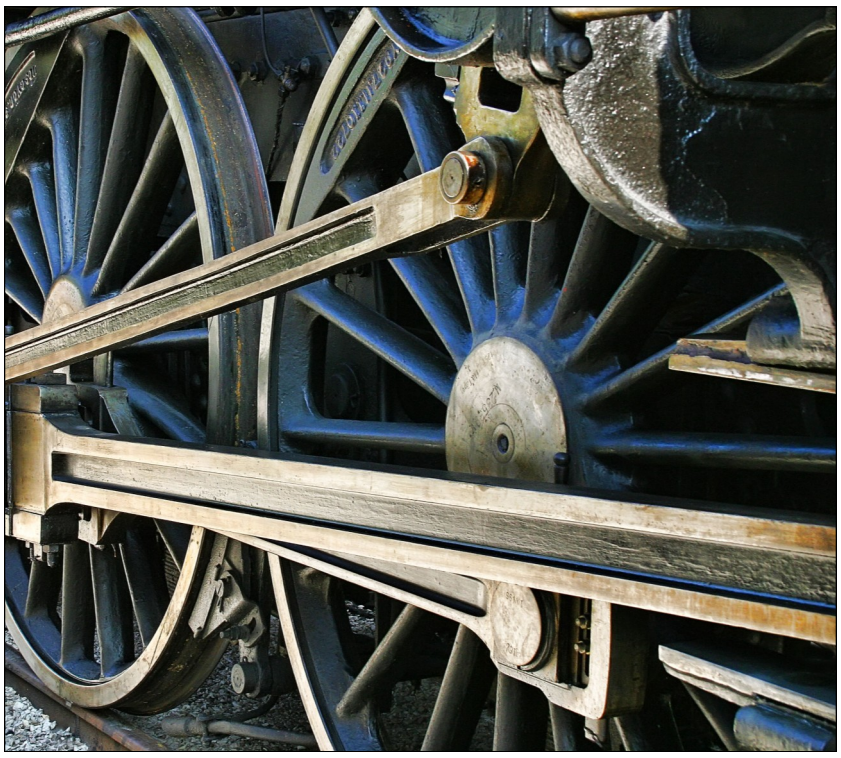


The THOMAS BRASSEY Society

The Thomas Brassey Society

ANNUAL REPORT



2021

Registered Charity No 1195546

A message from our Patron



Dear Society Members,

Although Covid is still with us it has been another good year for both the Society and myself. 'The model railway exhibition, Making Tracks' at the Chester Cathedral eventually happened and attracted an astonishing 45,000 visitors. This was so popular that I have been invited to create a new layout and return to the Cathedral in Summer 2022, I have chosen to mimic the Kilsby to Rugby Hillmorton Junction and will probably be ready to show a week earlier than last year.

Looking through the Society's Annual Report I am delighted that they have been able to obtain charity status which is a must to attract the sums of money needed to fund a statue of Thomas Brassey. He has not been recognised as one of the greatest railway engineers in this country and it is right and fitting that a statue located at Chester station in his birthplace will go a long way to remedy that.

With best wishes for a happy and healthy New Year,

Pete Waterman

Chairman's Report

This Annual Report for 2021 covers a 14-month period from November 2020 to the end of December 2021. It is only our second year as a fully constituted voluntary organisation and it has been a period of unprecedented activity despite the constraints of the Covid-19 pandemic. Membership has almost doubled, to 110, and we are now a registered charity. In that capacity, the rest of this Annual Report follows the format recommended by the Charity Commission. Sections C and D provide a complete list of our activities and achievements, some of which are highlighted below.

First, our new information panel outside Chester railway station was installed in November 2020 and formally unveiled on 8th December 2020 – precisely 150 years after Brassey's death on 8th December 1870. An illustration of the panel was included in our last Annual Report and, once again, our thanks go to everyone involved in its design, installation and 'socially distanced' unveiling! We are very proud of this lectern-style panel and pleased to record that it has attracted a great deal of interest over the past 12 months.

By complete contrast, in spring 2021 the Society was contacted and asked for help by a community group at Cruet in SE France. They are trying to save an iron truss railway bridge, built by Brassey in 1859. It is important for its historical significance and valuable to the local people as part of a footpath and cycleway. We were happy to lend our support and practise our French translation *n'est pas!*

The Society's next big event was to support our Patron, Pete Waterman, during '*Making Tracks*', the mammoth model railway exhibition at Chester Cathedral. Our stall, alongside the model railway, gave us a wonderful opportunity to promote Thomas Brassey to the thousands of visitors. It was also an effective recruitment exercise, with over 40 new members signing up during that 7-week period. On 28th August, as the model railway exhibition entered its final week, we held a Members' Luncheon in the splendid surroundings of the cathedral refectory. The gathering was attended by 50 members and guests, including a growing contingent of Brassey family descendants.

Throughout all of the above we have continued to pursue plans for a statue of Thomas Brassey at Chester station. We have taken professional advice regarding funding opportunities and have developed a good relationship with the Public Statues and Sculpture Association (PSSA). We have collated information on many similar statues and have produced our own 'Case Statement & Funding Prospectus'. Site meetings with various stakeholders have taken place at the station and we are now preparing to submit an application for outline planning permission.

Not to mention the first-rate newsletters, talks and lectures presented by our Secretary, Peter Bolt and our website, managed by Phil Pearn. Oh yes, it's been a very busy year and an excellent team effort by everyone on the committee - thank you all.

Stephen Langtree MBE

Trustees Annual Report for the period

Start date: 1 November 2020 End date: 31 December 2021

Section A Reference and administration details

Charity name:	The Thomas Brassey Society
Registered Charity No:	1195546
Charity's principal address:	4 Poplar Farm Close Saughall Massie, Wirral, CH46 5NZ

Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

Trustee name	Office	Dates acted (if not for whole year)
John Stephen Scott Langtree MBE	Chairman	
Richard James Coackley CBE	Vice Chairman	
Peter Charles Bolt	Secretary	
David William Bebb	Treasurer	
David John Hooley	Membership Secretary	
Peter William Cocker	Minutes Secretary	
John Parton Whittingham	Committee member	
Jean Fortune	Researcher	4 Nov 2021 — 31 Dec 2021

Section B Structure, governance and management

Description of the charity's Trusts

Type of governing document:	CIO—Association (Registered 18 August 2021)
How the charity is constituted:	Charitable Incorporated Organisation
Trustee selection methods:	After registration, by co-option and then subsequently at Annual General Meetings of the Society's members.

Section C Objectives and activities

Summary of the objects of the charity set out in its governing document

To advance the education of the public in the historic significance of the life and works of Thomas Brassey in particular but not exclusively by providing and assisting in the provision of educational materials, activities and events open to the general public on the topic of Thomas Brassey and the field of railway engineering more generally.

Summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit in relation to these objects (include within this section the statutory declaration that trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit).

Giving talks and lectures to conferences, other societies and organisations on all aspects of the life and works of Thomas Brassey.

Raising awareness of Thomas Brassey by installing interpretation panels and information plaques at key locations.

Educating the public about Thomas Brassey at public exhibitions by face-to-face contact and by the distribution of literature.

Providing a 60 minute film for the public about Thomas Brassey by a Society member.

/continued over

/Section C continued

Preparing and distributing literature about Thomas Brassey and his achievements through various outlets and events.

Producing and circulating bi-monthly digital newsletters to members and other interested parties.

Keeping an up to date Society web-site and Facebook account, accessible to the general public.

Note:
In undertaking the work of the Society the Trustees have had due regard to the Charity Commission's public benefit guidance.

Section D Achievements and Performance





1 The Society designed, funded, manufactured and erected a public Information Panel at Chester Railway Station, explaining the significance of Thomas Brassey in the construction of railways in the 19th century and providing educational material about some of his significant achievements, including the construction of the Victoria Bridge, Montreal, the Cefn Mawr Railway Viaduct and Chester Station. The Panel was unveiled by the local member of Cheshire West and Chester Council, Councillor Samantha Dixon, on 8 December 2020.

2 At the Model Railway Exhibition ("Making Tracks") in the nave of Chester Cathedral, organised and run by our Patron, Dr Pete Waterman OBE DL, the Society installed a public information/ education stand. This was staffed by volunteer members of the Society for six days a week from 16 July to 3 September 2021, involving over 600 person hours. Trustees and other Society members engaged, face to face, with the general public (over 45,000 people visited the exhibition) explaining the achievements of Thomas Brassey, handing out more than 1800 educational "flyers" and with the aid of a wooden model, teaching scores of children (and some adults) the art of bridge building. The Erasmus Chapel at Chester Cathedral is dedicated to Thomas Brassey and his wife Maria and contains a bust of Thomas Brassey as well as an Italian wall mosaic, funded by their three sons.

3 Between them, four members of the Thomas Brassey Society gave 7 talks about Thomas Brassey and his achievements (as volunteers) to the general public, engaging with various social and historical societies—either face to face or via Zoom.

4 A 60 minute film about Thomas Brassey was prepared by one of our members and included cameo performances by professional actors who represented important characters in the Brassey history. This was broadcast on line, due to Covid restrictions, during Summer 2021 and is still available to view.

5 An educational flyer about Thomas Brassey has been produced, with nearly 2000 distributed throughout the year to the general public at exhibitions, talk and lectures. /*continued over*



Section D continued/

6 Trustees have explored the possibility of erecting a statue of Thomas Brassey outside Chester Railway Station (built by Thomas Brassey in his home city) which, coupled with the information panel already installed at the site in 2020 (see Item 1), would help educate the public about his significance in the construction of the British and international railway system in the 19th century. To this end, Trustees have had discussions with members and officers of Cheshire West and Chester Council, representatives of Network Rail and Transport for Wales and the joint Chair of the Public Statues and Sculptors Association. They have also investigated how such a statue could be designed and funded, including a discussion with a funding consultant.

7 Seven members of the Society attended the Cheshire Local History Association annual conference on 30 October, 2021, staffed an education/information stand and handed out flyers on the life and works of Thomas Brassey. Our Secretary was one of the speakers at the conference. Two members also attended the Toy and Train Fair at Crewe Heritage Centre on 2 October 2021 and handed out flyers.

8 We held an annual luncheon in Chester Cathedral attended by 50 members.

9 We were asked for support by the community of Cruet in the Department de la Savoie, South East France, about saving one of the oldest metal truss frame bridges in France (built by Thomas Brassey). We wrote in strong support, direct to the Department de la Savoie (local authority) and have since heard that the planned demolition has been put on hold. The Secretary of Cruet Nature et Patrimoines, Joan Decker, has accepted honorary membership of The Thomas Brassey Society.

10 With the stated aim of the society being to "advance the education of the public in the historic significance of the life and works of Thomas Brassey", tentative approaches have been made to the University of Chester.

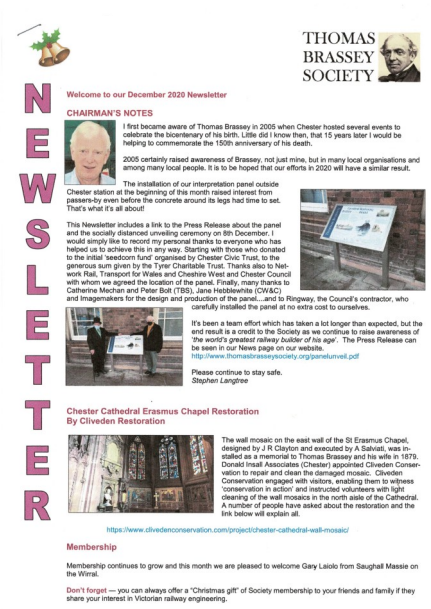
Contact has been made with Professor Helen O'Sullivan, Provost & Deputy Vice Chancellor and we hope to take our ideas forward with the School of Humanities. Clearly we are at an early stage, but we hope to explore ideas such as an annual "Thomas Brassey Lecture". These lectures could be related to Thomas Brassey himself or on themes inspired by his life.

/*General operation & administration continued overleaf*



In respect of the general operation and administration of the Society, the Trustees have:

- held monthly and minuted meetings throughout the year via Zoom, including regular reports from the Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and Membership Secretary
- produced a bi-monthly newsletter for Society members
- successfully registered as a Charity with the Charity Commission (18 August 2021)
- successfully registered for Gift Aid with HMRC (11 October 2021 but effective from 18 August 2021)
- increased our membership by 100% over the year to a current 110 members
- maintained a Society web-site, providing information about Thomas Brassey and his achievements, about the Society and its operation, about its Privacy Policy and links to other relevant information and created a Facebook account—all accessible to the general public.



THOMAS BRASSEY SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

Welcome to our December 2020 Newsletter

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

I first became aware of Thomas Brassey in 2005 when Chester hosted several events to celebrate the bicentenary of his birth. Little did I know then, that 15 years later I would be helping to commemorate the 150th anniversary of his death.

2005 certainly raised awareness of Brassey, not just mine, but in many local organisations and among many local people. It is to be hoped that our efforts in 2020 will have a similar result.

The installation of our interpretation panel outside Chester station at the beginning of this month raised interest from passers-by even before the concrete around its legs had time to set. That's what it's all about!

This Newsletter includes a link to the Press Release about the panel and the socially distanced unveiling ceremony on 8th December. I would simply like to record my personal thanks to everyone who has helped us to achieve this in any way. Starting with those who donated to the initial 'seedcorn fund' organised by Chester Civic Trust, to the generous sum given by the Tyrer Charitable Trust. Thanks also to Network Rail, Transport for Wales and Cheshire West and Chester Council with whom we agreed the location of the panel. Finally, many thanks to Catherine Mechan and Peter Bolt (TBS), Jane Hebblewhite (CW&C) and Imagemakers for the design and production of the panel....and to Ringway, the Council's contractor, who carefully installed the panel at no extra cost to ourselves.

It's been a team effort which has taken a lot longer than expected, but the end result is a credit to the Society as we continue to raise awareness of *'the world's greatest railway builder of his age'*. The Press Release can be seen in our News page on our website.
http://www.thomasbrasseysociety.org/panelunveil.pdf

Please continue to stay safe.
Stephen Langtree

Chester Cathedral Erasmus Chapel Restoration By Cliveden Restoration

The wall mosaic on the east wall of the St Erasmus Chapel, designed by J R Clayton and executed by A Salviati, was installed as a memorial to Thomas Brassey and his wife in 1879. Donald Insall Associates (Chester) appointed Cliveden Conservation to repair and clean the damaged mosaic. Cliveden Conservation engaged with visitors, enabling them to witness 'conservation in action' and instructed volunteers with light cleaning of the wall mosaics in the north aisle of the Cathedral. A number of people have asked about the restoration and the link below will explain all.

https://www.clivedenconservation.com/project/chester-cathedral-wall-mosaic/

Membership

Membership continues to grow and this month we are pleased to welcome Gary Laiolo from Saughall Massie on the Wirral.

Don't forget — you can always offer a "Christmas gift" of Society membership to your friends and family if they share your interest in Victorian railway engineering.

Section E Financial review

Details of any funds materially in deficit

The Society has no reserves and no reserve policy.

Brief statement of the charity's policy on reserves

Not applicable.

	Note	Society Name			No (if any)	
		The Thomas Brassey Society				
		Receipts and Payments Account				
		For the period from	Period start date	To	Period end date	
			1 November 2020		31 December 2021	

Part A Receipts and Payments

	Note	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last period to the nearest
A1 Receipts						
Membership Subscriptions		1,190	-	-	1,190	590
		-	-	-	-	
Donations		-	-	-	-	
Private	1	847	-	-	847	2,740
Other	2	355	-	-	355	4,699
		-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-
***Sub total** (Gross income)*		2,392	-	-	2,392	8,029
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).						
		-	-	-	-	
		-	-	-	-	-
Sub total		-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts		2,392	-	-	2,392	8,029
A3 Payments						
Administration	3	20	-	-	20	25
Fund raising	4	125	-	-	125	-
Promotion costs	5	331	-	-	331	202
Other costs	6	55	-	-	55	234
		-	-	-	-	
		-	-	-	-	-
Sub total		531	-	-	531	461
A4 Asset and investment purchases						
			-	-	-	
		-	-	-	-	
Sub total		-	-	-	-	-
Total payments		531	-	-	531	461
Net of receipts/(payments)		1,861	-	-	1,861	7,568
A5 Transfers between funds		-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end		5,568	2,000	-	7,568	-
Cash funds this year end		7,429	2,000	-	9,429	7,568

Notes

1. "Donations - Private" includes all donations from private individuals.
2. "Donations - Other" includes all donations from other organisations or societies.
3. Administration includes the annual cost for maintaining the Society website.
4. Fund raising includes the cost for the preparation of a Fund Raising Report by specialist consultants.
5. Promotion costs include the purchase of "pop up" banners, marketing flyers and leaflets.
6. Other costs include the purchase of sundry items such as face shields and donation boxes.

Part B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Cash held in bank current account	7,429	2,000	
	Total cash funds	7,429	2,000	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))			

	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets	JustGiving Fund Raising Page	402	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities	Supply and Installation of the Interpretation Panel	Unrestricted	3,380	
	JustGiving Fees	Unrestricted	15	
			-	
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees	Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
	DW Bebb	David Bebb	19/01/22

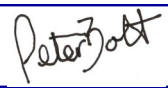
Section F Other optional information

None

Section G Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s)		
Full name(s)	John Stephen Scott Langtree	Peter Charles Bolt
Position (eg Secretary, Chair, etc)	Chairman	Secretary
Date	3 February 2022	