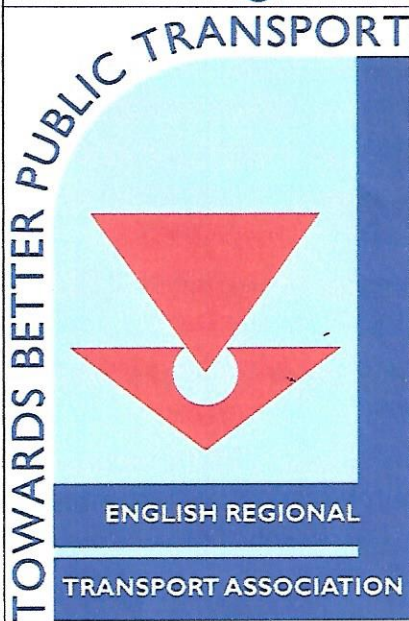


English Regional Transport Association (ERTA)



Patrons: Sir Edmund Verney, The Rt Hon. the Lord Newby OBE + Others welcome of professional, business or other acumen and of good standing.

Elected Association Chairman and Campaigns Coordinator, Bedford Area Forum Convenor and Coordinator, Publications, Newsletter Editor, Social Media, Media Officer/Main Spokesperson, Co-Conference Organiser, Membership and General Advisor:
Mr Richard Pill, 24c St Michaels Road, Bedford, MK40 2LT
T. 01234 330090. E. richard.erta@gmail.com

Vice Chairman and ERTA Nationwide Coordinator responsible for (Finance, Delegated Meetings, Recruitment, Administration, Membership and Great Central, Westminster, London, Northern and Southern Teams) and the oversight of all Forums and forwarding the route protection and reopening agendas and West Country Area Rep:
Mr Simon Barber, 20 Fitzherbert House, Kingsmead, Richmond, Surrey, TW10 6HT T. 0208 940 4399, E. simon4barber@gmail.com

W.

<https://ertarail.co.uk/>

Newsletter No. 33

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<https://ertarailvolunteer.blogspot.com/>

September-October 2020

£1 where sold.

Bedford-Northampton or Northampton to Bedford, either way needs route protection and investment studies now. Saving these rail corridor assets is an investment!



Captions Above: Taken by our colleague Mr Philip Bricher of Northampton 2020, shows two shots of the former Brackmills Branch, which is the stub of the former Bedford-Northampton and Northampton-Wellingborough lines. ERTA has tirelessly campaigned for route protection to keep options open medium/long term and for studies to make the case for reopening. We welcome the Brackmills Chief Executive Ms Sara Homer to our membership and together we hope to move the project forward. This may mean re-railing of a local rail-based transport solution like a Parry People Mover. Join us to boost the effort. Any new rail hopes bet Bedford, Wellingborough or Peterborough needs this corridor as they share the bit between Castle Station and just past the Waterside University Campus where the Wellingborough/Peterborough route veered off to the left to cross Bedford Road, whereas the Brackmills Branch carried on. Key issue is the threat of a St James' - London Road link road and the controversial issue of level crossings. The Office for Rail and Roads (ORR) demand bridges or underpasses, but in tight, listed building urban areas, is impractical, making for a conundrum to overcome. Suffice to say it is not all plain sailing, but a concerted effort getting consensus and progress. As ever we wish to build a team and COVID-19 has hindered our efforts to convene events.

News and Notes: Statement on ERTA Annual Conference at Berkhamsted 26th September

2020 Following the recent meeting of the Executive Committee (EC) our deliberations are that given the legal requirement to wear masks, given the restrictions on meeting indoors and cumbersome distancing and other involved actions as may be necessary, it has been decided to change the conference to the following:

1. The same day we will do it on-line via Skype/Zoom as yet to be determined from 1.30/2pm-4/4.30pm.
2. All speakers and delegates are invited to participate and expand to cater for more, so please tell friends and others to join in.
3. In lieu of a refund of the conference fee the offer is to cascade to a year's 2021 membership and donate the £3 to the association as a goodwill gesture. For those who wish it refunds will be available on request.
4. We very much hope our speakers and delegates will work with us.
5. The offer of the on-line conference is open to all.
6. We apologise for any disappointment, but feel in the circumstances this is the best we can offer. More positively we will be doing other meetings on-line as well and that will save us time, expense and enable more people to more readily participate hopefully.
7. For all enquiries about the on-line conference, refunds, cascades and wider participation please contact Mr Colin Crawford: 21 Clunbury Court, Manor Street, Berkhamsted, HP4 2FF T. 01255- 507332 / Mobile 07836-693977 Skype In 020-3239-2841

E: colin.crawford1@btconnect.com

Bedford-Northampton: Outside the Brackmills Branch theatre of operations, there will be a need for a brand-new route around Olney and we call on Milton Keynes Council, having given planning permission to scupper the old route successively over the years, to jointly apply for Government funding to look at alternative route options around or bypassing Olney. By all means contact us and let's talk. The layout of the land means in all probably Olney would not now be able to have a station although a station somewhere off the A509 should not be ruled out. We call on the councils to work together. It is an act of the will, not rocket science. On the Bedford side, again route protection is required. We have this form of words so far (30-05-2020) "*Bedford Borough Council would be broadly supportive of plans to see the Northampton-Bedford rail line rebuilt and re-opened. However, our current focus remains on the delivery of East West Rail and improving Midland Main Line journeys to the North and South.*"

But what we need NOW is a commitment to:

1. Get Northampton, Milton Keynes, Bedford and other agencies together, agree a joint statement of support and commitment to protect a route and realignment spaces/new route where blockages exist.
2. Ensure the railway can physically link to existing lines both ends! Joined-up common sense?!

AGM Notice: Would you like to stand for the Executive Committee (EC) and help run ERTA?

You must have Skype/Zoom access, be reliable and committed to our success. **Tuesday 24th of November** 1/2pm onwards. It will be held on-line via Skype/Zoom. For updates and details please contact Mr Simon Barber who will put you on a list. T. 0208 940 4399, E. simon4barber@gmail.com
All welcome. The pandemic is prohibitive for gatherings currently.

Update on East-West Rail and Associated Issues: Progress is being made with clearing the trackbed between Claydon and edge of Bletchley for eventual re-railing. At Bletchley an all-singing, all-dancing new station on the flyover facing the town is being constructed and that is all well and good. Meanwhile the existing Bedford-Bletchley Railway shuttle passenger service has had numerous problems with breakdowns, unreliability and now technical issues meaning either a cancelled service or bus substituted service. Really the long-term solution is for campaigners to call for electrification in-fill and lengthening of halts and stations to 4-coach standard length capability. Then operations should be 'open-access' with whoever wants to run services enabled and coordinated. On Bedford-Tempsford-Cambridge we have made our views known that we prefer the old route out of St John's going east with a new flat route to Tempsford from the south-westerly direction, contrast the northern route which seems more circuitous, hilly, more expensive and problematic. We contribute our views and are trying to be helpful. However, building houses over the old St John's site and locking in one solution or bust is a sad beginning to a salutary lesson in defaultive planning. If any wish to discuss further email Richard Pill on richard.erta@gmail.com and join our loop or check our Blogspot which has a wealth of information and background reading: <https://ertarailvolunteer.blogspot.com/> Only by a growing membership can we pay the way. If not already, please join ERTA today!

Unity in Diversity, Diversity in Unity...

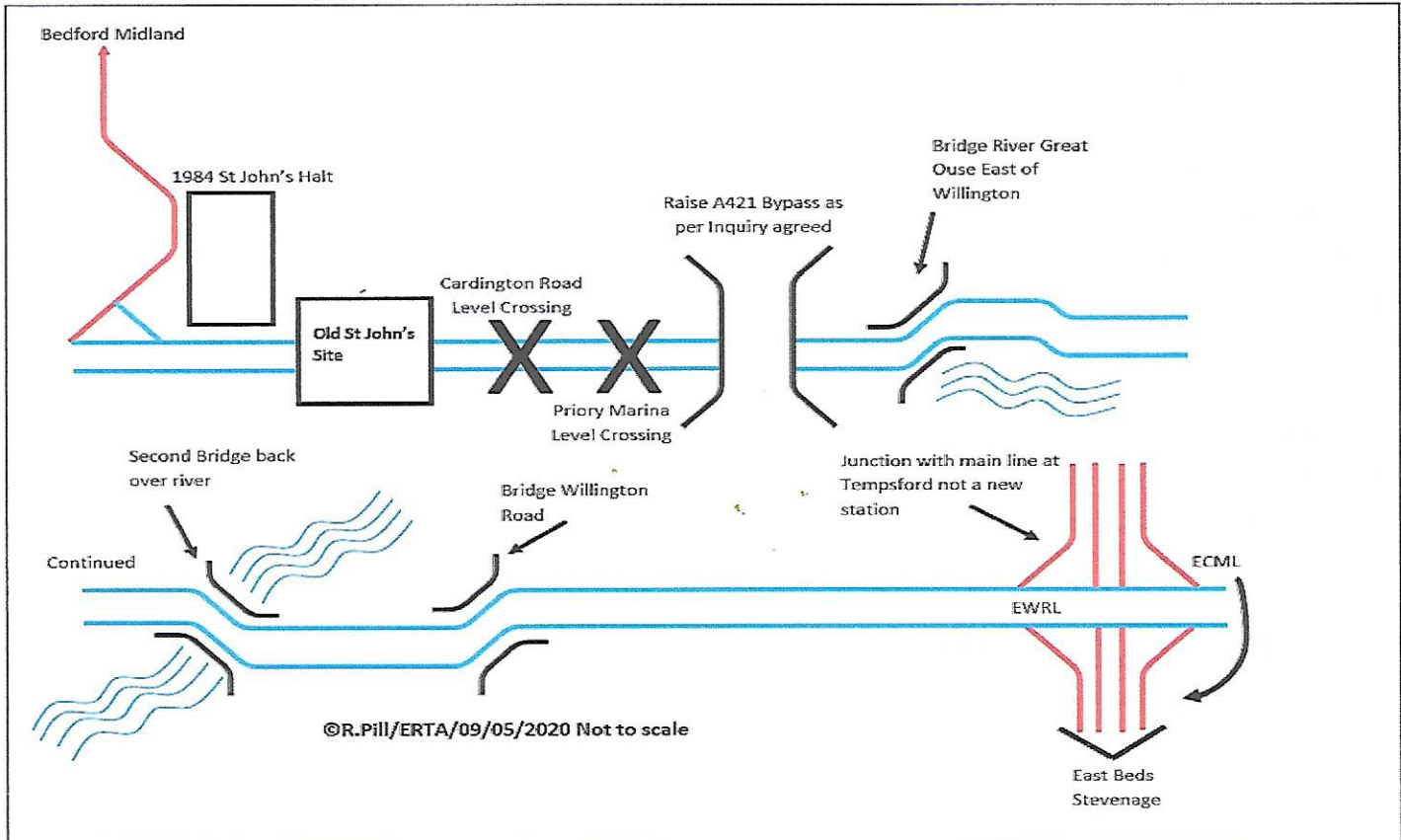
Can we have a more joined-up and inclusive portrayal of our rails?

Rail Magazine edition 909 pages 30-33 (July 15-July 28 2020 Edn.) has an interesting article on 'NR plans more platforms and tracks for North East railways'. The map on page 31 shows a huge focus and concentration on York and the stretch of ECML between York and Northallerton being sole bearer of increased demand and capacity issues abound by the lack of an alternative.

The map fails to show what the inclusion of a Harrogate-Ripon-Northallerton could offer: more capacity, more paths for York, more passenger and freight by rail, modal shift, environmental gains, land saved for other things, less pollution. HS2 is planned to go to York!

If you want more, something either has to give or reopening Harrogate-Ripon-Northallerton makes a whole load of sense. Please support by a. writing to Rail rail@bauermedia.co.uk and saying you want Harrogate-Ripon-Northallerton, likewise contact Network Rail and b. Join ERTA and swell our Northern Team working towards this and other select reopenings like Woodhead for example.

It makes good sense and should be worked up and included in the frame, otherwise we have a stitch-up and oh... Boris indicates he wants Parliament or a Government Office established in York, requiring more paths and trains... again a relief line is required. Our suggestions are not so daft and should be given fair coverage surely? Please join [#ertarail](https://ertarail.com/) ERTA and vote with your wallets as well as feet!



Caption Above: We are thankful for our friend Mr Samiur Chowdhury for helping work up our diagrams to look pretty. Yes, bridges could be considered but crucially special dispensation for level crossings where that can't be done for practical reasons is essential for all reopenings to go ahead. Our route needs consideration, contrast the northern route which we see as with considerable flaws including hillier. We have made our views widely known and hope common sense will prevail.

Use form below. Please Join or Renew your Membership of ERTA and help us help you!



Tear Off and Send with Your Subscription or Renewal or go to on-line:

<https://www.ertarail.com/become-a-member>

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

Membership of ERTA costs £12 per annum. I/We wish to join

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: E. richard.erta@gmail.com