



PRESS RELEASE

CELEBRATING THE LIFE AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF A RAILWAY BUILDING HERO

“At last a man that helped build a modern world gets the recognition he so rightly deserves” Pete Waterman, OBE (Patron of the Thomas Brassey Society)

The Thomas Brassey Society is delighted to announce that a new interpretation panel has been unveiled outside Chester railway station on 8th December. It celebrates the life and achievements of Chester’s “unsung hero”, Thomas Brassey who died 150 years ago on 8th December 1870.

Brassey was born at Buerton, Aldford a few miles south of Chester in 1805. His career began as a trainee surveyor on Thomas Telford’s Shrewsbury to Holyhead road through North Wales. He learned a lot about civil engineering, became a quarry manager on the Wirral and then set up his own business as a railway contractor. This coincided with the start of ‘railway mania’, and Brassey was at the forefront, building one third of all the railways in the UK during his lifetime.

Thomas Brassey’s enterprising business was not confined to Great Britain. He quite literally built railways all over the world, on almost every continent, and at the height of his career he employed an estimated 80,000 men in his global workforce.

Pete Waterman, OBE, record producer, railway enthusiast and Patron of the Thomas Brassey Society said:

“At last a man that helped build a modern world gets the recognition he so rightly deserves ...”

On behalf of the Brassey family of today Rowena Feilden (ne Brassey) added:

“how delighted we are that the Brassey Society is doing so much to promote our ancestor’s great achievements”.

The new interpretation panel was funded by the Thomas Brassey Society with the aid of a donation from the Tyrer Charitable Trust. Its design and installation, however, is the result of a close collaboration with Cheshire West & Chester Council, Network Rail and Transport for Wales.

Councillor Louise Gittins, Leader of Cheshire West and Chester Council, said:

"We are always pleased to support community initiatives and special interest groups, especially when attention is being drawn to one of Chester's most famous sons. Thomas Brassey was indeed a remarkable man; a civil engineer and entrepreneur who deserves to be as well known as Brunel, Stephenson and other great figures of the Victorian age. He built Chester Station in less than two years and it is now one of the city's most important Listed buildings."

The Thomas Brassey Society was inaugurated a year ago although some of its members have been lifelong Brassey enthusiasts.

Chairman, Stephen Langtree, summed up, saying

"This is by no means the end of our ambitions. There are statues of Stephenson, Brunel, Gresley and Locke around the country and we think Brassey deserves his own bronze sculpture here in Chester. Our fundraising campaign will start in earnest next month."



(This picture shows John Whittingham and Stephen Langtree with the panel)



(This picture shows (L-R)

Jane Hebblewhite (Cheshire West & Chester Council)
Mark Messham (Transport for Wales)
John Whittingham (TBS committee member)
Cllr Samantha Dixon (Cheshire West & Chester Council)
Stephen Langtree (Chair, TBS)

For more information about the Thomas Brassey Society see our website

www.thomasbrasseysociety.org

Editor's notes

Thomas Brassey was a railway contractor who built one third of the railways including stations and viaducts in this country and went on to then build 1 in 20 miles of the world's railways during the 19th Century. He also constructed other major works including sewage systems, docks and embankments.

The Thomas Brassey Society is open to all those who have an interest in Victorian engineering, railways and associated projects. The aims of the Society are to promote Thomas's achievements through talks, publicity campaigns and other means. For further information contact the Secretary, Peter Bolt, on 0151 678 9300.