

# English Regional Transport Association (ERTA)

	<b>Patrons:</b> Sir Edmund Verney, The Rt Hon. the Lord Newby OBE + Others welcome of professional, business or other acumen and of good repute.	
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## ERTA joins the fight to protect the Guildford-Horsham Rail Link Trackbed and broadens South East Rail Vision.



**Caption Above:** Typical rolling stock train stands at Horsham Station, taken by Mr Simon Barber. ERTA, continues to interject the idea and aspiration to reopen the rail link between Horsham and Guildford. Threats abound including a canal and disputes whether a cycleway fits or not better with rail fenced off or water and towpath!

ERTA has started responding and interjecting to various tiers of governmental and organisational studies putting our goals and suggestions forward. Silence informs default, we are pro-affirma for what we believe could make a critical difference to the South East Rail Network:

1. Guildford-Cranleigh-Horsham rail rebuild/reinstatement/new-build as lie of the land informs and reasonable negotiation can accommodate.
2. Polegate-Stone Cross – about 1 mile of new realigned construction would enable semi-fast Brighton-Ashford services but also free up capacity and renewal of lines into Eastbourne to enable more focused London-Gatwick-Resort, services which make more of it as a staycation destination to explore the South East by rail more.
3. New curve from Gatwick to the Tonbridge-Redhill line to be studied to see if feasible, would enable a raft of complimentary services.
4. Supporting electrification of the North Downs Line and building the Arundel Curve. The latter would enable Horsham trains onwards to Brighton via Shoreham!

"I think most Cranleigh residents don't think the re-opening of our railway line is an option. It's an ongoing problem with the canal also. However, there is masses of new housing going up in Cranleigh + the Dunsfold airfield development and those newcomers may be very happy to see the railway re-opened." Local Cranleigh Resident, October 2020. ERTA believes a series of studies are needed on how best to negotiate Cranleigh, to realign, buy up and relocate or an as yet an unknown option! A station is needed.

**News and Notes**

**Conference and Other Meetings via Zoom:**

ERTA had a successful conference with some 17 delegates via Zoom, a first for us. Good presentations and discussion were had and we hope to do another in about 6 months' time.

**Winter-Spring Zoom Meetings:**

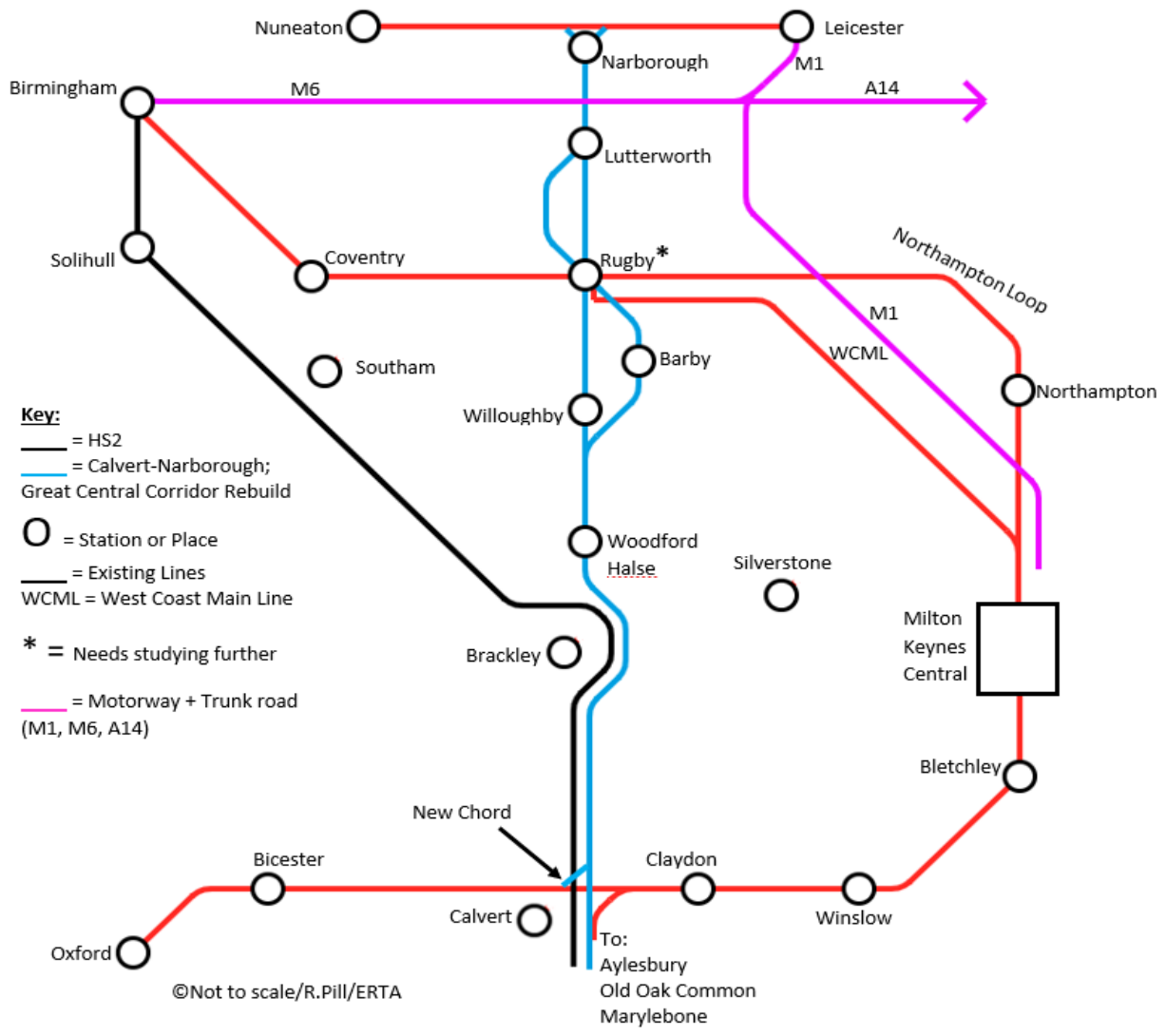
Covid19 has pushed us onto Zoom and Skype for meetings. In future we will have physical meetings but as and when and where expedient. Zoom saves time, money and hassle, enabling focus.

**ERTA Needs Appeal:**

ERTA is still seeking and welcomes a growing network of volunteers to help us forward our aims. Please peruse our website for what is available and consider whether you could give an hour per week to it.

**Great Central Life-Lines:**

Diagram below is not the last word. The link from Banbury to Woodford could also be slotted in and yes; the key may need slight amending. The diagram however shows our view of what is happening and intent on what should be re-railed as far as the Great Central Rail corridor is concerned. Several studies are needed as well as overarching studies. The approach needs to be how blockages are overcome, not be defeated at the outset as so many follow that negative inclination. Our nations poverty of faith and faith-vision is lamentable except where like HS2 vested interests see big as beautiful and go for it with much intrusion and disenfranchisement in the name of connectivity! Brackley is a case in point, a railway without a station on HS2, could our line go alongside and provide one? Answers to MP's who need to listen more.



**Getting Our Message Across. England's Economic Heartland (EEH) is a growing player in agenda setting. But 2050 is too little, too late for a Climate Emergency and preventative action to reduce road, car, van, lorry and fossil fuel dependency is required NOW and that must as a critical part mean re-railing and keeping re-railing options open to give that modal shift and choice a chance. Intelligence, Reports and Stats are not enough, we need action and 'spades on the ground' to 'make it so' in a timely manner. We all have a part to play. Tuesday, 4 August 2020 [Draft Transport Strategy for Green Recovery](#)**

I am responding to the consultation for your draft Transport Strategy for green recovery, with the following comments: In the main document (**DRAFT TRANSPORT STRATEGY**) Transforming Journeys p.38 East-West Main Line - the Central Section must be completed before 2030 at the latest, ideally even earlier. Furthermore, I have reservations in regard to the chosen route option for the Central Section and I would prefer the original route via Bedford St John's (as per the attached diagram). In fact, your organisation should call-in Bedford Borough Council's non-rail development plans for the old St John's Station area and get them rejected to keep contingency options open should the chosen route prove problematic for any reason. Comparative costs and challenges should be done and approaching Tempsford from the south-west avoids the need to negotiate A421/Black Cat Roundabout/A1 and descent to Tempsford Flood Plains. Please also see: <https://ertarailvolunteer.blogspot.com/> (7 and 21 July). Furthermore, there should also be stations on the East-West at Kempston Retail Park, Claydon and Calvert (which is the potential site for a new town). Transforming Journeys p.39 Other East-West Arcs - both these other two arcs (Banbury - Northampton- Peterborough) and Bucks - Herts) are vital. These are also referred to in the PASSENGER RAIL STUDY Phase 1 pp. 81-82 **Connecting People with Opportunities p.45 Transport Orientated Development** - both the Mass Transit Systems for Milton Keynes and Cambridge (also see p.88) are top priorities. As regards Milton Keynes, its Council's Mobility Strategy Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2018-2036 had proposed a Light Rail Transit. In addition, the old Wolverton - Newport Pagnell railway should be re-opened and much of the original track-bed survives. As regards Cambridge, the Mass Transit system should be a Metro which should not go underground since this could bring more cars on to Cambridge's roads, many of which are not designed to modern standards. I had also looked at the PASSENGER RAIL STUDY Phase 1, and referring to the section Upcoming Rail Enhancements in the Heartlands p.91 Midland Main Line - Associated Enhancements & Schemes. The Midland Main Line electrification (already in delivery) should be extended beyond Market Harborough to Leicester/Nottingham/Derby/Sheffield. In the section **Gaps in the Rail Offering throughout the Heartlands pp.80 etc.**, the following railway lines should also be re-opened and much of the old track-beds survive in these cases: Bedford-Northampton; Northampton-Market Harborough; Great Central (Calvert-Brackley-Rugby-Lutterworth-link existing Nuneaton-Leicester line at Narborough); Luffenham Curve (linking Midland Main Line eastward with Leicester-Peterborough line); and Northampton - Wellingborough. All these routes need protection, urban corridors need protecting for integration and coordination, and furthermore most of these routes could also be used for freight traffic. Banbury-Northampton (Northern Arc) needs to link with the Great Central somewhere in the Woodford Halse area.

The Southern Arc should involve the re-opening of both the disused St. Albans Abbey - Hatfield and Watford - Croxley lines. I would also like to add that the delivery of the rail components must be made at the earliest opportunity to meet Climate Change targets. Finally, I do not support the Oxford-Cambridge Expressway since it will bring no benefit at all to the England's Economic Heartlands. This new road will affect Green Belt areas, and will also be an incentive to build new housing and will not solve traffic congestion at all and in fact, the road will bring in more traffic which is already increasing with the significant housing growth between these two towns. This increase in traffic will in turn increase CO2 emissions and also air pollution (a serious health emergency), both of which the Government is pitifully complacent. Yours faithfully, **Simon Barber, ERTA Vice Chairman, T. 0208 940 4399, E. [simon4barber@gmail.com](mailto:simon4barber@gmail.com)** If any of our members wish to help Simon with consultation responses please contact him and offer to help as a part of a growing team.

## Simon Barber's Column

The ERTA have been supporting the re-opening of both the Guildford–Horsham and Horsham– Shoreham railway lines for about two years. Both of those lines had closed during the mid-1960s following the Beeching axe.

In both cases much of the old trackbeds survive, and where they do, they now form part of the Downs Link, which is a pedestrian-cum-cycle path which runs from Guildford to Brighton. There are some places where the trackbeds are obliterated, notably at Cranleigh with some housing developments which had already taken place some years ago.

However just recently a greater threat has taken place since the Wey & Arun Canal Trust wishes to use part of the old trackbed of the Guildford–Horsham line at Bramley for canal purposes as part of the Canal Trust's restoration programme, since the original canal route at that point is compromised. Some members of the ERTA had already made objections to the Canal Trust's planning application to Waverley Borough Council, and the Council's decision is expected to take place provisionally on 21 October. Details in regard to this planning application are as follows:

**Waverley Borough Council, The Burys, Godalming, Surrey, GU7 1HR Phone: 01483-523333 Email: [consultation.planning@waverley.gov.uk](mailto:consultation.planning@waverley.gov.uk) Reference No. - WA/2020/0004 Case Officer - Kate Edwards**

The ERTA feels that the restored railways are far more important than the canal, since the canal is intended for leisure purposes whilst the railways are intended for commuting. These lines should be re-opened following several new housing developments and population growth along the track-bed corridors. The increased population will increase road traffic which is already horrendous at times along the A281 Guildford - Horsham road. The re-opened railway would provide a direct strategic link between Brighton and Guildford/Reading and potentially beyond. It is never too late to object/write/contact MP's and support ERTA, it's aims, objectives and essentially, keep this rail option open!



**Caption Left:** The old trackbed of the former Guildford-Horsham rail link which ERTA believes could play a new role in these times linking Reading/Heathrow with Brighton and Gatwick, creating more capacity on and off the rails. For anybody worried about the impact of the proposal on the Downs Link as a walking and cycling route, the ERTA feel that it can be slewed beside the railway being separated by appropriate perimeter fencing (including a hedge) to keep out children and trespassers accessing the railway. Furthermore, certain sections of the Downs Link could run parallel with certain sections of the Wey and Arun Canal. During the past two years members of the ERTA have led delegated meetings with several relevant stakeholders, with the most recent with a Councillor from Adur District Council who was very supportive of the ERTA's proposals.