local services between Watford and Milton Keynes Central). Wixams and or cost incurred in a change of train will surely deter many would-be passengers? 7. There is no east-north curves or track access, which scuppers freight from Felixstowe – West Midlands via a Cambridge-Bedford rail link. Claims of congestion of getting freight through Cambridge surely informs the need for a new link to the Cambridge-Ipswich line from Shepreth Junction which should be grade separated to Fulbourn via Wandlebury Country Park areas which freight could use. The Reports browser setting is: https://www.nic.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/5thStudio-FinalReport.pdf
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Simon Barber's Column + Pictures above: Central London Forum: This took place in the evening on Monday, 5 February at our usual venue, the Metropolitan Bar in Baker Street. Two other ERTA members came – David Ferguson and Michael Hustwait. In addition, my friends Conway Castle-Knight, Simon Pitt and Hugh Richards also attended. We welcomed new people as well who were interested. The main topic we discussed was ERTA's aspiration for a through rail route between Leicester and Brighton, utilising the old Great Central Main Line and the Guildford – Cranleigh-Horsham – Shoreham routes, combining these routes with links to Heathrow Airport and Old Oak Common. Some people seemed sceptical about the whole aspiration, although we all seemed to be interested in improved rail access to Heathrow Airport, particularly to Terminal 5 from the South Western routes from Waterloo, and also from the Great Western Main Lines via the former West Drayton – Colnbrook branch which is still used for a few freight trains. Indeed, only the other week I had been on a rail tour of the Thames Valley freight branch lines, one of which was Colnbrook. The top right photo is the Didcot West Curve, which could one day take fast Swindon-Oxford trains?

Editor's Take: There are numerous bids to improve rail access to Heathrow. A major destination and market to serve. Heathrow is controversial because of the flight paths and noise and there is a strong campaign against its expansion and ideally for closure! However, on the other side, whether planes or housing, better rail links are needed to challenge road-based congestion proliferation on all roads to and from the area and from all directions. Crossrail will serve it but is weighted as a London centric destination. The Windsor Link aspires to link Heathrow from the West: <https://windsorlink.co.uk/> The Southern Heathrow seeks to link direct from the Guildford-Woking-Waterloo line: <https://heathrowrail.com/> HS2 will avoid it with a new 'Stratford Style' interchange at Old Oak Common. Ideally all these and existing lines would converge onto a sub-surface single multi platformed station and in the case of the Guildford-Woking link, extend to link with the Old Oak Common Station and the Chiltern Main Line. That would then give Milton Keynes/Bedford-Old Oak Common-Heathrow-Guildford arcing link 'not via London' choice and bridge the gap from Old Oak Common and Heathrow. ERTA like many organisations has a divergence of views and opinions and debate can get heated. However, we need to be objective and able to deduce the strategic from merely aesthetic or parochial or London centric bias for example.

Conference: It is with regret that we have had to decide to cancel the conference in Northampton due to a total lack of interest from our members. We move on.

Sandy Meeting: Saturday 17th March is St Patrick's Day but also, we will be having an open to all meeting in the side room at the Queen's Head Pub, Market Square, Sandy, East Bedfordshire, SG19 1JE to discuss East-West Rail, Local Plans, Development Proliferation, Super Highways and NIMBYISM amongst other things. 1pm is social, 2-4 we get down to business discussion.

All welcome
<http://thequeensheadsandy.co.uk/>

Volunteers: We welcome new people who have expressed a wish to explore getting involved with us. However, we still need someone to manage and update our current website and ideally develop it and others to reach ever more audiences.

Notice is given that **ERTA intends to table a Forum on Saturday 28th April at the Wetherspoons 'Rupert Brooke'**, 8 - 10 Castle Street, Rugby CV21 2TP open to all who may be interested in discussing the matters around reopening the Great Central Railway or at least a slice of it. The meeting will be 1pm social interaction and buy food and drink from the bar and 2-4pm discussing the main business of the meeting.

The Great Central closed over 50 years ago at a time when motorways were being built by Government expenditure and railways like the West Coast Main Line were being modernised and smaller lines or duplicate lines cut. Now we have a scenario whereby these other transport corridors are reaching full capacity, development is going in and people and freight still needs options for efficient choice of transport and travel which do not cost the earth.

ERTA wants local authorities to be at very least open minded and preferably to support the principle of rebuilding the line between Leicester/East Midlands-Calvert and the East-West Rail link being resuscitated. Deviations are required and recovery of the route would ideally be done over a 20-year period with proactive policies of reclamation.



Diary: We have a spread of meetings and forums arcing across the country which members and wider supporters are welcome to tap into. Our current webmaster is keeping our events page up to date and may be perused at: <https://ertarail.com/events/> You can also conjoin with us and give support on Twitter and Facebook and our Blogspot contains a wealth of information and is updated on a regular basis:

<https://ertarailvolunteer.blogspot.co.uk/>
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/153355755256764/>
<https://www.facebook.com/ERTACobblerLine>
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/richard-pill-erta/>

Our notepaper which usually fronts these newsletters doubles up as your copy of Who's Who. Contact us, feed us with news, views, observations, feedback and encouragement. The association is in the members hands as to how good or not it can be. We are covering a large expanse of the countryside and urban connectives from East-West Rail to Great Central to Guildford-Horsham-Brighton and of course the London-wide area. We interject ideas, observations, seek meetings and raise issues. Join us!

Wanted!

As ERTA grows so it needs a diverse reach and range of people with different skills and talents to make time available to help us with niche needs including:

1. **New Webmaster** – able to develop a sales page, court income and present a good image, handing downloads and PayPal and Amazon accounts under one roof.
2. **More to come on to the Executive Committee (EC)** – help with daily management of the associations and campaigns. Meets quarterly.
3. **Helpers with the Bedford-Northampton Rail Reopening Committee.** Meets bi-monthly and needs actioning people not armchair critics!
4. **Local Government Liaison and Delegated Meetings Pool** – join with others to win support at strategic levels.

Contact Mr Simon Barber to make offers, enquire further and negotiate! T. 0208 940 4399, E. simon4barber@gmail.com

The plight of bus users in Bedford



Comment: The number 7 bus runs from Bedford Town Centre Bus Station in Greyfriars to Church Lane, Putnoe in North East Bedford. These Optare Buses have plied the route for about 20 years and it tells to the daily user. Beit rust or break down, they are coming to the end of their efficient life-spans and need replacing by better buses. These small buses worked on a 3 per hour frequency but due to cuts is now just 2 per hour even as population and usership has risen. It carried a large proportion of elderly people, women generally, students and pupils to school or college, under 65's and commuters. Add to that audience a push chair, a wheel chair, a mobility push set of wheels and it can be standing room only leaving the bus stop, let alone picking up at St Paul's Square. What the route needs is a vision and a plan. Yes, either restored frequency or a bigger bus. Moreover, it should ideally loop the High Street-St Paul's-Midland Road-Railway Station-Bromham Road-Bus Station for completeness, saving derve if it looped Elliott Crescent and did Putnoe Street on its return from Putnoe. Alas we have professionals who need to get out more and councillors who need to make it their business to actually use local buses, hang up the car keys and appreciate the plight of bus users as a prelude to action, not just listening and doing nothing! We appreciate across the whole nation the bus system outside London is hotch-potched!

Tear Off and Send with Your Subscription. Please help us recruit more members!

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

Membership of ERTA costs £10 per annum. I/We wish to join _____

Name: _____

Address: _____ Postcode: _____

Tel/Mobile: _____ Signed: _____

Dated: _____ Please send completed form to ERTA Membership: ERTA,

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