

# 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.

~ Contributing towards retention and improvement in better public transport. ~



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<p><b>Northampton-Peterborough Rail Link Pamphlet</b></p>	<p><b>90p where sold</b></p>	<p>From August 2018</p>

## Reopen a Northampton-Peterborough Rail Link and re-rail Northamptonshire!

**ERTA:** The English Regional Transport Association (ERTA) was founded circa 2013 and has the aim of promoting better public transport generally and improving the lot of ordinary people by calling and supporting select local rail reopenings specifically. We are a membership-based association and welcome people to support our endeavours by joining and giving support, time and talent as may be suitable. We work from the grassroots upwards, not top-down Big Brother superimposition. We float ideas to inform a consensus and gather that support often in forums and consolidate support taking it to the powers that be. Join us today!

**Northampton-Peterborough rail link:** Opened in 1845 and closed 1964. (Notes 1) It was a casualty of a trend of closures which was unravelled during the post-war period especially between 1958 and 1972 (2) and the Serpell Report of 1982 (3). The key issue is that a combination of reasons purported to justify the closures from growing car ownership predicated on post war economic growth, deliberate Government policy of investing in new roads and motorways upon which the switch of goods and domestic travel grew, eroding the freight – a mainstay of the railway was drained from local lines and the network aggregately as a whole.

**The cons of reopening**

The practicability of reopening is formidable from a certain angle even as reopening and indeed new builds are on a sliding scale. Given a strategic business case, backers and investors, there is a progression chain via the Department for Transport (DfT) for pursuing schemes. However, getting that in situ – the business case, backers and investors as well as courting a cynical and ‘otherly’ public is a key task and challenge. If like HS2 you have £billions, and the permission and hand of Government behind you – they enjoy privileges other schemes do not, then superimposition is more straightforward. Apart from political intransigence and disruption of possible reclamation of a route, reopening the Northampton-Peterborough rail line is a matter of fact as a proposition.

**Key challenges in practical terms:**

1. Getting out of urban areas. Level crossings or bridges are needed at the St James-London road link and crossing London Road itself.
2. Circumnavigating the edges of the new University of Northampton Waterside Campus (a new dual use rail station could be provided somewhere nearby).
3. Crossing or bridging Bedford Road.
4. More or less open country until the edge of Wellingborough, would land owners support and embrace the project?
5. Wellingborough is a huge pain and problem but not insurmountable!

**The pros of reopening**

The pros of rebuilding a new rail link to Peterborough are as follows potentially:

1. Northamptonshire is east-west stretched as any examination of the county lines on a map will indicate. Yet thanks to the legacy of the closures, only north-south main lines exist and none of these have any joined-up links.
2. The closures threw all onto the roads and population in the last 50 years has trebled. This means all domestic and commercial movements go by road as there is few choices and this ends up at urban areas demanding land for ever more parking and congestion which emits fumes affecting people’s health. Only choice restoration can break the cycle.
3. Centrally located, Northamptonshire gets more cross traffic than some other places = a market for rail to serve!

**Key challenges in practical terms:**

6. A45 needs re-grading and slewing to enable the railway to go under or over.
7. Whitworths Factory and Industrial Estate adjacent area needs to accommodate a new railway.
8. New build across flood plain/Nene Valley to go under the Midland Main Line.
9. Recovery of trackbed generally, including rebuilding through or around Stanwick Lakes.
10. New build and amending A14 and other roads at Thrapston
11. Incorporating the current steam Nene Valley for linkage with the Peterborough-Norwich line for through passenger and freight with East Anglia.
12. Links to the ECML main Peterborough Station.

### Key needs and problems

1. **Northampton:** Northampton suffers from chronic congestion and air pollution. With growth, if allowed to spiral without checks and balances only re-railing offers, things will get worse and that impacts people and communities negatively. You can't build your way out of congestion. New roads have not delivered less road usage, rather more compounding at junctions. It is time to stop making excuses or shrugging shoulders and grasp the nettle, have some guts and bottle and do what needs doing – provide the rail alternative where it is currently a glaring gap.
2. **People say that the railway was under-used when open why would it be better used now?** Tripling of population means new demand. A45, A14 and A43 are hugely heavily congested and overflowing and these roads tend to follow the spine of the county. Modal shift can only happen if the rail infrastructure is put back or new built with amendments.
3. **The current Oxford-Bedford-Cambridge East-West Rail link** has had numerous studies and shown promising usage figures. However, for Northamptonshire it is too far south to reap any direct benefits. West Coast Main Line capacity is at a premium, if Connex in 2001 could not run South London trains to Rugby via Northampton why would new services suddenly find paths e.g. Northampton-Aylesbury?

### Key Opportunities: The new build could offer:

1. **New station to serve south Northampton** including Delapre Abbey venue, growing population, congestion hot spot and new University Waterside Campus.
2. **Running along the spine of the County, the rail link would link existing north-south rail lines** with an east-west link making for a more joined up, robust and resilient railway network, attractive for passenger and freight operational use.
3. **A new station at Wellingborough** would be needed. Likewise, the Rushden Lakes is a new market as well as Parkway access for growth areas like Rushden, Higham Ferris, Irthlingborough, Finedon and elsewhere/A6 interchange.
4. **Parkway Stations for Raunds, Thrapston, A14 interception and Oundle would link principal outlying areas** with the County Town, cutting the need to drive, reducing land used for ever more parking demand which often has to be price managed and would give more options for local shopping, commuting, study and school access.
5. **Peterborough is a key location for access to the East Coast Main Line with links** to Spalding, York, Doncaster and Norwich/Cambridge and them to the Nene corridor and county town of Northampton. Historically the two towns were linked and Peterborough is still the diocesan main church location for the county. These historical links need to be underscored with re-railing, otherwise swathes of population are disenfranchised, face unnecessary costs and hardship in mobility and access terms.

## What you can do

<p><b>Join ERTA.</b> As a member you can offer to get involved and participate in actions and advocacy of forwarding these outline ideas to a study, to policies of route protection and getting a better deal for better rail links for Northamptonshire. Every member counts as a growing membership helps us point to public support and may lend others to get involved.</p>	<p><b>Write to your local council and MP's.</b> From Parish to District to County, the three tiers of Local Government may change to a unity council which combined planning and transport for designated areas. Write to existing councillors and councils and get the idea embedded in discussion, debate and pose the challenge if we fail to deliver a rail link.</p>
<p><b>Not nostalgia or past glories!</b> You can't live on past glories alone. Our call is for a study to make the case for a brand-new start and railway linking the County Town with the rest of the county along the Nene Valley corridor, which is a currently disjointed array of growing populations and needs bringing together in unity of purpose. Re-railing is a key focus.</p>	<p><b>ERTA:</b> ERTA is only as good as its members inform. A key consideration is that if we are to see sustainable town centres we need to recognise rail delivers bulk of people and goods minus the congestion and pollution. Links between the East Coast Ports, DIRFT and principal main lines is just the ticket to underscore the central geographic position of Northamptonshire, which for too long has been a Cinderella backwater. Re-rail now!</p>
<p><b>Further Reading and References:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northampton_and_Peterborough_Railway">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northampton_and_Peterborough_Railway</a></li> <li>2. <a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beeching_cuts">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beeching_cuts</a></li> <li>3. <a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serpell_Report">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serpell_Report</a></li> <li>4. Kingscott, G. (2008) Lost Railways of Northamptonshire, Countryside Books, Newbury, Berkshire</li> <li>5. Pill, R. (2017) Making a case for a new Northampton-Bedford rail link</li> </ol>	



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Name (Please Print): \_\_\_\_\_

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I/We hereby give consent to our data being used and stored for the purposes of communication with ERTA and its purposes compliant with General Data Protection

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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

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