



ALL THE WAY ACROSS

SCENE 1

Music in rhythm but soft. Cast enters – positions – mime working on a railroad – sticks? – chairs? – as shovels /wheelbarrows.

NARRATOR – (1 OR MORE)

These are navvies – workers
They build canals – shifting earth
Digging, lifting, shoving, pulling
Cutting, bridges, tunnels, tracks
In rain, in heat – all day
Working

*Music/ rhythm builds to a climax & stops. Silence/Freeze
About 15 seconds build? 2 of cast stand on chairs at each end of acting area. (football shirts?) Each carries a poster/ bill board. Cast freeze in between the chairs. Then they move – not all at once.*

Hey you! What are you doing?
What's your name? Carlisle! - Newcastle!
Get down off there! It's loose up there!
You'll slip! You'll die! Come down! You'll die!

Carlisle- (*very strongly*) No – we need a canal
Newcastle- (*very strongly*) Right across England
Carlisle- Just like the wall- the Roman wall
N – What 61 miles? All the way across?
C – Yes from West to East
N – from East to west
C – for coal
N – for lead, stone, iron, - everything
C – for people

They climb down off the chairs & speak to the chorus



We've done it before. Canals. They're good. Big loads, heavy weight,
the horses pull, the barge moves, the coal shifts---

There'll be money in it (*approval*)

All the way across England (*wow response*)

Carlisle to Newcastle

Newcastle to Carlisle (*enthusiasm*)

No!

What!

No!

It won't work

Won't work? Course it will – a few locks – it'll -----

Too much

Too much what?

Too much MONEY

SILENCE – (*they look at each other*)

A railway would be half the money – less than half – about a third in
fact!!

A RAILWAY!

Simple – carriages, on the rails, no big hills, few high bridges, horses
pulling- just like the canals – no problem – well – a few----

A RAILWAY! (*pause*)

But there's a war on

The French war – we've got to get 'im Who? 'Boney' Napoleon! Oh
yeah (*pause*)

We can't do it now (*oh well response*)



No , not now but one day -
One day we will.

SONG / DANCE / MUSIC

SCENE 2

_MEETING LAYOUT - CHAIRS IN ROWS DIAGONALLY

HIGH SHERRIF-Good Morning everyone. As High Sherrif of Northumberland I have been asked to chair this meeting to consider the best method of linking Newcastle to Carlisle-----

We already have a link – the wagons---(*some support*)

We all know the wagons take three days----(*response*)

What about the stage coach then- there's two –

H SHERRIF – I am well aware of that. The 'True Baiton' & 'The Royal Mail' take 8 ½ hours sir. They can hardly take quarried stone or coal – if I may continue---(*there is attention*) I would like to introduce someone who has looked into the question very carefully – Mr. William Chapman--(*applause*)

CHAPMAN – Thank you, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am, as you know, a canal engineer. Well we've worked out a possible route (*murmur of approval*) from west of Close in Newcastle to a summit in Gilsland by Upper Denton & Wetherall to the Canal Basin in Carlisle(*strong approval & comments- 'eh, that's a good route; sounds o.k to me; etc.*) there'll be a few problems but we can do it(*murmurs*). The point is (*pauses for attention*) we could use the same route for a railway (*some noise*) **AND IT WOULD BE MUCH CHEAPER!**



HECKLER – No- we’ve already built a canal in Carlisle- up to Solway- 11 miles & it’s going well

CHAPMAN – I know, I know but----

HECKLER – Look- it’s 61 miles

CHAPMAN – We can keep the slopes down-

HECKLER (1, 2, 3) You’ll have to do more than that .

Who wants a railway anyway. Canal for me, what about you?

Yeah, canal- eh – canal- that’s what we need

some of meeting is standing now & arguing- it’s become chaos

CHAPMAN (*shouting*) Look- there’s no real difference. The horse has the rope – yes? –the coal or whatever is on the wagon – on the rail (*Chapman uses rope to demonstrate*)- horse pulls – just like a canal – yes?- coal moves—

HECKLER (*grabbing rope*) You’ll start using those engines – I’ve seen ‘em – great, filthy, noisy contraptions, who needs ‘em ?

It has now become a noisy tug of war – one group shouting for canals, the other for railways.

Chapman blows a whistle. Everyone stops.

CHAPMAN(*very slowly*) A railway is much cheaper.

The canal team collapse

CHAPMAN A railway it is then! (*everyone sits down again- order is restored*) We’ll raise £300,000 by selling shares at £100 .

I declare the Newcastle upon Tyne & Carlisle railway Company to be open! (*cheers*) 24 directors – we need an act of Parliament of course but then money (*more cheers*)

STATION RAP



SCENE 3.

Cast sitting & lying upstage.

HEW – This is ridiculous – well, I mean for goodness sake – I simply won't have it. Not on my land. Not anywhere near my land. (*Cast begins to make train noises*) Enough!! (*Noise stops*) Oh let me introduce myself. I am sir Huw Dairyrymple Ross – that's it – Dairyrymple Ross. Well of course with a name like that I just have to be filthy rich, well I am! You see it – (*Train noises again, stronger this time*) look here, just stop it will you! (*Noise quieter but does not disappear*) Filthy! Noisy! Ugly! – And they want this, this railway to go past my estate – Hayton – don't you know, yes Hayton! (*Noise much louder*) Stop! Just stop it! (*Sudden silence but chorus now standing*) A few trees they say! Oh we'll plant some trees for you – you won't be able to see these - - - these, locomotives. Honestly! As though that would make any difference! They said they wouldn't use this filthy new steam stuff – George Stephenson didn't like it you know – oh no indeed – disapproved the route – questioned them

(The train noise has been under this speech and now gets so loud it drowns out the words.)

Will you stop! Stop! (*Chorus begins to taunt him – a circle?*)

CHORUS – You don't even live on the same side of the river Hewie!

HUW – I'm not alone you know, there's lots of us!

CHORUS – We'll give you £1000 Hewie.

HUW – Oh shut up!!

CHORUS - £2000, £3000!!

HUW – It's not the money – nothing to do with the money!!

CHORUS - £4000, £5000!!

HUW – Oh for goodness sake!!



CHORUS - £6000, £7000!!

HUW – STOP!!!!!!!!!!!!!! (All freeze)

CHORUS - £8000. (pause)

HUW – Done!

LAUGHTER / DISSOLVE / MUSIC

SCENE 4

Repeat music and movement from scene 1 / Navvies. Underlying music?

BLAKEMORE – Blakemore, John Blakemore – Engineer in Charge.
Yeah it's a tough job, lots to shift.
We've done some good stone bridges – Wetherall, Gilsland – but this is something else, this cutting.

The Cowran cutting

The Navvies call it the killer, yeah well –

It's 110ft deep, see--.

2,270ft long

Biggest any of us have ever done.

The Cowran -- We'll do it.

The navvies have to lift the dirt – shovel, barrow, hod up ladders or ramps – they use buckets, wooden boxes.

They have their own ways each gang.

Tough lot...

I leave 'em alone. They know what they're doing – don't need to be told – sometimes it happens – broken back, shoulder, a death - . It happens.

Gangs from all over- Ireland, Wales, Scotland, Yorkshire

When it's done they just move on -

The navvies.



THE MUSIC FADES - THE NAVVIES STOP WORKING - THEY
REST. SILENCE. 5 SECONDS?

SCENE 5

NAVVIES BEGIN TO MOVE SLOWLY & INDIVIDUALLY INTO
TRAIN NOISES - WITH ADDED RHYTHM. INTRODUCE FOLK
DANCE WHICH BUILDS - NOISY & ENERGETIC. AT THE END OF
THIS THE NAVVIES HAVE BECOME THE CROWDS ON THE
HILLS NEAR BLAYDON, OVERLOOKING TYNE.
OPENING DAY OF THE RAILWAY.

TV ANCHOR MAN/WOMAN – well a very good morning to all of you
& a very bright & sunny morning it is too which is good because today is
THE DAY –yes Tyne TV Breakfast show is there out at Blaydon – our
reporter Mike smith should be looking down on the new railtrack & the
engines just about to go off to Hexham – are you there Mike?

TV REPORTER – I certainly am & as you can see, there are hundreds, if
not thousands of people here waiting for the Mayor & the Corporation.
These people have come out from Newcastle by coach, by wagon, on
horseback, in fact- many of them on boats by the river – it is indeed an
historic day. Let me speak to some of them- excuse me sir – Tyne
Television...

MAN – Television?

REPORTER – Yes – Tyne Television – could you...

MAN – Hello mum, bet you're watching – Aggie's here – wave to
Grandma, Aggie...

REPORTER (*moving on*) – Thank you. & you madam. Why are you
here today?



WOMAN- Well, I wouldn't miss this for the world. We've been waiting years for this haven't we- I can go shopping in Carlisle now, can't I – I mean...

REPORTER (*moving away*) Yes , oh, thank you madam.....

ANCHOR MAN – can you see the engines Mike – are you near them?

REPORTER - Yes, yes – they're just below me here – the two engines each with 3 carriages to take the guests – there's the 'RAPID', that of course is designed by George Stephenson himself - & then there's the 'COMET' designed by Hawthorne Company – they both have full steam up but there's no sign of the barge bringing the guests up the river – once they get going they should be in Hexham in 30 minutes- yes, just 30 minutes.

THE STATION RAP?

CROWD HAVE BEEN MIMING. THEY NOW BEGIN TO MAKE THE
TRAIN NOISE & MOVE TO A CLIMAX - FACE THE AUDIENCE-
SHARE THE LINES

So that's it – we did it!
A line all the way across
Soon there'll be lines everywhere
Down to London
Up to Scotland
Across America
Across Africa
But this is one of the first
One of the first railways ever From Newcastle to Carlisle
From Carlisle to Newcastle
And it's ours
Cos we built it
It belongs to us.

MUSIC/ DANCE/ FINISH