

The THOMAS BRASSEY Society

Welcome to our February 2023 Newsletter

NEWSLETTER

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES



In 1998, while chairman of Chester Civic Trust, I helped to organise our AGM at Chester railway Station to celebrate its 150th anniversary. Now, twenty-five years later, the Thomas Brassey Society is considering how it can celebrate the 175th anniversary! Very few of us will be around in 2048 so I think we should take this opportunity to do our bit.

Brassey's work in Cheshire included the construction of the Chester and Crewe railway (1839), the Chester and Holyhead railway (1845), the Shrewsbury and Chester railway (1846), the Birkenhead and Chester junction railway (1847) and Chester Station (1848). Surely no one has done more to connect Chester with the outside world.

By the end of this anniversary year, and barring any unforeseen problems, we should be close to installing a commemorative piece of art, a 1.25 x lifesize statue and where better than outside his magnificent station.

Fundraising is going well and I would like to take this opportunity to thank those members who have made personal contributions. We are grateful for them all, from the smaller ones to the more substantial. If you are thinking of making a donation please do so in the next two or three months so that we can reach our target at about the same time as we enter the second stage of choosing a sculptor. The first stage (expressions of interest) closes on 17th March, so please come to our AGM on 15th April at the Queen Hotel, Chester to hear the latest news.

Meanwhile, very best wishes for 2023 and many thanks for your continuing support.

Kind regards
Stephen Langtree MBE

STATUE UPDATE



Over the last two months we have had a number of amazing donations and pledges for the statue fund boosting the up-to-date figure to **£78,000**. Amongst those is a significant pledge from Heap and Partners Ltd from the Canada Works in Birkenhead, several of the Brassey Family Charitable Trusts are now donating and our own society members are responding positively including a very significant donation from one of our members. If you haven't made a pledge or sent a donation yet please consider doing so now.

This is the right time, every little helps.

/continued over ....

NEWSLETTER

Members will be pleased to see some of the more recent donations. For example:

Several donations of £50 plus
One donation of £100
Three donations of £250
Three donations of £1,000
One donation of £1600
One donation of £5,000

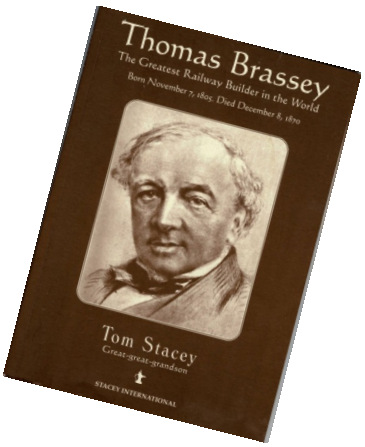
The sculptors are now visiting Chester Station meeting up with the society trustees and generally getting to know what we are looking for.

Some of you may have seen the Artist's impression in the Chester Newspapers of the proposed revamp of the Chester Station Forecourt and a bronze piece of art, a statue, commemorating one of Cheshire's greatest sons, would certainly enhance the area.

.

Details of how you can make a donation are on our website www.thomasbrasseysociety.org under Donations. All donations, large or small, will be gratefully received and all will be personally acknowledged.

Tom Stacey



I was notified recently that Society member, Tom Stacey, had died at his home in London in late December. Tom was a prolific author but from our point of view he is remembered for his little brown book entitled,

'*Thomas Brassey the Greatest Railway Builder in the World'.*

Tom had a lot of in-depth knowledge on Brassey, being his great, great grandson. The book is still available on Amazon and we do recommend it as a low cost, accurate read. There is a lot of information on Wikipedia about Tom Stacey so I will not go down that route but I first met him at a 'Thomas Brassey' Lunch-eon at the Queen hotel in Chester in 2005, the year of publication for his book on Brassey. Interestingly he was married to Caroline Clay who was to become a widely exhibited sculptor, mostly in clay for bronze. When I last spoke to Tom he was very enthusiastic about our sculpture project and had joined TTBS.

Tom will be missed by many and I have sent our sincere condolences to his family on behalf of the society.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM has been fixed for Saturday 15th April to be held at the Queen Hotel, Chester. Similar to last year, the AGM will take place in the morning and there will be a two course lunch laid on afterwards with coffee for a price of £28.00 each which includes room hire.

Listen to the latest developments of how the statue project is moving forward and what our plans are for the rest of the year. We will also have a special guest presentation talk by society member, Max Steel, entitled, "How I first met Thomas Brassey," Intriguing? Yes!
Would you please give an indication to our Treasurer, Dave Bebb, dv.bebb@gmail.com if you:
a) Would like to attend the AGM, lunch and talk.
b) If you would like to attend the AGM and talk only.

Menu details will be forwarded in due course.

NEWSLETTER

Excursions/Events calendar for 2023

Our Events Co-ordinator, Ian Walker, suggests some future excursions for members:



MARCH: Saturday, 25th, 10 am - 4 pm.

The Wirral History & Heritage Fair takes place at Hulme Hall, Port Sunlight.

The TBS will have a stand there and all members are invited for an informal meet up for an interesting day out.

I am putting together a walking tour of the route of the Storeton Tramway at the Port Sunlight end, it will be around 1.5 to 2 miles, and I'll aim to start this at about 2 pm. The Storeton Tramway was used to transport stone from the Storeton Quarry to the stone Quay, for onward transport on the Mersey, during and after, the time when Thomas Brassey was employed as the Storeton Quarry supervisor.



MAY: Wednesday 17th,

A visit to the Churnet Valley Railway

Meet at the CVR, Froghall Station, (postcode ST10 2HA), at 10 am to join the first train of the day leaving at 10.30 am and enjoy breakfast on board during the round trip.



Afterwards there will be time for another round trip, or part trip and visit to the workshops. Cost for a breakfast train Rover ticket is £28.50 per person.

Please contact me, by 17th February, if you're interested in this trip, as I'll need to have some idea of numbers before I can do any advance bookings. lan.walker131@gmail.icom

AUGUST: Making Tracks 3 at Chester Cathedral

Our TTBS stand will be there and we will be looking to arrange a social event at the end of it in early September again. We will be asking for volunteers to help staff the stand nearer the time.

The 1st of August is a '**red letter day**' as Chester Station is celebrating 175 years since the opening. We hope to join in some of the commemorative events with more details to follow although we definitely won't be able to re-enact the original "Grand Opening" Festivities including marching bands, big feasts etc.

NEWSLETTER

The Kingfisher Line, Titley Junction, Herefordshire

Thomas Brassey was awarded a contract by the Leominster and Kington Railway in November 1854 for the construction of 14 miles of railway between Leominster and Kington via Pembridge and Titley Junction. The section between Leominster and Pembridge opened for goods traffic in October 1855. The second section between Pembridge and Kington opened in August 1857. The line was constructed as single track and there were no tunnels or viaducts.

The peak of the railway operation was during World War II when it served two US Army hospitals. Post war operation declined due to increasing competition from bus transport. The line closed to passengers in 1955 and finally to freight in 1964.

One mile of the original railway track of the Leominster and Kington Railway survives. It runs south-west from Titley Junction to the River Arrow where it abruptly ends because the railway bridge spanning the river was demolished in the 1960's. This section of the line including the station at Titley Junction and the goods yard was privately purchased in the 1980's. Restoration of the station and goods yard was followed by the reinstatement of the trackbed and the relaying of ¾ mile of the track was completed in 2005 by the present owners. The line became known as the Kingfisher Line and the first steam train to travel on the new track was run in August 2005. There are ambitions to undertake further work including relaying of track in the station yard area and the laying of a "run round loop" at Titley Junction.



Titley Junction Station
Photograph taken in 2007 by Roger Cornfoot and licensed for reuse under the Creative Commons Attribution license

Footnote

The Kingfisher Line and Titley Junction Station are privately owned and entry to the public is strictly forbidden. Private parties are welcome by prior arrangements. Now, there's an idea for a visit by the Thomas Brassey Society in 2023. The owners can also lay on Afternoon Tea by arrangement!

SEPTEMBER: PROPOSED TRIP TO CRUET, France

When planning your summer holidays this year, don't forget that we hope to arrange a trip to Cruet in South East France, to visit the Thomas Brassey Bridge, the "Pont des Anglais" as guests of the Cruet Nature & Patrimoines group. We will be travelling before the weekend of September 16 & 17 and returning shortly after. Details to follow.

For new members, here is a link to the booklet about the area and the Brassey Bridge, "Pont des Anglais", which the Society was asked to approve.
http://www.thomasbrasseysociety.org/Cruet%20Bridge%20booklet.pdf

NEWSLETTER

Membership report



Firstly, may I take this opportunity to wish all our members a very Happy New Year, and hope that all had a joyful Christmas.

Secondly, could I thank all those members who have renewed their subscription to The Thomas Brassey Society for 2023. Very many thanks from myself and the committee. The majority of the current renewals were by BACS transfer, which does simplify our record keeping.

When the remaining members come to renew their subscriptions, could I please request that they give consideration to setting up an annual BACS transfer?

For the record, payments (£10 annual membership) may be made by cash or cheque , directly to our Treasurer, David Bebb, at 2, Kings Crescent, Chester, CH3 5TH or by BACS to The Thomas Brassey Society – Sort Code :01-07-02. Account No 56481608.

When paying by BACS, please include your name as an identifier.

Wishing you all the very best for 2023,

David Hooley
Honorary Membership Secretary
The Thomas Brassey Society

New Members

Welcome to the Society to 2 new members for December who are Jon Yates and Bill Yates from Chester. Good to have you on board and we look forward to meeting up in the future.

Looking forward to meeting everyone
at the various events planned for this year.
With best wishes

Peter

Peter Bolt
Secretary
The Thomas Brassey Society
petergillianbolt1@btinternet.com