

# **NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

## **APPLICATION BY CENTRAL RAILWAY PLC TO OPEN NEW RAILWAY**

Central Railway Plc have made an application under the Transport and Works Act 1992 for an Order which will authorise a new railway, partly adopting existing railway lines, from the Channel Tunnel to the Midlands. In passing through Northamptonshire, the proposal is to use the trackbed of the former Great Central Railway, which follows a route through the west of the County, including Brackley and Woodford Halse.

A special meeting of the County Council has been called to enable the Council to decide on its response to the Company's application. This meeting will take place at 4.00 pm on Tuesday the 25th June 1996 here at County Hall, George Row, Northampton.

The meeting is open to the public who, by prior application, can address the meeting on this issue. For further details write to the undersigned or ring Northampton (01604) 236815.

**RICHARD PAVER**

Director of Finance and Administration

PO Box 136  
County Hall,  
Northampton  
NN1 1AT

# Vote for passenger station distorts the true opposition to the Great Central plan

BY DEFINITION of your unwarranted Editorial, I am just one amongst numerous 'namby-pamby nimbys' who could see no point in responding to your Central Rail "wishy-washy" survey.

The structure and compilation of an opinion survey is science, not implausible questions randomly 'cobbled' together on the back of an envelope during an office tea break.

Living adjacent to the former Central Station (since the 1930s), I am (now) against the reopening of the line, thus my answer to your so called survey is categorically 'against'.

A further question stupidly asks in effect, 'would I carry the anti-vote to personal absurdity by refusing to use the passenger/car transport facilities if they did exist' - but that is another question and which I suspect to be only a sop to the gullible at this stage!

Any vote for a passenger station service grossly distorts true opposition to the proposal that is for a freight line service each 10 minutes of the day.

In this respect at least, your survey was not very 'helpful'.

Equally conflicting is your personal statement of opposition to the scheme on the grounds of continental vehicle safety and legality.

If there is evidence of that to be the case, then there is urgency to get MEPs to sort out any questions of inequality in UK and continental vehicle reliability/safety legislation and enforcement immediately -

after all, that is what the European Union is all about; the Central Rail scheme is not the criterion for action.

But even more pertinent and pathetic, is my information from the town hall that drivers would be restricted to their lorry cabs for the rail journey from France to Shawell - 'it's only five hours' comment.

Someone must be living in cloud cuckoo land if they think that is acceptable either by the trades unions involved and/or by appropriate Health and Safety and other policing agencies.

Derek Gee,  
Richmond Road,  
Rugby.

# Lets support the railway

I READ Mr Philip Mortimer's letter with interest and agree with everything he says.

I would also like to add if we don't have railways opened it will mean more motorways and extending the A5, A45 etc.

It is too late to stop this project now.

After living by both railway and roads, I can assure you the accident rate is far lower on the railway.

People supporting the railway should write to the local council or to me Mrs June Raffell, 23 Archer Avenue, Braunston, Daventry, NN11 7HD.

**June Raffell  
Braunston  
Daventry**

# Rail opposers hope for ally

OPPONENTS of the plan to reopen the Great Central Railway have called on the help of a recently privatised rail line.

Rugby MP James Pawsey has written to the managing director of M40 Trains Ltd which has bought out the Chiltern Railway Company.

Mr Pawsey said: "I see M40 Trains has some very exciting plans to operate fast train services to and from London during the next two years. But I understand if the Central Railway gets the go-ahead their rebuilding work will take four or five years, causing heavy and constant disruption to M40 trains."

# *opinion*

**I**t's not surprising that Tim Boswell is set to vote against the Great Central Railway scheme (story page 5). As the Daventry MP it's his duty to do what he believes is in the best interests of his constituents. But is that in fact what he's doing? Or is he just bowing to a vociferous minority who some people might label NIMBYS? The 300 objectors he's had letters off will mostly be people directly affected by the plan – that is living near the route of the old line. They fear for the disruption the scheme would bring to their lives and the affect it would have on their property values. For them the blight brought to thousands by increasing amounts of heavy traffic thundering past their homes all day and night, and the damage done to our countryside as more and more roads are built is only a secondary concern.

I live in a small town with a main line railway station to the back of my home and a main trunk road right out the front. I hardly hear a train, even at night. But traffic – particularly big smelly lorries – make my life a misery. And before I'm accused of being a towny, I used to live in a quiet country village. Then they built the M40. It was a good six miles away so you couldn't see it. But the drone of the traffic was constant.

Everyone today is affected by road traffic. If we're talking majority interests and about a future for our children let's at least give the Central Railway scheme the consideration it deserves.

*Bridget Dakin*

# We should promote CR plan, for the greater good

FROM a national perspective the fruition of Central Railway's project can have only positive consequences:

- Road congestion and related environmental damage will be prevented.
- Freight trains will run unimpeded from the Continent to the Midlands augmenting industry within this area.
- The Midlands will possess a modern railway from Leicester to the south east on which any company's trains can operate.
- Jobs will be created in some of the areas through which the line runs.

From a local perspective negative consequences are necessitated. However, because of these national benefits it is surely democratic and rational to promote the greatest happiness of the greatest number and support CR's bid.

Therefore I am disgusted that not one coun-

ty councillor is prepared to stand up for political principles and support this project. The Labour and Liberal party supposedly favour rail on environmental grounds.

The great thing about CR's proposal is its lack of environmental impact, as much of its route follows waste land hidden in a cutting.

It is regrettable that some of the trackbed has been built upon, but this development is insubstantial when compared to what has happened on other redundant lines. This trackbed is a national asset that deserves to be employed for the purpose for which it was built!

Are our Labour and Liberal councillors no longer concerned, or do they too suffer from that very British disease called 'not in my back yard syndrome' which constantly debilitates this country's transport network.

My disgust turned to nausea however, when I discovered that Mr. Pawsey is attempting to

solicit the help of M40 Trains who operate services over sections of track which CR will have to use.

If the managers of M40 Trains possess the foresight that the protesters lack then they should support CR's bid as it would make sense for them to operate passenger trains over CR's route. There has been much scepticism and confusion over this issue. The truth is that whereas CR will not provide passenger services they will allow other operators onto the line. By utilising this M40 Trains could offer an alternative service between Leicester and London calling at Lutterworth and Rugby, competing with the WCML and the Midland Main Line.

Services on this route could well be cheaper as CR is competing with Railtrack and so will seek to attract custom by having cheaper track access charges. Anyone who has had to pay the extortionate peak fare to travel to London from Rugby before 9.30am on a weekday would surely welcome an alternative service.

I was always led to believe that politicians of the same persuasion as Mr. Pawsey privatised BR in an attempt to encourage the benefits of competition in the rail industry. Surely it is ludicrous for such people to object to the largest private railway project to have emerged for decades which promises to introduce such a competitive element into Britain's transport network!

Richard Fincham,  
Faraday Road, Rugby.

## Sick and tired of misguided people

I AM sick and tired of the number of misguided people who are proposing the central railway for the naive reasons that traffic will be taken off our roads and more jobs will be created.

How else will freight lorries reach their terminals if they don't use the roads - fly? Traf-

fic will merely be re-routed through towns such as Rugby, causing congestion, destruction and pollution.

Very few permanent jobs will actually be created since the loading and unloading of freight will be controlled by machinery.

This proposal is expensive

and completely unnecessary. The Great Central Walk is a stunningly beautiful area of land that will bring far more pleasure to the people of Rugby than an unsightly freight railway.

Miss Maria Realf,  
Harebell Way,  
Rugby.

18/7/20

# Rail firm plays down number of objections

By Will Rankin

AROUND 12,000 letters objecting to the re-opening of the Great Central Line have been received - but the company behind the plan say that's a lot less than they expected.

Central Railway PLC has put a massive planning application before the Department of Transport to build and run a 180-mile rail line from Leicestershire to the channel tunnel.

Anyone wishing to comment on the proposed plans had to do so during a 42-day period, which has now ran out, but the Department of Transport rejected 700 letters of objection because they arrived before the official consultation period.

Spokesman Aubrey Chalmers said: "Considering the volume of noise which has been generated by protest groups we are rather surprised the number is not far greater for a project of this size - it amounts to little more than 40 objections per kilometre - and we expected hundreds."

Mr. Chalmers highlighted the 25,000 objections received about the M25 link roads, and said the low number of objections probably confirms that people recognise the benefits the railway will bring, and that it will not absorb tax payers' money.

But local leader of the Central Railway Action Group (CRAG), Tony Ovenden, said he is delighted with the response.

"12,000 people have bothered to put pen to paper and complain. From the feedback we have been getting from the Department of Transport, 5,000 letters is considered a lot. The normal response to such an application would be nothing like this," he said.

But the railway firm spokesman added: "It is clear many have displayed a misconception about the current stage of the procedure. Because this is a scheme of national significance it must first be approved by both Houses of Parliament before it can go on to be considered in detail at a public inquiry."

And he stressed that many objectors do not appreciate they can support the principle of the scheme but still reserve their position so matters that concern them can be examined at the public inquiry.

# Save rail protestors plan derailing

**DERAILING** plans to reopen a disused train line is the biggest issue to stir up villagers... since they were protesting to save it from closure!

Residents along the Leam Valley say they would suffer while private enterprise makes money out of the supergauge line with three half-mile long freight trains an hour in each direction for 16 hours a day.

It would mean a new bridge over the A45 and a gantry up to seven metres above that as Central trains will carry lorries.

## NOISE

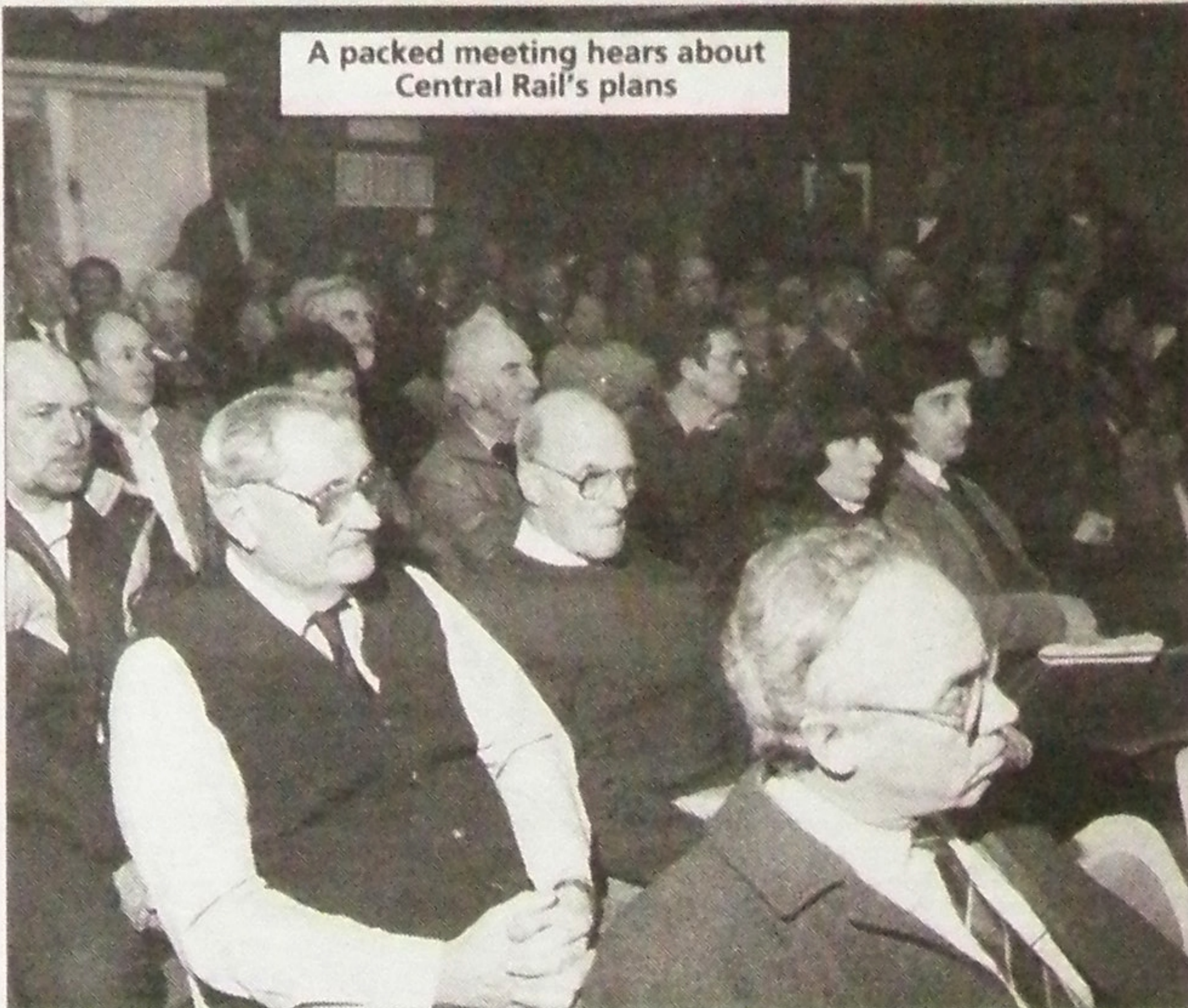
It's the 30th anniversary of the closure of the Great Central line south of Rugby. Willoughby parish chairman Fred Mitchell said villagers were about ten-to-one against the scheme and are mainly worried about the noise.

He said: "I have lived here for 40 years and have not seen not known such interest in an issue since the closure of the line was announced in 1959. This issue seems to be equally important."

## EFFECT

"The people who spoke up for the plans were not from Willoughby. But the scheme will need a viaduct to carry it to over the River Leam and the line being up high will mean the sound will travel over the valley and affect other villages as well."

Tuesday's public meeting in Willoughby attracted 130 people. Support came from Brownsover and Shawell residents who are



A packed meeting hears about Central Rail's plans

also against the scheme because of the effect on their lives.

Christine Sanderson of Wolfhampcote said: "Parliament is going to give a group of

surveyors and merchant bankers the right to take part of my garden. It is a question of rights and civil liberties,

"These are people who are not really interested in taking freight off the roads. In the 60s they would have been building tower blocks and shopping centres in the 70s."

John McKnight of Willoughby said: "I can guarantee this will make a loss. If they want to take one million lorries a year off the road they will need 3,000 lorries and I do not believe they can do it."

Council officers said Central Railway have never given any evidence to support their figures. Deputy county planner David Scott said: "We should hope the Daventry (Crick) and Hams Hall terminals succeed. Terminals should be as close to the major conurbations as possible. You should not be sticking a terminal in the middle of nowhere and then attract traffic from everywhere."

# Rail plan bosses brave it!

**BOSSES** behind plans to reopen a disused rail line through Rugby will brave a public meeting for the first time ever locally tonight.

Labour county councillor Andy King has secured their appearance for his meeting at Brownsover Community First School, Webb Drive, from 7.30pm.

Locals have not yet been told not that Central Railway

will be speaking.

A public meeting in Willoughby on Tuesday night heard locals were fed up with the company giving conflicting information at every meeting.

## CLOSED DOORS

And they said the firm has previously only met people behind closed doors and when a list of questions has been

supplied in advance.

Mr King said: "The majority of the meeting will be given over to hearing people's views."

"We look forward to seeing as many people as possible this evening."

"It is my intention to stimulate an informed debate on this very important local issue and hearing what the people of Rugby have to say."