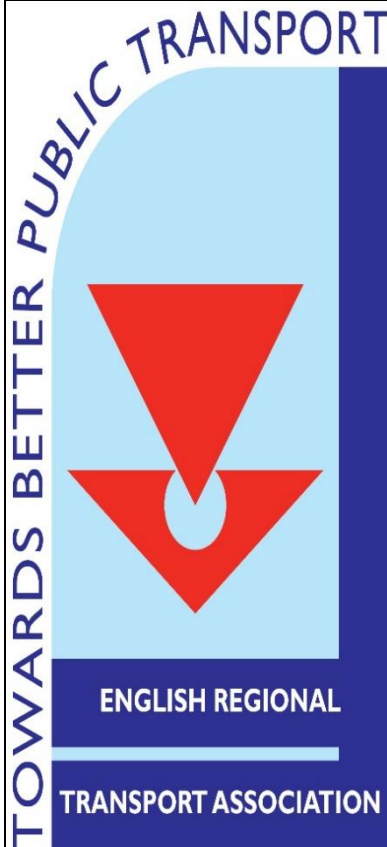


English Regional Transport Association (ERTA)



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+ Others welcome of professional, business or other acumen and of good repute.

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Newsletter No. 47

January-February 2023

£1.50 where sold

ERTA reaches out and with more joining and being willing, can do more and better too!



Caption Left: ERTA Executive Member, Mr Colin Crawford, represented our association at the House of Lords, Wednesday 12th October 2022. He is standing by Jo Gideon MP and they attended the Next Generation Report Launch Entrepreneurs Launch & Reception Cholmondeley Room and Terrace. What we are trying to do is raise a team of people who can expand our representation in various corridors of power be it Westminster, Local Authorities and Agencies/Other organisations. Richard Pill, Chairman of ERTA helps with the behind the scenes work be it emails, sales stalls, leafleting, desk-top productions, but it is for others to join and assist be it campaigns or administration or ideally a bit of both. It is time to step up to the plate! Then we can better get our calls and messages across and add our unique contributions to the pool of what needs to be done. Re-Rail GB Plc!

ERTA Rail Campaigns Round-up:

Great Central Realities: ERTA sees the glaring gaps and the capacity such a rebuilt rail link could offer. However, we arrived late in the day and everything is dominated by the elephant in the proverbial room, namely HS2. Its exponents will give great spiel for the case to the point of almost rubbishing every other thing or dissenting voice. A point is that our new-build along same corridor local rail inclusive idea stands on its own merits. HS2 occupies some of the old GC corridor, so we are talking £billions and new-build to 21st C designs. Forget Berne Gauge, think roll-on, roll-off and Piggy-back clearances optimally, but more lines for more diverse passenger and freight if only a new configured project could court professional interest, a study and get into the corridors of Whitehall as HS2 has done. The gap between what we can do and what needs doing is huge. We plant ideas, court public awareness and will talk with any so interested. That is all we can reasonably do and with enough volunteers, we can aspire towards doing more and better. That is, it in a nutshell! I would ask people to consider:

1. Rugby WCML-Magna Park-Lutterworth area-Narborough whence to join current Nuneaton-Leicester lines.
2. Leicester-Burton-on-Trent is being reopened, so passenger into Leicester, freight routed via Knighton Junction, Burton and Derby.
3. Studies are needed on orbitals or new build in or around Rugby. Rugby suffered with withdrawal of GC rails and has been overlooked as a railway town with Coventry, Leamington, Leicester and Northampton stealing the limelight. Rugby is central to these and so has a strategic and historical value.
4. South, growing populations, all new development going onto congested roads, is bad from many viewpoints including the environment and public health.

Bedford-Northampton: In 2004 the proposal for a rebuild and Thameslink-style integrated arm came before the Rt Hon. Alistair Darling MP, then Secretary of State for Transport. The studies proved it could be done and should be done. However, government being post-Iraq short of money – wars are expensive – decided to long-grass both Bedford-Cambridge and Bedford-Northampton and recommended focus on what became known as the ‘Western Section’ of what became known as East-West Rail namely Oxford-Milton Keynes, Bedford and Aylesbury. Bedford-Northampton got that far! Whereas Manchester Metro extension was also ruled out but reinstated, because it had a bigger support base and push, long-grassed Bedford-Northampton did not enjoy that swell of support where it counts, still being seen as rural and peripheral and thus expendable. Now it is extensively built on at Olney meaning unless a mad scheme to demolish housing and industry was done, a new route around Olney to the north – near or further out would need to be done. Again, we can’t do more, but those so resourced could. Suffice to say, some seem unable to change their mind or narrative according to the proverbial ‘cloth’ to fit the proverbial ‘table’. It can be embarrassing when they blurt out, without ability or reason to break down constituency parts. Detractors of course, won’t do it for us, they will only state declining candidacy and problems. They did it for earlier efforts for Bedford-Sandy rail link too. It is pure politics to say “I’m all for rail reopenings” but be critical of every effort to get them and hide behind £50k cost studies and ‘professionalism’ as an excuse for £27 billion new roads and a mere £500 million the Rail Reopenings Fund. We are where we are, who will blink first? It needs route protection, a vision, a study and professional advocacy. Everyone has cars, but if that goes pear-shaped, immobility abounds, because we’ve dismantled everything else. Brighton-Bedford-Birmingham arcingly with 3 airports, Eurostar and much more linked by rail!

Report by Simon Barber:

Climate Change Rally November 2022 - I went on the Climate Change Rally against COP 27 which started at the Shell headquarters on the South Bank and finished up at Trafalgar Square. As you may know, that summit is taking place in Egypt from 6–18 November. I had heard this from Transport Action Network from their Events list which I receive every month.

It was revealed at that event the top seven oil companies rake in about \$150 billion in profits this year whilst half of the UK's households will receive fuel poverty. Several of the campaigners are against the proposed oilfield in Rosebank which is 130km. off the coast in the Shetland Islands in Scotland.

Meanwhile I had distributed a few ERTA newsletters which, as you know, would have a Membership form attached to them.

South Western Railway Stakeholder Conference November 2022 - I attended the virtual stakeholder meeting with South Western Railway and the following points were raised:

- Sustainability - South Western Railway is the first railway company to tackle sustainability when the new Class 484 units operated on the Isle of Wight line last year, using electric battery units. They aim to reduce half CO2 emissions by 2030 and aim to be net-zero by 2040. Some stations are now boasting bird boxes, such as Ashurst (New Forest) and about three in Surrey.
- Accessibility - South Western Railway has been one of the first company for assisted disabilities other than wheelchair users. The new toilets at Woking will now have a hoist, and London Waterloo earlier on was in fact the first toilet with a hoist. A new toilet block at Basingstoke will also become disabled-friendly.
- Partnership with Hampshire County Council - A new pedestrian access was unveiled at Winchester, and also includes a cycle hub. Meanwhile Basingstoke and Fleet also have cycle hubs.
- E-bikes Hub - A new e-bike scheme is now installed at Exeter Central, Cranbrook (Devon) and Honiton where there are several housing developments.
- New Stock - The Arterio trains (Class 701) will have cycle storage.
- TV adverts - That was apparently being promoted by Railfuture in general terms which would tempt people back on to actual trains post-pandemic. South Western Railway is the first company to do this, since commuting journeys had gone down since people were prevented from using public transport.

Contact, offers of support or feedback: Mr Simon Barber, 20 Fitzherbert House, Kingsmead, Richmond, Surrey, TW10 6HT T. 0208 940 4399 E. simon4barber@gmail.com

ERTA Spotlights: Bringing people together and championing just causes!



Above: Taken at our Horsham Meeting in April 2022, some 17 people turned out - given post-Covid issues, was not bad! ERTA is trying to facilitate meetings in the south, midlands (south and east) and north to enable the public and our members to turn out, tune in and contribute. Clearly, as we grow and our resources from donations and membership, so may quality!

Below: Bedford-Bletchley Class 230 Vivarail unit creeps around the 1984 configured curve from Bletchley entering Bedford and same said halt of 1984 vintage. If our east-west rail triangle reinstatement were to happen, some reform would be necessary. In any event, that may also be required anyway. Speed is not the sole consideration! Vivarail has apparently gone into administration leaving a bus substituted replacement service until further notice.



Northern Lights! Harrogate - Ripon Railway Reinstatement Campaign

Plans to reinstate the Harrogate to Ripon railway line are once again back on the table.

Dr Beeching axed the line in the late 1960s but it is a candidate in the government's new 'Restoring Your Railway Fund.' The Department for Transport (DfT) launched the fund in January 2021.

Harrogate – Ripon is one of 195 bids. So far 25 have been successful. It means that those projects will be given money towards feasibility studies.

This is not the first time that these proposals have cropped up and it may prove to be problematic. Homes have been built on some parts of the track and on Ripon's former train station. Former Ripon mayor Dr Adrian Morgan is a keen supporter of the plans. He has been fighting for reinstatement for the last 34 years.

Highways bosses should not 'shy away' from sustainable transport.

The project has broad support from North Yorkshire County Council, Ripon City Council and Kevin Hollinrake MP.

Cllr Don Mackenzie, executive member for access at North Yorkshire County Council, says

"There has been a campaign to restore the Harrogate – Ripon – Northallerton line for many years, we would be supportive of that.

"It would not be a small job. It is a medium to long term project so it would take between five and 30 years.

"Any move to take traffic off of the busy roads would be good news. But we do need realistic, it would take a lot of work."

"The lack of a train line was cited as the main reason why Ripon lost the teacher training college in the 1990s.

"It would be also very important as a way to bring more tourists in the city. I say broad support because it would be unfair if it impacted those who had homes on the line."

Kevin Hollinrake, the MP for Thirsk and Malton, also said:

"I am very supportive of the bid to re-open the Leeds to Northallerton Railway Line, a section of which would run through my constituency of Thirsk and Malton.

"Local transport connections are key to boosting regional economic activity by attracting new business and creating new jobs in the region.

“It would make the journey from Leeds to Northallerton 13 miles shorter and could also provide an emergency diversion between York and Northallerton.”

The Friends of Askern Railway Station, are Campaigning for the reopening of Askern Station, which in turn will support a new railway service via Pontefract to Doncaster.

I'm now pleased to be able to report that the Doncaster to West Yorkshire via Askern (Askern Line) Strategic Outline Business Case has now been submitted to the DfT. T under the restoring your Railway Fund. I am unable to publish the S.O.B.C at the moment in full but trust me when I say it's a tremendous piece of work and look forward to the DfT's response in due course The Doncaster to West Yorkshire via Askern (Askern Line) Scheme is an opportunity to better utilise existing infrastructure, and level-up communities north of Doncaster which lack opportunities due to poor connectivity to the local and national railway network. What sets the Askern Line scheme apart is that it not only provides significant benefits for local communities, but also delivers strategic connectivity and resilience benefits right across South and West Yorkshire through the reinstatement of an underused line for regular passenger services. In the context of the climate emergency, the Restoring Your Railways programme offers a once in a generation opportunity to reduce reliance on car use and shift trips to sustainable modes of transport. This SOBC document demonstrates that the Askern Line scheme has... a compelling strategic case for investment.



All enquiries via our Northern Area Rep: Mr Chris Hyomes, 10 Tythe Barn Road, Knottingley, West Yorkshire, WF11 9BU, E. chris.hyomes@hotmail.co.uk T. 07971766207

Dates for your Diary and other news:

<p>ERTA Rugby Forum: Saturday 21st January 2023 1pm food, 2pm onwards business. All welcome. Location is Rupert Brooke Wetherspoons Tel: 01788 576759 8-10 Castle Street, Rugby, Warwickshire CV21 2TP https://www.jdwetherspoon.com/pubs/all-pubs/england/warwickshire/rupert-brooke-rugby Main discussion is Rugby-Narborough via Magna Park and Lutterworth area. The idea needs a vision with backers who can take the idea and work it up and inform studies which start at upwards of £50k and progress the matter towards delivery. This is a crucial meeting for supporters of our Great Central Corridor and associated routing links to offer to help and turn up.</p>	<p>ERTA Ampthill-Flitwick Transport Forum: Saturday 11th February 1pm food, 2pm onwards business. This forum is open to all, so all welcome. Our aim is to bring people together to discuss the Flitwick-Ampthill Central Bedfordshire area and in particular how an extra Station – Ampthill Parkway Railway Station could serve upwards of an area stretching from Wrest Park in the east to Woburn in the west and commuters off the M1/Milton Keynes/A507 and Marston Vale. Flitwick alone cannot cope. Venue is The Swan Pub Lounge, (exactly opposite the Thameslink railway station at Flitwick). 1 Dunstable Road, Flitwick, Bedfordshire, MK45 1HP T. 01525 754777 https://www.swaninflitwick.co.uk/ Support and volunteers needed please.</p>
<p>ERTA Leicester Forum: Saturday 25th February 1pm food, 2pm onwards business at The High Cross Wetherspoons Leicester: 105 High Street Leicester LE1 4JB https://www.jdwetherspoon.com/pubs/all-pubs/england/leicestershire/the-high-cross-leicester Discussion will be centred about getting organised in the Leicester area, recruitment and leafleting to help get our message across. Great Central linkage off current Leicester-Nuneaton lines via a combination of GC, Midland and new build to reach Rugby WCML and options in and around Rugby to head south to join East-West Rail via Brackley with links to Aylesbury and Oxford for example. One big mistake is that HS2 leaves Leicester out except on default, when a ‘Y’ shape may have been better. ERTA Contact/ Convenor: Mr Simon Barber, 20 Fitzherbert House, Kingsmead, Richmond, Surrey, TW10 6HT T. 0208 940 4399</p>	<p>Market Harborough Public Meeting – second try! Market Harborough Public Meeting Saturday 11th March 2023 from 2pm Details: To discuss Northampton-Market Harborough (MH) rail link being restored and accentuated others including stations, Rugby-Leicester, Magna Park and Lutterworth. Market Harborough Methodist Church/Hall, Northampton Road, Market Harborough, LE16 9HE www.harboroughmethodistcircuit.org.uk Opposite the Market Hall. ERTA personnel will meet at the local Wetherspoons from 12 Noon. The venue is only a 5-minute walk from the railway station. The Sugar Loaf: https://www.jdwetherspoon.com/pubs/all-pubs/england/leicestershire/the-sugar-loaf-market-harborough 01858 469231 18 High Street, Market Harborough, Leicestershire, LE16 7NJ Local contact Cllr Peter James: peter341@btinternet.com</p>

From the chair: As we enter our 8th year as ERTA, we reflect that 2022 was for us a year of growth. A Leicestershire Area Rep, a start on getting the ball rolling on Northampton-Market Harborough Rail Link, a new pattern of core spinal regional meetings, presence and increased human resources to assist with taking our messages to political circles alongside endless consultations. This is good news. However, the 1958-1984 local rail closures, did enormous damage and we've never, I think, as a nation, fully recovered from the trauma, the whole change of logistical operations, recovered as a country. 60 years of road building, still unabated and many swathes calling for more, denies the urgency of Climate Emergency, whereby 2030 is the cut-off point for irreversible climate change, not 2050 as many governments plans white-wash and green-wash to purport taking it seriously, whilst expanding the proverbial pie at any cost. This is code to followers it is really 'business as usual', 'by any means make money!', 'things not people', as focuses. Many rail media leave me in some despair. They highlight, pander to middle managers, existing rails, operations, nostalgia and if new rail, must be High Speed/Main Lines. To this, Colonel Stephens and associated other 'pioneers' would have turned in their graves. They saw local people and places having a railway, a basic transport facility to connect to a wider rail network; receiving people and goods from that wider network. They were local upwards and outwards looking people. We need that vision now, translated to 21st Century lessons-learnt and improvements in lower cost operations. No-one seems to speak for the railway as a whole, fragments may win accolades, but we need a rail lobby, not as a broad church, but working out and delivering local rail-based solutions to year-on-year grow the local rail network and enable more modal shift from road to rail. Unless we grasp that, we cut ribbons and praise 'good aesthetics', but miss the big picture of waste and unadulterated congestion! ERTA does speak out; we do plant ideas and that is leadership!

Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/H. F. Stephens](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/H._F._Stephens)



Please Join ERTA -Help us help you!

<https://ertarail.co.uk/become-a-member/>

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

Membership of ERTA costs £15 per annum. I/We wish to join _____

I/We wish to explore volunteering opportunities (optional)

Name (Please Print): _____

Address: _____ **Postcode:** _____

Tel/Mobile: _____ **Email** _____

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 Regulation (GDPR) _____

Signed: _____ **Dated:** _____

Please send completed form and payment to ERTA Membership:

ERTA, 24c St Michael's Road, Bedford, MK40 2LT (01234 330090)

Join our free email loop for news and views: E. richard.erta@gmail.com