

# English Regional Transport Association (ERTA)



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

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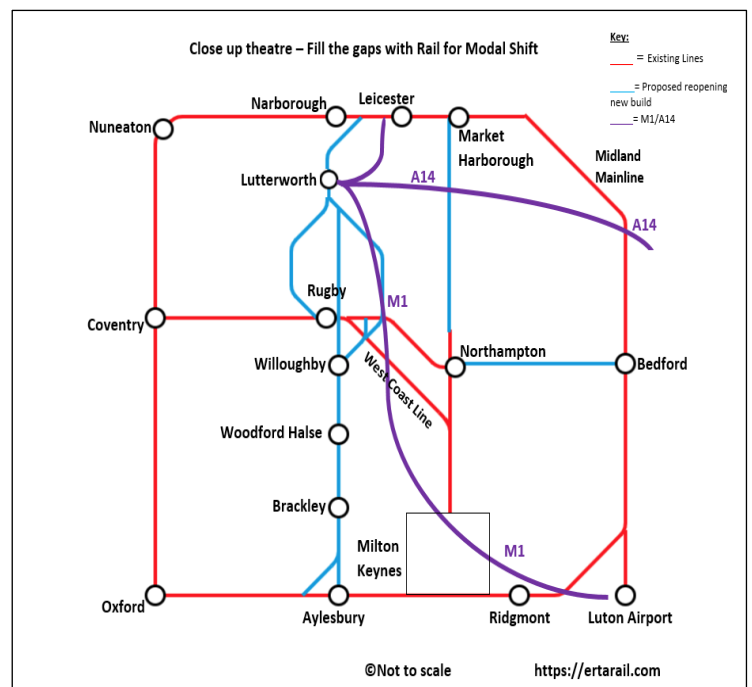
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## The end of another year beckons and time to reflect and chart the way ahead

As we enter that season with end-of-the-year in mind and reflect on 2019, whilst the backdrop of political turmoil has been a constant, ERTA has seen some signs of positive growth. We have done plethora of stalls, forums and meeting specific people and very much hope to continue and build on that vein. From Spalding to Horsham to Northampton and London, our areas covered and convened have expanded and so has our team and membership is going up. Our message continues to get into local newspapers and national publications like Rail as well as the daily inputs on-line be it our website, Blogspot, Facebook, Twitter and Linked-in accounts. We have pulled a steady stream of interest and following as aim to signpost people to the coalface of what is needed. This has emerged starkly as we go about our work, strengthening numerically and qualitatively those gatherings to be productive, but also focusing on Westminster and getting Government to make it its business to support and fund a rolling programme of line rebuilds and reopenings. The disparity and inequality between capital funds available for piecemeal and wider road schemes running to £billions but we don't see it for rail reopenings and rebuilds and maintenance of the status quo is not expansion and moreover getting the right type of railway for what the nation needs – not HS2 – but able to link strategic places like Stratford-M11 corridor-A14 corridor-M6 corridor and link north-south radial lines, none of which HS2 does. Likewise, a new railway to cater for passenger and freight and be all singing, all dancing not narrow vision and huge cost. Indeed, were HS2 to be toned down to a conventional railway, a Great Central link could be bolted on. Suffice to say ERTA promotes the Great Central corridor for being re-railed at every opportunity!



## Gallery of Action!



**Caption Left:** From left to right Christopher Spencer, Simon Barber and Richard Pill man the ERTA Stall at the monthly St Paul's Antiques and Collectors fair in Central Bedford. This event is one of a very few genuinely inclusive events whereby we can access 'light' with minimal cost and bureaucracy. Some others only cater for businesses and/or charities and we are neither of them, we are unincorporated association, voluntary and too small to be a charity. Besides have been told consumer groups don't qualify for charity status in the past. Can you be part of the answer?

**Caption Right:** Nostalgia now, but the Greater London Council (GLC) under Ken Livingstone had a scheme to take London refuse from Cricklewood to Forders Sidings in Bedfordshire on the Bedford-Bletchley Railway for Landfill purposes. This has now stopped, but the idea of moving waste by rail for recycling purposes is something we believe should be a government sponsored initiative to get lorries off local roads across the English Regions for the benefit of all and the environment. Alas all is at sea and it is laissez-faire with the forlorn belief the market solves all – useless in a climate emergency!



**Above left and right:** On 7<sup>th</sup> September some 20 people gathered at our first ever public meeting in Horsham, West Sussex to discuss the reopening of the Guildford-Horsham-Shoreham rail link to give multiple local and regional benefits including Brighton Main Line relief, relief to local roads and traffic demanding more, links between Brighton, Reading and Heathrow in triangulation currently not well served by direct non-stop services and access via Horsham to Gatwick via Three Bridges.

**Notice to our members:** We have a new website for perusal and feedback. It will be progressively updated and amended. Send comments to Mr Simon Barber for consideration: T. 0208 940 4399, E. [simon4barber@gmail.com/](mailto:simon4barber@gmail.com) <https://www.ertarail.com/> In addition, you may detect from this newsletter front page we have a new logo with the message of 'Towards Better Public Transport' and new layout. Our thanks go to our new member and officer Mr Mike Cockerill.

## As we walked the fields of gold!



Looking at the area in August 2019 one can see that with realignments via adjacent fields and a southern bypass of built Gamlingay – pretty much from the M11 to east of Potton is recoverable/new build-able. However, at Potton the old formation is heavily built on as is at Gamlingay but much more severely. To go to the south of Potton from a southern bypass of Gamlingay meets further complications whereby notwithstanding the old route is lost any new route to the south faces the significant blockage of John O’ Gaunt Golf Course which is prestigious attracting well-heeled people who can read, write and command lawyers. Who would want to ruffle their feathers by suggesting a railway blights their facility and landscape? Moreover, from south of Sandy to east of Gamlingay the railway rises out of the Ivel Valley to higher ground. So, any tunnelling or cut and cover solution would have to be on a gradient. Go further south and you face the hills of Wrestlingworth and Hateley, further south and you enter another valley altogether going north of Eyeworth for example. So getting from Sandy to east of Gamlingay is a pinch point which could have done with some positive consideration. If the case and justification for the railway outweighs the pain or cost, then it is imperative things like this are looked at with a view to options of what could be done, not rule it out at the stroke of a pen. In this caption by Jeremy Harvey looking westwards you have Gamlingay and Sandy Heath on your right, a wind turbine on your left. Key question is, can we get a local railway through here with a park and ride station or do we accept development with no sustainable transport and send it all on local roads? That is the stark choice here and elsewhere plethora and tough choices have to be made. To pretend expanded Gamlingay will not expand further over the next decade is to put one’s head in the sand!

## Simon Barber's Column

### DELEGATED MEETING WITH TRITAX DB SYMMETRY

One day in October, two ERTA members (Mike Cockerill and I) had met up with two of the directors of Tritax DB Symmetry at its Northampton office. The company is a Real Estate Investment Trust dedicated to investing in and funding the pre-let development of logistics facilities in the UK.

The primary reason why the ERTA decided to meet up with that company was that it was proposing a rail freight terminal at Hinckley, on the railway between Leicester and Nuneaton, and the site will be close to the point where that railway had crossed the old Great Central main line from London Marylebone to Leicester. The section of the Great Central between Calvert (near Aylesbury) and Leicester was closed by Dr Beeching in 1966, and the ERTA wish to see that line re-open which will enable freight traffic from the new terminal to access south coast ports such as Southampton and Dover without the need to travel through London.

They stated that at present the chief aim of the Hinckley terminal was to despatch/receive freight from principally both Felixstowe and Liverpool, which would both use the Leicester – Nuneaton railway to access the terminal. They were supportive of our idea of re-opening the Great Central since the company wish to get more freight onto the railways and taking it off our congested roads. The reason why there is slow progress at present of taking freight off our roads was that many of our existing railways are stretched to capacity.

They also stated that there are fewer young lorry drivers in Great Britain and consequently there is a shortage of them, and it is more vital than ever that we should have more railways, together with air pollution and CO2 emissions resulting from road traffic. The company also took a copy of our GC Scoping Report plus one of our diagrams showing the Great Central.



**Caption left:** The former ex London Transport rolling stock converted to Class 230 D Units by Vivarail have now been deployed on the Bedford-Bletchley Railway local shuttle passenger service. However, they have had a fair share of break downs making the service once again plunged into unreliability with bustitutions and inconvenience testing the patience of rail users to the limit. Clearly what is required is 4 coach length halts and infill electrification with joint workings off both the West Coast and Midland Main Lines making it a more integral part of wider operations for both passenger and freight and use these units for reopening of branch lines!