

It's been a busy time for FOWS since our Autumn Bulletin, we've installed the flower beds on the platform and been lobbying hard on a number of important safety and service improvements that are now in the hands of our partners at GMPT, Network Rail and Northern Rail.

Platform Gardens

We hope you've all enjoyed seeing the flower beds on the station. After the mild spells this winter some of the bulbs are already sprouting and we'll soon be planting out the bedding plants we've raised over winter in a greenhouse. We're also in the process of acquiring larger, stand-alone planters to add even more colour to the platform scene.

Same old service – Higher new fares

Turning to the quality of rail services from Walkden we're still waiting for Sunday services and extra trains to relieve rush-hour over-crowding. We're in regular contact with Northern Rail to keep these much-needed improvements on their agenda. Meanwhile, at the start of this year local rail fares increased by more than twice the annual rate of inflation, and as much as 7% in some cases.

Happy Birthday !

This July marks the 120th anniversary of Walkden station's opening and FOWS are talking to Northern about special events to celebrate this landmark.



For all the Latest News

Please visit our website and weblog at the addresses below:

Website: www.walkdenstation.org.uk

Blog: walkdenstation.wordpress.com

What is FOWS ?

- We are a volunteer organisation formed in February 2007.
- We have a written constitution, committee, officers and operate a bank account.
- We perform volunteer works to improve the station.
- We campaign for safety, security, service, and environmental improvements at Walkden station (see details, right).
- We have formally adopted Walkden station and been Safety Briefed by Northern Rail for platform work.
- We are members of ACoRP (the Association of Community Rail Partnerships) and work with Northern Rail, GMPTE, & Salford City Council to improve the facilities and services provided for users of Walkden station.
- We hold regular progress meetings every two months, an Annual General Meeting, and occasional public meetings.
- Our membership is open to all users of Walkden station. Membership for 2008 costs £1.
- We are not aligned to any political party.
- We maintain a website and blog where our progress and news about the station are published.
- We regularly clean and tidy the station.
- We run projects to install gardens on the station.
- We campaign for Walkden station through the local press, internet and by writing to Northern Rail, Network Rail, Salford City Council, GMPTE, and The Office of Rail Regulation among others.
- We liase with Salford's highways department to improve pedestrian access to the station.
- We conduct surveys of passenger numbers using Walkden.
- We are compiling a history of the station to encourage local interest in its heritage.
- We apply for funding for projects to improve the station environment.

FOWS Objectives

Safety



The station should be safe and accessible to all who wish to use it. This means providing step-free access for the benefit of elderly or mobility-impaired passengers, and reducing the dangerously large gap between the platform level and train doorways.

Pedestrian access to the station is across busy roads and needs to be made safer.

Security



Walkden station is only manned part-time and can be a frightening place after dark. GMPTE have plans to install CCTV cameras at stations along the Atherton line ... but not at Walkden.

Services



Rush-hour trains are chronically over-crowded and even weekend and evening are sometimes full.

Sunday services were stopped in the 1960's but we believe the massive social changes that have taken place since then mean the time to restart a Sunday timetable is long overdue.

Environment



FOWS want to make Walkden station a brighter, cleaner, more pleasant place to catch a train. We're working on more gardening plans, toward repainting the buildings, and installing artwork.

The station facilities badly need improvement: there is no public address system, help point, live train information display, nor a modern, clean shelter.

Trackside litter is a constant eyesore.

A Little History

Walkden station is 120 years old this summer and FOWS are hoping to mark the occasions with some special events.

The first station in Walkden was the London & North Western Railway's picturesque halt on Brindley Street next to the present day Parr Fold park. This station opened in 1875 but was shut when British Railways closed the Bolton to Manchester via Worsley route in 1954.

The present day Walkden station was opened on July 2nd 1888 by the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway when their Swinton to Manchester route was extended west to Atherton. The new station – known as Walkden High Level to distinguish it from the existing station – offered stiff competition to the LNWR service with cheaper fares and a Sunday service.

The first ever train from Walkden was the 5.15am to Manchester, whose 6 carriages were boarded by 22 passengers. A 3rd class single to Manchester cost 3½ pence, and no 2nd or 1st class tickets were sold !

By that August the L&Y completed laying the track west from Atherton to join their Wigan to Bolton line at Crow's Nest Junction near Hindley. The junction is still in use today although it looks far less impressive now than when 4 tracks headed off in all three directions and a massive signal box presided over the passing trains.

The first passenger train over the new section ran on August 3rd 1888 when the Atherton United Schools chartered a train for a day trip to Southport. Not to be left out, the Congregationalists of Walkden persuaded the organisers to start the train from Walkden so their choir and friends could join the excursion !

If you have memories or pictures of Walkden station in days gone by, why not get in touch with FOWS and help us assemble a more complete history of the station ?

Contact: friends@walkdenstation.org.uk