

SIR VALENTINE GEORGE CRITTALL, 1ST BARON BRAINTREE (1895-98)

He was born Valentine George Crittall on 28 June 1884, the son of an Essex businessman Francis Henry Crittall and Ellen Laura Carter.

He was elected as a Labour Party Member of Parliament for the constituency of Maldon, Essex in the general election of 1923, by a majority of only 49 votes over the sitting Conservative MP. He served as Parliamentary Private Secretary to Lord Thomson, the Minister of Air and was the first Labour Under-Secretary of State for Agriculture.

He was defeated by Lt Col Ruggles-Brise (who he defeated in 1923) in the 1924 general election and later joined the Conservative Party!

In 1926, he founded the model Village of Silver End, near Braintree in Essex. It was built as a "garden village" to provide accommodation for the people who worked in the Crittall family's growing factories. The village has been described as "a wonder of its time" and its motto is "Why not?". Picture shows him at digging of foundations for first house. Silver End has recently been the subject of a documentary on BBC4 series the Perfect Village.



He was knighted in 1930 and elevated to the peerage on 9 February 1948, as Baron Braintree "for political and public services". He was also a director of the Bank of England from 1948 to 1955 and a magistrate in Essex. He served as SOF President in 1937.

His gift to the College was slightly unusual – he gave them 50 metal windows for the dormitories, from his business, [Crittall Windows](#), which to this day is still based in Braintree.

He died aged 76 on 21 May 1961, without any male children and therefore his barony has become extinct.



His coat of arms at Silver End to mark Diamond Jubilee of village in 1986