

The Saughall Massie Bridge



The Thomas Brassey Society was advised in 2005 that the Saughall Massie Bridge on the Wirral was built by Thomas Brassey and his Partner, William Lawton, in 1829. This information was discovered in the Chester Public Records Office by chance and passed on to the Saughall Massie Village Conservation Society (SMVCS).

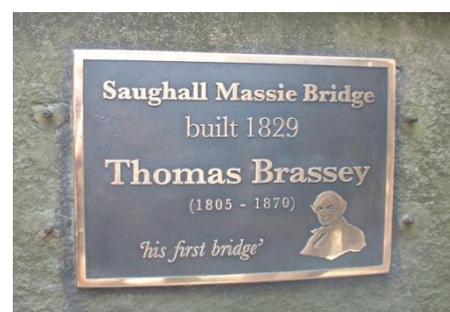
The Secretary of the SMVCS, knowing the significance of this find, put in an application to English Heritage to get the Bridge listed as, at that time, from records that were available when Thomas was only 25, he had not started contracting and this would have been his first bridge.

English Heritage awarded the bridge a grade 11 listing and in the citation considered Brassey, *"A pre-eminent civil engineering contractor of the 19th Century at the starting point of his illustrious career"*.

From the documents and specifications revealed in the Chester Records Office, Brassey was requested to supply an 'Arched Bridge' and 'Watering Road' – a sloping stone roadway leading down to the Arrowbrook pool for use by horses and cattle. All the stone was taken from the Bidston Quarry located a few miles away.

The SMVCS raised money from Awards for All and other local donors, installing an interpretation panel and a bronze plaque advising that this was Thomas Brassey's first bridge.

On a glorious April day in 2007 over 200 people from all over the country attended the unveiling including



representatives from the Local Authority, schools, the fledgling Thomas Brassey Society, engineers, Councillors, local residents and a number of Brassey family members.

An exhibition was set up in a nearby marquee with guides supplied by children from the Overchurch and Blackhorse Hill Primary Schools who had been working on a school project about Thomas. John Whittingham, a Chester Blue Badge Guide, dressed as Thomas Brassey, arrived with his horse and Roger Croston, a founder member of the Society, dressed as Robert Stephenson.

Saughall Massie continues to attract a number of interested enthusiasts wishing to see Brassey's first bridge designed for horses and carts and now taking juggernauts.

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