

**An archaeological watching brief
on sewerage improvements at
Bulford Lane,
Black Notley, Essex**

May-June 2001

**on behalf of
J Breheny Contractors Ltd**

CAT project ref.: 01/5E
HAMP site code: BNAW.01
Braintree Museum accession code: BRNTM 2001.8
NGR: TL 7689 2073-TL 7732 2034



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CAT Report 145

Contents

1 Summary	1
2 Introduction	1
3 Archaeological background	1
4 Aims and objectives	1
5 Methods	1
6 Results	2
7 Discussion	2
8 Archive deposition	3
9 Acknowledgements	3
Appendix: Finds listing	4
Plate	5
Figures	after p 5

EHCR summary sheet

List of plate and figures

Plate 1 Soil-stripping of the central section.

Fig 1 Site location, scale 1: 20,000.

Fig 2 Plan of new sewer and existing sewer, scale 1: 2500.

1 Summary

Observations were made during soil-stripping for a new Anglian Water sewer-trench at Bulford Lane, Black Notley, Essex. The soil-stripping did not reveal any features or finds of archaeological significance, due partly to the disturbed nature of the soil and partly to the shallow depth of the stripping.

2 Introduction (Figs 1 & 2)

- 2.1 This is the report on an archaeological watching brief carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) between the 18th May and the 11th June 2001, along the line of a new 0.8km-long sewer-pipe from the northern end of the village of Black Notley to Bulford Lane. Soil-stripping followed by the laying of the new pipeline was carried out by Breheny Contractors Ltd. The works were given planning permission with the condition for an archaeological watching brief to be carried out.
- 2.2 The site is located to the south of Braintree, on the north-eastern side of the village of Black Notley at National Grid Reference TL 7689 2073-TL 7732 2034. The pipeline easement runs through grass fields lying to the west of the River Brain and slopes down towards it.
- 2.3 This report follows the standards set out in the IFA's *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (1999).

3 Archaeological background

Roman sites are located on the upper slopes of the Brain Valley in the immediate area of the pipeline. On the western side, an extensive scatter of Roman material has been identified (Essex Heritage Conservation Record no 14020). It is possible that occupation spreads down the slope towards the river. On the eastern side, a further scatter of material has been identified, again consisting of Roman pottery and tile (EHCR no 14150).

4 Aims and objectives

The aim of the watching brief was to determine the location, extent, character, condition and quality of any surviving archaeological remains relating to the occupation of the site.

5 Methods

- 5.1 The fieldwork was carried out by Stephen Benfield (SB) and Kate Orr (KO) of CAT, who carried out an intensive watching brief according to a brief written by the HAMP Group of Essex County Council and a Written Scheme of Investigation by CAT. The length of the area stripped was 800m and the width approximately 8.5m. The topsoil-stripping was at a depth of between 240mm and 500mm, and 100% was monitored.
- 5.2 The brief stated that any archaeological features or deposits exposed during contractor's topsoil-stripping should be recorded, and in addition be excavated if running along the line of the actual pipe cut. However, no features or deposits were exposed, and therefore none were recorded.
- 5.3 Individual records of excavated contexts were entered on CAT pro-forma record sheets and are listed in section 6. Registers were compiled of finds and samples. Finds were washed, weighed and bagged according to context. Those that were not discarded were marked with the site code and context.
- 5.4 General photographs were taken on a digital camera.

- 5.5 A record of the position of the site excavations was made which has been reproduced as Figure 2.

6 Results (Fig 2)

18/05/01 - SB monitored the stripping of the central section which was 15m wide. This area was outside the line of the existing sewer. Two worked flints and one fragment of probable peg-tile were picked up at various places along this stretch. There were no features, but this may be because the stripping had not gone deep enough to expose the subsoil.

18/05/01 - SB monitored the northern section which was between 10m and 12m in width. This area was within the line of the existing sewer and was very messy when seen. There were no finds or features, only a reddish brown clay soil underneath a light grey/brown silt topsoil.

18/05/01 - SB monitored the laying of pipes in the area of the temporary cabins, just north of Bulford Lane, and saw nothing of interest.

08/06/01 - KO monitored the stripping of the south-eastern section. This was the field to the south-east of the temporary cabins, near Bulford Lane. Only 240mm was stripped off and therefore the topsoil (a mid-brown clayey silt) was not taken off completely. The width of the stripped area was 8.5m. Previous drains were observed near Bulford Lane. Fragments of peg-tile, post-medieval pottery and iron objects were retrieved but these were not in any particular concentrations. There may have been features cut into the subsoil, but the stripping did not go deep enough to expose them. Disturbance will also have been caused by the existing sewer which runs right through this area. A trench was later opened in this area and the fill was exactly the same as the topsoil, all the way down.

11/06/01 - KO monitored the north-western section which is on land which slopes from east to west down to the River Brain. The stripping was done to between 250mm and 500mm depth and to between 10.5m and 12m width. In the shallower area to the west, the stripping had not gone below a light grey/brown silt topsoil and there were no features showing. The area of slightly deeper stripping to the east had gone down to a more reddish brown clayey soil with stone. It is not clear whether the clay was undisturbed natural subsoil or some sort of earlier topsoil. It had been baked by the sun since it was stripped three days earlier and had also been very compacted by the machine tracks. This made it difficult to see artefacts on the surface. Although this section had not been disturbed by the existing sewer, there were no visible archaeological features or finds.

The north-eastern section was not stripped.

7 Discussion

- 7.1 The soil-stripping did not reveal any features or finds of archaeological significance, due partly to the disturbed nature of the soil and partly to the shallow depth of the stripping.
- 7.2 The southern stretch and most of the northern stretch follow the line of the existing sewer and should therefore mainly just consist of backfill. This was borne out by what was seen of the open trenches. The anticipated degree of survival of archaeology in these stretches is therefore quite low.
- 7.3 The anticipated degree of survival within the central section is greater, as the existing pipeline follows a different course. There may be remains existing here which were not exposed during the topsoil-stripping, depending on whether this field has been ploughed and to what depth.

8 Archive deposition

- 8.1 A copy of this report and the full archive will be deposited at Braintree Museum under accession code BRNTM 2001.8 within two months of completion of the final publication report on the project, and confirmed to HAMP. All requirements for archive storage will follow the guidelines required by Braintree Museum.
- 8.2 Finds will be bagged and boxed in the manner recommended by Braintree Museum.
- 8.3 The photographic archive is to be presented as follows: original digital data on disk, and hard copies of digital photographs on high-quality paper or as otherwise requested by Braintree Museum.
- 8.4 Copy disks of material held on computers will be presented to Braintree Museum, along with bound copies of printouts.
- 8.5 A summary of the contents of the archive shall be supplied to HAMP at the time of deposition at the museum.
- 8.6 The results will be submitted for publication, at least at a summary level, in *Essex Archaeology and History* in the year following the work. An allowance will be made for full publication of results if justified.

9 Acknowledgements

Colchester Archaeological Trust is grateful to the following for their help and co-operation:

Anglian Water
Richard Havis, Archaeological Officer for HAMP Group of Essex County Council
Breheny Contractors
Robert Rose, Braintree Museum

Kate Orr, July 2001

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Appendix: List of finds

Find no	Description	Weight in g	Date	Discarded
2	Utilised flint flake blade	3	Neolithic or Bronze Age	N
3	Unidentified burnt organic object	3	?	N
4	Utilised waste flint flake with reworkings	4	Neolithic or Bronze Age	N
5	Abraded tile, probably peg-tile	20	Post - medieval	Y
6	Unidentified iron object	13	Post - medieval	Y
6	8 peg-tile fragments	149	Post - medieval	Y
7	9 peg-tile fragments	367	Post - medieval	Y
7	5 sherds of fabric 40 post-medieval red earthenware pottery	45	17th-19th century	N
7	2 iron nails	17	Post - medieval	Y
7	1 animal bone	10	?	Y
8	1 brick lump	121	Post - medieval	Y
8	1 peg-tile fragment	37	Post - medieval	Y
8	Clay tobacco pipe stem fragment	1	Post - medieval	Y
8	Fe object, probably agricultural	97	Post - medieval	Y
8	1 sherd of fabric 48d ironstone pottery	9	19th-20th century	N
8	2 sherds of post-medieval red earthenware	17	17th-19th century	N



Plate 1 Soil-stripping of the central section.

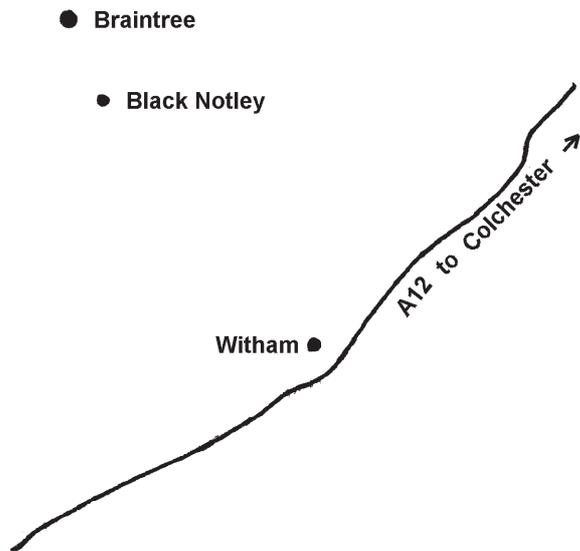
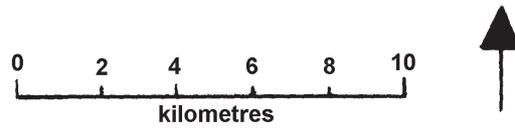


Fig 1 Site location, scale 1:20,000

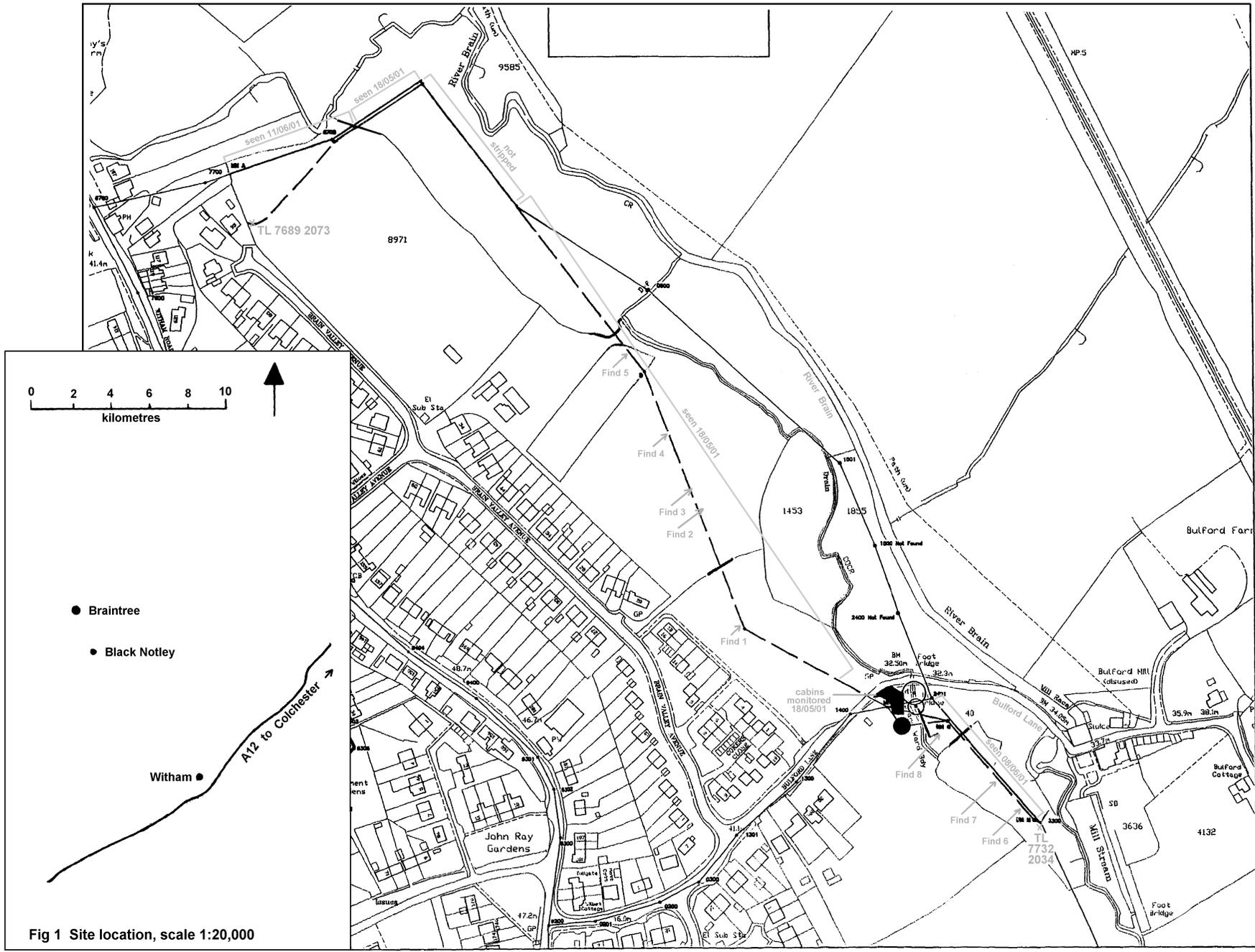


Fig 2 Plan of the new sewer and existing sewer, scale: 1:2500.



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**Essex Heritage Conservation Record/
Essex Archaeology and History**

Summary sheet

Site name/address: Bulford Lane, Black Notley, Braintree, Essex	
Parish: Black Notley	District: Braintree
NGR: TL 7689 2072-TL 7732 2034	Site code: BNAW.01
Type of work: Watching brief/excavation	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: May-June 2001	Size of area investigated: 8.5m-15m x 800m
Location of finds/curating museum Braintree Museum	Funding source: Anglian Water
Further seasons anticipated: No	Related EHCR nos: 14020 & 14150
Final report: CAT Report 145 and summary in <i>Essex Archaeology and History</i>	
Periods represented: Negative	
Summary of fieldwork results: Observations were made during soil-stripping for a new Anglian Water sewer-trench at Bulford Lane, Black Notley, Essex. The soil-stripping did not reveal any features or finds of archaeological significance, due partly to the disturbed nature of the soil and partly to the shallow depth of the stripping.	
Previous summaries/reports: None	
Author of summary: Kate Orr	Date of summary: July 2001