

Pottery from the Potton Test-pits (Site POT/12)

SHC: Early Medieval Shelly Ware: AD1100-1400. Hard fabric with plentiful fossil shell mixed in with the clay. Manufactured at many sites in western Bedfordshire. Mostly cooking pots, but bowls and occasionally jugs also known.

EMW: Early Medieval Sandy Ware: AD1100-1400. Hard fabric with plentiful quartz temper. Manufactured at a wide range of generally unknown sites all over eastern England. Mostly cooking pots, but bowls and occasionally jugs also known.

HG: Hertfordshire Greyware, Late 12th – 14th century. Hard, grey sandy pottery found at sites all over Hertfordshire. Made at a number of different places, with the most recent and best-preserved evidence being from Hitchin. Range of simple jars, bowls and jugs.

HED: Heddingham Ware: Late 12th – 14th century. Fine orange/red glazed pottery, made at Sible Heddingham in Essex. The surfaces of the sherds have a sparkly appearance due to there being large quantities of mica, a glassy mineral, in the clay. Pots usually glazed jugs.

CW: Cistercian Ware: Made between AD1475 and 1700. So-called because it was first found during the excavation of Cistercian monasteries, but not made by monks. A number of different places are known to have been making this pottery, particularly in the north of England and the midlands. The pots are very thin and hard, as they were made in the first coal-fired pottery kilns, which reached much higher temperatures than the wood-fired types of the medieval period. The clay fabric is usually brick red or purple, and the pots covered with a dark brown- or purplish-black glaze on both surfaces. The main type of pot was small drinking cups with up to six handles, known as 'tygs'. They were sometimes decorated with painted dots and other designs in yellow clay. Cistercian ware was very popular, and is found all over England.

MP: Midland Purple ware. Made and used between AD1450-1600. Very hard, red to dark purplish-grey in colour, usually with a dark purple to black glaze. Wide range of different pots made such as jars, bowls and jugs.

LMOx: Late Medieval Oxidized Ware: Hard, red pottery with lots of sand mixed in with the clay. Made from about 1450 – 1500 in lots of different sites in the south-east midlands and western East Anglia. Used for everyday pottery such as jugs and large bowls, and also large pots ('cisterns') for brewing beer.

LMT: Late Medieval Earthenware. Fine, red, slightly sandy pottery with a reddish-orange glaze, very similar to GRE, but earlier, dating to 1400-1550. Made at a number of places in Essex, including Colchester.

GRE: Glazed Red Earthenwares: Just about everywhere in Britain began to make and use this type of pottery from about AD1550 onwards, and it was still being made in the 19th century. The clay fabric is usually very smooth, and a brick red colour. Lots of different types of pots were made, particularly very large bowls, cooking pots and cauldrons. Almost all of them have shiny, good-quality orange or green glaze on the inner surface, and sometimes on the outside as well. From about AD1680, black glaze was also used.

HSW: Harlow Slipware. Similar to glazed red earthenware (GRE), but with painted designs in yellow liquid clay ('slip') under the glaze. Made at many places between 1600 and 1700, but the most famous and earliest factory was at Harlow in Essex

SS: Staffordshire Slipware. Made between about AD1640 and 1750. This was the first pottery to be made in moulds in Britain since Roman times. The clay fabric is usually a pale buff colour, and the main product was flat dishes and plates, but cups were also made. These are usually decorated with thin brown stripes and a yellow glaze, or yellow stripes and a brown glaze.

CP: Chinese Porcelain, mid 17th century +. Hard, slightly translucent white fabric with a clear glaze, often with hand-painted polychrome decoration. Known in Europe from the 13th century, but did not become common until the 18th century. Wide range of table- and decorative wares.

SMW: Staffordshire Manganese Ware, late 17th – 18th century. Made from a fine, buff-coloured clay, with the pots usually covered with a mottled purple and brown glaze, which was coloured by the addition of powdered manganese. A wide range of different types of pots were made, but mugs and chamber pots are particularly common.

EST: English Stoneware: Very hard, grey fabric with white and/or brown surfaces. First made in Britain at the end of the 17th century, became very common in the 18th and 19th century, particularly for mineral water or ink bottles and beer jars.

SWSG: Staffordshire White Salt-Glazed Stoneware. Hard, white pottery with a white glaze with a texture like orange peel. Made between 1720 and 1780, pots usually table wares such as tea bowls, tankards and plates.

VIC: ‘Victorian’. A wide range of different types of pottery, particularly the cups, plates and bowls with blue decoration which are still used today. First made around AD1800.

Results

Test Pit 1

TP	Cntxt	GRE		SWSG		VIC		Date Range
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
1	1			1	3	1	5	1720-1900
1	2	1	3			5	8	1550-1900
1	4					5	13	1800-1900

All the pottery from this test-pit is post-medieval, with most dating to the Victorian era, suggesting that the site was probably only used as fields before then.

Test Pit 2

TP	Cntxt	GRE		SMW		SWSG		VIC		Date Range
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
2	1							6	8	1800-1900
2	2			1	1			24	30	1680-1900
2	3					1	3	17	27	1720-1900
2	4	1	12	1	7			19	41	1550-1900

All the pottery from this test-pit is post-medieval, with most dating to the Victorian era, suggesting that the site was probably only used as fields before then.

Test Pit 3

TP	Cntxt	LMT		GRE		VIC		Date Range
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
3	1	1	1			10	11	1400-1900
3	2					6	6	1800-1900
3	3					5	8	1800-1900
3	4	1	3	1	1	4	14	1400-1900

Nearly all the pottery from this test-pit is post-medieval, with most dating to the Victorian era, suggesting that the site was probably only used as fields before then.

Test Pit 4

TP	Cntxt	VIC		Date Range
		No	Wt	
4	3	5	10	1800-1900

All the pottery from this test-pit is Victorian, indicating that the site was not used by people before that time.

Test Pit 5

TP	Cntxt	EMW		HED		LMOx		VIC		Date Range
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
5	1					1	1			1450-1550
5	2	1	4	1	2			2	8	1100-1900

This test-pit did not produce much pottery, but that which was here shows that the site was in used throughout the medieval period, probably as fields. It was then abandoned until the Victorian era.

Test Pit 6

TP	Cntxt	LMT		VIC		Date Range
		No	Wt	No	Wt	
6	1			2	8	1800-1900
6	2			4	90	1800-1900
6	3			4	13	1800-1900
6	5	1	41			1400-1550

Nearly all the pottery from this test-pit is post-medieval, with most dating to the Victorian era, suggesting that the site was probably only used as fields before then.

Test Pit 7

TP	Cntxt	GRE		SS		VIC		Date Range
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
7	1					2	9	1800-1900
7	2	1	10	1	1	4	28	1550-1900
7	3					2	4	1800-1900
7	4					5	25	1800-1900
7	5					7	28	1800-1900

All the pottery from this test-pit is post-medieval, with most dating to the Victorian era, suggesting that the site was probably only used as fields before then.

Test Pit 8

TP	Cntxt	HG		GRE		VIC		Date Range
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
8	1					6	14	1800-1900
8	2	1	5	2	7	6	11	1150-1900
8	3					10	27	1800-1900
8	4					5	28	1800-1900
8	5					4	82	1800-1900
8	6			1	11	4	24	1550-1900
8	7					8	82	1800-1900
8	8			1	11	4	48	1550-1900
8	9					6	34	1800-1900

Nearly all the pottery from this test-pit is post-medieval, with most dating to the Victorian era, suggesting that the site was probably only used as fields before then.

Test Pit 9

TP	Cntxt	GRE		HSW		SS		EST		VIC		Date Range
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
9	2									2	14	1800-1900
9	4	1	2	2	14	1	8	1	1			1550-1750

All the pottery from this test-pit is post-medieval, with most dating to the Victorian era, suggesting that the site was probably only used as fields before then.

Test Pit 10

TP	Cntxt	HG		MP		GRE		VIC		Date Range
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
10	1							5	16	1800-1900
10	2			1	6	1	1	4	13	1350-1900
10	3	1	8					1	18	1150-1900

Most of the pottery from this test-pit is post-medieval, with the majority dating to the Victorian era, suggesting that the site was probably only used as fields before then. There does seem to have been activity throughout the medieval period, but then the site appears to have been abandoned until the 19th century.

Test Pit 11

TP	Cntxt	SHC		EMW		HG		LMT		LMOx		GRE		HSW		SWSG		VIC		Date Range
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
11	1																	1	2	1800-1900
11	2					3	13											5	20	1150-1900
11	3							1	7									2	11	1400-1900
11	4									2	14							5	46	1450-1900
11	5			1	103	2	21					1	2			1	4	1	6	1100-1900
11	6			2	4	2	16							1	7			2	10	1100-1900
11	7	1	5			1	5													1100-1200

This site produced a relatively large amount of medieval pottery, which suggests that people were living here throughout that time. The post-medieval assemblage is smaller, and so the site may have been used as fields or similar until the 19th century.

Test Pit 12

TP	Cntxt	HG		SS		VIC		Date Range
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
12	1					1	17	1800-1900
12	3	1	3	1	2	24	90	1150-1900
12	4					25	93	1800-1900
12	5 1/2	2	12			23	60	1150-1900
12	7	2	6			5	11	1150-1900

Most of the pottery from this test-pit is post-medieval, with most dating to the Victorian era, although the amount of medieval pottery present suggests that people may have been living there in the 12th – 13th centuries. It then appears to have been abandoned until the 19th century.

Test Pit 13

TP	Cntxt	HG		LMOx		SS		VIC		Date Range
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
13	2							1	6	1800-1900
13	3					1	15			1650-1700
13	4	1	6					1	3	1150-1900
13	5					1	4			1650-1700
13	6			1	60					1450-1550

This test-pit did not produce much pottery, but that which is here indicates that it was probably used as fields in the medieval period.

Test Pit 14

TP	Cntxt	GRE		VIC		Date Range
		No	Wt	No	Wt	
14	1			1	2	1800-1900
14	2	1	4	3	6	1550-1900
14	3-5			6	166	1800-1900
14	6-10			52	247	1800-1900

All the pottery from this test-pit is post-medieval, with the majority dating to the Victorian era, suggesting that the site was probably only used as fields before then.

Test Pit 15

TP	Cntxt	VIC		Date Range
		No	Wt	
15	1	2	2	1800-1900
15	2	10	137	1800-1900
15	3	4	52	1800-1900
15	4	10	62	1800-1900
15	5	1	7	1800-1900

All the pottery from this test-pit is Victorian, indicating that the site was not used by people before that time.

Test Pit 16

TP	Cntxt	VIC		Date Range
		No	Wt	
16	1	13	41	1800-1900
16	2	20	23	1800-1900
16	3	10	73	1800-1900

All the pottery from this test-pit is Victorian, indicating that the site was not used by people before that time.

Test Pit 17

		VIC		
TP	Cntxt	No	Wt	Date Range
17	2	3	4	1800-1900
17	3	1	1	1800-1900

All the pottery from this test-pit is Victorian, indicating that the site was not used by people before that time.

Test Pit 18

		LMT		GRE		SMW		EST		VIC		
TP	Cntxt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	Date Range
18	2	1	3							5	14	1400-1900
18	4							1	2	20	45	1680-1900
18	5			1	2	1	2			18	86	1550-1900

Nearly all the pottery from this test-pit is post-medieval, with the majority dating to the Victorian era, suggesting that the site was probably only used as fields before then.

Test Pit 19

		EMW		CW		
TP	Cntxt	No	Wt	No	Wt	Date Range
19	2			1	3	1470-1550
19	5	2	39			1100-1150

This test-pit did not produce mush pottery, but that which was here suggests it was used throughout the medieval period, possibly as fields.

Test Pit 20

		SMW		VIC		
TP	Cntxt	No	Wt	No	Wt	Date Range
20	2			1	2	1800-1900
20	4	1	4	1	2	1680-1900

All the pottery from this test-pit is post-medieval, with the majority dating to the Victorian era, suggesting that the site was probably only used as fields before then.

Test Pit 21

TP	Cntxt	HG		GRE		VIC		Date Range
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
21	1					22	92	1800-1900
21	2					23	68	1800-1900
21	3					18	48	1800-1900
21	4	1	4			15	26	1150-1900
21	5			1	7	16	29	1550-1900
21	6					9	28	1800-1900

All the pottery from this test-pit is post-medieval, with the majority dating to the Victorian era, suggesting that the site was probably only used as fields before then.

Test Pit 22

TP	Cntxt	VIC		Date Range
		No	Wt	
22	1	4	8	1800-1900
22	3	1	1	1800-1900

All the pottery from this test-pit is Victorian, indicating that the site was not used by people before that time.

Test Pit 23

TP	Cntxt	LMOx		GRE		SS		SMW		SWSG		VIC		Date Range
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
23	1	1	7	1	2							6	11	1450-1900
23	2 & 3			2	10	1	4			1	1	8	19	1550-1900
23	3					1	2	3	3			1	1	1650-1900

Most of the pottery from this test-pit is post-medieval, with the majority dating to the Victorian era, suggesting that the site was probably only used as fields before then, but it appears to have been continually in use from the late medieval period onwards.

Test Pit 24

TP	Cntxt	EMW		LMT		GRE		SS		SMW		SWSG		VIC		Date Range
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
24	1					1	1					1	1	12	13	1550-1900
24	2													7	10	1800-1900
24	3							1	3					34	115	1650-1900
24	4									3	16	1	2	12	59	1680-1900
24	5	1	3	1	1	2	2							6	15	1100-1900
24	6					1	3							1	18	1550-1900

Most of the pottery from this test-pit is post-medieval, with most dating to the Victorian era, suggesting that the site was probably only used as fields before then.

Test Pit 25

TP	Cntxt	GRE		SMW		VIC		Date Range
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
25	1			1	2	9	23	1680-1900
25	2					16	22	1800-1900
25	3	1	2			7	19	1550-1900

All the pottery from this test-pit is post-medieval, with the majority dating to the Victorian era, suggesting that the site was probably only used as fields before then.

Test Pit 26

TP	Cntxt	GRE		SMW		CP		VIC		Date Range
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
26	1	1	3			1	1			1550-1800
26	2			1	3					1680-1750
26	4							1	1	1800-1900

All the pottery from this test-pit is post-medieval, with the small quantities present indicating that it has only been used as fields in the past.

Test Pit 27

TP	Cntxt	LMT		VIC		Date Range
		No	Wt	No	Wt	
27	2	1	3	3	25	1400-1900
27	3			2	6	1800-1900
27	4			2	3	1800-1900

Nearly all the pottery from this test-pit is post-medieval, with most dating to the Victorian era, suggesting that the site was probably only used as fields before then.