

British Regional Transport Association

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Other Area Reps can be found on our website contact's page:

<https://brtarail.com/team-contact/> Our Blogspot is a wealth of information too:

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

BRTA Newsletter No. 67

May-June 2026

£2.00 where sold/Donations
welcome

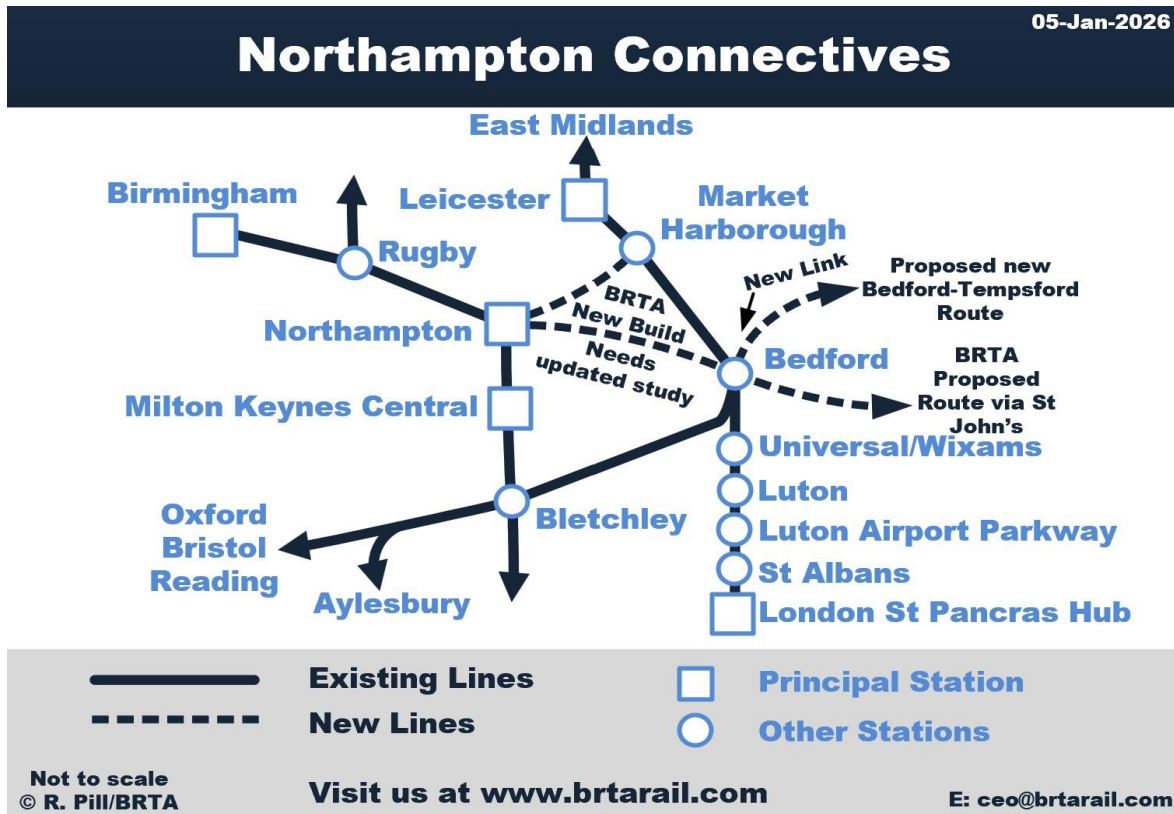
BRTA gets media coverage in various areas including Northampton!

(diagram shows what we are calling for)

BRTA - British Regional Transport Association
Sustainable Britain Needs Re-Railing

**“Rail Campaigners Call for Better Sustainable Travel
Infrastructure for Universal Park” “Improved Rail Vital for
Universal Park Sustainability”**

The Government has given the Universal Theme Park at Stewartby the go-ahead. Now the real work must begin to ensure a sustainable future for the area, say BRTA.



The British Regional Transport Association (BRTA), who campaign nationally for better public transport and railway reopenings, are demanding a fresh investigation into the region’s rail links, now that planning permission for the 500-acre attraction has been granted.

With a proposed 2031 opening to crowds of up to 55,000 visitors a day, the group say that it is vital that the proposed major upgrade of Bedford main-line railway station and the revamped East-West Rail Station at Kempston Hardwick / Stewartby, which would become the theme park’s nearest station, are carried out and completed in time. Designed to link Oxford to Cambridge via Bedford, East-West Rail has yet to deliver a Bedford - Oxford passenger service.

BRTA highlights that the East-West Rail project heralds the potential closure of up to 6 halts (small stations) between Bedford and Bletchley and the withdrawal of their hourly shuttle passenger service. With 8.5 million visitors projected yearly, BRTA stress that car-free links to the surrounding area are

important for maximising the economic benefits of the development whilst limiting environmental damage and the adverse health effects of road traffic. The campaign group is also concerned that Northampton is being disenfranchised from sharing the benefits of direct rail access to the Universal Theme Park by rail. BRTA has long campaigned for the reopening of the 20-mile Bedford to Northampton (B2N) line, giving the opportunity to extend Thameslink services via an Olney Parkway Station, Brackmills and the University of Northampton. 8,000 permanent jobs are to be created by the Universal Park along with a huge increase in demand for visitor accommodation across the region. That's why BRTA are now calling for the rail corridor to Northampton to be protected from development and a new study into the economic viability of re-railing commissioned.

BRTA's Richard Pill said:

"The Universal Park plan hugely ramps up the need for a 'fit for purpose' new Bedford Midland Railway Station, able to reliably deal with the volume of trains and passengers Bedford will need - all at the same time as being able offer routes to freight carried sustainably by rail. East-West Rail must now deliver a reliable and expandable Oxford - Bedford service, properly connecting the existing Marston Vale line stations, Universal and other services at Bedford. The theme park development, with the associated rail improvements, will underline Bedfordshire as a dynamic area to visit, invest in and live. Getting away from road travel as a default choice is vital if emissions are to be kept down and gridlock avoided."

BRTA's Andrew Williams commented:

"Northampton used to be a major rail hub but since the 1980s it now only has a single rail line allowing only journeys to London, Milton Keynes, Birmingham and Coventry. For far too long Northamptonshire has been left out from the considerable opportunities afforded by rail re-openings - all of which in the UK have exceeded their most optimistic passenger forecasts. Within Northants, reopening one or more closed lines would transform commuting between Northampton, Kettering, Leicester and Market Harborough as well as dramatically cutting the rail journey time to the Universal Theme Park in Bedford. We urge everyone to give their support to the BRTA campaign for railway and station reopenings."

BRTA's Falak Naz stated:

"A 25-mile rail journey taking up to 115 minutes is not fit for a modern economy. This lack of direct rail access risks shutting Northampton out of the

thousands of jobs and wider opportunities being created by the Universal Theme Park near Bedford. Reopening the Northampton to Bedford railway and reducing journey times to around 27 minutes would be a game-changer for residents, workers and local businesses alike."

PUBLIC CONTACTS and LINKS:

brtarail.com/b2n | brtarail.com/ewrail | brtarail.com/team-contact/

For enquiries about membership and volunteer opportunities with BRTA see:

brtarail.com/become-a-member | membership@brtarail.com

For more information, contact:

For interviews (broadcast and press) and comment:

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About BRTA

The British Regional Transport Association (BRTA) is a voluntary, membership-based public transport improvement association.

This is what was sent in December 2025 following the announcement of the go-ahead for the new Universal Theme Park in the Bedford area and BRTA's call for Northampton to be in the frame too, both to get directly to Wixams via Bedford on one Thameslink train and arcing lines to the new proposed East-West Rail Northern Route from the Northampton direction for Birmingham-Northampton direct to and from Cambridge and East Anglia for more passenger and freight operations by sustainable and 'green' rail. We appeal to you to join BRTA and give us your support. BRTA is the sole agent promoting rail in such contexts often and we need a bigger, louder voice to be heard. As it was, Bedford Independent gave it coverage: <https://www.bedfordindependent.co.uk/rail-campaigners-say-bedfords-universal-theme-park-must-come-with-fit-for-purpose-rail-connections/> 2031 the Theme Park and Oxford-Bedford trains commence, but no date for the Bedford-Cambridge section as yet!

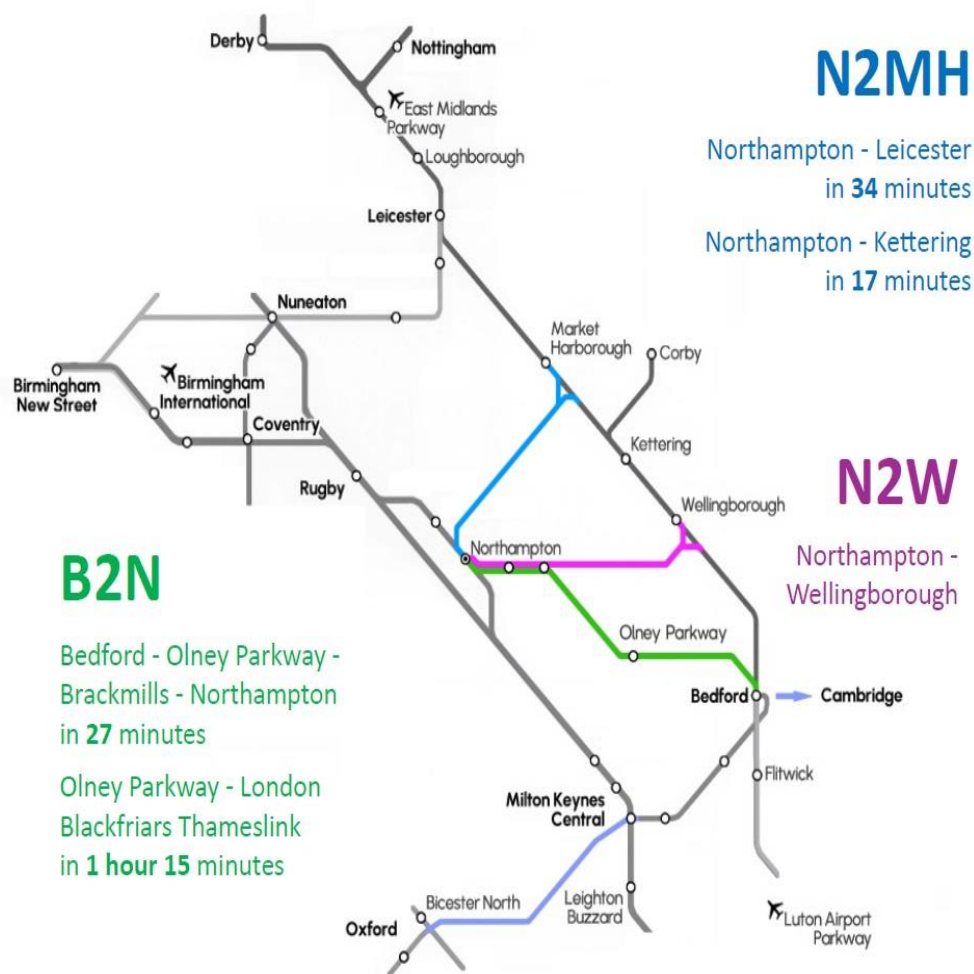
Despite the planning set-backs, Northampton-Bedford, and East-West Rail albeit via a new Northern Route is a must-have and our colleagues at Northampton are pressing on with highlighting the benefits of re-railing and calling for a consideration, whereby if the case is robust, the engineering can be worked out anew. Please email your MP and call for governmental support.

We're campaigning for better public transport. Join us.

STIMULATING ECONOMIC GROWTH
ENHANCING ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION

PROMOTING QUALITY OF LIFE AND HEALTH
IMPROVING OUR ENVIRONMENT

PUTTING **NORTHAMPTON** BACK IN THE CENTRE OF A NATIONAL RAIL HUB



ANY ONE OF THESE RE-RAILING PROJECTS WOULD TRANSFORM JOURNEYS IN NORTHANTS.

COMMISSION NEW FEASIBILITY AND IMPACT REPORTS NOW

Association News:

BRTA welcomes new members and thanks to those who renew year-on-year. We are building a team and details are on our website: <https://brtarail.com/team-contact/>

Falak Naz has joined BRTA and taken officership position as ‘Projects Manager and Westminster Coordinator’ and has joined both the Northampton Team (where she is based) and the Executive Committee. This is a very welcome appointment and should bolster our efforts in making progress. She will bolster both the Executive Committee and our Forums ‘out and about’ and possibly via Zoom.

David J. Start is also co-working with Falak on Westminster Collaboration and it is hoped a meeting to take aspects of our calls for a nationwide programme of local rail reopenings be enacted as government policy and funding. Not just new roads and new High-Speed styles rail links and squeezing reopenings out due to a lack of money!

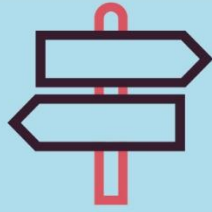
David Ferguson has retired due to ill-health. We wish him well.

Key volunteering posts to fill:

1. Grants Research and Applications Officer to seek and apply for Grants to help with BRTA Funding. Guidance can be given and liaise with David J. Start.
2. Marketing on/off-line officer to help get turn-out for forums and other events.
3. Leafleting volunteers as and when and where. Reliability is key quality we seek. Area can vary but current focus is on Guildford-Cranleigh-Horsham – contact Simon Barber to meet for coffee and work together.
4. Area Reps for Leicester, Gloucester and Wales are needed. Honesty, reliability and following BRTA policy of priority is crucial. Grow teams and move towards a public meeting at Aberystwyth 2027.

All need to raise own money and liaise with David J. Start on costs, printing and liaison. Membership growth is key to budgets! Tap into our website: <https://brtarail.com/events/>

Sustainable Britain Needs Re-Railing



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We're campaigning for better public transport. Join us.

STIMULATING ECONOMIC GROWTH
ENHANCING ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION

PROMOTING QUALITY OF LIFE AND HEALTH
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Re-Opening the Dumfries to Stranraer Railway

Do you support a restored modern railway linking Dumfries and Stranraer with select intermediate stations?

Join **BRTA** today and add your voice to our campaign.

Get in touch with our local representative
info@brtarail.com



MORE OVERLEAF and at BRTARAIL.COM

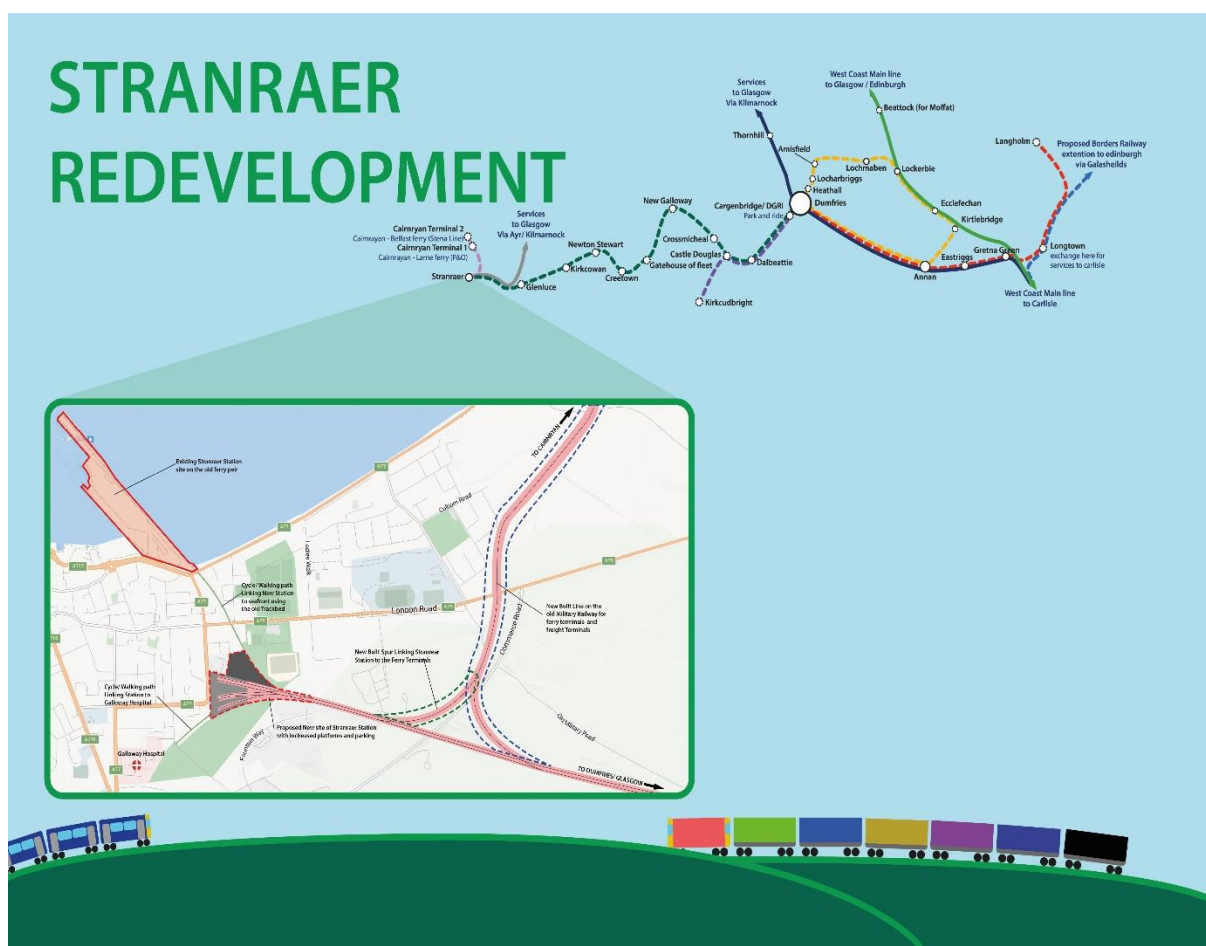


BRTA is a proudly neurodivergent-led organisation.

info@brtarail.com | [linkedin.com/in/richard-pill-brta](https://www.linkedin.com/in/richard-pill-brta) | brtarailvolunteer.blogspot.com | [facebook.com/brtarail](https://www.facebook.com/brtarail)
BRTA, 2 Leigh Road, Hildenborough, Tonbridge, Kent, TN11 9AB

Support our Dumfries-Stranraer Rail Link Aspiration Campaign!

BRTA is calling for sponsorship to enable a feasibility study and business case to be progressed. We want the line rebuilt to a modern railway standard with a triangular junction at both ends for optimal operational potential for both passenger and freight to be realised. Modal shift from a busy A75 to rail would make the situation more sustainable and help speed end-to-end timings.



Public Meeting Report and photos in our July edition!

Sad News on Rails East of Bedford via St John's and Rails between Northampton and Bedford – falling through the net, scuppered by stealth development and a lack of strategic rail infrastructure planning at any level of responsibility.

Planning Applications for 1000 houses on Land West of Willington and Lower Farm Road Bromham, block the rail routes for both 'east of Bedford via St John's' and Bedford-Northampton route as well. BRTA has made the case for these rail routes to be retained tirelessly and we lack the resources of people and money to do objecting justice and besides we get a cold shoulder from those who you would think should be leading on such pro-rail projects like parishes, councils, agencies, and Government.

Alas, they shoot out plans and development like sluices without care, thought or consideration of impacts. Most households on average have approximately 2.5 cars per household. So, 2500 at both Willington and Bromham will go straight onto local roads, adding to peak-time congestion and land-use for massive urban area parking demand, which is a crisis pinch-point not being properly considered.

We are nationwide in scope and other areas may be more appreciative. Your CEO is limited mobility-wise, but with growth, BRTA can facilitate the public to rally, get stuck in and fight for transport balance to just endless roads and pollution and the sum-product of 'ruin-nation'! None-the-less, we hold out hope for better times and elsewhere a groundswell wants more local rail reopenings.

However, all is not lost either as East-West Rail consultation gets underway with more details.

<https://eastwestrail.co.uk/consultation/consultation2026> includes what BRTA has called for 'electrification of Bedford-Bletchley' and many other positives like a new booking hall for Bedford Midland. Bedford-Bletchley is not just Oxford-Cambridge synergies, but Watford-Corby as well!

Northampton to Bedford, Northampton to Northern Route for direct running to Cambridge/East Anglia and vice versa. The proof is in the eating of the pudding as to robustness and passive design inclusivity.

BRTA sets a Limit on schemes it is focusing on, but more relies as ever on a growing membership and reliable volunteer pool. BRTA 2026-2027 Rail Reopening Focuses

Logic: Given our limited resources (human and financial), we need to go for a top number of projects and try to make progress. If we get more people and financial input we can:

Do more in depth and take-on more projects.

Others can go on the website which can be revised, updated, and edited as we go

Top projects are:

1. **East-West Rail:** Oxford-Milton Keynes has no trains. The Aylesbury rail link may go ahead, but single track (pinch-point) and no westerly curve for Aylesbury-Bicester. Bedford-Bletchley being upgraded, but no electrification so far (wider uses like freight and Watford-Corby synergies) and possible closure of local shuttle, 4 stations (Bow Brickhill, Aspley Guise, Millbrook and Stewartby). Passenger trains will need buying land used for stabling trains at Bedford Midland from Oxford.
2. **Dumfries-Stranraer** – supporting and working with Scott Borthwick as much as possible.
3. **Gloucester-Ross-on-Wye-Hereford:** (Southampton-Shrewsbury arc) Forums needed at Gloucester, Ross and Hereford with extensive marketing, calling for a study to assess potential, demand, business case and overcoming blockages and other engineering aspects.
4. **Guildford-Cranleigh-Horsham + Arundel Curve and Redhill Reform agenda.** Delegated to Simon to:
 - a. Convene forums at Guildford, Cranleigh, Horsham, Arundel, Shoreham, and Redhill in that rotational order at the Wetherspoons until further notice. Aim at the public and groups.
 - b. Keep raising funds for leaflet production and distribution. Space each of a leaflet out to coincide and be updated for dates/times/venue of forums which are to be 'open to all'.
 - c. Grow a leafleting team and delegate to reliable people.
 - d. Court sponsorship and work with Webmaster and DJS on handling money and any logo/weblink in exchange for sponsorship. Recruit new

members who pay up! Do not be distracted by or for anything including Merrow!

5. **Wales.** I will do a new diagram for working up. I will liaise on web page update. Lines to Amwlch, Bangor-Criccieth, Aberystwyth-Carmarthen, Blaenau-Bala-Dolgellau-Barmouth/Tywyn (reinstate a triangular junction at former Barmouth Junction, Caersws – Llanidloes-Brecon-where? Plus, a new twin-track Wales-England River Severn Estuary rail bridge for more passenger and freight by rail/capacity. A public meeting is not ruled out.
6. **Hunstanton, Stansted-Braintree/Colchester, Lower Thames Rail Crossing – East Anglia.** Forums and Westminster marketing as per some others.
7. **Northern England:** Colne-Skipton, Burscough Curves, Woodhead, Peak Rail, Scarborough-Whitby, Ripon, Keswick. Bringing up the rear!
8. **Great Central Corridor** new-railing from Old Oak Common-Leicester Midland.
9. **London outside M25 orbital links radial of the Channel Tunnel and east-west.** Forums and specific schemes like Dudding Hill, Gospel Oak to West Hampstead – Heathrow, South Chiltern Link (Luton-Reading) and Kentish Town Thameslink – Barking (cross-London links).
10. **Devon delegated to Dr Jonathan Coghill**
All others/new on a case-by-case basis and/or listed on the website to revisit and update from time-to-time.

Additional Strategy Notes:

1. Do an inventory of state of the route and make a list of blockages/hazards. Ideally get people to walk routes with photographic evidence/use Google Maps.
2. Compile a list of rail benefits and scope and a list of non-rail benefits too.
3. Get a competent person to compile Business Cases to Government Green Book Rule Standard.
4. Always encourage affiliation/membership to BRTA. Target local media, public, groups via google. Refer to (CEO) me on every decision, step and action proposed. Do not deviate.

BRTA Membership Form 2026-2027: Join or Renew
Official annual renewal date may vary in any given year.



Tear Off and Send with Your Subscription.

Please help us recruit more members!

Tick if a New Member: _____

Tick if renewing as an existing member: _____

I/we would like more information about volunteering opportunities with BRTA

Membership of BRTA is as follows:

Family Membership £26 _____

Ordinary Member (Individual) £16 _____

Corporate Members (Business/Organisations) £51 _____

Concessionary Membership (Any kind of Welfare/Disability) £10 _____

Students £5 _____

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 BRTA and its purposes compliant with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR): _____

Signed: _____ Dated: _____

Please send completed forms, payments, and donations to BRTA Membership and Finance: BRTA, Mr David J. Start, 2 Leigh Road, Hildenborough, Tonbridge, Kent, TN11 9AB Mr David J. Start T: 07535 641055

E: davidjstart63@gmail.com Membership Payment can also be done on-line via our website:

<https://brtarail.com/become-a-member/>

Bank Details are Sort Code: 40-45-27 Account Number: 92086808 Please help and enable all of us with YOU to make a difference!

