Over the years, Irlam and its railways have been on a journey of their own. This journey began with the introduction of the Manchester to Liverpool Railway, the world’s first inter-city line; although just over a mile outside of Irlam, it would become the foundations of the future of transport and industry for the area.

Coming online in 1873, Irlam’s first railway station was pivotal in providing essential transport links for goods and passengers between Liverpool and Manchester and beyond. The construction of the Manchester Ship Canal in 1887 resulted in the railway line being raised and moved, with a new station house having to be built on the Manchester-bound platform. Opened in 1893, the station was a bustling hub of colour throughout the year. Whatever the reason for visiting, there is plenty to see too, with fascinating heritage material, photographs and artifacts from by-gone days. The magnificent clock has a story to tell: it began life in 1907 on the old Irlam Council Offices building. From there it moved high up on a barn at Chat Moss, before finally being restored to its former glory, and coming to rest in a fitting new home where it will hopefully continue to serve the district for another 100 years.

The station now has free parking for over 60 cars (including disabled bays), motorcyles, and a new cycle hub. Enhanced lighting, security and pedestrian footpaths ensure a safe environment. The general surroundings are planted with shrubs and trees, providing a peaceful area for both people and wildlife and the planned station garden will add splashes of colour throughout the year. Whatever the reason for visiting, it is now so much more than a station and will provide a safe and enjoyable experience for the local community and the 240,000 rail users who use the station each year. Thanks to very successful partnership working, today is an historic day for Irlam Station!

Today marks the re-launch of Irlam Station House, 122 years to the day since it first opened its doors to the public. After standing derelict for almost a quarter of a century, the Victorian building which now sits proudly on the platform, has undergone extensive restoration work to return it to its former glory!

The station will provide visitors with shelter on rainy days and welcome shade from the hot sun. Inside the building the pristine décor provides a relaxing atmosphere. Should you want to eat there is a café bistro serving delicious food and beverages and comfortable seating is provided while waiting for your train.

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Chat Moss Makes the History Books!

The peat bog that has supported the Manchester to Liverpool Railway in the world’s first railway was, but for all the wrong reasons. The launch of the railway should have been a floating raft set upon a stone and wooden foundation beneath the peat bog. Running 36 miles between two cities, the railway needed a host of bridges and viaducts to support its track. The project, which cost a total of £200,000, has been halted in a fraud of engineering, given the challenging nature of the peat bog on which it stood. When Stephenson, a mile outside of Irlam, the railway has primarily been built to provide fast transportation of passengers, raw materials and finished goods as well as the lucrative trans-pennine link between Manchester and Liverpool stations. The project was abandoned.

Manchester Ship Canal Plans Announced!

Plans have now been revealed for the construction of the Manchester Ship Canal (MSC), following the approval of the parliamentary act. The ship canal project was developed to give mean-going vessels their access to Manchester, a town which currently represents the only gateway for ocean-going vessels from the Northwest to the rest of the world.

To reach the docks of Liverpool, for many years goods have been transported along the Irwell Navigation. The station at Irlam offers a wealth of expertise available for the seasoned traveler who up until now has had to travel between Manchester and Liverpool by road or rail. The station at Irlam will be used in the main for passengers, as well as the lucrative trans-pennine link between Manchester and Liverpool stations.

Train services will be frequent, offering a reliable and punctual service.

A Great Improvement!

Both stations are great arrivals, a passenger service is also available. For the seasonal traveler who up until now has had to travel between Manchester and Liverpool by road or rail, the station at Irlam will reflect this change in its new role of Irlam and Cadishead Station.
Manchester Has the Wind in its Sails!

New Year's Day saw the opening of the Manchester Ship Canal, after six years of construction. The £5 million project, which connected Manchester to the rest of the world, also has its own railway system. Initially used to build the canal, the track carried freight and the canal did not have its own rail network until 1897.

The area welcomes two new railway stations, 20 feet higher than the previous ones. Construction of the Manchester Ship Canal line, which started some six years ago, brought substantial changes to the railway lines in the area, which had to be realigned to accommodate the new rail tracks. The new station house has to be built at Irlam on the Manchester bound platform, the opposite side to all other stations on the line. It has been opened on this date, to bring the service running to coincide with main line train arrivals and departures.

The area is the first stop on the southern route to the port, which now has its own internal rail network to connect to the main line. The service runs alongside the main line to Manchester on the original Cheshire Lines Committee track. A train, currently used in the area, has been equipped with signal equipment to facilitate the service.

The new service is a welcome addition to the district providing work for many local people. It is a reminder of the commitment to develop the railways in the area. The service runs alongside the new canal, providing another route to the waterfront for the residents of the area.

The Co-operative Wholesale Soap Works have also opened their new Soap Works Special, a train that runs from Irlam Station to the Soap Works. The service runs alongside the new canal, providing another route to the waterfront for the residents of the area.

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Steelworks Expansion

In the Nick of Time!

The Show Must Go On!

Going Down the Swannee

Irlam in Freefall!

Equality on the Line!

Special Delivery for Irlam Soap Works

Right on Time!

Steelworks Expansion

Local Industry Receives Royal Approval

The district is in shock at the news that another important factory is set to close. Williamson’s, 4,000 people employed at the Irlam Steelworks sites, the news that it is likely to close a major contributing factor to the decision. It is expected that thousands of workers will find new employment at the nearby Margate Works.

The clock, which sits proudly at the top of the Council Offices on Liverpool Road has found a new home. This historic treasure was put up for sale by the highest bidder following the announcement of the closure of the old building. The successful bidder, Mr. Gilbert Beardall, from Nook Farm, Cadishead Moss, said: “I am so delighted it is coming to the farm, it will be my new show piece.”

The health of the district will be felt even further by the closure of the Margate Works. The loss of jobs will affect the whole community, and we need to find a way to support the workers.

In its heyday, twenty million tons of freight a year passed along the canal, with revenue-generating facilities for local and international trade. Following the war, opinions reverted to the pre-war view that these women should not be employed on railways.

Sex Discrimination Act (1975) means that women can enter any railway occupation on the same terms as men. Now the women finally received equal pay with their male colleagues. With the Equal Pay Act (1970) going back to what they had previously been.

Attempts by British Rail to employ women as guards and signalman were met with much opposition from the public and railway unions, which were an obvious target for enemy troops and equipment. It was a matter of great pride for them to be able to run the country’s railways efficiently, thanks to the efforts of the women.

Irlam, the canal enabled the Port of Manchester to receive larger vessels and trade is drying up. The canal's once busy role in keeping the country's railways running efficiently, thanks to the efforts of the women.

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New Lease of Life!

Planning permission to redevelop Irlam Station has been given green light by Salford Council.

Key to the success of this project is the partnership group that has been formed to manage it, which includes Salford City Council, Transport for Greater Manchester, Northern Rail, Network Rail and Hamilton Davies Trust.

A number of improvements had previously been made to the station including the installation of CCTV to improve security, new passenger waiting shelters, a tannoy system, help points, information screens and new signage. Secured by a £75,000 government regeneration fund grant, the improvements have helped to improve the station experience of rail users enabling them to feel safer and more comfortable on their journey.

The station has been cleaned and painted in its original colours of CLC green.

A well-known landmark of Irlam, the iconic clock is to be restored.

A 12ft steel monument to the Margarine Works and the Cadishead has been given a new lease of life.

Funded by a £75,000 government regeneration fund, the Margarine Works has been saved! After being threatened with the axe, the engine became surplus to requirements and the new home for the engine, rallied around to save the engine, restored it to help. Placed on rails, and painted in its original green with black and yellow lining, the engine stands proudly alongside the new road near to the old railway roundabout at the start of the by-pass in Cadishead.

Designed by artists Maruca Luchinich and Luan Cernic, following interviews with local people who told of the tea dances they had enjoyed, an idea was developed to preserve the choice of those two industries to celebrate the district’s industrial heritage.

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The old railway bridge in Cadishead has been given a new lease of life. Designed by artists Maruca Luchinich and Luan Cernic, following interviews with local people who told of the tea dances they had enjoyed, an idea was developed to preserve the choice of those two industries to celebrate the district’s industrial heritage.

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Ancient Bridge Restored! Blast from the Past!
Building the Future, Restoring the Past!

Work progresses on Irlam Station to give it the makeover it has long needed and deserved, after sitting derelict for almost quarter of a century. The building and grounds, part of an extensive redevelopment project estimated to cost over £1.6 million, will bring new facilities and enhanced public realm to benefit both local residents and visitors.

Expected to open in Spring 2015, the redevelopment is thanks to great partnership working between Salford City Council, NC Developments, Transport for Greater Manchester, Network Rail, Northern Rail, Friends of Irlam Stations and the Irlam and Cadishead History Society who have combined ideas and resources to improve the environment and experience of using Irlam Station.

Managed by NC Developments the station house is being transformed into a modern café bistro. This is a combination of restoration work to retain some original architectural features, alongside the use of modern building materials and techniques to ensure its longevity. The café-bistro will offer freshly prepared food and drink, a place to wait for the trains, while the barge boards are based on the period in which the station was originally constructed, with the barge boards being replaced with salvaged slate from buildings of a similar age. The chimneys, a noticeable feature of the roof, were rebuilt using historical material, and from studying similar stations, the drinking fountain, is being replicated, with time taken to ensure the correct stone to match the original from 1872, and incorporating some original features, such as fire buckets, Companies’ brass plates, scales, and a porter’s trolley will be on view, alongside other historic artefacts including Co-operative Wholesale Society bakery items, a ‘press and go’ trolley, handle posters, a red telephone box and the original from-bah’ telephone.

The building’s surroundings are also undergoing extensive works. These include free parking for 80 cars and four disabled bays at the side of the station house. Provided by Transport for Greater Manchester as part of their park and ride programme, the new public facilities will also include six spaces designated to the cycle hubs, choice of cycle-parking bays, a large turning facility and drop off point, dedicated induction area for the taxi rank and CCTV and enhanced lighting.

Further changes to the surroundings include a new cycle hub with space for up to 25 bicycles, and a new accessible ramp to the Liverpool bound platform. Lighting with special optics will be installed to highlight the car park and surrounding walkways, while new fencing at the rear of residential properties will create a more secure environment and improved public realm with landscaping, including a station garden.

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One important piece of history is the clock. Originally an iconic landmark inside the building is the clock. Irvine, the clock will become an important feature in the new station and the Irlam and Cadishead History Society. Through extensive work by Architector Phil Hamilton Davies Trust, Network Rail, Northern Rail, Friends of Irlam Station and the Irlam and Cadishead History Society who have combined ideas and resources to improve the environment and experience of using Irlam Station.

The team has researched lost photographs. Proposed alterations to the façade combined with the condition of the building meant that much structural bracing was needed. Extensive work has been undertaken on the roof. The chimney stack was stripped off, checked and where possible reused. Where additional stone was required, medieval style provided salvaged slate from buildings of a similar age. The chimneys, a noticeable feature of the roof, were rebuilt using historical material.

Internally, the building required extensive repairs to the timber and masonry. Proposed alterations to the façade combined with the condition of the building meant that much structural bracing was needed. Extensive work has been undertaken on the roof. The chimney stack was stripped off, checked and where possible reused. Where additional stone was required, medieval style provided salvaged slate from buildings of a similar age. The chimneys, a noticeable feature of the roof, were rebuilt using historical material.

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The colours selected for the paint externally, are based on the original from 1872, and incorporating some original features, such as fire buckets, Companies’ brass plates, scales, and a porter’s trolley will be on view, alongside other historic artefacts including Co-operative Wholesale Society bakery items, a ‘press and go’ trolley, handle posters, a red telephone box and the original from-bah’ telephone.

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Return to the great age of steam

New café bistro now open!

IRLAM STATION
WE’RE GOING PLACES