Reddfest 2015 was the culmination of the FORSS community project with local schools to design posters with the theme ‘Welcome to Reddish’ and we were delighted to be able have the services of Andrew Gwynne MP and new Mayor and Reddish Councillor Andy Verdeille to do the honours for us.

The project started nearly 12 months ago with the idea that the Friends should try to obtain funding for another community project, this time involving local primary school children.

We are hoping that our campaign will bring much improved public rail transport into Reddish South once again; and it is this young generation that will hopefully benefit from direct travel into the heart of Manchester—so it seemed obvious that they should let us know what they think is important about Reddish.

See inside how we got there!
Our major landscaping project was finished in 2013 and as you know as part of Macmillan Day that year we had the official ‘unveiling’.

It was the picket fence that gave us the idea of posters to welcome passengers to Reddish. We wanted our young community to have the opportunity to celebrate what they thought Reddish had to offer, so we asked pupils from 7 local schools if they would like to become involved.

St Elisabeth’s, St Joseph’s, St Mary’s, Vale View and Whitehill Primary Schools were very interested in the project, and we visited each school to outline the idea.

The only ‘rules’ were that the theme was ‘Welcome to Reddish’ and we asked the children to think of what they thought was the best of Reddish and what they thought passengers would like to see when they alighted at Reddish South Station.

We decided, with the schools, that the time scale of a half- term for children to give their interpretation of inspiring posters for Reddish South Station platform would be the best option, and then left it to them! Pictured, the teachers involved with the project.

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We collected the artworks at Easter, and then Jacqui Wood and the team from Arts for Recovery in the Community (ARC) generously offered to put them on exhibition at the beginning of May for 10 days so that the schools could view them and judging for the final 6 posters could take place.

Jacqui and her colleague from ARC and Matthew Worman, Stakeholder Manager from Northern Rail had the very difficult job of deciding on the 6 posters that would go on the station platform.

Each school was to have one piece chosen for display.

The schools were given free rein to develop their own vision of how the posters would look and the results are an eye-catching festival of colour and imagination.

Each school, as you can see, had their own idea on the look of the pieces, from just one piece that every child had contributed to from one school, to collaborations from two different age-groups and then there were pieces that were the work of two, three or four children as a group.
Although only 6 posters will be permanently on the station platform, every entry is to be made into a poster and displayed in the poster case on the platform over the coming months.

The judges were impressed by the variety and standard of the work and said it was not an easy decision.

Above: Vale View Primary School

Above: Whitehill Primary School

Judging panel from L to R, ARC student Debbie, Matthew Worman & Jacqui Wood
The unveiling at Reddfest

As ever with FORSS we had to dodge a downpour whilst we were setting up, but Dave & Noel kept saying ‘it will brighten up at 11 o’clock’—and they were right!

We had a huge carrot cake generously donated by Sharon of Sykes Café and fruit cake, lemon drizzle cake, scones, biscuits and drinks for the day. Morrisons kindly kept our hot water flask full (as you know we have no electricity or water on the station platform). Stockport Silver Band entertained us and was appreciated by everyone there; and gave an (almost) impromptu rendition of ‘Happy Birthday’ for our Dot whose birthday it was on the day.

Andrew & Andy made an impressive double act for the unveiling and two young men helped out with the tricky bits!

Mrs Tootall, the headteacher and teacher Mrs Lowery from St Elisabeth’s Primary School were able to attend on the day and were pleased to receive a duplicate poster and a picture poster size of their school’s entries.

We were delighted that Andy Griffin from Network Rail was able to come and have a stand. He was promoting Rail awareness and safety, especially to the children who were there, but was very popular all afternoon with adults and youngsters alike.

The day was very successful and once again we must thank all the residents of Reddish who attended for their generosity and support. See overleaf for more pictures.
The unveiling of the artwork—Reddfest 2015

Left—table laid – everything ready

Below left: the Stockport Silver Band make ready to play

Above: Andy shows Jon Ashworth and a 2 youngsters the intricacies of the Rail System

Above, The Mayoress receives a bouquet from one of our youngest FORSS members

Pictured above: Andrew & Alison Gwynne with flowers and some young rail enthusiasts

Pictured right: (from L to R) Friend Keith Chapman, ARC manager Jacqui Wood, and Friend Noel Henry
Left: the unveiling of the ‘Our Reddish’ collaboration by St Mary’s Primary

Above: the poster from Whitehill Primary

Above: St Elisabeth’s first entry—of the two entries, the judges could not decide between them!

Above: Headteacher Mrs Tootall and Art teacher Mrs Lowery with the replica posters for their school (we understand a special place has been chosen for them!)

Above: Mayor Andy Verdeille and his Mayoress, Mrs Cleo Cundall

Pictured right (from L to R) Friend Noel Henry, Birthday girl Dot and Friend Kim Burrows
We couldn't have done it without you ....

Heatons & Reddish Scrutiny Committee, Network Rail and ACoRP for granting us funding for the project.

ARC for all their help and their precious time

St Elisabeth’s, St Joseph’s, St Mary’s, Vale View and Whitehill Primary Schools for making it happen

Noel for his organisation and expertise and Dot, Dave, Keith, Alan, Kim, Walter, Len, for the work before & on the day

Andrew & Alison Gwynne & the Mayor & Mayoress of Stockport for their invaluable contribution and their young helpers, (you know who you are!)

Andy & Miss Griffin for much appreciated added value

Stockport Silver Band for the superb entertainment

Sharon at Sykes Cafe and the Catering Manager at Morrison’s

Thank you all
The regular passenger service from Stockport to Stalybridge via Reddish South & Denton Stations was replaced in 1991 by a single weekly ‘Parliamentary’ train (one way only to Stalybridge).

The Friends of Reddish South Station was inaugurated in 2007 after it was feared that the station would be closed altogether. Our dual aims were to restore the station platform to something like its former prize-winning glory (see before and after pictures), and campaign for a full reinstatement of regular rail passenger services.

Alan Jones formed the Friends of Denton Station in 2010 (our sister station up the line) and together we campaign for the reintroduction of a regular passenger service from Stockport to Manchester Victoria; not only for the benefit of Denton & Reddish residents but to revolutionize connectivity between north, south & east Manchester in conjunction with the Ordsall Chord, (but at a fraction of the cost!), and, of course, ready now! ‘Our’ line remains the only one that runs into Manchester Victoria from the south of the city.

We have met with the shortlisted contenders for the new Northern Rail Franchise and will continue to campaign for a service to be included in the franchise proposals. In the Invitation to Tender document there is a strong recommendation for restoring current ‘parliamentary’ services to their former glory.

To raise awareness of our campaign we arrange very popular regular breakfast folk trains to Stalybridge and the lovely Caz and staff at the buffet bar open up early just for us!

We have also been able to persuade Retrorailtours to make our station a scheduled stop (going AND coming back!) on their regular rail excursions whenever it is possible—and we always have a really good time. Ged, Phil & Michael (Michael writes his own songs too) provide the entertainment on the folk trains (and we usually can drag them on the excursions with the promise of a free pint) and we can be joined by guest artistes who usually hear we are on our way and join us.

We are fortunate to have the full support of Tameside & Stockport Councils, Heatons & Reddish Area Committee (who have been fantastic) the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, Stephen Forde, (Transport for Stockport Council) and our MP, Andrew Gwynne, without whose tireless efforts on our behalf we wouldn’t have got this far.

We work with Arts for Recovery in the Community (ARC) on community art projects and have appreciated Jacqui & the team’s advice and support since 2011 and our first project.

Local businesses also help out and to put a bit back in we have an annual coffee morning on the station platform to raise funds for Macmillan Cancer Care as part of the World’s Biggest Coffee Morning.

If you haven’t already—COME & JOIN US! For the princely sum of £2.50 you will be informed, entertained, educated and perhaps a bit nearer being able to jump on a train to Manchester from your local station.

May our FORSS be with you!