



Archaeology in Pegsdon 2020

Shillington History Society
Report compiled by Derek Turner
Pottery analysis and comments by Paul Blinkhorn
www.shillington-history.org.uk

Index

| | |
|----------|---|
| p2 | Introduction |
| p4 | The historical context- a summary of Pegsdon's development |
| p6 | Location map for 2020 Pegsdon test pits |
| | Reports on the 2020 Pegsdon test pits |
| p8 | PEG 20/1 & surrounding area |
| p11 | PEG20/2 |
| p13 | PEG20/3 |
| p16 | PEG20/4 |
| p17 | Other pottery find in 2020 |
| p18 | Location map for all Pegsdon test pits 2019 - 2020 |
| | Pottery distribution maps & analysis for different periods |
| p19 | Late Anglo-Saxon |
| p20 | Early Medieval |
| p21 | Late medieval |
| p22 | Post Medieval |
| p23 | Modern |
| p24 - 27 | Appendix 1- Pottery types found and locations |
| p28 | Appendix 2- Amounts and analysis of pottery by age and test pit |

Introduction

Archaeological investigations into the history of settlement in Shillington and nearby continued during 2020 when circumstances allowed. For the second year running, test pits were dug in the geographically separate hamlet of Pegsdon. Four excavations bookended the digging season with two of them completed in March before the first Covid-19 lockdown came into effect. The two final test pits were also located there during warmer weather when restrictions were eased and in compliance with the social distancing guidance. A few other finds made in the vicinity of the test pits and elsewhere are also listed. This is the first year that a separate report has been produced for Pegsdon.

Shillington History Society began to dig test pits in 2013 with the help and guidance of Access Cambridge Archaeology (University of Cambridge) and funding from an All Our Stories grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). Small teams of enthusiasts have continued working each year and by the end of 2020, they had excavated 61 test pits in Shillington, 2 in Upper Gravenhurst and 5 in Pegsdon. Those who helped during 2020 include Steve Bottle, Ivor Davis, Mike Dewberry, Alison Graham, Nigel Harper-Scott, Jane Harrison, Fiona Hutton, Kevin Jorganssen, Dave Pengelly, Graham Spurway, Derek Turner and Lindsay Wheeler. I thank them all for their support and hard work and everyone who provided sites for us to dig.

The methodology used has been consistent since 2013 including excavating in 'contexts' of 10cm deep layers, except where a buried surface or change in the soil is encountered, in which case a new context is begun. The participants have sieved the soil or sorted through it by hand, retaining and cleaning finds of non-natural materials, taking photographs and recording information in 'Excavation Records' booklets.

Pottery is usually robust and survives well in the soil. It's composition, method of manufacture and appearance changed over time making it possible to assign it to a specific period. Once all of the test pits had been completed, the ceramic finds were taken for identification to Paul Blinkhorn- a specialist in pottery from central and southern England- who separated, counted and weighed it all and entered the results in tables. These, together with his comments which are based purely on the pottery that he was given, are shown *in italics* with his initials (*PB*) in this report. Other finds such as animal bones and shells, pieces of metal and personal artefacts such as buttons and fragments of clay tobacco pipe have not yet been examined by an expert.

The conclusions which I have drawn for this report are based on the assumption that most finds that can be dated were used by people who lived in the vicinity at that time and either discarded or lost them. However, some caution is required as it is possible that some of the items originated some distance away and were spread in manure when the site was farmland. Some items will not have survived in the soil or will have been disturbed and we may have missed some of it. This report comments only on what we have found and the sites where we've excavated so far represent just a tiny part of the Pegsdon area.

This report broadly follows the format that was established by Access Cambridge Archaeology for test pit excavations when it began working with community groups in 2005. It begins with a brief summary of conclusions made by the author about the development of Pegsdon drawn from the test pit evidence and a range of other sources. Next are the details of and results from each of the 2020 test pit locations. I have added location maps, further information and my own comments based on my knowledge of the area and records of other finds.

There are also maps showing the distribution of pottery from different historical periods and the number of test pits completed facilitates further analysis of the finds. Only test pit finds are used to compile the distribution maps and analyses unless stated otherwise.

Appendix 1 lists all the different pottery types that we have found so far with Paul Blinkhorn's description of them and sites where each has been found. Appendix 2 analyses the weight of pottery and averages from each test pit and by period to facilitate comparisons between them.

I have tried to achieve accuracy and objectivity throughout this report and apologise if there are any errors. If you spot any, please let me know.

Derek Turner, Shillington History Society, January 2021, <http://www.shillington-history.org.uk>

The historical context- a summary of Pegsdon's development

Pegsdon's current layout is very different to that of Shillington where test pit pottery shows a significant expansion of the village and its numerous 'Ends' in late Saxon and early medieval times. Pegsdon has only one end- Green End- about 0.5km NW of the triangle of roads within which most of the current homes are located.

We excavated a single test pit in 2019 at Green End Farmhouse and two landowners kindly let us dig 4 more in 2020 in an area S of there and W of the triangle. The pottery from these suggests that Pegsdon was thriving at the same time as Shillington. Evidence of mankind's presence in the landscape goes back much earlier than this, particularly in the area around Pegsdon Common Farm and on the surrounding hills which are part of the Chilterns.

Prehistoric times

According to Bedfordshire Archives and Records Service, the earliest find is a neolithic polished axe made of greenstone, found in about 1880 [HER 407]. A hammer stone and scraper found on Pegsdon Hills in 1941 [HER 415] and worked flints may also date from this period. Finds of this antiquity are not proof that this area was occupied then but show that humans were at least visiting it.

This changes in the Bronze Age where life and death are represented by the remains of two bowl barrows sitting on the skyline as you look NE from Pegsdon Way. One of them, Knocking Knoll, sits on a spur where it is also visible from Pirton. William Ransom from Hitchin excavated it in 1856 and reported finding pottery. About 550m to the south is the smaller Tingley Field Plantation barrow. Aerial photographs have revealed ring ditches that are probably the ploughed-out remains of similar features. One west of Pegsdon Common Farm showed up in an aerial photograph from 1996 [HER 16760]. Another spotted south of Pegsdon [HER 9402] may have been confused with the edge of a former chalk pit. An incomplete bronze spearhead [HER 18377] from the middle to late Bronze Age was found in a garden at Bury Farm.

The construction of a massive bank ditch and bank over 200m long may have taken place in the Iron Age and is one of many probable tribal boundaries along the Icknield Way. Iron Age remains have been found at Bury Farm. Field walking found pottery sherds [HER 16328] to the north-east of Pegsdon Common Farm which may be associated with activity near a spring that used to erupt at the foot of Knocking Hoe. In 1879, a cemetery at Pegsdon Common [HER 413] seems to have been used from the Iron Age into the time of the Roman occupation. Further evidence from this time was found north of Pegsdon Common [HER 1841] where two circular and several irregular enclosures suggest a farm. In 1998 and 1999, metal detecting in the same area led to the discovery of Iron-Age pottery and a range of spectacular finds including votive offerings, a late Iron Age mirror, two silver brooches and later finds. A piece of pottery found on the Pegsdon Hills nature reserve in 2020 is probably a piece of an Iron Age or Romano-British cremation urn (see p17).

The Roman occupation and beyond

A 1st century brooch [HER 16292] was found in rabbit spoil on the Iron Age bank described above in 1997. Excavation to create a 'dewpond' on Pegsdon Hills close to the Icknield Way in December 1932 revealed some Roman pottery [HER 291] from what was thought to be the ditch around a Romano-British hut. The metal detector finds of 1998 and 1999 also included two coin hoards (NRHE Monument no. 1302313). One of these comprised 18 silver denarii and the other contained a remarkable 127 gold coins depicting emperors from Tiberius (AD 36-7) to Vespasian (AD 78-9)- the largest ever hoard from the 1st century. A Roman quern, used for grinding corn, was also discovered [HER 11315]. Settlement may have extended further N as Roman pottery has been found on either side of the brook at Kettledean Farm. It is possible that people continued to live there after this as an Anglo-Saxon burial was discovered. Otherwise, little is known about Pegsdon for several centuries until we found plenty of datable pottery in the test pits.

Late Saxon and Medieval times

All 4 of the 2020 test pits dug in woods and fields NW and W of the current settlement at Pegsdon have revealed small quantities of late Saxon pottery which shows that people were living in this area after 1,000AD. In 1086, Pegsdon is shown as Pechesdone in the Domesday Book when it was held by Ramsey Abbey (Huntingdonshire). It comprised ten hides and contained 37 villagers, 7 smallholders and 5 slaves. This total of 49 people is comparable with the number shown in the separate entry for Shillington and represents the heads of households which implies a total population of something like 200, more than double what it is today. The manor contained two watermills and woodland for sixty pigs. Before 1066 the manor had been worth £12 but this had fallen to £10 by 1086, perhaps a result of depredations by passing Norman armies.

Nevertheless Pegsdon, seems to have flourished with late Saxon and plenty of early medieval pottery having been found in the test pits. A moat in woodland NW of Pegsdon (HER No.:3328, SAM No. 20247) and strip lynchets on Deacon Hill are probably of similar age and the latter suggest that even very steep land was adapted for cultivation to meet the needs of a growing population. A Ramsey Abbey document from 1311 shows that the manor of Pegsdon had amalgamated with the manor of Shillington.

An abrupt decline in the country's fortunes followed after 1348 as the plague or Black Death spread across England, killing many. The test pit pottery record for Shillington and other evidence suggest that the population there fell by 25 to 50%. In contrast, 4 of the 5 Pegsdon test pits produced evidence that settlement continued in the late medieval between 1400 and 1550. Construction in the late 15th century of Bury Farmhouse (HER No. 3857) and Pegsdon Grange (formerly known as Pegsdon Barns) also point to Pegsdon faring well then.

Post-medieval onwards

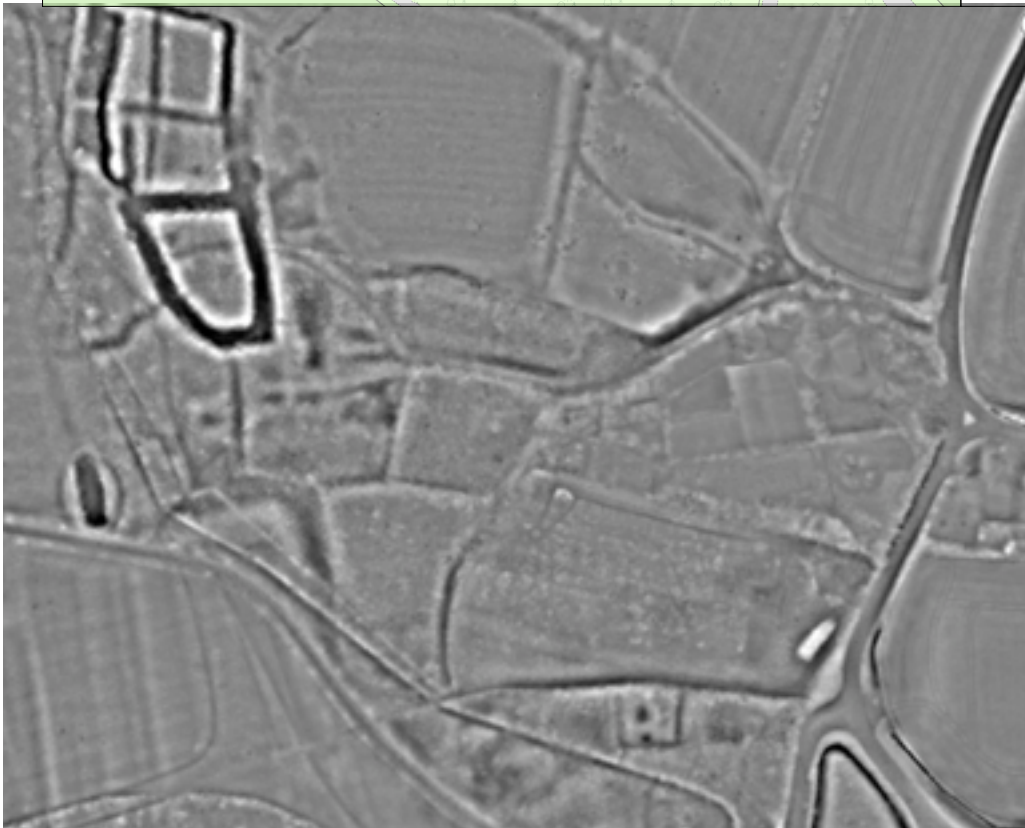
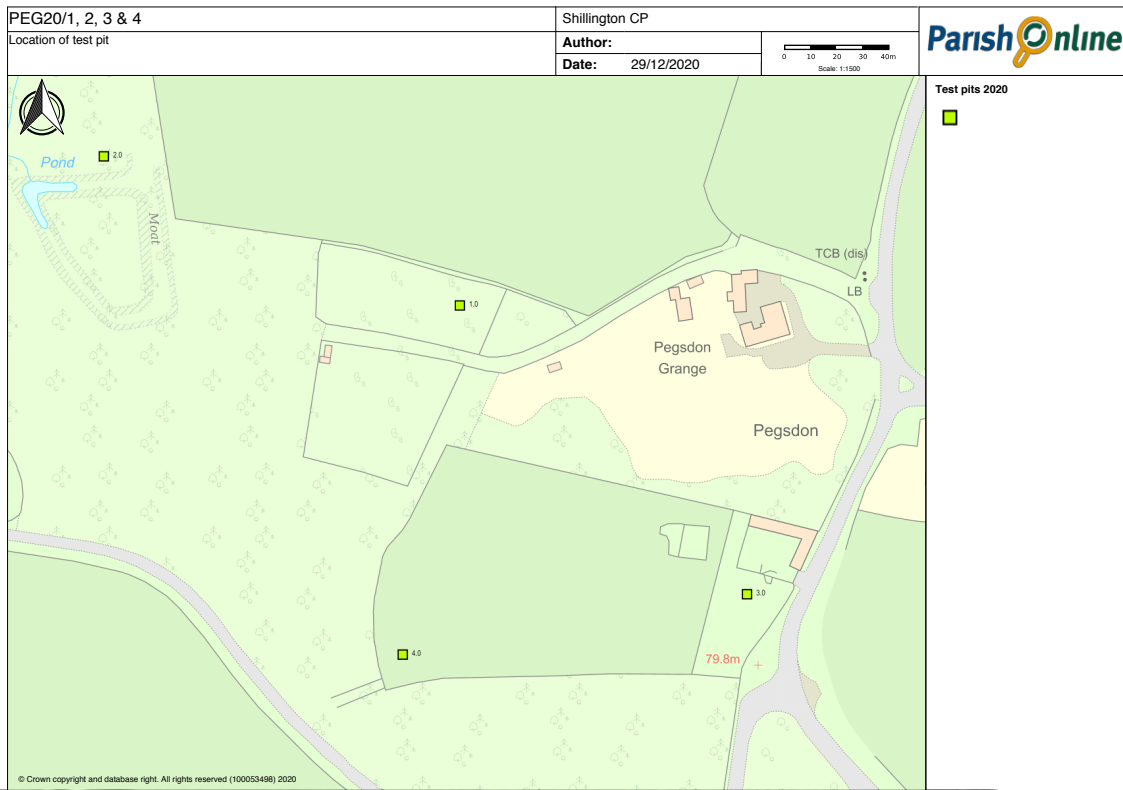
Surviving houses from the 17th century include Green End Farmhouse and possibly, Green End Cottage, as well as a now-demolished farmhouse (HER No. 9407) shown on a 1777

map west of Pegsdon Grange, named as Bank Farm on Ordnance Survey maps in around 1890.

Apart from the Victorian buildings of Long Row, Crossways and the Live and Let Live, other houses in Pegsdon are all post 1960.

Location of 2020 Pegsdon test pits

This map and extract from the the Chilterns Office LIDAR survey for its ‘Beacons of the Past’ research of hillforts show the area of the 2020 digs. A moated complex in Hexton Park shows in the top left, the road towards Shillington goes off in the top right and its junction with Pegsdon Way is midway down the right side. Hexton Park avenue makes a gentle reversed ‘S’ in the bottom left with the original park boundary ditch prominent nearby.



Reports on the 2020 Pegsdon test pits

Pegsdon test pit 1 (PEG20/1)

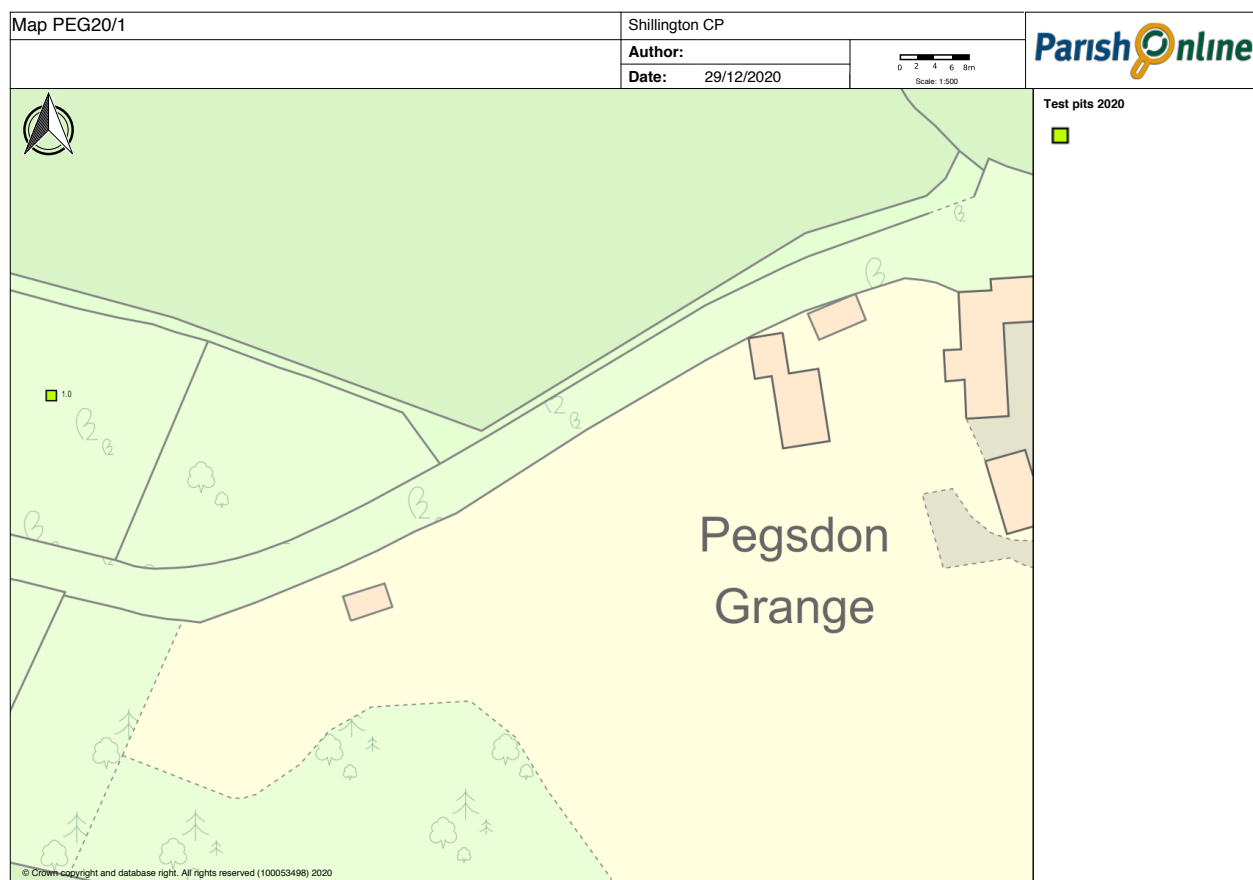
Hexton Park 1 Nearest postcode SG5 3JZ (TL 1173 3038)

14-15 March 2020

This test pit was excavated on Hexton Manor estate where it spills across the parish and county boundary into Pegsdon, Shillington parish and Bedfordshire. It was located some 120m west of the nearest dwelling- Pegsdon Grange (formerly known as Pegsdon Barns). It was about 20 m N of this path's junction with Footpath 45 and 160m W of where Footpath 60 meets the road. It is also about 340m S of test pit PEG19/1 at Green End Farmhouse excavated during the previous August.

The alignment of these and other footpaths show up well on the LIDAR image as a network of tracks- many of which are no longer used- between the modern settlement of Pegsdon and the eastern side of Hexton Park. Footpath 60, shown by the double lines crossing the map (below) from centre left to top right, may represent of the original highway between Hitchin and Barton-le-Cley before it was diverted around the boundary of Hexton Park.

This location was chosen as it is close to the site of buildings shown on an 1777 estate map and named as Bank Farm on late 19th century Ordnance Survey maps. The area is covered with rank vegetation including lots of nettles that are thriving on the dark organic soil suggesting this was once cultivated land. Pheasants are reared in the area now.



The excavation went through a layer of deep soil. Natural light grey chalk marl was first encountered at ~50cm depth but a strip of darker soil and subsoil occupied a deeper 20cm wide strip across the northern side and produced further finds down to 80cm. Digging continued where possible and ceased at a maximum depth of 106cm.

Pottery finds

| TP | Cntxt | SN | | EMW | | HG | | BB | | LMT | | GRE | | CP | | MOD | | Date Range |
|----|-------|----|----|-----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|----|-----|----|----|----|-----|-----|------------|
| | | No | Wt | No | Wt | No | Wt | No | Wt | No | Wt | No | Wt | No | Wt | No | Wt | |
| 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 5 | 15 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 9 | 6 | 14 | | | 70 | 109 | 900-1900 |
| 1 | 2 | | | | | 2 | 5 | | | 2 | 12 | 4 | 46 | 1 | 3 | 83 | 126 | 1150-1900 |
| 1 | 4 | | | | | 2 | 13 | | | | | 3 | 5 | | | 26 | 40 | 1150-1900 |
| 1 | 5 | | | 1 | 3 | | | | | | | | | | | 8 | 13 | 1100-1900 |
| 1 | 6 | | | | | 2 | 14 | | | | | | | | | 2 | 4 | 1150-1900 |
| 1 | 7 | 1 | 11 | | | 2 | 18 | | | | | 1 | 1 | | | | | 900-1900 |
| 1 | 8 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 8 | 3 | 15 | | | | | | | | | | | 900-1200 |

The range of pottery from this test pit shows that occupation began during the Saxo-Norman period and continued into the 'high' medieval period. Activity dropped off sharply during the 15th century, and continued at a similarly low level throughout the post-medieval period until relatively recently. (PW)

Other finds were abundant and included the following-

195 pces pieces of red brick and tile (discarded)

16 rusty nails (discarded)

12 pces thin window glass

10 pce broken glass (discarded)

1 pce modern glass bottle (discarded)

11 animal teeth, 2 small animal jawbones

37 pieces of other animal bones

9 pces clay tobacco pipe stem, 3 pces clay tobacco pipe bowls

1 button 25mm diameter, 2 other buttons

3 pces coal

1 metal 'O' ring

1 plastic gardener's plant identification marker (discarded)

2 shotgun cartridge metal ends (discarded)

a broken circular pce of sandstone about 45mm diameter with a circular depression in the centre.

A search of the surrounding area also located pottery lying on the surface.

PEG 20/BF1 and BF 2

Pasture S of Bury Farm, Pegsdon. TL1177 3041

The following pottery was retrieved from spoil around rabbit holes in pasture in two locations between 25m to the N and 50m to the NE of PEG20/1.

| Cntxt | SN | | HG | | GRE | | VIC | | Date Range |
|-------|----|----|----|----|-----|----|-----|----|------------|
| | No | Wt | No | Wt | No | Wt | No | Wt | |
| BF1 | 1 | 14 | 5 | 75 | | | | | 900-1200 |
| BF2 | | | 2 | 8 | 1 | 3 | 15 | 47 | 1150-1900 |

PEG20/FP 60

Surface of footpath 60. TL 1174 3035

This pottery was found on the surface of the footpath about 20m from PEG20/1.

| Cntxt | HG | | Date Range |
|-------|----|----|------------|
| | No | Wt | |
| FP 60 | 1 | 3 | 1150-1200 |

Along with with single sherds of Hertfordshire Greyware (HG) and Early Medieval Sandyware (EMW) picked up in 2019 in the pasture, these finds all come from within 50m PEG20/1 and provide further evidence for settlement in this area in the Late Saxon and Early Medieval periods.

Analysis

The soil in the test pit has been disturbed to a depth of 60cm.

The discovery of modest quantities of late Saxon St Neots Ware (SN)- 2 pieces of which appear in undisturbed contexts near the base of the test pit and another from nearby- suggests that settlement began here soon after the year 1,000.

The presence of plenty of Hertfordshire Greyware (HG) and Early Medieval Ware (EMW) show that people continued to live here throughout the medieval period. A little Brill/Boarstall Ware (BB) and other Late Medieval Ware is inadequate to show continued use of this site after the plague (Black Death) struck this area.

The probable farmhouse shown on the 1777 map is consistent with the presence of the Glazed Red Earthenware and many pieces of red brick and tiles. Most of the other pottery and remaining finds are post 1800. It has not yet been possible to determine exactly when the farm went out of use and the buildings were demolished.

The natural geology appeared to have been reached at about 50cm depth across much of the test pit but the presence of subsoil down to 106cm in a strip across the northern side merits further investigation on another occasion.

Pegsdon test pit 2 (PEG20/2)

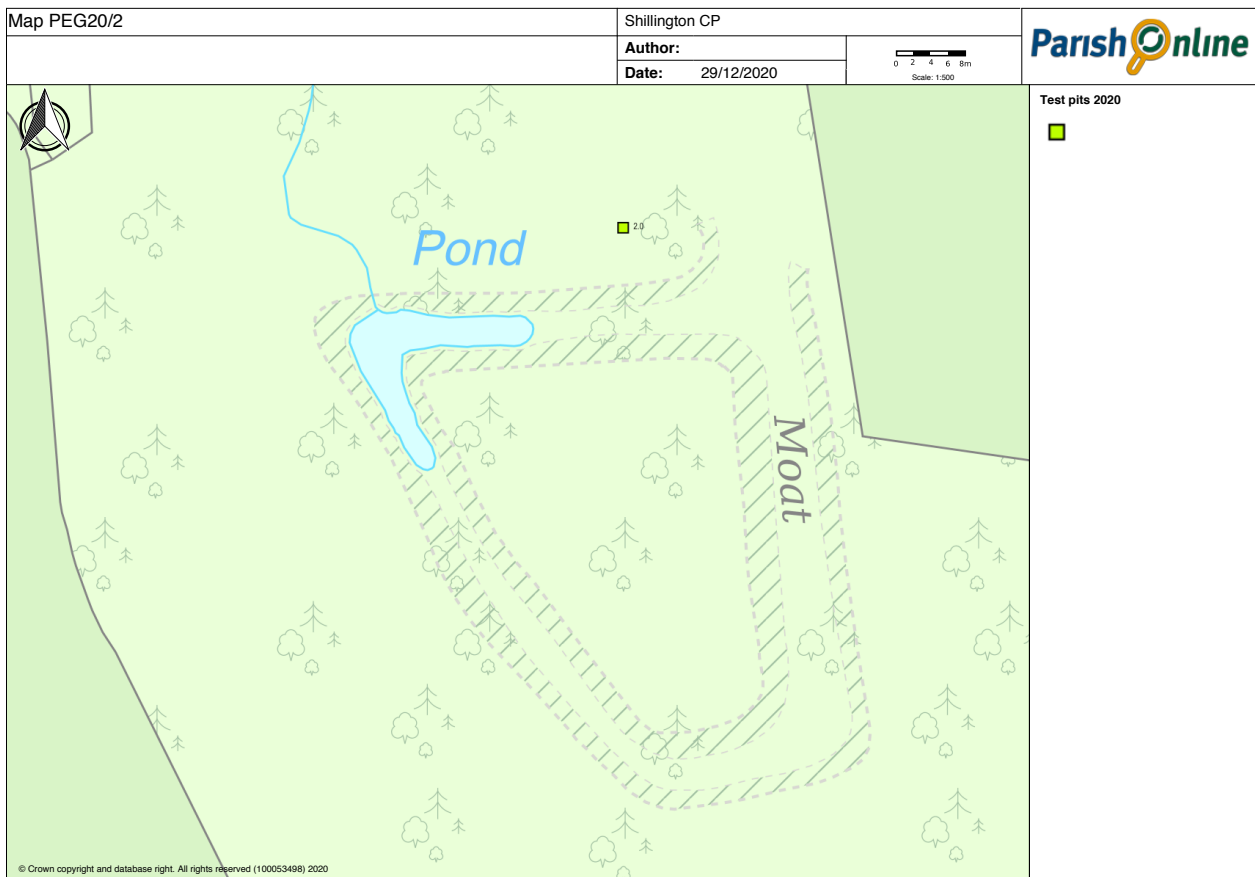
Hexton Park 2, N of moat Nearest postcode SG5 3JZ (TL 1159 3044)

20 - 21 March 2020

Following discussion with the local Historic England representative, we dug a second test pit on the Hexton Estate just N of a moated site which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument No. 20247 (Bedfordshire HER 3328). The moat is assumed to have been constructed between about 1100 and 1350 around a high-status dwelling. Nowadays, the site is concealed in the wooded shelter belt surrounding much of Hexton Manor park on its E side in an area now used for rearing pheasants.

This test pit site was chosen as a building was shown in the vicinity on Ordnance Survey maps from about 1890. It was situated to the N of the moat in an adjacent rectangular area defined by smaller ditches (dry at the time) on its other three sides. These seem to form a subsidiary moated area of unknown purpose and assist with drainage of the overflow of water from the main moat.

This location was about 150m WNW of the site of PEG20/1 and about 350m SW of the site of test pit PEG19/1. The test pit was situated 14m from the top of the moat's bank on its northern side and 24 m from the fence along the Hexton estate's boundary with the pasture to the east which is under different ownership.



A few finds were made down to 63cm and excavation ceased at a maximum depth of 73cm in light grey marl.

Pottery finds

| TP | Cntxt | SN | | THET | | EMW | | HG | | GRE | | MOD | | Date Range |
|----|-------|----|----|------|----|-----|----|----|----|-----|----|-----|----|------------|
| | | No | Wt | No | Wt | No | Wt | No | Wt | No | Wt | No | Wt | |
| 2 | 1 | | | | | | | | | 2 | 22 | | | 1550-1600 |
| 2 | 2 | | | | | 1 | 8 | | | | | | | 1100-1150 |
| 2 | 3 | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 5 | 1800-1900 |
| 2 | 4 | | | 1 | 2 | | | 1 | 3 | | | | | 900-1200 |
| 2 | 5 | | | | | 2 | 51 | | | | | | | 1100-1150 |
| 2 | 6 | 1 | 3 | | | | | | | | | | | 900-1100 |

The pottery from this test-pit suggests the site had a marginal use during the Saxo-Norman and earlier medieval periods, before virtually falling from use. (PB)

Other finds included

A few pieces of red brick and tile

4 pces cream floor tiles

1 pce mortar

1 pce corroded metal

7 pces animal bone

2 no. animal tooth

1 possible worked flint

1 pce burnt flint

Discussion

Contexts 4, 5 and 6 seem to be relatively undisturbed.

With the moat close by, it was disappointing that the pottery finds here were few. The presence of a little late Saxon St Neots Ware (SN) and early medieval Thetford Ware (THET), Early Medieval Ware (EMW) and Hertfordshire Greyware (HG), is consistent with some settlement existing in the area from after 1000 until 1400, perhaps associated with a building within the moated area.

No Late Medieval pottery was found. Until and unless further evidence proves otherwise, it seems possible that the site was abandoned.

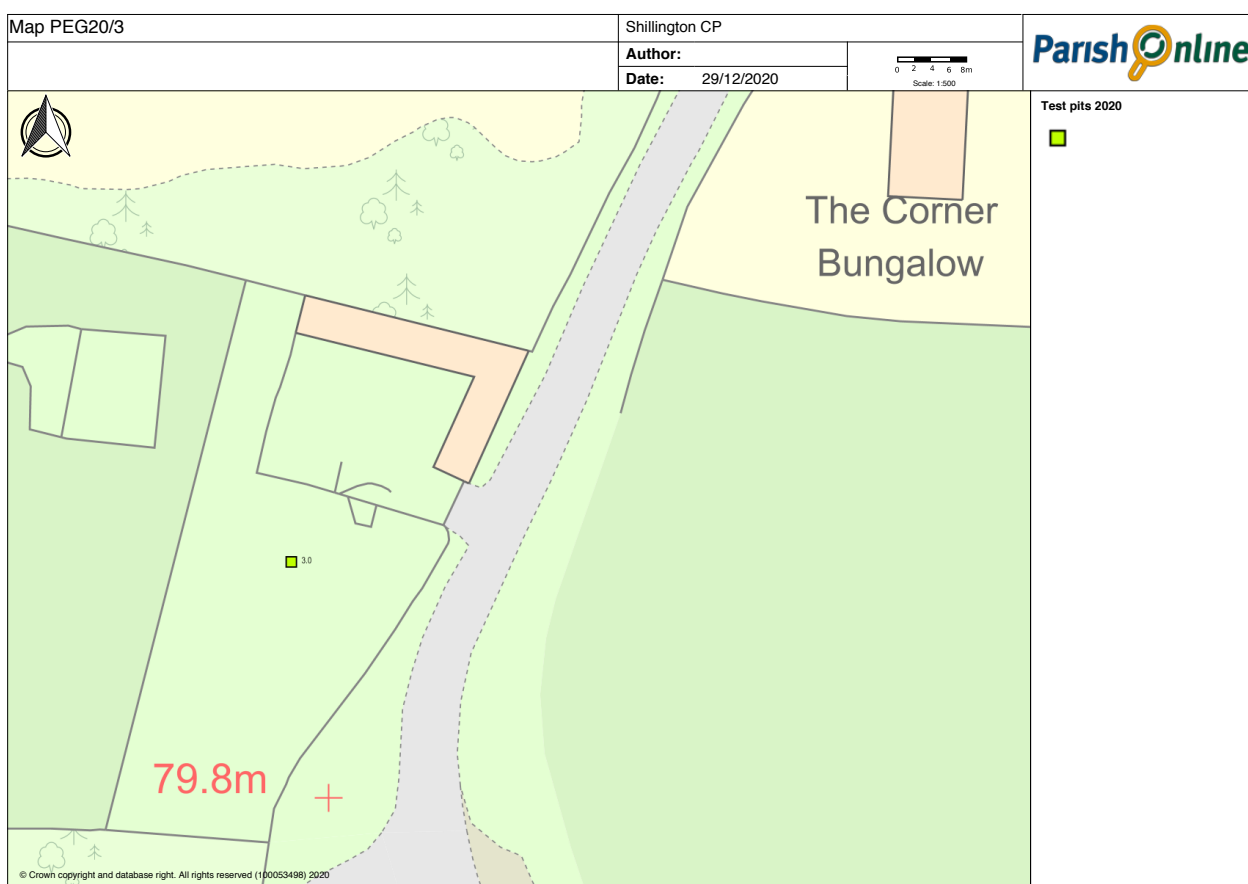
The few pieces of more recent Glazed Red Earthenware (GRE) and Modern (MOD) pottery are not enough to show that the area was used subsequently and it is concluded that the building marked on old maps was likely to have been a barn.

Pegsdon test pit 3 (PEG20/3)

Pegsdon Grange field 1, nearest postcode SG5 3JZ (TL 1184 3025)

24 - 25 September 2020

This test pit was located in an area of rough grassland near derelict barns last used as stables in the 1990s. Late 19th century Ordnance Survey maps show that part of a now demolished range of building S of these was a dwelling. The test pit was excavated a few metres S of that in the NE corner of a field about 100m S of Pegsdon Grange. It was about 28m SW of the hanging post of the field gate in the access off Shillington Road to the east and about 20m from the nearest part of the highway surface. It was 13m from a fence line to the W and the edge of a mound of soil was about 4m SE of the test pit. The site was about 157m SE of PEG20/1.



Blocks of undisturbed pale grey chalk were encountered below 32cm depth. At 39cm, soil remained in only one third of the test pit area. This was all extracted and digging ceased at a maximum depth of 52cm on an uneven chalk surface.

| T P | Con- text | SN | | STAM | | HG | | LMT | | RAER | | CW | | GRE | | SS | | MOD | | Date Range |
|--------|--------------|----|----|------|----|----|-----|-----|-----|------|----|----|----|-----|----|----|----|-----|-----|---------------|
| | | No | Wt | No | Wt | No | Wt | No | Wt | No | Wt | No | Wt | No | Wt | No | Wt | No | Wt | |
| 3 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 3 | 9 | 30 | 1650-1900 |
| 3 | 2 | | | 1 | 2 | | | 14 | 49 | 1 | 1 | | | 3 | 16 | 1 | 1 | 51 | 157 | 900-1900 |
| 3 | 3 | | | | | 3 | 10 | 16 | 103 | 1 | 13 | 1 | 1 | 10 | 76 | | | 17 | 74 | 1150-1600 |
| 3 | 4 | | | | | 9 | 105 | 2 | 8 | | | | | | | | | | | 1150-1550 |
| 3 | 5 | 2 | 8 | | | 14 | 152 | 5 | 30 | | | | | | | | | | | 900-1550 |

The range of pottery from this test pit shows that occupation began during the Saxo-Norman period and continued throughout the medieval period. Activity dropped off during the 16th century, and continued at a similarly low level throughout the post-medieval period until relatively recently. (PB)

Other finds included-

Large quantities of pieces of mainly red and some white bricks, red roof tiles (all discarded),

Red and white floor tiles (discarded)

Pieces of slate (discarded)

28 rusty nails (discarded)

1 pce curved, metal rod c7mm dia x 180mm long (Concrete reinforcement rod?)

1 curved metal strap (4 x 15 x 100mm long) (possibly the heel of a child's shoe)

1 no. pce lead sheet (37 x 101mm)

Numerous pces of broken glass (some from Victorian beer bottles) (discarded)

4 pces blue plastic (discarded)

1 black button (Bakelite?)

8 pces clay tobacco pipe stem

27 pces animal bone inc 1 scapula (71mm max width x 166mm max length)

3 animal teeth

47 pces oyster shell, 2 pces mussel shell, 2 pce shell

Discussion

The soil in Contexts 4 and 5 had not been disturbed in recent centuries and the finds from this test pit were particularly interesting and informative.

As in PEG20/1, a piece of St Neots Ware (SN) was found along with another of Stamford Ware (STAM) which is unusual in this area having been found in only 2 of the 61 Shillington test pits. These suggest that people were living here from 1000 and maybe earlier. Hertfordshire Greyware (HG)- 267g of it- proves that settlement continued here during much of the 350 year long Early Medieval period through to 1400.

The 190g of Late Medieval Ware (LMT) made between 1400 and 1550 is an exceptionally large haul for this 150 year period. There was more of it here than in any test pit so far in Shillington where the most productive site was the Musgrave Arms in Apsley End (SH14/8) with 152g. While the substantial reduction in pottery compared with Early Medieval seen throughout Shillington illustrates the devastating effects of the Plague on the population there, the people living on this Pegsdon site seem to have been doing well at this time.

Unusually, the amount of Post Medieval pottery recovered is less than that from the Late Medieval implying less intensive use of this site- as was also the case at Green End Farmhouse (PEG19/21). However, it did include rare examples of Raeren Stoneware (RAER), manufactured in Germany between 1450 and 1600. This is absent from all Shillington test pits to date although it has been found during field walking close to All Saints Church. A tiny piece of Cistercian Ware (CW) from between 1485 and 1700 was found and is also uncommon locally, having appeared in only 3 Shillington test pits.

These pottery types along with the single sherd of Staffordshire Slipware (SS) and the Glazed Red Earthenware (GRE) suggest that the site may have continued to be settled until the 19th century when many of the other finds including modern (MOD) pottery and marble-stoppered beer bottles confirm occupation, probably in the home shown on ~1890 maps but now no longer present.

With the large quantity of late medieval pottery found here, this is an intriguing site. In addition, the presence of three very different types of pottery that are uncommon in this area- Stamford Ware, Raeren Stoneware and Cistercian Ware- raises the possibility that people with wealth and excellent connections lived here. The area justifies further investigation in future.

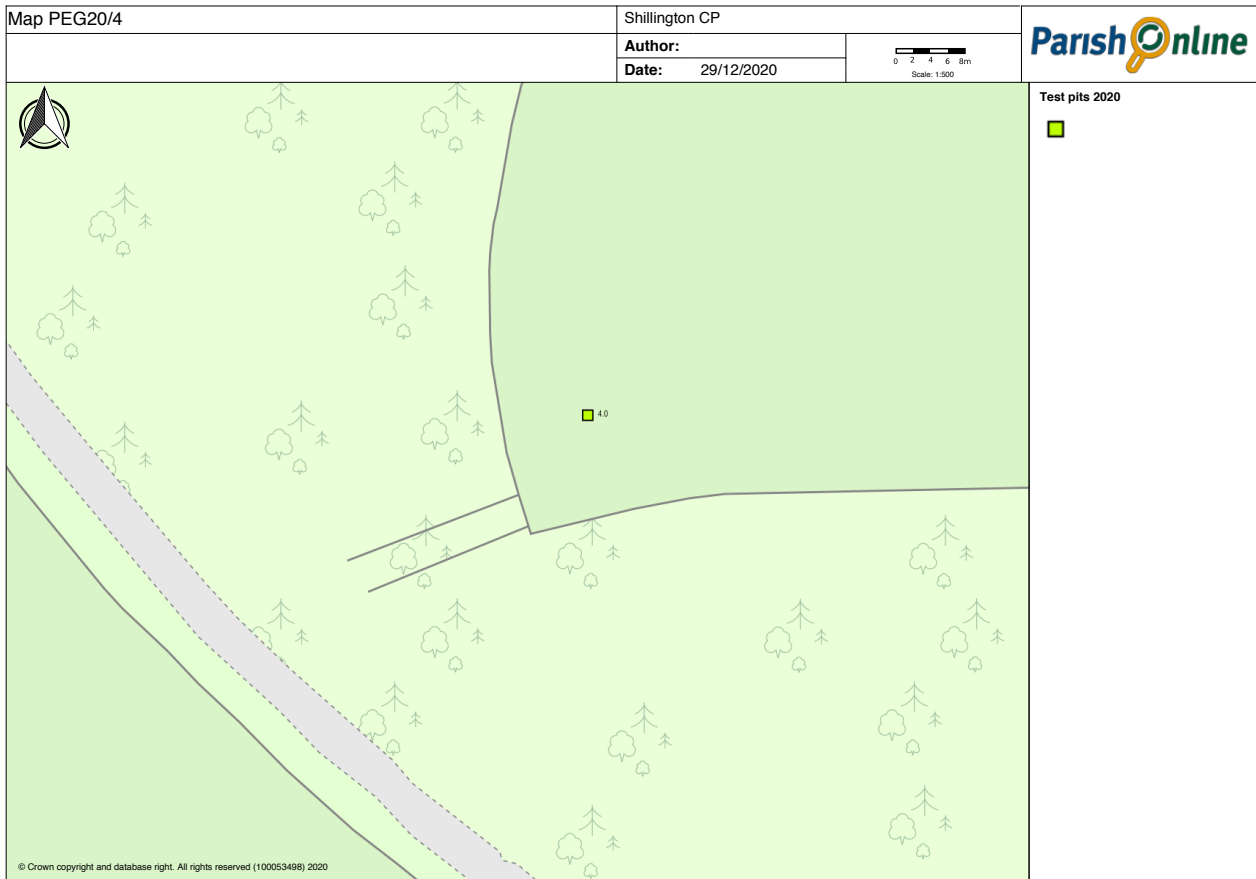
Pegsdon test pit 4 (PEG20/4)

Pegsdon Grange field 2. Nearest postcode SG5 3JZ (TL 1171 3024)

26 - 27 September 2020

This test pit was excavated in the SW corner of the same field as test pit PEG20/3 and 134m WSW of it.

It was located about 10m from the fence on the W side of the field and 10m from the fence on the S side. Shillington Footpaths 44 and 45 follow these boundaries and the test pit was about 11m NE of where these paths meet. The test pit was also 137m S of PEG20/1. At 22cm depth, many large flint cobbles and pieces of red bricks were found in the SE corner of the test pit. Most were left in situ and this part was not excavated any deeper. The remainder was excavated until natural light grey chalk was suspected at 58cm depth. A small area in the NW corner was dug to 63cm to confirm this and digging ceased. A further 50cm x 50cm area was opened adjacent to the test pit on its eastern side and further cobbles were found at 22cm confirming that the surface continued further to the east.



| TP | Cntxt | SN | | STAM | | EMW | | SHC | | HG | | LMT | | GRE | | MB | | DW | | HSW | | SS | | MOD | | Date Range |
|----|-------|----|----|------|----|-----|----|-----|----|----|-----|-----|----|-----|-----|----|----|----|----|-----|----|----|----|-----|-----|------------|
| | | No | Wt | No | Wt | No | Wt | No | Wt | No | Wt | No | Wt | No | Wt | No | Wt | No | Wt | No | Wt | No | Wt | No | Wt | |
| 4 | 1 | | | | | 1 | 2 | | | 4 | 12 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 50 | | | | | 1 | 11 | 1 | 2 | 40 | 42 | 1100-1900 |
| 4 | 2 | 4 | 6 | | | 4 | 9 | | | 17 | 65 | 4 | 5 | 22 | 137 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 14 | | | 1 | 5 | 92 | 125 | 900-1900 |
| 4 | 3 | | | | | 16 | 65 | 1 | 5 | 41 | 143 | 3 | 13 | 3 | 18 | | | 2 | 2 | | | 1 | 1 | 8 | 16 | 1100-1900 |
| 4 | 4 | 10 | 28 | | | 9 | 50 | | | 27 | 100 | 4 | 19 | 1 | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | 900-1600 |
| 4 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 25 | 2 | 8 | 26 | 161 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 900-1200 |
| 4 | 6 | 4 | 12 | 1 | 5 | | | | | 19 | 87 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 900-1200 |

The range of pottery from this test pit shows that occupation began during the late Anglo-Saxon period and continued throughout the medieval period and into the 16th – 17th centuries. It may represent evidence of the original Saxon core of the village. Activity dropped off during the 17th century, and continued at a similarly low level until relatively recently. (PB)

Other finds included-

Numerous pces of broken red brick and tile (discarded),

15 pces broken glass,

43 rusty nails (discarded),

5 pce corroded metal (discarded)

1 no. wrist watch strap metal buckle

6 pce clay tobacco pipe stem, (continued on next page)

1 pce clay tobacco pipe bowl
1 pce bone knife handle,
1 no. tombac button
52 no. pces animal bone,
4 no. animal teeth

Comments

The 12 different pottery types constitute the most varied assemblage found in Pegsdon so far and represents up to a millennium of continuous human settlement since 1000. The beginning of this period is represented by St Neots (SN) and Stamford (STAM) Ware and the 57g of Late Saxon pottery is more than found in any test pit in Shillington.

Early medieval pottery totals are also impressive and at 732g are the highest found in Pegsdon so far with Early Medieval Ware (EMW), Early Medieval Shelly Ware (SHC) and a very healthy 568g of Hertfordshire Greyware (HG) present. The 40g of Late Medieval Ware (LMT) indicates some post plague activity here too.

As well as 207g of Glazed Red Earthenware (GRE), small quantities of Midlands Blackware (MB), Delft Ware (DW), Harlow (HW) and Staffordshire (SS) Slipware show continued settlement nearby from 1550 to 1800 with modern (MOD) pottery suggesting occupation into at least Victorian times. The flint cobbles and bricks may be part of a surfaced area and worthy of further excavation.

Other pottery finds in 2020

PEG20/PHI

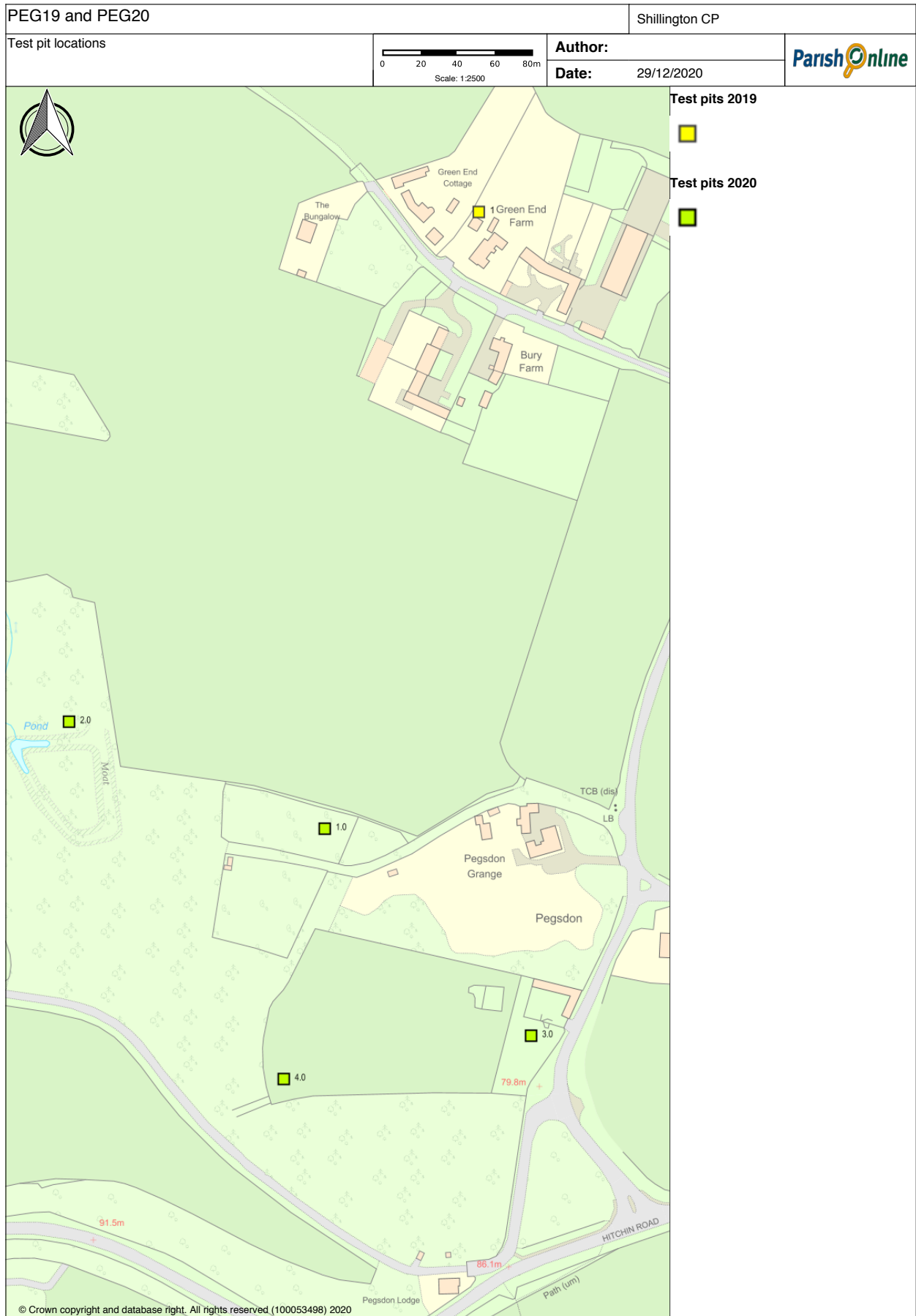
Pegsdon Hills Nature Reserve. TL1208 2947

This piece of pottery was discovered in March 2020 in spoil surrounding rabbit holes on the Pegsdon Hills Nature Reserve. These occupy a NE facing slope above a side valley off Barn Hole- a classic example of a deeply-incised scarp-slope dry valley on chalk. An area of the slope above the rabbit holes was cultivated for arable crops before the nature reserve was created in 1995. It is possible that natural soil creep and cultivation had moved the item some way from its original position.

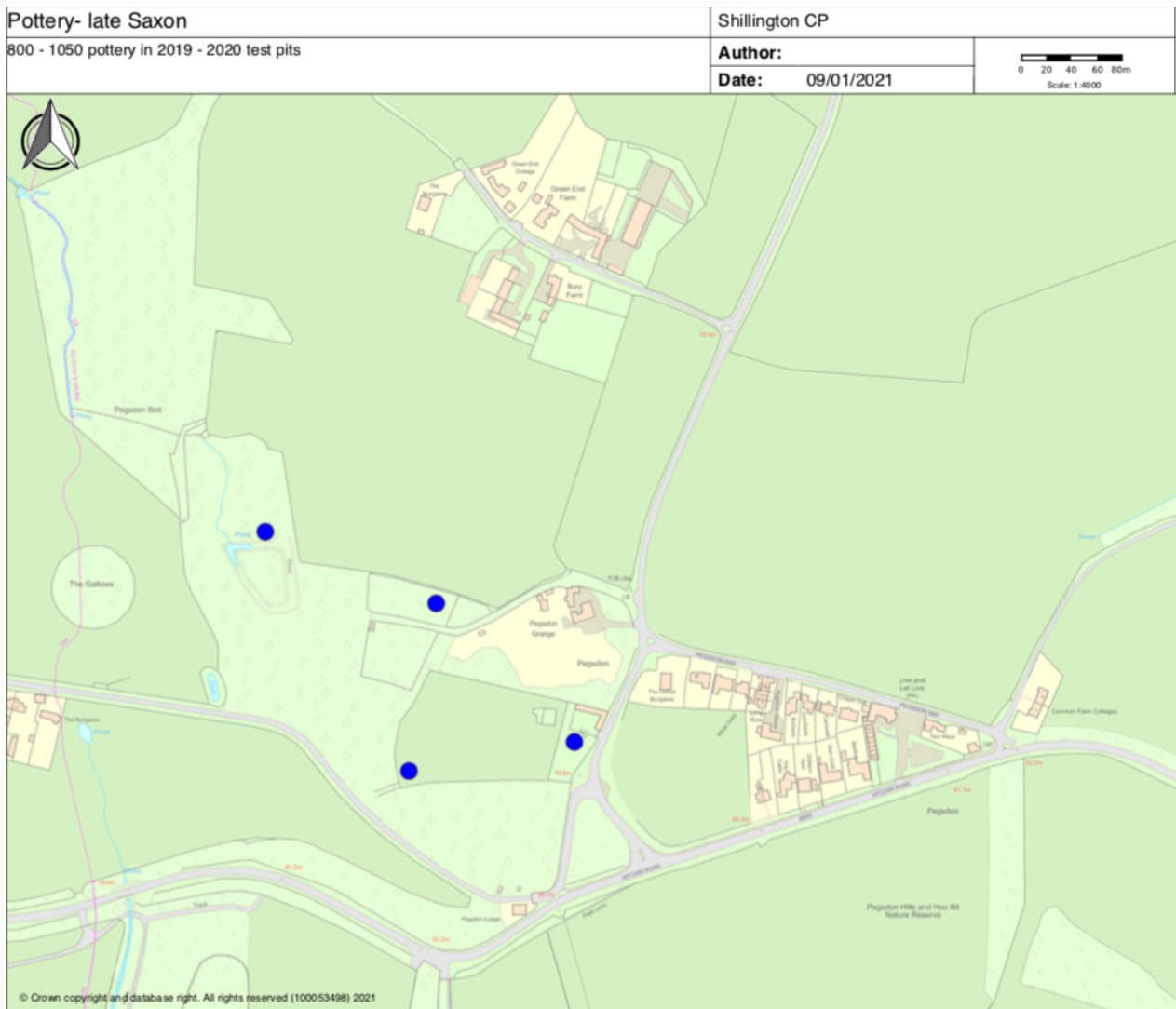
| | IA/RB | | |
|---------------|-------|----|-------------|
| Cntxt | No | Wt | Date Range |
| PEG20/ PH1 | 1 | 32 | Iron Age/RB |

The pottery is likely to be part of an Iron Age or Romano-British cremation or burial urn, perhaps originating in a burial mound of which no trace remains.

Location map for all Pegsdon test pits 2019 - 2020

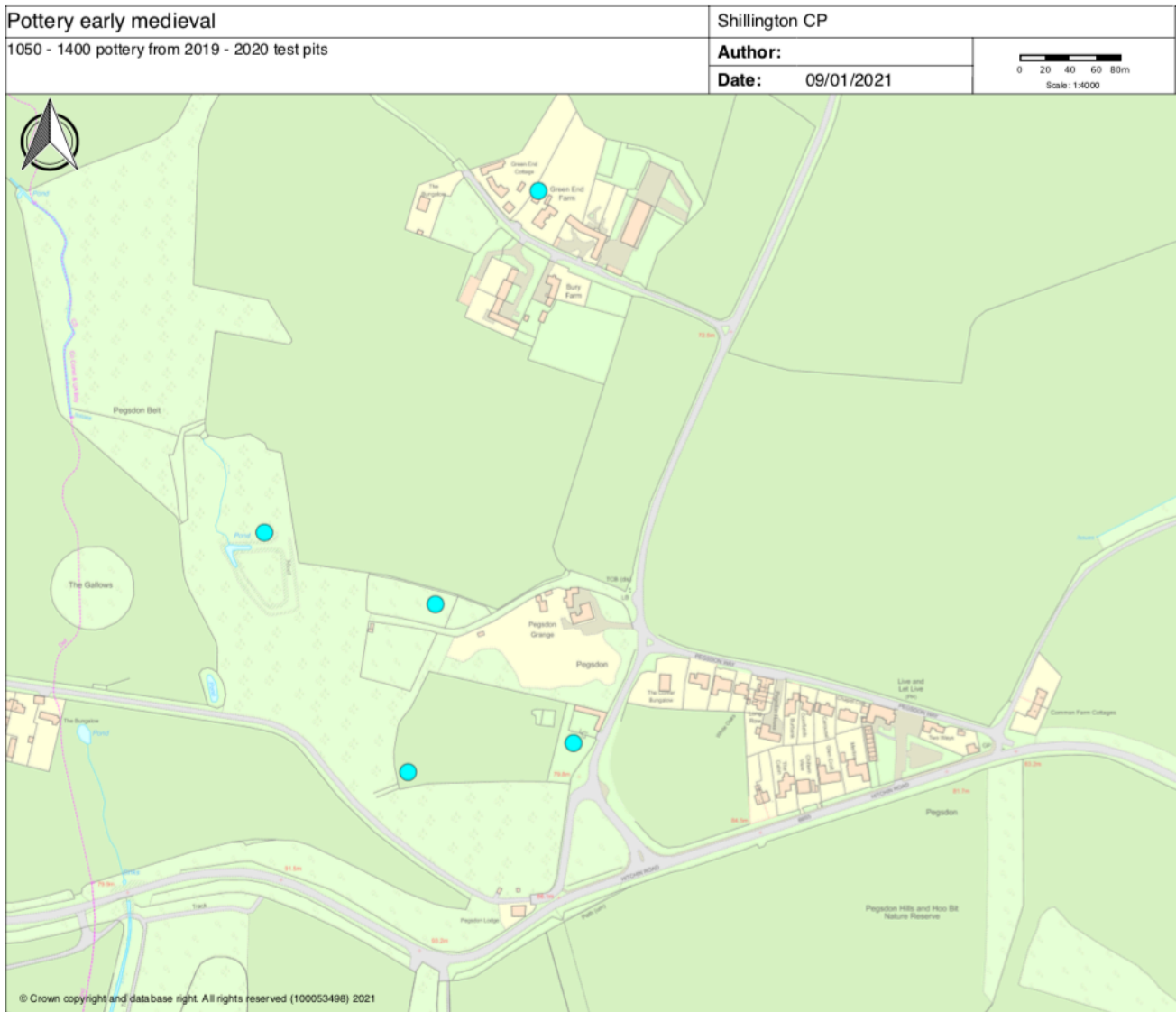


Pottery distribution maps & analysis for different periods: Late Saxon



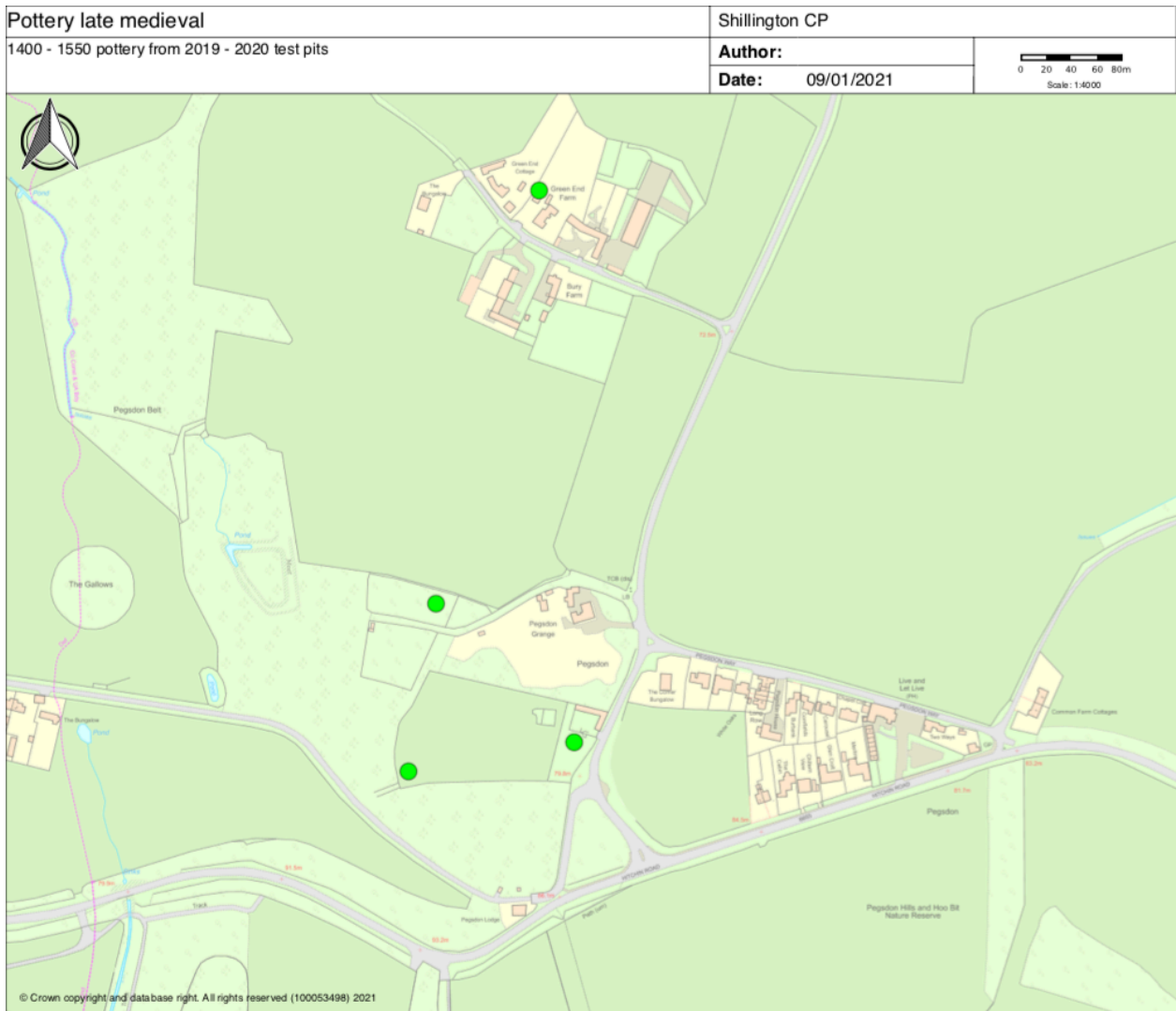
- Late Saxon pottery is the oldest discovered in Pegsdon so far.
- It occurs in 4 (80%) of the 5 test pits, all situated to the W of the modern settlement.
- The greatest amount- 57g- was in SH20/3 (centre R of map, near road), more than in any Shillington test pit where the most was 47g at 1, Clawders Hill (SH13/1) and 43g at 77 Church St (SG13/5).

Early Medieval pottery



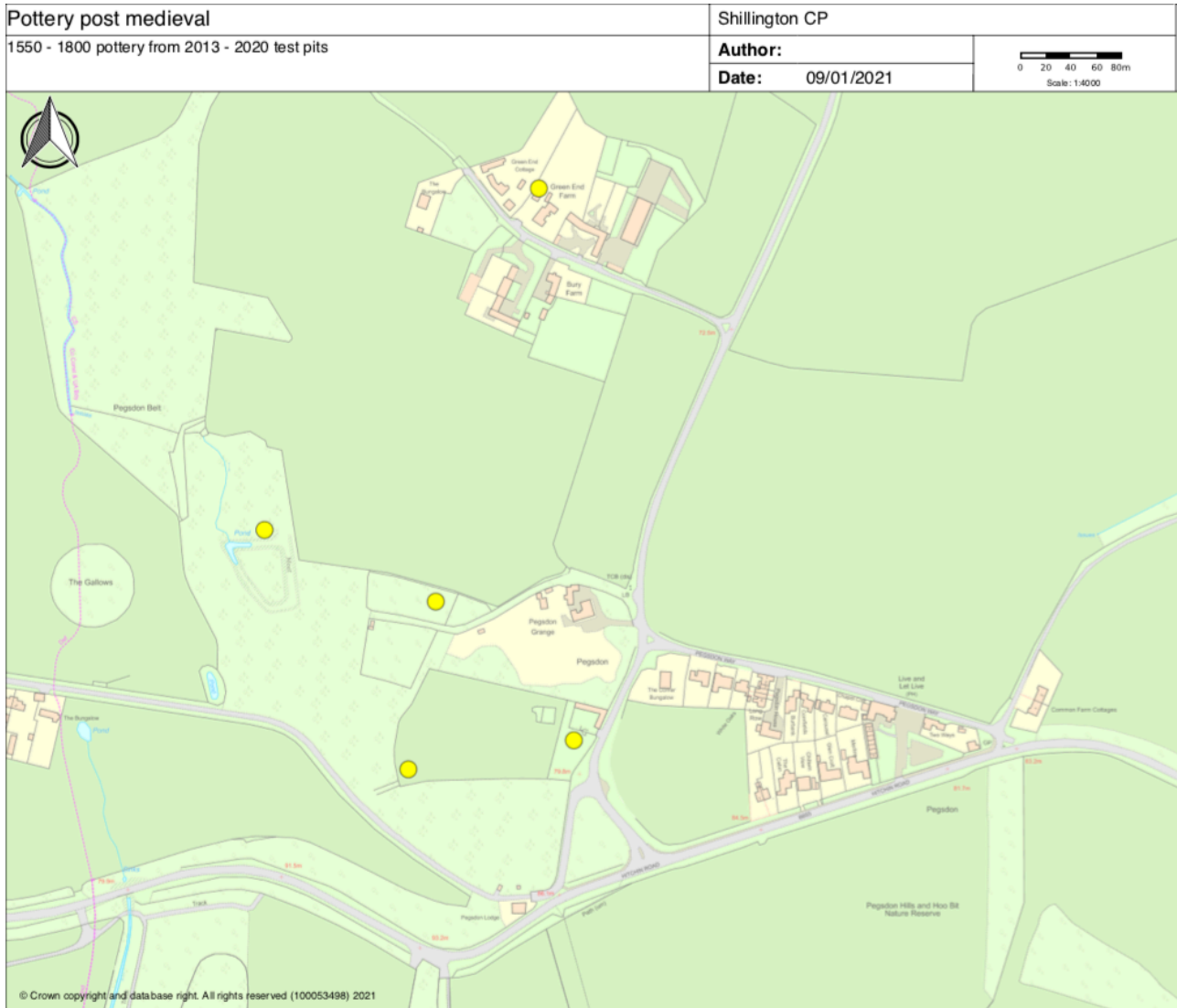
- Early medieval pottery has been found in all 5 Pegsdon test pits.
- It comprises over 41% of the total weight of pottery recovered.
- The greatest quantity was 732g from SH20/3 (centre of lower part of map, near road), comprising 568g of Hertfordshire Greyware (HG), 151g of Early Medieval Ware (EMW) and Early Medieval Shelly Ware (SHC).
- Only 1 test pit in Shillington has produced more than this- Shillington Bury front garden (SH14/4)

Late Medieval pottery



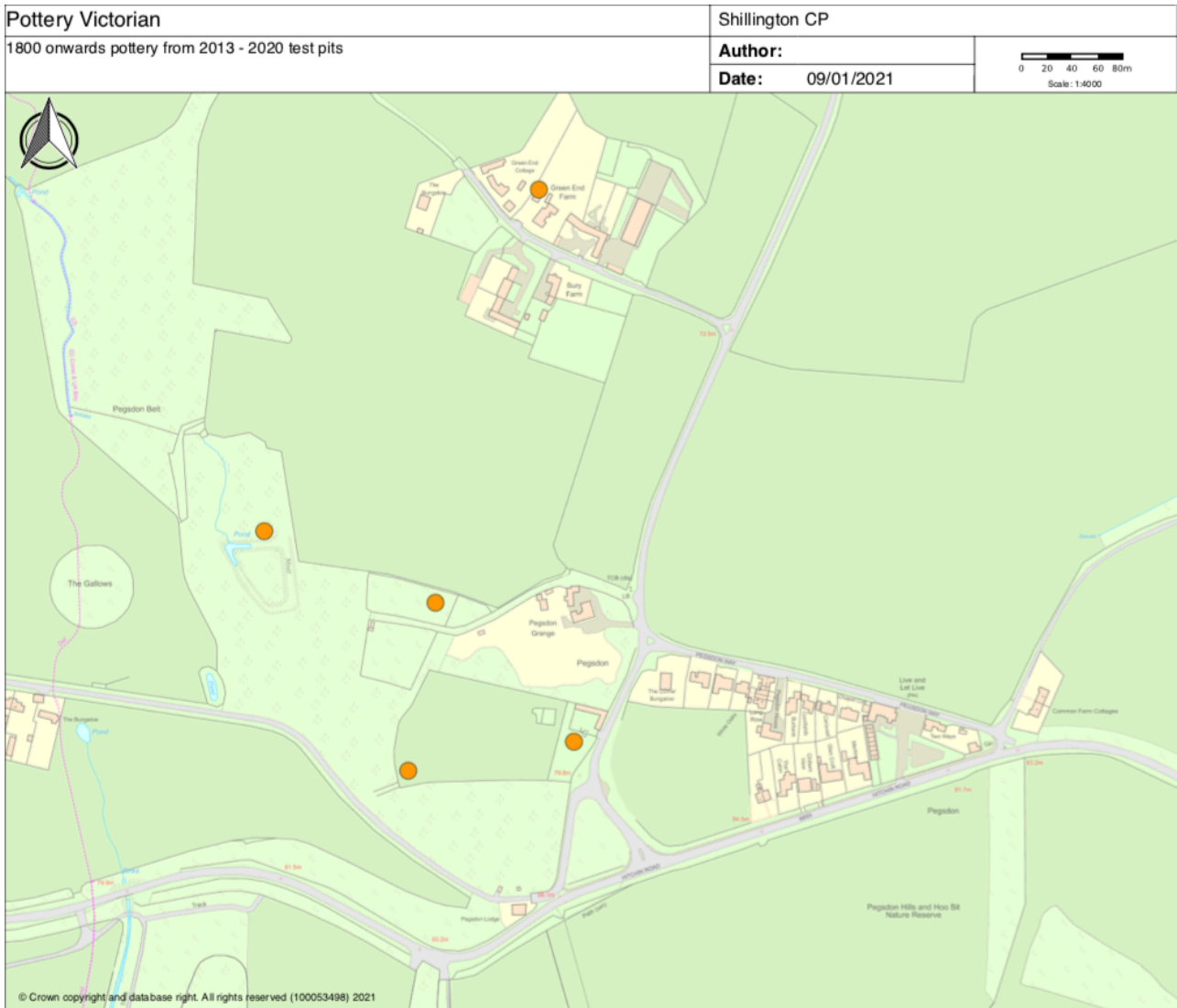
- Late Medieval pottery was found in 4 (80%) of the test pits, with none from Hexton Park 2 (near moat).
- There was 190g in Pegsdon Grange Field 1 (SH20/3) and 183g at Green End Farmhouse (SH19/1).
- These quantities exceed the highest yield in any Shillington test pit- 155g at the Musgrave Arms (SH 14/8)- by a good margin which suggests that Pegsdon may have suffered less from the plague than Shillington.
- After correcting for the different lengths of the Late and Early Medieval periods, the average pottery yield for these periods were remarkably similar. (see Appendix 2 on p27)

Post medieval pottery



- Post medieval pottery occurs in all 5 Pegsdon test pits.
- The greatest amount at Pegsdon Grange Field 2 (SH20/4)

Modern Pottery



- Modern pottery made since 1800 has been found in all 5 Pegsdon test pits.
- The most (292g) was at PEG 20/1 Hexton Park 1.

Appendix 1- Pottery types found and locations

Pottery from Pegsdon (Sites PEG/19 & PEG/20)- descriptions by Paul Blinkhorn

Late Saxon- mid 9th to mid 11th century (850-1050)

SN: St Neots Ware. Made at a number of as-yet unknown places in southern England between AD900-1200. The early pots are usually a purplish-black, black or grey colour, the later ones brown or reddish. All the sherds from this site date to AD1000 or later. The clay from which they were made contains finely crushed fossil shell, giving them a white speckled appearance. Most pots were small jars or bowls.

PEG20/1 (Hexton Pk 1, NW of Pegsdon Grange)

PEG20/2 (Hexton Pk 2, No of moat, W of Pegsdon Grange)

PEG20/3 (Pegsdon Grange field 1- NE corner)

PEG20/4 (Pegsdon Grange field 2- SW corner)

THET: Thetford ware. So-called because archaeologists first found it in Thetford, but the first place to make it was Ipswich, around AD850. Potters first began to make it in Thetford sometime around AD925, and carried on until around AD1100. Many kilns are known from the town. It was made in Norwich from about AD1000, and soon after at many of the main towns in England at that time. The pots are usually grey, and the clay has lots of tiny grains of sand in it, making the surface feel a little like fine sandpaper. Most pots were simple jars, but very large storage pots over 1m high were also made, along with jugs, bowls and lamps. It is found all over East Anglia and eastern England as far north as Lincoln and as far south as London.

PEG20/2 (Hexton Pk 2, N of moat, W of Pegsdon Grange)

STAM: Stamford Ware. Made at several different sites in Stamford in Lincolnshire between AD850 and 1150. The earliest pots were small, simple jars with white, buff or grey fabric, or large jars with painted red stripes. By AD1000, the potters were making vessels which were quite thin-walled and smooth, with a yellow or pale green glaze on the outside, the first glazed pots in England. These were usually jugs with handles and a spout, but other sorts of vessel, such as candle-sticks, bowls and water-bottles are also known.

PEG20/3 (Pegsdon Grange field 1, NE corner)

PEG20/4 (Pegsdon Grange field 2, SW corner)

Early Medieval- mid 11th to end 14th century (1050-1400)

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.

PEG20/4 (Pegsdon Grange field 2, SW corner)

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.

PEG19/1 (Green End Farmhouse)

PEG20/1 (Hexton Pk 1, NW of Pegsdon Grange)

PEG20/2 (Hexton Pk 2, N of moat, W of Pegsdon Grange)

PEG20/4 (Pegsdon Grange field SW corner)

HG: Hertfordshire-type Greyware, mid/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.

PEG19/1 (Green End Farmhouse)

PEG20/1 (Hexton Pk 1, NW of Pegsdon Grange)

PEG20/2 (Hexton Pk 2, N of moat, W of Pegsdon Grange)

PEG20/3 (Pegsdon Grange field 1, NE corner)

PEG20/4 (Pegsdon Grange field 2, SW corner)

Late medieval- 15th to mid 16th century (1400-1550)

BB: Brill/Boarstall Ware, 13th – 16th century. Made at several centres on the Oxfordshire/Buckinghamshire border. Buff to orange slightly sandy fabric, usually with a bright orange or green glaze. Usually glazed jugs.

PEG20/1 (Hexton Pk 1, NW of Pegsdon Grange)

LMT: Late Medieval Ware. Hard, reddish-orange pottery with lots of sand mixed in with the clay. Made from about 1400 – 1550 in lots of different places in East Anglia. Used for everyday pottery such as jugs and large bowls, and also large pots ('cisterns') for brewing beer.

PEG19/1 (Green End Farmhouse)

PEG20/1 (Hexton Pk 1, NW of Pegsdon Grange)

PEG20/3 (Pegsdon Grange field 1, NE corner)

PEG20/4 (Pegsdon Grange field 2, SW corner)

Post-medieval pottery- mid 16th to end 18th century (1550-1800)

CW: Cistercian Ware: Made between AD1475 and 1700. It was first found during the excavation of Cistercian monasteries, but was not made by monks. A number of different places are known to have been making this pottery, particularly in the N 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 all over England.

PEG20/3 (Pegsdon Grange field 1, NE corner)

RAER: Raeren Stoneware, 1450 – 1600. Made at Raeren in Germany. Very hard grey clay fabric, with the outer surface of the pot often having a brown iron wash. The most common vessel types were mugs.

PEG20/3 (Pegsdon Grange field 1, NE corner)

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.

PEG19/1 (Green End Farmhouse)

PEG20/1 (Hexton Pk 1, NW of Pegsdon Grange)

PEG20/2 (Hexton Pk 2, N of moat, W of Pegsdon Grange)

PEG20/3 (Pegsdon Grange field 1, NE corner)

PEG20/4 (Pegsdon Grange field 2, SW corner)

MB: Midland Blackware, AD1550 – 1700. Similar to GRE, but has a black glaze on one or both surfaces. Vessels usually tall cups, jugs and bowls.

PEG19/1 (Green End Farmhouse)

PEG20/4 (Pegsdon Grange 2, field SW corner)

DW: Delft ware. The first white-glazed pottery to be made in Britain. Called Delft ware because of the fame of the potteries at Delft in Holland, which were amongst the first to make this type of pottery in Europe. Soft, cream coloured fabric with a thick white glaze, often with painted designs in blue, purple and yellow. First made in Britain in Norwich around AD1600, and soon after in London. Continued in use until the 19th century. The 17th century pots were expensive table wares such as dishes or bowls, but by the 19th century, better types of pottery was being made, and it was considered very cheap and the main types of pot were plain white, and humble vessels such as chamber pots and ointment jars.

PEG20/4 (Pegsdon Grange field, 2 SW corner)

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.

PEG20/4 (Pegsdon Grange field 2, SW corner)

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.

PEG20/3 (Pegsdon Grange field 1, NE corner)

PEG20/4 (Pegsdon Grange field 2, SW corner)

CP: Chinese Porcelain. Very hard, thin and light white pottery, usually with blue painted decoration. First imported from China around AD1650.

PEG20/1 (Hexton Pk 1, NW of Pegsdon Grange)

Modern pottery- 19th century or later (1800-present)

MOD: Modern Pottery. 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 and continuing through Victorian times until the present day.

PEG19/1 (Green End Farmhouse)

PEG20/1 (Hexton Pk 1, NW of Pegsdon Grange)

PEG20/2 (Hexton Pk 2, N of moat, W of Pegsdon Grange)

PEG20/3 (Pegsdon Grange field 1, NE corner)

PEG20/4 (Pegsdon Grange field 2, SW corner)

Appendix 2- Amount and analysis of pottery by age and test pit

Pegsdon Test Pits- weight of pottery (grams)

| Period> Test pit | Bronz e Age 1,200 - 800BC | Iron Age 800B C-0 | Rom an 0-50 0AD | Late Saxn 850- 1050 | Early med 1,050- 1,400 | Late med 1,400- 1,550 | Post med 1,550- 1,800 | Mode rn 1,800- 2,000 | Totals |
|--|------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------|
| PEG19/1 Green End Farmhouse | | | | | 107 | 183 | 50 | 26 | 366 |
| PEG 20/1 NW Pegsdon Grange | | | | 13 | 97 | 22 | 69 | 292 | 493 |
| PEG20/2 near moat | | | | 5 | 62 | 0 | 22 | 5 | 94 |
| PEG20/3/ P'don Grange field 1 | | | | 10 | 267 | 190 | 111 | 261 | 839 |
| PEG20/4/ P'don Grange field 2 | | | | 57 | 732 | 40 | 245 | 187 | 1,261 |
| Pegsdon totals | 0 | 0 | 0 | 85 | 1,265 | 435 | 497 | 771 | 3,053 |
| Period as %age of total weight | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 2.8% | 41.4% | 14.2% | 16.3% | 25.3% | |
| No. sites with this pottery | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Ave wt pottery per test pit (g) | | | | 21 | 253.0 | 108.8 | 99.4 | 154.2 | |
| CORRECTED PER 100 years | | | | | | | | | |
| Length of period in centuries | 4.0 | 8.0 | 5.0 | 2 | 3.5 | 1.5 | 2.5 | 2.0 | |
| Ave wt of pot/test pit/century | | | | 11 | 72.3 | 72.5 | 39.8 | 77.1 | |