

# TOWN ASSESSMENT REPORT

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# BRAINTREE

## TOWN ASSESSMENT REPORT

### INTRODUCTION

This report is an archaeological and historical assessment of Braintree and forms part of the Essex Historic Towns Survey. This is an extensive urban survey as defined by English Heritage (1992) of 32 historic settlements in Essex. This project, funded by English Heritage, forms part of a nationwide reassessment of the management of the urban archaeological resource. The project is being carried out by Essex County Council's Planning Department and takes as its basis a survey carried out by the County Council in the early 1980's. This was published as Historic Towns in Essex (Eddy and Petchey 1983) and adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance by the County and District Councils.

This report has been compiled using a number of sources, including the Essex Sites and Monuments Record (ESMR), the List of Buildings of Architectural and Historical Interest, records held by the County Planning Department's Historic Buildings Section, and various cartographic and documentary records (following an assessment of such records by Dr Chris Thornton of the Victoria County History, Essex). The preparation of this report has involved the addition of information to the ESMR database and the digitising of spatial data onto a Geographic Information System (GIS).

For the purposes of this study the Roman period is the time-span between 43-410, the Saxon period is 410-1066, the medieval period is 1066-1536, the post-medieval period is 1536-1900 and the modern period is 1900 to the present day. This corresponds to the period divisions used by the ESMR.

### LOCATION AND TOPOGRAPHY

Braintree lies on a clay and brickearth capped ridge between the Rivers Brain and Blackwater (Pant). At this point the east-west Roman road of Stane Street crossed the Chelmsford to Sudbury road. In the medieval period Braintree and its neighbouring town, Bocking, were two separate settlements (see also the Historic Town Assessment Report for Bocking, Medlycott 1998). However, by the modern period the two built-up areas had merged to form the Urban District of Braintree and Bocking. For the purposes of this report Braintree is taken to include the historic area of Braintree and the immediately adjoining portion of Bocking Parish (Bocking End and The Causeway).

### BRIEF HISTORY OF THE TOWN

There is evidence for prehistoric activity in and around Braintree, including a Late Iron Age ditched enclosure containing roundhouses on the site of the later Roman town. A second bank and ditch is known to have run along the southern side of the Coggeshall and Cressing Roads. It has been suggested that this feature is an Iron Age *oppidum* enclosing an area of about 50 ha on the northern slope of the Brain valley (Drury, 1976), however this has not been proven.

The Roman Small Town appears to have been confined within a triangular area between the main Roman roads of Stane Street (Rayne Road) and the Sudbury-Chelmsford route (London Road). Within the area of the Roman town there appears to have been two

phases of development. The first century town was concentrated in the area of the modern Pierrefitte Way, and there is some suggestion of deliberate planning in the initial layout of the town with the minor roads and major boundary ditches running at right-angles to London Road, forming blocks approximately 145 m apart. In the second and third centuries the town expanded into the Rayne Road and George Yard area, and there appear to have been a second phase of road building, which cut across the original layout. The cemetery was located on the western edge of the built-up area.

There is evidence that there was a Saxon settlement in Braintree, but there is nothing to suggest that it was ever urban in nature. Occupation remains have been recovered from the area to the south-west of St Michael's Church, and the church itself may have had a Saxon predecessor. In the later Saxon period the Braintree area formed part of the estates of a Saxon *thegn*, Aetheric, who willed his Braintree lands to the Bishops of London in 991. The Bishops of London's estate at Braintree was probably administered from Chapel Hill, where their manor house was certainly sited in the medieval period.

The early settlement focus for Braintree was probably located in the area of St Michael's Church, with a second focus around the Bishop's manor house and St John's Chapel at Chapel Hill. It has been postulated that St John's Chapel was the original parish church for Braintree, and St Michael's was a subsidiary chapel, the roles being reversed at the beginning of the thirteenth century when the 'new town' was created. In 1199 a grant was made to the Bishop of London of a weekly market and annual fair. As a consequence of this grant he founded a 'new town' at Braintree on Episcopal estate land, on the eastern side of the main road junction. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries Braintree became an important cloth centre.

Braintree was still an important cloth town at the beginning of the post-medieval period, specialising in the manufacture of bays and says. However, the woollen cloth industry went into terminal decline in the eighteenth century, and the nineteenth century saw the rise of the silk industry, the principal firms of which were Courtauld and Walters. The importance of the market and the retail trade also continued to grow. In addition the first half of the twentieth century was dominated by the growth of metal manufacturing firms, notably Crittalls. In 1939 the parishes of Bocking and Braintree were united to form a single Urban District.

## **EVIDENCE**

### **DOCUMENTARY**

*Summary assessment of the documentary and cartographic evidence*  
by Chris Thornton (Victoria County History)

Documentary evidence for the manor and the town of Braintree seems to be fairly limited during the medieval period, although there may be further material in the records of the parish of Great Rayne, that included the Braintree urban area until the thirteenth century. The most abundant manorial material would appear to relate to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. There are, however, a large number of deeds in the Essex Record Office (ERO), British Library (BL) and elsewhere which could enable the reconstruction of tenement histories. Another area of early settlement immediately adjacent to the town was at Sandpitts, a manor held of the Honor of Clare, which has a broken series of court rolls and account rolls from the thirteenth century onwards. It is not known whether these

contain information relating to the urban area, but they may well do so. Braintree is very poorly served with historic maps and plans, apparently none surviving before the Chapman and André map of 1777. There may be more recent cartographic evidence from the late nineteenth century onwards within the Borough records.

Modern development for both Braintree and Bocking is covered by business and local government records. For the modern industrial history see 'An account of the textile industry in Bocking to 1839' (ERO T/Z 27) and Coleman, D.C., (1969, 1980), *Courtaulds: an economic and social history*. See also a thesis on the mills of Sam. Courtauld and Co. (ERO T/Z 75/11) and Blake, D.J. and Crittall, A., (1989), *Window Vision* and Quin, W.F. (1981) *A history of Bocking and Braintree*.

### *Assessment of the place-name and documentary evidence*

Braintree (*Branchetreu*) is first mentioned in 1086, but it was also known as Great Rayne. The Domesday Book records Braintree in 1066 and 1086 (Rumble, 1983). Braintree consisted of 30 acres of land that had belonged to three free men prior to 1066 and had subsequently been annexed by Ledmer of Hempstead, the reeve of Richard son of Count Gilbert. Morant (see Drury, 1976) suggested that this 30 acre holding was located in the triangular area between the High Street and Rayne Road, known as Sandpit Leet, as this area was later in the medieval period an appendix to the Honour of Clare but not a manor in its own right. The remainder of the area that later became the town of Braintree appears to have formed part of the holding of *Raines* (the modern village of Rayne is located four kilometres to the west of Braintree). *Raines* is twice mentioned in Anglo-Saxon wills, dating to the late tenth century. There are five separate entries for *Raines* in the Domesday Book, including the holding by the Bishops of London which incorporated part of the later town of Braintree:-

*Bishop William held Rayne before 1066, for 4 hides and 30 acres. Always 2 ploughs in lordship. Then 5 men's ploughs, now 4.*

*Then 16 villagers, now 10; then 9 smallholders, now 8; then 4 slaves, now 3.*

*Woodland, 200 pigs; meadow, 16 acres; now 1 mill. 10 cattle, 45 sheep, 24 pigs.*

*To this manor were added 15 acres after 1066, which 1 free man held before 1066; so the Hundred testifies.*

*Value then £10; now 14.*

*In this manor, Roger holds from the Bishop 3 virgates. 1 plough. 2 slaves.*

*Value 10s.*

By the thirteenth century a distinction is made between Little and Great Rayne, the latter being also known as Braintree.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL

### *Above ground remains*

The above ground remains in Braintree are all medieval or later in date. Of particular interest are the Parish Church of St Michael, the medieval and early post-medieval buildings, and the industrial buildings dating to the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

## Excavations

The earliest archaeological observations in Braintree were made by John Cunnington between 1825 and 1850 and the Rev. J.W. Kenworthy between 1890 and 1910. Further work took place during the first half of the twentieth century by the Rev. G. Montagu Benton, M.R. Hull and others. The first large-scale excavations took place in 1971-76 (Drury, 1976), by the Essex Archaeological Society and Essex County Council, in advance of re-development of the town centre. Further development, in particular the construction of Pierrefitte Way and George Yard, between 1984 and 1990 prompted additional excavations in the area of the Roman town by the Brain Valley Archaeology Society, Braintree District Council and Essex County Council (Havis, 1993). A number of small-scale evaluations have taken place within the urban area during the 1990's.

ESMR	DATE	SITE	ARCHIVE LOCATION	PUBLICATION
6291-2		Brand's the builders (BT5/BB)	Finds & archive: Braintree Town Hall	Unpublished - summary in <i>Essex Archaeol. Hist</i> 16, 1984-5, p.125
6347-7	1971	Rear of 3. Bank St (BT7)	Finds & archive: Colchester Museum	Drury, P.J., 1976, "Braintree: Excavations and Research, 1971-6" " <i>Essex Archaeol. Hist</i> 8, 1-144
6373-7	1971	13-17 Bank St (BT6)	Finds & archive: Colchester Museum	Drury, P.J., 1976, "Braintree: Excavations and Research, 1971-6" " <i>Essex Archaeol. Hist</i> , 8, 1-144
16385	1973	Under B+Q, Rayne Rd (BT2)	Finds & archive: Colchester Museum	Drury, P.J., 1976, "Braintree: Excavations and Research, 1971-6" " <i>Essex Archaeol. Hist.</i> , 8, 1-144
16386	1973	Rear of Corn Exchange (BT9)	Finds & archive: Colchester Museum	Drury, P.J., 1976, "Braintree: Excavations and Research, 1971-6" " <i>Essex Archaeol. Hist</i> 8, 1-144
6355	1973	Tesco's supermarket (BT10)	Finds & archive: Colchester Museum	Drury, P.J., 1976, "Braintree: Excavations and Research, 1971-6" " <i>Essex Archaeol. Hist</i> 8, 1-144
6367-2	1974	51-57, Rayne Road (BT1)	Finds & archive: Colchester Museum	Drury, P.J., 1976, "Braintree: Excavations and Research, 1971-6" " <i>Essex Archaeol. Hist.</i> , 8, 1-144
6387-91	1976	Blyth's Meadow	Finds & archive: Colchester Museum	Eddy, M., 1983, 'Excavations on the Braintree earthworks, 1976 and 1979', <i>Essex Archaeol. Hist.</i> , <b>15</b> , 49-50
16974	1978	New Street	Finds & archive: Colchester Museum	Eddy, M., 1979, 'New Street, Braintree', <i>Essex Archaeol. Hist.</i> 11, p.72
6361-3, 7479, 7483	1980	Toft's Garage (BT17/TGB80)	Finds & archive: Braintree Museum	Milton, B., 1986, 'Tofts Garage, Braintree' <i>Essex Archaeol. Hist.</i> 17, 82-91
6356-6360	1981-2	The Flock/Fountain (BF84)	Finds & archive: Braintree Town Hall	Unpublished - summaries in <i>Essex Archaeol. Hist.</i> 14, 1982, p.133
6293-4	1983-5	Behind Letch's the builders (BT15)	Finds & Archive: Braintree Town Hall (amalgamated with SMR 6356-60)	Unpublished - summaries in <i>Essex Archaeol. Hist.</i> 16, 1984-5, p.125; <i>Essex Archaeol. Hist.</i> 17, 1986, p.158
6295-6	1983-5	Rear of 4, London Rd (BT13/BLR A,B,C & D)	Finds & archive: Braintree Town Hall	Unpublished - summaries in <i>Essex Archaeol. Hist.</i> 16, 1984-5, p.125; <i>Essex Archaeol. Hist.</i> 17, 1986, p.158; <i>Essex Archaeol. Hist.</i> 19, 1988, p.262
6296	1983-5	2, London Road (LRB)	Finds & Archive: Braintree Museum?	Unpublished - summaries in <i>Essex Archaeol. Hist.</i> 16, 1984-5, p.125 (summary)

6297	1983-6	College House (BCH/BT14)	Finds & archive: Braintree Museum except leather & wood at Montrose Rd.	Unpublished - summaries in <i>Essex Archaeol. Hist.</i> 16, 1984-5, p.125; 17, 1986, p.158; 18, 1987, p.106; 19, 1988, p.262
6290	1984	Sandpit Road (BT4/SL84)	Finds & archive: Braintree Museum	Havis, R., 1993, "Roman Braintree: excavations 1984-90" " <i>Essex Archaeol. Hist</i> 24, p.22-69
6300	1984	Rayne Road/Sandpit Lane (RR84/BT3)	Finds & archive: Braintree Museum	Havis, R., 1993, "Roman Braintree: excavations 1984-90" " <i>Essex Archaeol. Hist</i> 24, p.22-69
6364-6	1984	Rear of Horn Hotel, High St (BT11/BHH84)	Finds & archive: Colchester Museum	Clarke, P. 1986, 'Rear of Horn Hotel, High Street', " <i>Essex Archaeol. Hist.</i> 17, 1986, p.95
6378-6382	1984	Mount House Earthwork (BT8/MHB84)	Finds & archive: Braintree Museum	Bedwin, O. 1984-4, 'Excavations at Mount House, Braintree, 1984' <i>Essex Archaeol. History</i> 16, 28-39.
7484-8	1984	Sandpit Lane (SL84/BT14)	Finds: Discarded; Archive: Braintree Museum	Bedwin, O., 1986, 'Sandpit Lane, Braintree', <i>Essex Archaeol. Hist.</i> 17, p.91-6
16351-3	1985	The Boar's Head (BBH)	Finds & archive: Braintree Town Hall	Unpublished - summaries in <i>Essex Archaeol. Hist.</i> 17, 1986, p.158; <i>Essex Archaeol. Hist.</i> 18, 1987, p.106
6298-9	1985	Bank Site (BH85)	Finds & archive: Braintree Museum	Havis, R., 1993, "Roman Braintree: excavations 1984-90" " <i>Essex Archaeol. Hist</i> 24, p.22-69
16244, 16358	1986	69, Rayne Road	Archive & finds: Braintree Town Hall	Unpublished - summary in <i>Essex Archaeol. Hist.</i> 18, 1987, 106
16356-7	1986	65, Rayne Road (BRR86)	Finds & archive: Braintree Town Hall	Unpublished - summary in <i>Essex Archaeol. Hist.</i> 18, 1987, 104-6
16363-8	1986	Braintree Youth Club (BYC86)	Finds & archive: Braintree Museum	Havis, R., 1993, "Roman Braintree: excavations 1984-90" " <i>Essex Archaeol. Hist</i> 24, p.22-69
16366-8	1988	Sandpit Rd (SR88)	Finds & archive: Braintree Museum	Havis, R., 1993, "Roman Braintree: excavations 1984-90" <i>Essex Archaeol. Hist.</i> 24, p.22-69
16337-8	1989	Rayne Rd, Methodist Chapel Site (BT21)	Finds & archive: Braintree Museum	Havis, R., 1993, "Roman Braintree: excavations 1984-90" <i>Essex Archaeol. Hist.</i> 24, p.22-69
16332	1992	34, New Street (BT23)	Finds: Discarded; Archive: Braintree Museum	Wardhill, R. 1992 " 34, New Street, Braintree", ECC Int. Rep.
14599-602	1993	St Michael's Rd/Coronation Ave. (BT24)	Finds: Montrose Rd.	Medlycott, M. 1993 "St Michael's Road/Coronation Avenue" ECC Int. Rep.
17286	1996	Great Bradfords County Infant and Primary School, Marlborough Road	Archive: Bocking Place, Finds: Discarded	Germany, M., 1996, 'Great Bradfords County Infant and Primary School, Marlborough Road', ECC Int. Rep.
6465	1996	Former Manor Works, Manor Street	Archive: Cotswold Arch. Trust	Bateman, C., 1996, 'Former Manor Works, Manor Street, Braintree, Essex', Cotswold Arch. Trust Int. Rep., ESMR
16866-7	1996	College Road (BT25)	Finds: Montrose Road; Archive: Bocking Place	Lavender, N. 1996 "College Road, Braintree" ECC Int. Rep.
17783-4	1997	7 Grenville Road	Finds: Montrose Road; Archive: Bocking Place	Garwood, A., 1997, '7 Grenville Road, Braintree, Essex', ECC Int. Rep. ESMR

**Table 1: Archive location and publication record for fieldwork**

## Finds

### **Roman pottery** by Scott Martin and Colin Wallace (Essex County Council Field Archaeology Group)

Since 1971 there have been several small scale excavations, trial trenches and watching briefs in Braintree that have located evidence of Roman occupation. Work up to 1976 has been summarised by Drury (1977). The main site discussed by Drury, 51-57 Rayne Road, produced a "considerable quantity" of sherds including a small amount of Late Pre-Roman Iron Age as well as some 1st century Roman material (Thompson 1982, 636-40; Drury and Pratt in Drury 1977, 42-6). The pottery (supported by the coin evidence) suggests that this area may have been abandoned in the mid 4th century. A Late Pre-Roman Iron Age roundhouse, located in 1982 at the Fountain (now Flack's Hotel) by John Hope, is the clearest evidence for domestic occupation in this period (Priddy 1983, 163). The ceramic evidence suggests that the main occupation sequence in the eastern part of the settlement appears to have begun in the second half of the 2nd century and lasted to c.360/70. Pottery associated with latest Roman horizons was generally absent (e.g. Oxford red colour-coat), although some Late Shell-tempered ware was present. The Mount House excavations examined part of the supposed Late Pre-Roman Iron Age *oppidum* as well as locating evidence of mid 2nd to mid 3rd century activity on the periphery of the Roman small town (Bedwin 1986). Within the putative *oppidum* little evidence for Late Pre-Roman Iron Age domestic occupation was encountered; instead, this seems to have centred around the London Road area. This is where the earliest Roman occupation appears to have been situated (Havis 1993, 61). Traces of Romano-British activity were also located at the Toff's Garage site in 1980 (Milton 1987), including a very fragmentary pottery assemblage. Occupation appears to have spanned the period from second half of the 2nd to the 4th century. The most recent work published dealt with the eight George Yard sites and provided a brief synthesis of the development of the small town (Havis 1993). As with the Toff's Garage site, much of the pottery was in a fragmentary condition due to the 'backyard' location of the excavated areas. However, eight groups, spanning the later 3rd and 4th centuries were of sufficient quality to be selected for quantification and published in detail (Horsley, in Havis 1993), but only five of the eight George Yard sites were represented. One of these groups (Group 5) was assigned to the late 4th to early 5th century on account of the presence of a coin of Gratian (AD 376-385), a Late Shell-tempered ware dish and jar, and a bowl with 'Romano-Saxon' decoration. The absence of Oxfordshire red colour-coat is noteworthy in that it is present in late groups at Chelmsford (Going 1987 and Going, in Wickenden 1992) and Great Dunmow (Going and Ford, Wickenden 1988). Pottery dating evidence suggests settlement contraction in the later 4th century in the published eastern part of the settlement at least. More recently, Reece has noted that Braintree's coin assemblage is very untypical compared with other Romano-British small-towns (1995, 191). This suggests that Braintree has interesting research possibilities regarding its coin assemblage as well as its pottery.

### **Saxon finds** by Sue Tyler (Essex County Council Archaeological Advisory Group)

A small amount of mid to late Saxon finds (ESMR 6414) have been found in the southern half of Braintree, comprising a knife, dress fitting and some Thetford-ware pottery. The pottery indicates that occupation around the Bishop's Palace must have begun by the 12th century. A number of the unpublished sites are said to have had Saxon features, including sunken-floored buildings. The finds from these need to be located and published.

## **Medieval and post-medieval pottery** by Helen Walker (Essex County Council Field Archaeology Group)

The geographical location of Braintree is of particular interest from a ceramic studies viewpoint. The relationship between Hedingham ware and Braintree needs to be examined as the town was one of the nearest consumer sites, and was the nearest point of access to Stane Street. Evidence of an extended east-west distribution along Stane Street needs to be studied. The Oxford ware jug from Bank Street may be evidence of this, and the presence of the Mile End bowl from the Colchester area is interesting because the Hedingham kilns, which also produced coarse wares, would have been a closer source for this type of ceramic vessel. Braintree is also on the intersection of the road from Chelmsford to the north east and may have had trading connections in this direction.

There have also been a number of excavations by Brain Valley Archaeology Society (BVAS) and Braintree District Council (BDC), and these are summarised in the *Essex Archaeol. Hist.* excavation round ups. Most are Roman but some sites produced post-Roman features as well, and one round-up of a site at Brands mentions ?post-Roman pottery (J. Hope *Essex Archaeol. Hist.* 1984/5, 125). Other sites with post-Roman features are:-

Site	Organisation	<i>Essex Archaeol. &amp; Hist.</i> reference
Boars Head	BVAS	17, 1986, 158
George Yard	BDC/MS	17, 1986, 158-9
George Yard (North)	BDC	20, 1989, 159
65 Rayne Road	BVAS	18, 1987, 104-6
Sandpit Road	BDC	18, 1987, 106 & vol. 19, 1988, 262-3
Sandpit Road (west)	BDC	20, 1989, 159-60

### **Summaries**

#### Medieval pottery

*51-57 Rayne Road Site (Pratt 1976, 3-65)* A few sherds of pottery were excavated from the lower fills of a medieval ditch, including a beaded cooking pot rim dating from the mid-12th to early-13th century, and a sandy orange ware jug rim with a white slip-painted band below the rim dating to the 14th century. A sherd from a green glazed Hedingham ware strip jug was found intrusively in lower levels.

*13-17 Bank Street (Simpson 1976, 72-5)* Here the most interesting find comprises body sherds from an Oxford ware jug; the lower body has a reddish-brown lattice, while the upper body has a raised strip and incised herring bone design under a splash glaze. Oxford ware is a very unusual find this far east. Occurring in the same 13th to 14th century phase but perhaps residual here, are coarse ware cooking pot rims including a sand-and-shell-tempered example, and a coarse ware jug rim. A 14th century-type medieval coarse ware cooking pot rim is also present. Late medieval pottery comprises fragments of a two-handled colander in glazed sandy orange ware, probably dating to the 15th to 16th century.

*Toft's Garage (Huggins 1986, 87-91)* There is no material earlier than 13th century. A small group of medieval coarse wares dated c. 1250 to 1350 was excavated from a ditch comprising cooking pot and bowl rims and sherds from jugs. Similar wares were found in other contexts. There is also a possible Hedingham ware sherd with an applied strip and some sherds with a sandy orange fabric including a thumbled jug base and jug handle.



Finds from the *High Street* include a 13th to 14th century sandy orange ware bowl rim from No.45 (*Drury 1976, 97*) and a red ware base (*BT 22*). In addition two ECC Archaeology Section excavations produced only minimal medieval pottery, not worth reporting on; these are at *Sandpit Road* (*Bedwin in Milton 1986, 91-3*), and at *Mount House*, (*Bedwin 1984/5, 28-37*).

*The Lake and Elliots foundry, Chapel Hill* (*Drury 1976, 109*): A fragment from a Thetford-type ware jar; medieval coarse ware late 12th to earlier 13th century cooking pots showing thumbled, applied strips and cordons; and a fragment identified as a decorated bowl rim but which is more likely to be a curfew were found on this site. Sherds from a Hedingham ware jug were also found. A small quantity of early medieval pottery was found at *Skitts Hill* suggesting settlement in the area (*Drury 1976, 110-1*).

#### Post-medieval pottery

*13-17 Bank Street* (*Simpson 1977, 72-5*) Post-medieval red earthenware forms of interest comprise a lid, part of a chafing dish, and jar and bowl rims.

*Toft's Garage* (*Huggins 1986, 87-91*). Groups of 16th century table and kitchen wares were excavated from two boundary ditches and a pit; sherd size is large and complete profiles were obtained. Table wares comprise a few sherds from Raeren stoneware drinking jugs and fragments from black and brown glazed Cistercian ware cups and mugs, some with applied white slip decoration. Local post-medieval red earthenware copies of Cistercian ware forms are present but with an orange, brown or olive glaze. There is also a post-medieval red earthenware chafing dish and several dish rims. Kitchen wares comprise jugs, bowls, storage jars, pipkins, a dripping dish and a costrel. In addition, there are sherds of post-medieval red earthenware with slip-painted decoration which is typical of the 16th century.

*Cressing Rd site* (*Eddy 1983, 49-50*), which lay outside the historic town produced a group of post-medieval pottery comprising the base of a brown salt-glazed stoneware bulbous cup, Metropolitan slipware included part of a flatware vessel with a slip-trailed star pattern, and sherds of tin-glazed earthenware dating to the 17th to 18th centuries.

*St Michael's Rd* (*Medlycott ECC internal rep., BT 24*) Several features produced small groups of pottery with a fairly tight date range of late 17th to earlier 18th centuries. Fragments from ?Lambeth tin-glazed earthenware plate rims were found along with fragments from tin-glazed earthenware cups and drug jars and a chamber-pot which may also be a Lambeth product. There is a Metropolitan slipware dish rim and some examples of Staffordshire-type slipwares including a dish rim and more unusually, a cup decorated on the inside with oval-shaped brown slip pads. Other wares comprise the bottom half of an English salt-glazed stoneware bulbous drinking jug, along with examples of the ubiquitous post-medieval red earthenware. Forms in this ware comprise jar rims, including the rim of a large storage jar, one-handed jars or chamber pots, and a couple of black-glazed ware sherds.

Other post-medieval pottery in Braintree worth mentioning is the 'Braintree ringers jar' in Colchester and Essex museum and published in Cunningham (1985c, fig.51). This is a large post-medieval red earthenware black-glazed two-handed narrow-necked jar with an inscription which includes the words 'made at Stock 1685'. Stock was a manufacturing site to the south of Chelmsford.

## LISTED BUILDINGS

in consultation with Anne Holden and Dave Stenning (Listed Buildings)

The schedule of listed buildings provided in this report is derived from the List of Buildings of Special Architectural and Historical Interest. This List has been compiled over many years through the work of many inspectors and, as a result, the reliability of the List varies from District to District. Time was extremely limited and very few interiors were looked at, or even the rear wings of buildings. Where further research has been carried out on individual buildings, this has often shown the limitations of the List descriptions. The List for Braintree was originally compiled in 1973, but can be considered to be of fair reliability. It has been possible to supplement the information provided in the List through the knowledge and records of the County Historic Buildings and Design Section. There are 83 Listed Buildings in Braintree. The following table shows the Listed Buildings by the date of original build attributed to them in the List, although subsequent research has demonstrated that some of these dates are inaccurate.

CENTURY	NUMBER
13	1
14	0
15	6
16	10
17	22
18	23
19	19
20	2

**Table 2: Listed Buildings grouped by century of origin**

A number of buildings merit particular mention:-

- 47 High Street has a very wide cross-passage under the late fourteenth century cross-wing fronting on to the street. The hall had a possible 'aisle' to the rear.
- The flank of the Swan Public House that faces on to Swan Side consists of late sixteenth century covered market-stalls and a small shop.
- The White Hart Hotel, Bank Street, incorporates the remains of a fourteenth century aisled hall.
- The rear of 17 High Street is an early fifteenth century public building, possibly a court hall.
- The rear of 106 High Street is a jettied cross-wing with a very wide cross-passage underneath the wing, of probable late fifteenth century date.
- 1, Swan Side is a public building.
- 1, George Yard is jettied to the rear, suggesting that it was originally approached from that side.

General information derived from the Listed Buildings has been incorporated into the period syntheses.

## **SYNTHESIS**

### **PRE-URBAN SYNTHESIS**

#### *Prehistoric*

Prehistoric material dating from the Mesolithic period to the Early Iron Age was discovered during brickearth digging in the valley of the River Brain at Skitts Hill. This material was found in association with alluvial deposits containing timber remains, possibly structures.

#### *Late Iron Age*

Evidence of Late Iron Age activity has been found on many sites within Braintree. Part of a Late Iron Age ditched enclosure was excavated on the College House (ESMR 6297), 4 London Road (ESMR 6295/6) and 2 London Road (ESMR 6295) sites. The extent of the presumed enclosure is not known, although it can be estimated on the basis of the portion excavated that it might have enclosed much of the lower end of Grenville Road. There is evidence of Late Iron Age occupation in this area, with roundhouse gullies at both the Fountain and the Boar's Head (ESMR 16351-3) sites. There was also evidence of Late Iron Age occupation at 13-17 Bank Street. It is not however thought that this occupation was urban in nature.

In 1833 Cunnington (Drury, 1976) described a bank with a ditch on either side, that ran along the southern side of Coggeshall and Cressing Road. He also described an 'ancient artificial Mount' within the grounds of Mount House, which he considered to have some connection with the bank and ditches. Cunnington thought that the bank formed the foundation for Stane Street, however Drury (1976) suggested that it was more probably an Iron Age *oppidum* enclosing an area of about 50 ha. on the northern slope of the Brain valley. Excavation took place in 1976 and 1979 at Blyth's Meadow, Railway Street and Cressing Road (Eddy, 1983). On the Cressing Road site a substantial 1.6m deep ditch was located, that partially underlay the Cressing Road and has not been dated. The other two sites failed to locate the ditch. Trenching at the former Manor Works, Manor Street (ESMR 6465) on the approximate line of the proposed ditch revealed a glacio-fluvial river channel but no trace of a man-made feature. Excavation in 1984 of the Mount House bank (Bedwin, 1984-5) demonstrated that it was a post-medieval garden feature, and unconnected with the proposed *oppidum* bank and ditches. It is of interest that the Late Iron Age occupation within Braintree has all been found outside the area of the proposed enclosure.

Late Iron Age or 'Belgic' burials (Eddy, 1976) were recorded in the nineteenth century as coming from Mill Cottages, Mill Hill to the south-east of the town and from the allotment gardens adjacent to Notley Road to the south of the town.

### **URBAN SYNTHESIS**

#### *Roman*

The Roman Small Town of Braintree was occupied throughout the Roman period. The urban area appears to have been confined within a triangular area between the main Roman roads of Stane Street (Rayne Road) and the Sudbury-Chelmsford route (London Road). There appears to have been two phases of development within the Roman town. The first century town was concentrated in the area of the modern Pierrefitte Way, and there is some suggestion of deliberate planning in the initial layout of the town with the

minor roads and major boundary ditches running at right-angles to London Road, forming blocks approximately 145m apart. In the second and third centuries the town expanded into the Rayne Road and George Yard area, and there appears to have been a second phase of road building, which cut across the original layout. The cemetery was located on the western edge of the built-up area.

The urban components of the Roman town are:-

### **Roads**

A number of Roman roads have been identified in Braintree. Drury (1976) postulated a staggered road junction of some seven roads, However subsequent excavation along some of the postulated routes has made it possible to simplify this pattern (Havis, 1993). There are two main routeways, the east-west route of Stane Street and the northeast-southwest route from Sudbury to Chelmsford, and there are at least seven minor roads or tracks. Of these minor roads, one is located on the outskirts of the built-up area at Mount House (Bedwin, 1984) and probably linked a farm or village with Stane Street. The remaining six minor roads are all located within the Roman built-up area in the triangular area formed by the junction of the main roads. There is some suggestion that there may have been some form of internal planning, in that the southernmost minor road (road E in Havis, 1993) is located perpendicular to London Road and parallel (approximately 145m/4 Roman *actus* apart) to a major boundary ditch located at 7 Grenville Road (Garwood, 1997). Road B in the northern part of the town is on a similar alignment and may represent part of the same plan. The other roads form no discernible pattern and may represent subsequent unplanned development.

### **Built-up area** (TL 7544 2295)

The Roman built-up area appears to have been concentrated, possibly even confined to the triangular area in the south-west quadrant of the main road junction. To an extent this pattern may be a reflection of those areas which have been archaeologically examined, however excavation on the eastern side of the Chelmsford-Sudbury route has found no Roman remains. Roman buildings have been excavated at 4 London Road (ESMR 6295), the Letch's Builders Yard site (ESMR 6293-4), the Boar's Head site (ESMR 16351-3), 65 Rayne Road (ESMR 16356-7), 51-57 Rayne Road (ESMR 6367-2), College Road (ESMR 16866-7) and the Flock/Fountain sites (ESMR 6356-60).

The structures were of timber-framed construction, some of which rested on masonry foundations or low masonry walls. There is a definite pattern of alignment of individual structures and boundary ditches to the two main roads, London Road and Rayne Road. In the absence of publication of the relevant sites it is not possible to determine any alignment to the known minor roads.

### **Possible Public Building** (TL 7538 2290)

Excavation at 7 Grenville Road (Garwood, 1997) revealed the post-holes of a substantial building, probably an aisled building, and more significantly the material remains of a Roman building with architectural pretensions. This latter structure was built of squared timbers, plastered and painted, with a rubble and mortar foundation and tiled roof, and appears to have burnt down. This structure appears to have been considerably more elaborate architecturally than the other structures that have been excavated to date in Braintree, and it is tentatively suggested that it may have served some form of a public function, rather than being a private dwelling.

### **Industrial area**

There is some evidence for a degree of industrial zoning within the built-up area, with a concentration of iron-working debris, including furnace slag at the College House site (ESMR 6297) and a possible bloomery and smithy at the Letch's Builders Yard site (ESMR 6293-4) in the south-west corner of the town.

### **Cemetery** (TL 7527 2287)

The principal cemetery area appears to have been located in the Grenville Road area (Drury, 1976), on the western edge of the Roman town between the two main roads. All the burials to date are cremation burials, with the exception of some child burials from the College House site (Havis, 1993).

### **Saxon**

There is some evidence that there was a Saxon settlement in Braintree, but there is nothing to suggest that it was ever urban in nature. A two-post sunken-floored building was excavated at The Flock site (ESMR 6356-60) and is presumed to be Saxon in date, but the site remains unpublished. At 69 Rayne Road (ESMR 16244, 16358) the Roman features were sealed by a thick black loamy deposit, possibly a post-Roman 'dark earth' relating to subsequent agricultural or horticultural activity on the site, dating to the Saxon period. Some Saxon pottery has been recovered from Hunnable's gravel-pit, Clare Road, in 1922 (Drury, 1976). A group of burials were also uncovered in 1909 from the pit. These were accompanied only by iron knives, and may perhaps have been Saxon in date (Drury, 1976). To date the evidence suggests that a Saxon settlement was probably located to the south-west of the later St Michael's Church, and the church itself may have had a Saxon predecessor.

In the later Saxon period the Braintree and Bocking area formed the estates of a Saxon *thegn*, Aetheric, who distinguished himself and died at the Battle of Maldon in 991. He left his Braintree lands to the Bishops of London and his Bocking lands to the Prior and monks of Canterbury. The Bishops of London have thus held an estate at Braintree since the late tenth century, probably administered from Chapel Hill where their manor house was certainly sited in the medieval period. Tenth century grass-tempered ware and Thetford ware have been recovered from the Chapel Hill area confirming some form of occupation of the site at that period.

### **Medieval synthesis and components**

At the beginning of the medieval period Braintree were divided into two distinct holdings, the manor of the Bishops of London which included the area of Braintree town and thirty acres annexed by Ledmer of Hempstead. The early settlement focus for Braintree was probably located in the area of St Michael's Church, with a second focus around the Bishop's manor house and St John's Chapel at Chapel Hill. It has been postulated that St John's Chapel was the original parish church for Braintree, and St Michael's was a subsidiary chapel, the roles being reversed at the beginning of the thirteenth century when the 'new town' was created. In 1199 a grant was made to William de Ste. Mere Eglise, Bishop of London, granting a weekly market and annual fair on St Matthew's Day. As a consequence of this grant he founded a 'new town' at Braintree on Episcopal estate land, on the eastern side of the main road junction. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries Braintree became an important cloth centre, and by 1452 the Braintree bailiffs 'certified that the art or mystery of weaving woollen cloth was exercised there and more so than any other arts or mysteries and had been from time beyond memory'.

The medieval urban components are:-

***Built-up area*** (TL 7565 2306)

The Domesday Book and the off-centre siting of the St Michael's Church suggest that there may have been a small settlement at Braintree focused on the church, in the centuries preceding the founding of the new town in 1199. The new town appears to have been deliberately planned, with blocks of tenements fronting on to the market-place. These tenements measure c.13m across the frontage and are c.60m deep. The tenements on the west side of Bank Street may belong to a second phase of development possibly dating to the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century (on the basis of an excavated boundary ditch). These tenement blocks measure approximately 10m wide by 42m deep, and were not part of the episcopal estate. The earliest surviving building in Braintree is the thirteenth century church, and there are some fourteenth and fifteenth century buildings along Bank Street and High Street. The plots along the High Street were certainly developed in their present form by the end of the medieval period, however there was no closely planned layout as on Bank Street, due to the necessity to fit the properties into the two triangular-shaped areas of land available.

Twelfth century boundary ditches have been excavated at the Boar's Head (ESMR 16351-3) and 65 Rayne Road (ESMR 16356-7) sites. At 69 Rayne Road (ESMR 16244, 16358) a timber-framed building was identified, dated by a coin of Richard II to the later fourteenth century. At 13-17 Bank Street the excavated evidence suggested that the site was not developed in the medieval period until the early thirteenth century, when at least one and possibly two earth-fast timber buildings were constructed, aligned to Rayne Road. Excavation at the Tesco's site (ESMR 6355) failed to find any medieval remains, confirming that this area remained undeveloped until the post-medieval period.

***St Michael's Church*** (TL 7561 2293)

The nave and chancel of St Michael's Church are twelfth century in origin, and were almost certainly rebuilt c. 1240 when the north and south aisles and the tower were added. The discovery of inhumation burials immediately to the north of St Michael's Lane suggests that originally the graveyard extended out that far.

***Market-place*** (TL 7559 2287)

The market-place was a roughly rectangular area, sited on the eastern side of the junction of Bank Street and the High Street. It presumably dates to 1199 and the granting of the market-charter. The Listed Building evidence demonstrates that infilling of the site had begun by the sixteenth century. No. 1, Swan Side is a public building, probably associated with the market-place. The 'gants' or alleyways within the original market-place, perpetuate the layout of the original covered stalls (the term 'gant' is Flemish in origin (Brisley, 1992)).

***The Market Cross***

The Market Cross stood on Drury Lane.

***Fair-ground*** (TL7576 2295)

The fair-ground was located on the southern side of the town, where Tesco's supermarket and car-park are now.

***The Bishop's manor house*** (TL 7668 2285)

The manor house of the Bishops of London was located at Chapel Hill, under what is now the old industrial estate. In the late nineteenth century the site was marked by earthworks

of moats or fishponds (Drury, 1976). The manor house is known to have had at least one fishpond, as in 1242 a Ralf de Neckton was supplied with eight bream from it. The Bishops of London had held an estate at Braintree since the late tenth century (see above).

### ***St John the Baptist Chapel*** (TL 7671 2269)

The chapel of St John the Baptist was located to the south of the Bishop's manor house. A painting of 1849 by James Sargent, depicts the west end of the chapel with a triple-light lancet window surmounted by a triangle of moulded stone. The body of the building was of flint rubble with high gables and angled corner buttresses. The chapel was surrounded by a burial ground. It was still in use in 1511, when John Byrde of Braintree made a bequest in his will for the 'reperacion and sustentacion of Seynt John's Chapell' (Drury, 1976).

### ***Hospital of St James***

In 1229 Henry III made a grant of protection for the master and brethren of the hospital of St James at Braintree (Drury, 1976). This maybe the same site as the Chapel of St James in Bradford Street, Bocking. It was presumably closed during the Reformation, if not before.

### ***Public Buildings***

The rear of 17 High Street (TL 75759 23105) is a public building, possibly a court hall. 1 Swan Side is a public building (TL 75714 23132), probably associated with the market.

### ***Mills*** (TL 7657 2247)

There was a mill on the River Brain at Chapel Hill

### ***Post-medieval and modern synthesis and components***

Braintree was still an important cloth town at the beginning of the post-medieval period, having by the early sixteenth century specialised in the manufacture of bays and says. The principal market for the Braintree bays and says was abroad, particularly Spain and Portugal (Baker, 1981). In 1620 more than 600 bays were sent from Braintree each week. The cloth trade was however prone to peaks and troughs, being dependent on the communications and relationships with its overseas markets. The prosperity of Braintree also took a severe blow during the plague, when 665 people died, accounting for approximately a third of the population. The woollen cloth industry went into terminal decline in the eighteenth century but the nineteenth century saw the rise of the silk industry. The principal firms were Courtauld and Walters, but there were also a number of other shorter-lived silk factories in the town, these latter firms being concentrated just off the High Street, in Factory Yard and Martins' Yard. The importance of the market and the retail trade also continued to grow. In addition the first half of the twentieth century was dominated by the growth of metal manufacturing firms, notably Crittalls. In 1939 the parishes of Bocking and Braintree were united to form a single Urban District.

### ***The built-up area*** (TL 7567 2303)

The built-up area continued to grow throughout the post-medieval period. In 1619 a land purchase deed (Drury, 1976) records the existence of a '*newe markett streete*', New Street. The frontages along New Street were developed in the early seventeenth century and observation during the demolition of two early seventeenth structures on the site of the former cattle-market (now Tesco's supermarket) confirmed that they were the first buildings on the site. New Street was subsequently encroached on by nineteenth century building and the site of the market-place was shifted eastwards to its present location. The growth of the silk industry in the nineteenth century led to large-scale expansion of workers housing in Braintree, and a lot of infilling of the yards of existing premises in the old town centre. 118-120 and 141-145 South Street are weaver's cottages, with a purpose-built loom room integral to their original plan. Further expansion took place in the second half of the nineteenth century, particularly on the south-eastern side of the town around the station and the sidings, which became an urban factory and housing area. 21-22 Clockhouse Way and 156-158 Crossing Road were built in the years immediately after 1918 by C.H.B. Quennell and W.F. Crittall to demonstrate the use of the metric modular system of concrete block construction, in response to the need for cheap housing after the First World War. They are two-storeyed, flat roofed with moulded cornice and parapet and with original Crittall metal windows. In 1941 a bombing raid destroyed the buildings at the junction of Bank Street and Coggeshall Road, and the opportunity was taken to widen the road.

### ***The market-place***

The Listed Buildings evidence suggests that the infilling of the medieval market-place was certainly underway in the sixteenth century, if not before, and the documentary evidence records the laying out of a new market street (New Street, TL 7570 2302) in the early seventeenth century. New Street itself was subsequently encroached upon by buildings and the market-place was moved again in the early nineteenth century, this time eastwards to form the present day Market Square (TL 7581 2302), which was then a field.

### ***The Market Cross***

The original medieval market cross had become derelict by the beginning of the seventeenth century and it was replaced by a new structure in New Street in 1631.

### ***St Michael's Parish Church*** (TL 7561 2293)

The church was added to and altered in the sixteenth century, including the addition of new roofs to the north and south chapels. It was restored by J.N. Pearson in 1856.

### ***St John the Baptist Chapel*** (TL 7671 2269)

The Chapel of St John the Baptist at Chapel Hill was probably closed as a result of the Reformation in the 1530s. It was converted into two or three tenements, the graveyard becoming the garden for these properties. By 1839 the building was in ruins and by 1893 all that survived was the foundations (Drury, 1976). The site has been built over, first by the Albion Works and subsequently by further factory buildings.

### ***Nonconformist Meeting House*** (TL 7575 2340)

A purpose-built Nonconformist meeting house was built in 1701 at Bocking End. It was a red-brick building with gabled roof and leaded lights. It was demolished in 1808 and replaced by the present Congregational Church, which is buff gault brick.

### ***The Congregational Church, London Road***

The Congregational Church, London Road was built in 1832 in gault brick.



***The Town Pump*** (TL 75705 23062)

The Town Pump was located at the northern end of New Street, remaining in use until 1890.

***The Cage*** (TL 7571 2291)

The parish Cage was originally located next to the workhouse on Market Street. It was pulled down in 1838 and a new brick Cage built in New Street. The latter Cage is still extant, but has not been used for its original purpose since 1875 when it became an ammunition store for the 12th Essex Volunteer Rifles.

***The workhouse***

The parish workhouse (TL 7576 2300) was located on Market Street, under what is now Tesco's, and could house 60 inmates. It was replaced in 1838 by the Poor Law Union workhouse (TL 7501 2316), on Rayne Road on the western edge of the town. The Union Workhouse was based on a design by Jeremy Bentham and could accommodate 300 people. It is built of red brick, with a small central building from which three arms radiated, with a house at the front. The building was subsequently enlarged to hold 400 inmates and several acres of land added, including piggeries as a rubbish-disposal system. The buildings now form the central part of St Michael's Hospital, established in 1948 by the National Health Service.

***The Parsonage*** (TL 7668 2285)

The original parsonage was located near the site of the Bishop's manor house at Chapel Hill. It is not clear whether it had a medieval predecessor and formed part of the manor house complex, or whether it actually replaced the manor house after the Reformation. It was still in use until the late eighteenth century, before moving to its present site on The Causeway.

***Breweries and maltings***

There were maltings at Young's Brewery in Railway Street, at Ridley's Brewery and next to the Gas Works in Manor Street.

***County Courthouse*** (TL 7588 2326)

The County Courthouse, Coggeshall Road, is a late nineteenth century grey gault brick building. It now forms part of Braintree District Council offices.

***The Corn Exchange*** (TL 7565 2303)

The Corn Exchange, High Street was built in 1839 and enlarged between 1860 and 1877. It has been demolished.

***Braintree and Bocking Cottage Hospital***

The Courtauld's built a Cottage Hospital in Broad Road, Bocking in 1871. In 1921 it was replaced by a new Cottage Hospital in London Road, built and presented by William Julian Courtauld. It had 26 beds. In 1938 an 11 bed maternity unit was added. The hospital was transferred to the Ministry of health in 1948 under the National Health Service Act and scheduled for closure in 1998.

**Town Hall** (TL 7585 2301)

The old Town Hall, Market Square was financed by W.J. Courtauld and designed by V. Harris in 1926-8. It is of red Flemish bond brick with Portland stone dressings. It retains much of its original decorative scheme and fittings and is now used as a public information and exhibition centre.

**Crittall's Factories** (TL 7631 2315)

Crittalls Manufactory Company started from Francis Crittall's ironmongers shop in Bank Street in the mid-nineteenth century before expanding into manufacturing. In 1893 the Manor Works were built, where the production of metal windows was developed, but this site has been levelled and re-developed.

**Lake and Elliot Foundry Ltd.** (TL 7666 2278)

Lake and Eliot was founded in 1896, and was based in the Albion Works in Rayne Road where they manufactured bicycle tools and vehicle jacks. In 1906 the expanding company moved to the New Albion Works on Chapel Hill where they installed a steel foundry and what was apparently the first electric arc furnace in Britain. It was one of the first Essex factories to build a motor car.

**Courtauld's factories and public amenities** (TL 7656 2256)

In 1809 George Courtauld purchased the old flour mill at Chapel Hill and converted it to a silk mill (Baker, 1981). This involved the demolition of much of the original buildings and the erection of a much larger structure with a deeper mill-race and bigger water-wheel. He then quarrelled with his partner and sold his share in the mill. In 1816 his son Samuel Courtauld set up a small silk throwster business in Panfield Lane, before building a purpose-built mill at Pound End, South Street. This he in turn sold, purchasing the fulling mill at Bocking Church Street and converting it to silk manufacture, subsequently adding a steam factory and a finishing factory. In 1843 Samuel purchased the Chapel Hill mill, and in 1859 built a new three-storey mill next to the old mill, with winding, throwing and power-weaving facilities. The Courtaulds factories specialised in the production of black mourning crape. By the 1880s more than 1,300 workers were employed by the firm in Braintree and Bocking, out of a total population of 8,500, and more than 90% of the workforce were women. In 1904 Courtaulds bought the British rights to the 'viscose' process of making rayon and developed the world's first commercially successful man-made fibre. Courtauld Mill announced its closure in 1981 and the site has been levelled and re-developed.

The Courtauld family was paternalistic in its attitude towards both its workforce and the town, building some worker's housing and contributing to the provision of public amenities. In 1888 the Public Gardens next to The Causeway, given by Sydney and Sarah Courtauld, were opened. The land for Braintree High School was given by Mrs Sydney Courtauld of Bocking Place. William Julian Courtauld gave the town the William Julian Courtauld Hospital, the recreation ground, financed the Town Hall which opened in 1928 and donated the fountain and the Nurses' Home next to St Michael's.

**The Public Gardens** (TL 7586 2360)

In 1888 the Public Gardens next to The Causeway, given by Sydney and Sarah Courtauld, were opened.

### **Walters and Sons/Warner and Sons** (TL 7578 2282)

Samuel Courtauld's mill at Pound End was leased to Daniel Walters from 1822 (Baker, 1981), who manufactured high quality silk and velvets there, from 1840 specialising in figured fabrics. By 1861 there were 150 Jacquard looms in the factory. At that date he built a new mill, a two-storeyed building, just across the parish boundary in Black Notley. However in 1869 or 1870 this structure was moved to Pound End to form part of the New Mills complex, which was sited on the south side of South Street. The New Mills complex consisted of two long weaving sheds, one shorter one, a dyehouse and a workshop. Power looms were not introduced until 1870. In 1895 the factory was taken over by Warner and Sons. New Mills is now a working museum.

### **The railway** (TL 7606 2272)

The Maldon, Witham and Braintree railway opened in 1848 and the line was extended to Bishops Stortford in 1869. The railway station dates to 1865, and is of red brick with gault brick rusticated trimmings. The Station Master's House also survives.

## **SUMMARY OF GENERAL IMPORTANCE OF THE TOWN**

### **Historical and archaeological summary**

Braintree is a town of considerable importance archaeologically and historically, as an example of a small Roman town, a Saxon settlement and a medium-sized medieval and post-medieval market and manufacturing town. Settlement of the urban area appears to have originated as a ditched enclosure of Late Iron Age date, growing into a Small Town in the Roman period. It has also been suggested that there is an Iron Age *oppidum* enclosing an area of about 50 ha. on the northern slope of the Brain valley (Drury, 1976), however this has not been proven. The Roman Small Town developed on the cross-roads between the main Roman roads of Stane Street (Rayne Road) and the Sudbury-Chelmsford route (London Road). There is evidence that there was a Saxon settlement in Braintree in the area of St Michael's Church, but there is nothing to suggest that it was ever urban in nature. In the later Saxon period Braintree passed into the hands of the Bishops of London and there was a second settlement focus around the Bishop's manor house and St John's Chapel at Chapel Hill. In 1199 the Bishop founded a 'new town' at Braintree on Episcopal estate land, on the eastern side of the main road junction, which grew in to an important cloth-manufacturing town in the late medieval and early post-medieval period. The nineteenth century saw the rise of the silk industry in the town and the first half of the twentieth century was dominated by the growth of metal manufacturing firms.

### **Survival**

There have been numerous excavations and watching-briefs in Braintree, largely concentrated in the area of the Roman Town. The earliest archaeological observations in Braintree were made in the nineteenth century and further work took place during the first half of the twentieth century. The first large-scale excavations took place in 1971-76 by the Essex Archaeological Society and Essex County Council, in advance of re-development of the town centre. Further development, in particular the construction of Pierrefitte Way and George Yard, between 1984 and 1990 prompted additional excavations in the area of the Roman town by the Brain Valley Archaeology Society (BVAS), Braintree District Council (BDC) and Essex County Council. A number of small-scale evaluations have taken place within the urban area during the 1990's. Those sites that were excavated prior to 1976 have been published (Drury 1976), as have the George

Yard excavations (Havis 1993), although the important group of sites along Pierrefitte Way remains unpublished.

The excavated evidence reveals that there is a build-up of stratigraphy, at its deepest up to 2.7m. There has been haphazard localised quarrying within the urban area, largely dating to the post-medieval period, but these are small-scale in nature. A cellar survey of the town centre by the BVAS established that approximately a quarter of the buildings fronting Bank Street and the High Street are cellared, with consequent disturbance of below ground deposits. Waterlogged deposits are known to survive in deeper features such as wells and cess-pits, and there are antiquarian reports of alluvial deposits containing timber remains in the valley of the River Brain at Skitts Hill. Soil-conditions are conducive to the preservation of faunal remains and artefacts such as ceramics, building materials and metal. Braintree has a reasonable range of medieval and post-medieval documentary source material for a town of its size and importance. The High Street and Bank Street/Little Square area still retains enough of its historic buildings to preserve the appearance of a historic market town of medieval origin. Much of the nineteenth and early twentieth century industrial architecture has been lost.

### **Current planning constraints**

The medieval town and the core of the post-medieval town is located within the current Conservation Area, however over half of the area of the Roman town and the industrial area and areas of later post-medieval expansion are not included. There are 83 Buildings Listed as being of Architectural or Historical Importance, five of these are Grade II\*, the remainder are Grade II. Part of the disused railway line is a Country Park and a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation.

### **RESEARCH PRIORITIES**

The Late Iron Age/Roman transition period has been identified as a key theme in archaeological studies (English Heritage, 1997: Bryant in Brown and Glazebrook, forthcoming). Going (in Brown and Glazebrook, forthcoming) has identified a period of defensive building in the later Antonine period and evidence of decay and dereliction in many of the East Anglian regions town after the mid third century. Questions have also been raised regarding the nature of later Roman industries in towns, and the presence of agricultural activities within the urban area (Going forthcoming). With regard to this the archaeology of Braintree has a significance at a local, regional and national level.

The immediate research priorities for the Late Iron Age and Roman period are:-

- The records of the unpublished sites should be examined to assess their potential to further our understanding of this important town.
- The origins and subsequent development of the Roman small town from the preceding Iron Age settlement needs to be examined.
- Ceramic studies have considerable potential in addressing the problems of economy, dating, social and cultural organisation. In particular the latest Roman sequences (post c. 360/70) which indicate differences in the pottery supply between Braintree and Chelmsford at that date are of particular interest. There is a need to publish the unpublished pottery groups and a synthesis involving quantification of stratified groups.
- Examination of Braintree's relationship to its local hinterland is particularly important.
- To date there is no evidence that there were any defensive works associated with the town, and this needs to be verified. The development and subsequent decline of the

town in the later Roman period needs to be examined, as does the nature of the transition into the Roman period.

The understanding of the development and function of the medieval and post-medieval small market town and the testing of theories on social action, economy, politics etc. have been highlighted as an important area of study at the national level (English Heritage, 1997; Ayres in Brown and Glazebrook, forthcoming).

The immediate research priorities for the medieval and post-medieval period are:-

- Fieldwork undertaken within Braintree to date has added little to our knowledge of the medieval town, principally because the areas of development have led to a concentration of archaeological investigation on the area of the Roman town and the backlands rather than the street frontage. Subsequent fieldwork should need to be targeted to correct this imbalance.
- The period of transition from the late Saxon settlement to the medieval 'new town' needs to be examined.
- Further excavation will be needed before the medieval and post-medieval pottery evidence can reveal anything about dating, trade and distribution networks and socio-economic factors. Any pottery from excavations by the BVAS and BDC should be located and assessed with a view to publication. The relationship between Hedingham ware and the town needs to be examined, as Braintree was one of the nearest consumer sites for the Hedingham kilns, and was the nearest point of access to Stane Street. The evidence for an extended east-west distribution of pottery types along Stane Street needs to be examined, and the Oxford ware jug from Bank Street may be evidence of this. Braintree is also on the intersection of the road from Chelmsford to the north east and may have had trading connections in this direction.
- The role of the cloth trade in the development of the town and how it is represented in the archaeological and historical record is an important area of research and vital to our understanding of the morphology, economy and social history of Braintree.
- The surviving elements of Braintree's late post-medieval and early modern industrial heritage need to be assessed.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1: Documentary sources

Parish	Archive	Classmark	Number	Date	Title
Braintree	E.R.O.	T/A	172	medieval	Catalogue of deeds in Westminster abbey muniments.
Braintree	E.R.O.	T/A	733/1,2	medieval(?)	Deeds in Huntingdon Library, California.
Braintree	P.R.O.	SC2	123/1859-1864	Edw. II - Geo. III	Books of reliefs and fines for Clare Honor.
Braintree	P.R.O.	SC2	214	Edw. II - Ric. II	Braintree possibly included in court rolls for Honor of Clare etc.
Braintree	P.R.O.	SC2	214/2	2-4 Edw. II	Courts including Braintree.
Braintree	B.L.	Add. CH.	59373, 64933-65125 (within that range)	1371-1676	Collection of deeds.
Braintree	P.R.O.	SC6	1112/1	11-12 Ric. II.	Accounts of Honor of Clare fees in Essex, including Braintree.
Braintree	P.R.O.	SC2	214/28	16-17 Ric. II	Courts including Braintree.
Braintree	P.R.O.	SC6	1140/18,25	18 Ric. II, 4-5 Edw. IV	Accounts of lands of See of London at Braintree (Blanketre).
Braintree	P.R.O.	SC2	116-122	Hen. IV - Geo. III	Large series of court rolls and books. See P.R.O. List and Index VI (1896) for the individual references.
Braintree	P.R.O.	SC6	1112/18-19	8-11 Hen. IV	Accounts of Honor of Clare fees in Essex, including Braintree.
Braintree	P.R.O.	SC6	1114/2	1-2 Edw. IV	Accounts of lands of Duchess of York, including fee in Braintree.
Braintree	P.R.O.	SC2	213/59-68	1-2 Edw. IV - 20/21 Edw. IV.	Courts of Clare Honor including Sandpitts in Braintree.
Braintree	P.R.O.	SC2	213, 214	Hen VII, Hen VIII, Edw. VI	General courts of Clare Honor and Stambourne Honor, including Braintree. See P.R.O. List and Index VI (1896).
Braintree	P.R.O.	SC 11	989	13 Hen VIII	Terrier of the glebe and rectory.
Braintree	P.R.O.	SC2	171/37	24 Hen. VIII	General court of Bishop of London. (very defective)
Braintree	P.R.O.	DL 43	2/6	1&2 P&M, 16 Eliz.	Terrier and rental including manor/estate of Sandpitts, Braintree.
Braintree	E.R.O.	D/DU	65/49-59	1755-1893	Court rolls of manor of Braintree.
Bocking	E.R.O.	D/Z	2/7/8a, 8c, 2/18/8	1762-1922	Land tax assessments.
Bocking	E.R.O.	D/Z	2/7/8A, 8C; 2/18/8.	1762-1922	Land tax assessments.
Braintree	E.R.O.	D/Z	2/7/10A, 10C; 2/18/10	1766-1922	Land tax assessments.
Braintree	E.R.O.	D/DO	M61-64	1813-1930	Court books (1813-1890) and papers (1820-1913) of the manor of Braintree.
Braintree	E.R.O.	D/DU	65/78-82	1814	Surveys of Braintree.
Braintree	E.R.O.	D/DO	B36	1814-23	Schedule of profits of manor of Braintree, including tolls or markets and fairs.
Braintree	B.L.	Add. MS.	36362, f. 20	1824	Drawing of grammar school.
Braintree	E.R.O.	D/P	264/27	c. 1840	Tithe map. Town only. Scale: 60 in. to 1m.
Braintree	E.R.O.	no. ref.		c. 1850	Messrs Balls' Saleyard at Braintree



e					Market, showing buildings, pens, adjoining properties, inns etc. Scale: 1in. to 8ft.
Braintree	E.R.O.	D/HBr		1850-1894	Braintree Local Board of Health
Braintree	E.R.O.			1894-1934	Braintree Urban District
Braintree	E.R.O.			1934-1974	Braintree and Bocking Urban District.
Braintree	B.L.	Add. MS.	6754	n.d.	Sketches of Braintree Church.
Braintree	B.L.	Add. MS.	6754, f. 204		Archit. drawings of church.

## APPENDIX 2: Listed buildings

Serial No.	Date	Street	No.	Name	Building Type	GV	Grade	Material
1/99	13	St Michaels Road		Church of St Michael	Church	N	B	Flint, rubble
1/98	15	Bank Street	37, 39			Y	II	Timber framed, brick front
1/95	15	Bank Street	3 & 9			Y	II	Timber framed, plastered
1/118	15	High Street	85-93	The Boar's Head Hotel	House	N	II	Timber framed, plastered
1/20	15	High Street	113, 115		House	Y	II	Timber framed, plastered
1/114	15+16	High Street	106			Y	II	Timber framed, plastered
1/117	15/16	High Street	77			Y	II	Timber framed, plastered
1/96	16	Bank Street	31		House	Y	II	Timber framed, plastered
1/97	16	Bank Street	33		House	Y	II	Timber framed, plastered
1/92	16	Bank Street	26	Swan Inn	Public House	Y	II*	Timber framed, plastered
1/101	16	Great Square		The Constitutional Club and shops	House	Y	II*	Timber framed, plastered
1/221	16	High Street	117	College House	House	Y	II	Timber framed, brick, roughcast
1/113	16	High Street	100, 102			Y	II	Timber framed, plastered
1/123	16	Little Square		The Old Manor House	House	N	II*	Timber framed, plastered
1/78	16	Rayne Road	28 - 34[even]		House	N	II	Timber frame, plastered
1/108	16-17	High Street	72a, 72			Y	II	Brick, plastered
1/237	16/17	South Street	57	Gooseberry Hall	Farmhouse	N	II	Timber framed, cement rendered
1/93	17	Bank Street	40		House	Y	II	Timber framed, plastered
1/1	17	Bocking End		The White Hart Hotel	Hotel	Y	II	Timber framed, plastered
7/156	17	Coggeshall Road		Mark's Farmhouse	Farmhouse	N	II	Timber framed, plastered
7/233	17	Crissing Road	37-41[odd]	Tudor Cottage	House	N	II	Timber framed, plastered
1/106	17	Great Square		Bell Inn		N	II	Timber framed, plastered
1/110	17	High Street	76, 78		House	Y	II	Timber framed,
1/112	17	High Street	92-96 [even]		House	Y	II	Timber framed, plastered
1/115	17	High Street	112		House	Y	II	Timber framed, plastered
1/116	17	High Street	73, 75		House	Y	II	Timber framed, plastered
1/111	17	High Street	90		House	Y	II	Timber framed, plastered
1/119	17	High Street	105, 107		House	Y	II	Timber framed, plastered

1/107	17	High Street	68, 70	The Horn Hotel		Y	II	Timber framed, brick
1/10001	17	Little Square		Baytree Restaurant, & Osborn's Shop	Inn	Y	II	Timber framed, plastered
1/131	17	New Street	4		House	Y	II	Timber framed, plastered
1/133	17	New Street	14, 16		House	Y	II	Timber framed, plastered
1/121	17	Notley Road		Angel Inn	House	Y	II	Timber framed, plastered
1/226	17	Notley Road	122	Notley Place	House	N	II	Brick
1/163a	17	Notley Road	169		House	N	II	Timber framed, plastered
1/149	17	South Street	4, 6		House	N	II	Timber framed, plastered
1/130	17-18	New Street		House occupied by Henry Joscelyn Ltd	House	Y	II	Timber framed, plastered
1/163	17-18	Notley Road		Black Notley Lodge	House	N	II*	Red & blue brick
1/124	17/18	London Road	7	Blandford House	House	N	II	Timber framed, plastered
2/166	18	Bawn Close		Bawn Cottage	House	Y	II	Timber framed, weatherboarded
1/2	18	Bocking End	2		House	Y	II	Brick
6/214	18	Coggeshall Road	82		House	Y	II	Timber framed, plastered
1/103	18	Great Square		House & Shop	House	Y	II	Timber framed, plastered
1/126	18	London Road	23-33[odd]		Terraced House	Y	II	Timber framed, plastered
1/136	18	New Street	34		House	N	II	Timber framed, plastered
1/132	18	New Street	12		House	Y	II	Timber framed, plastered
1/146	18	New Street		Joseph Bradley and Sons Ltd Office	House	N	II	Timber framed, plastered
1/205	18	Panfield Lane	3			Y	II	Timber framed, plastered
1/75	18	Rayne Road	6, 8		House	Y	II	Timber frame, plastered
1/77	18	Rayne Road	20	Horse and Groom Inn		Y	II	Timber frame, plastered
1/79	18	Rayne Road	48-52[even]		House	Y	II	Timber frame, plastered
1/80	18	Rayne Road	54-74[even]		House	Y	II	Timber framed, plastered
1/152	18	South Street	68, 70			Y	II	Timber framed, plastered
1/240	18-19	New Street		The Liberal Club		N	II	Timber framed, plastered
6/215	18/19	Coggeshall Road	84		House	Y	II	Timber framed, plastered
6/216	18/19	Coggeshall Road	86		House	Y	II	Timber framed, plastered
1/223	18/19	Market Place	6			N	II	Timber framed, plastered
1/143	18/19	Market Place	1, 2	The Bull Hotel	Hotel	N	II	Timber framed
1/224	18/19	New Street	3		House	N	II	Timber framed
1/206	18/19	Panfield Lane	5, 7		House	Y	II	Timber framed, plastered
1/208	18/19	Rayne Road	36	Hill House	House	N	II	Timber frame, plastered

1/230	18/19	South Street	66		House	Y	II	Brick
1/212	19	Bank Street	11		House	Y	II	Gault brick
1/211	19	Bank Street	1	Barclay's Bank		Y	II	Gault brick
1/3	19	Bocking End		Congregational Church	Church	N	II	Gault brick
1/169	19	Bocking End		The Institute & Museum	Museum	N	II	Gault brick
6/217	19	Coggeshall Road	98,100		House	Y	II	Brick, plastered
1/234	19	Coggeshall Road		Essex County Library	County Court	N	II	Brick, stucco
7/201	19	Coggeshall Road	21		House	N	II	Brick, plastered
1/105	19	Great Square		House & Shop	House	N	II	Timber framed, plastered
1/232	19	High Street	101, 103	The Wheatsheaf Hotel		Y	II	Brick, plastered
1/109	19	High Street	74, 74a	+ Corn Exchange		Y	II	Brick, plaster
1/220	19	High Street	80			Y	II	
1/125	19	London Road	19, 21		House	Y	II	Stuccoed
1/128	19	London Road	41		House	Y	II	Brick, plastered
1/127	19	London Road	35, 37		House	Y	II	Gault brick
1/140	19	Market Place	23	+ Hill House	House	Y	II	Gault brick
1/241	19	New Street		The Cage or Lock Up	Lock Up	N	II	Brick, flagstone
6/81	19	Rayne Road		St Michael's Hospital	Hospital	N	II	Brick
1/151	19	South Street		New Mills	Silk Mill	Y	II	Brick
1/151b	19	South Street		Tesco Garden Centre	Garden Centre	N	II	Timber framed, weatherboarded
1/242	20	Bank Street		Telephone Kiosk, Swanside	Telephone Box	Y	II	Cast iron
1/10000	20	Market Place		Town Hall + Screens & Public Lavatories	Town Hall	Y	II*	Flemish bond brick, Portland stone dressing

APPENDIX 3: Urban components list.

ID	DATE	DESCRIPTION
LATE IRON AGE		
914	LATE IRON AGE	BUILT-UP AREA
915	LATE IRON AGE	OPPIDUM
916	LATE IRON AGE	ENCLOSURE DITCH
917	LATE IRON AGE	BURIALS
ROMAN		
918	ROMAN	ROADS
919	ROMAN	BUILT-UP AREA
920	ROMAN	CEMETERY
921	ROMAN	POSSIBLE PUBLIC BUILDING
922	ROMAN	INDUSTRIAL AREA
MEDIEVAL		
923	MEDIEVAL	BUILT-UP AREA
924	MEDIEVAL	PARISH CHURCH OF ST MICHAEL
925	MEDIEVAL	MARKET-PLACE
926	MEDIEVAL	MARKET-CROSS
927	MEDIEVAL	FAIR GROUND
928	MEDIEVAL	BISHOP'S MANORHOUSE
929	MEDIEVAL	ST JOHN'S THE BAPTIST CHAPEL
930	MEDIEVAL	HOSPITAL OF ST JAMES
931	MEDIEVAL	MILL
954	MEDIEVAL	PUBLIC BUILDINGS
POST-MEDIEVAL		
932	POST-MEDIEVAL	BUILT-UP AREA
933	POST-MEDIEVAL	MARKET-PLACE
934	POST-MEDIEVAL	MARKET CROSS
935	POST-MEDIEVAL	PARISH CHURCH OF ST MICHAEL
936	POST-MEDIEVAL	ST JOHN THE BAPTIST CHAPEL
937	POST-MEDIEVAL	NONCONFORMIST MEETING HOUSE
939	POST-MEDIEVAL	TOWN PUMP
940	POST-MEDIEVAL	CAGE
941	POST-MEDIEVAL	WORKHOUSE
942	POST-MEDIEVAL	PARSONAGE
943	POST-MEDIEVAL	BREWERIES AND MALTHOUSES
944	POST-MEDIEVAL	COUNTY COURTHOUSE
945	POST-MEDIEVAL	CORN EXCHANGE
946	POST-MEDIEVAL	TOWN HALL
947	POST-MEDIEVAL	CRITTALL'S FACTORIES
948	POST-MEDIEVAL	LAKE AND ELLIOT LTD.
949	POST-MEDIEVAL	COURTAULD'S FACTORIES AND PUBLIC AMENITIES
950	POST-MEDIEVAL	WALTERS AND SONS
951	POST-MEDIEVAL	THE RAILWAY
952	POST-MEDIEVAL	MILLS
953	POST-MEDIEVAL	PUBLIC GARDENS
955	POST-MEDIEVAL	CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
956	POST-MEDIEVAL	COTTAGE HOSPITAL