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## Archaeology in Pegsdon 2021

**Shillington History Society**  
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Pottery analysis and comments by Paul Blinkhorn  
[www.shillington-history.org.uk](http://www.shillington-history.org.uk)

## **Index**

p2	Introduction
p4	The historical context- a summary of Pegsdon's development

### **Reports on the 2021 Pegsdon test pits**

p7	PEG 21/1 & surrounding area
p9	PEG21/2
p11	PEG21/3
p13	PEG21/4
p16	PEG21/5
p18	Location map for all Pegsdon test pits
p19	Approximate positions of test pits on the 1882 Ordnance Survey 6 inch map
Pottery distribution maps & analysis for different periods:	
p20	Romano-British
p21	Late Anglo-Saxon
p22	Early Medieval
p23	Late medieval
p25	Post Medieval
p26	Modern
p27 - 30	Appendix 1- Pottery types found and locations
p31	Appendix 2- Amounts and analysis of pottery by age and test pit

## **Introduction**

We completed our third year of digging test pits in Pegsdon in 2021, excavating five and bringing the total to ten.

Shillington History Society began to dig test pits in Shillington 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 2021, they increased the number of completed test pits to 78 in total.

The first Pegsdon test pit was dug in 2019 and there were 4 in 2020. Those who helped during 2021 include Ivor Davis, Mike Dewberry, Alison Graham, Nigel Harper-Scott, Jane Harrison, Fiona Hutton, Mike McCaig, Dave Pengelly, Graham Spurway and myself, Derek Turner. I thank them all for their support and hard work and everyone who provided sites for us to investigate.

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 underground. It's composition, method of manufacture and appearance changed over time making it possible to tell what type and age it is. Paul Blinkhorn- a specialist in pottery from central and southern England- has analysed ours once more. He has counted the sherds and weighed it all and entered the results in tables. These are reproduced here, together with his comments which are based purely on the pottery that he was sent. These are shown *in italics* with his initials (*PB*). 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. Commonly available building materials and modern items were not retained.

The conclusions which I have drawn in this report are based on the assumption that finds that can be dated were used by people who lived in the vicinity at that time. The Pegsdon excavations have produced consistent results which gives them a high degree of reliability. Nevertheless, the test pits we've excavated so far represent just a tiny part of the Pegsdon area and there are other potentially rewarding places to investigate in the future.

This report broadly follows the format that Access Cambridge Archaeology established for test pit excavations involving community groups in 2005. It begins with a brief summary of Pegsdon's history based on evidence from the test pits and a range of other sources followed by maps showing where digs have taken place. Next are results from each of the 2021 test pit locations plus my comments and conclusions.

The number of test pits completed facilitates further analysis of the finds. 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 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 or misplaced assumptions. If you spot any, please let me know.

Derek Turner, Shillington History Society, January 2023, derek.turner@phonecoop.coop

## **The historical context- a summary of Pegsdon's development**

### Prehistoric times

According to Bedfordshire Archives and Records Service, the earliest find was a neolithic polished greenstone axe made in about 1880 (HER 407). A hammer stone and scraper of similar antiquity was found on Pirton Hills in 1941 [HER 415]. A Pegsdon test pit (PEG21/5) produced a piece of worked flint providing further evidence of stone tool making from before 1,500BC.

Evidence of settlement becomes more secure during the Bronze Age when barrows were created on hills NE and E of Pegsdon, presumably for the remains of local leaders or important people. They would have been prominent on the skyline when viewed from low ground. An incomplete bronze spearhead (HER 18377) from the middle to late Bronze Age (1,000 - 800BC) was found in a garden at Bury Farm.

A massive bank and ditch over 200m long on Pegsdon Hills is likely to be part of an Iron Age territorial boundary and resembles others that occur every few miles along the Icknield Way. The area around Pegsdon Common Farm Field has produced many prehistoric finds including pottery sherds (HER 16328) that suggest a settlement near a spring (now piped) at the foot of Knocking Hoe. Soil marks in aerial photographs showed two circular and other irregular linear features consistent with the presence of an Iron Age farm [HER 1841].

Metal detecting W of Pegsdon Common Farm in 1998 and 1999 led to the discovery of pottery and a range of spectacular finds including a late Iron Age polished bronze mirror and two silver brooches. An Iron Age cemetery (HER 413) discovered in 1879 was still in use after the Roman occupation. On the Pegsdon Hills nature reserve, a piece of pottery spotted in 2020 may be part of an Iron Age or Romano-British cremation urn. One of the 2021 test pits (PEG21/2, Pegsdon Grange pig meadow) contained 4 sherds of similar pottery weighing 25g indicating a possible settlement site at the foot of the chalk scarp where residents would have used one of the many springs that erupted along it.

### The Roman occupation and beyond

The metal detector finds of 1998 and 1999 near Pegsdon Common Farm also included two coin hoards (NRHE Monument no. 1302313). One of these comprised 18 silver denarii and the other contained 123 gold coins depicting emperors from Tiberius (AD36-7) to Vespasian (AD78-9)- the largest collection of gold ever discovered in England from the 1st century. They may be hoards that were buried to protect them from theft or during troubled times or be votive offerings made to 'the Gods'. A 1st century brooch (HER 16292) was found in rabbit spoil on the Iron Age bank mentioned above in 1997. Excavation to create a 'dewpond' on Pegsdon Hills in December 1932 produced Roman pottery (HER 291) from what was thought to be later infill in the ditch around a Romano-British hut. A Roman quern, used for grinding corn, was also discovered (HER 11315). Settlement may have extended further N of Pegsdon Common Farm as Roman pottery (HER 9298) has been found on either side of a drain at Kettledean Farm.

### Late Saxon and Medieval times

Nothing is known about Pegsdon for several centuries after the Roman occupation ended until an Anglo-Saxon burial was discovered near Pegsdon Common Farm. Eight of the 10 test pits have revealed small quantities of late Saxon pottery in woods and fields NW and W of the current settlement at Pegsdon which shows that people were living there from at least AD1,000. In 1086, Pegsdon was called Pechesdone in the Domesday Book when it was held by Ramsey Abbey (Huntingdonshire). It comprised ten hides and 37 villagers, 7 smallholders and 5 slaves lived there. This total of 49 people represents the heads of households which implies a total population of something like 200, greater than Shillington and 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 dropped to £10 by 1086.

Nevertheless, early medieval pottery from every one of the test pits show that Pegsdon continued to grow for nearly 300 years after 1050. 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 the population. A Ramsey Abbey document from 1311 shows that the Manor of Pegsdon had amalgamated with the Manor of Shillington before then and Pegsdon continued to be part of Shillington parish thereafter.

An abrupt decline in the country's fortunes took place after 1348 as the plague or Black Death spread across England, killing many. This is reflected in the weight of pottery from Pegsdon's test pits where the total amount falls from the early to the late Medieval period. After correcting for the different lengths of these periods, the average weight of pottery per test pit falls by about 25% suggesting a similar decline in the population.

The construction in the late 15th century of Bury Farmhouse (HER No. 3857) and Pegsdon Grange (formerly known as Pegsdon Barns) may indicate a partial revival of the village.

### Post-medieval onwards

More new buildings appeared with the 17th century Green End Farmhouse and a house (HER No. 9407) shown on a 1777 map west of Pegsdon Grange. However, the total weight of pottery from the test pits continues to fall.

Every test pit contained Victorian or later pottery and large quantities in PEG20/1, PEG 20/3 and PEG20/4 back up map evidence that people lived in homes in the area W, SW and S of Pegsdon Grange at that time (see map on p 19). Since then, these buildings have been demolished and the sites abandoned. New farms were built in the fields between Pegsdon and Apsley End following Shillington's Enclosure Act of 1801 (shown as Kittledean and College Farm on 1890s Ordnance Survey maps). Crossways, the Live and Let Live, the 1841 Methodist Chapel next door and the terrace of six cottages at Long Row were built off Pegsdon Way in the 1800s. Most of the other houses are post-war and are there and along Hitchin Rd, together with barn conversions at Bury Farm creating four dwellings there.

## Location of 2021 test pits



## Reports on the 2021 Pegsdon test pits

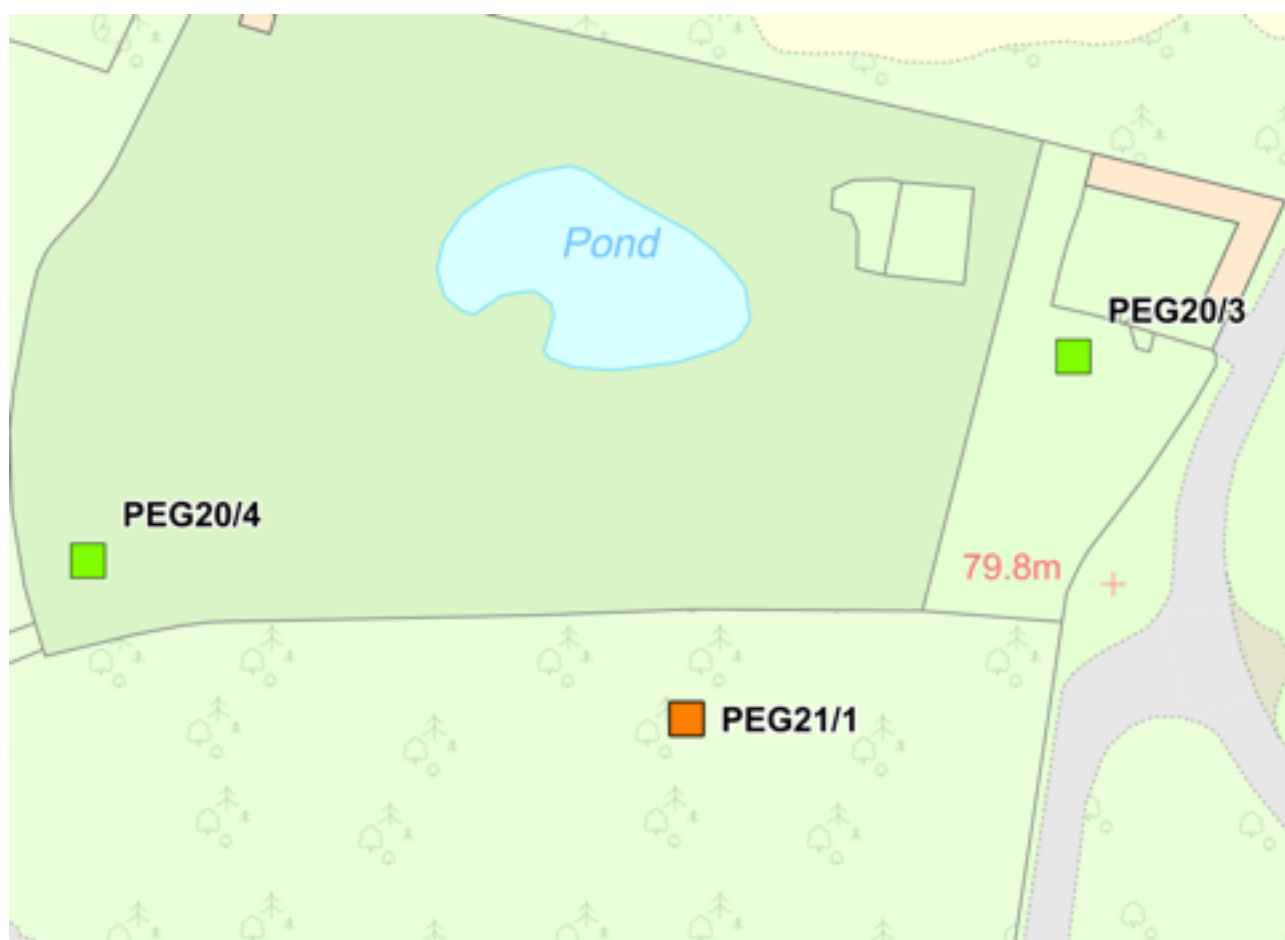
### Pegsdon test pit 1 (PEG21/1)

North of Pegsdon Lodge Nearest postcode SG5 3JS (TL 1178 3023)

1-2 May 2021

This test pit was on the Hexton Manor estate near three buildings shown on the Enclosure Map of 1817 and a house on a different alignment that had replaced them on OS maps around 1890 (HER 9394). This has since been demolished.

It was 14m S of the fence along Footpath 44 which is one of a network of probable medieval tracks. This is likely to have provided access to the buildings but a fence has been installed between them since then. The area is currently covered by woodland where pheasant shooting occurs. The test pit was excavated about 90m N of Pegsdon Lodge- the nearest occupied dwelling.



It was located about 70m SW of test pit PEG20/3 and 82m SSE of PEG20/4.. Avoiding large trees affected the location of the test pit and it was necessary to clear nettles and other vegetation before digging began.

The following table shows the number of sherds and weight of pottery in grams found in each 10cm layer of soil or context (Cntxt), which are numbered starting from 1 nearest the surface. A full list of the abbreviations used for different types of pottery is in appendix 1.

TP	Cntxt	SN		HG		Date Range
		No	Wt	No	Wt	
1	2 & 3	2	7	3	5	1000-1200
1	4 & 5	3	14	2	9	1000-1200

We also examined the spoil from a 1 metre deep rabbit hole beyond the NW corner of the former house about 12m W of the test pit site and found the following pottery.

TP	Cntxt	SN		SHC		HG		GRE		DW		VIC		Date Range
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
1	Rabbit spoil	9	30	1	3	9	76	8	137	3	13	17	38	1000-1900

*The pottery ..... shows that there was activity at the site from around the time of the Norman Conquest to the 12<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> century, after which time it was largely abandoned until the modern era. (PB)*

Other finds included:

- Numerous red bricks (mainly left in situ), red roof tile, white floor tile, rusty nails (not retained)
- 13 pieces of animal bone and 3 no. animal teeth.
- 1 piece of clay tobacco pipe bowl and 3 pieces of stem
- Metal items included 6 rusty nails, 1 metal curtain ring, 1 metal buckle, 3 lead pistol bullets used for shooting pheasants and one other unidentified lead item.
- 2 pieces of mirror glass, 9 other pieces of glass, 1 graphite pencil

Just 4cm below the surface we found bricks laid horizontally. Their pattern suggested that they were part of the outside wall (2 half bricks wide) of the ~1890 house, the base of a chimney and part of a conjoined outhouse with walls one half-brick thick. A possible rammed chalk surface appeared at about 15cm and was underlain by rubble consisting of hard, white lumps of chalk at about 30cm. There was some darker but sterile soil at 45cm towards corner 3. Tree roots hampered digging below this but natural chalk was found in one corner at 50cm and excavation ceased.

### Analysis

The test pit found part of walls of the house that maps show at the site in about 1890, a probable conjoined outbuilding and a little late Saxon and early medieval pottery. The rabbit spoil produced a more typical range of finds which have been used to represent the test pit in the pottery distribution maps and in Appendices 1 and 2. The late Saxon and early medieval pottery show occupation here between 1000 and 1400 and confirm that this area was within the early village of Pegsdon. This location was probably abandoned for several centuries after the plague struck. The post medieval pottery, mainly Glazed Red Earthenware (GRE), and more recent material are consistent with the probable period when the building was occupied.



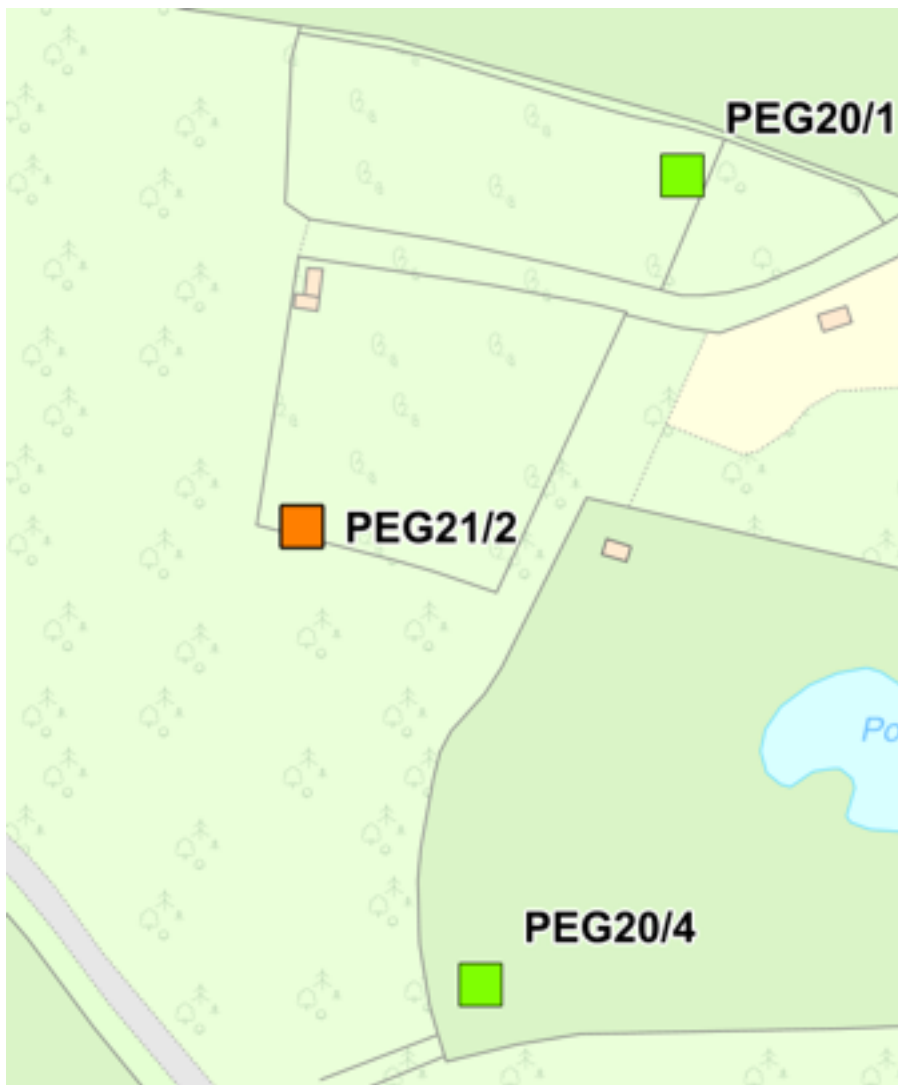
## **Pegsdon test pit 2 (PEG21/2)**

**Pegsdon Grange pig meadow Nearest postcode SG5 3JS (TL 1168 3032)**

9 May 2021

This test pit was excavated about 7m from the SW corner of land that was formerly a pig meadow according to a retired gamekeeper from Hexton Manor estate (Brian Mann, pers. comm.) The area is now part of the Pegsdon Grange land and about 175m SSW of the house and about 40m west of Footpath 45. It was located 7m from the fence to the W and 1m from the fence to the S.

This location was 83m SW of test pit PEG20/1 and 86m NW of PEG21/4. The LIDAR image shows that Footpath 45 was one of a network of probable medieval tracks in this area but no others show up in the immediate vicinity of this test pit. With no map evidence of buildings here either, work on the test pit began with little expectation that it would produce many finds.



The area was covered with rank vegetation including nettles thriving on dark organic soil. No finds occurred below 60cm. At 68 to 70cm, chalk was encountered and excavation ceased.

TP	Cntxt	IA/RB		SN		EMW		SHC		HG		LMT		VIC		Date Range
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
2	1			4	10					3	8			1	2	1000-1900
2	2			4	9	1	3			4	16	2	6	2	10	1000-1900
2	3	3	23	5	13	1	9	2	7	14	40	3	7			50-1550
2	4			5	14					3	45					1000-1200
2	5			4	17					1	10					1000-1200
2	6			5	5	1	5									1000-1150
2	7	1	2													100BC-100

*The pottery from this test-pit shows that there was activity at the site from around the time of the Norman Conquest to the 12<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> century, after which time it was largely abandoned. It also seems likely that the site was occupied in the Iron Age and Roman periods. PB*

Other finds included:

- pieces of red brick, roof tile and a rusty nail
- 83 pieces of animal bone, 7 animal teeth
- one piece of clay tobacco pipe stem

### Analysis

Considering that this test pit was located well away from the medieval trackways that LIDAR depicts, the pottery finds exceeded our hopes.

The 25g of late Iron Age/Romano-British pottery is the first from any test pit in Pegsdon or Shillington. It suggests a settlement was here in the latter part of the Iron Age and that occupation into the early years of the Roman occupation. There are springs nearby which would have provided a convenient source of drinking water. A similar piece of pottery- probably part of a burial urn- had been found previously on a steep hillside 0.5km away on Pegsdon Hills.

There was 27 shards/68g of late Saxon pottery, all of it St Neots ware (SN)- the most found in any Pegsdon or Shillington test pit so far.

This area was occupied in the Early Medieval period but a small quantity of Late Medieval Ware (LMT) suggests that it was abandoned soon afterwards, probably reflecting the plague's impact on Pegsdon.

### **Pegsdon test pit 3 (PEG21/3)**

**Merlins, Hitchin Rd, Pegsdon SG5 3JT (TL 1206 3026)**

10-11 July 2021

This test pit was the first to be excavated among the 19th and 20th century houses of Pegsdon. It was in the rear garden lawn at Merlins, a chalet bungalow built around 1970. It's location was about 16 m away from an extension on the back of the original house, 8m from the NW corner of the garden and 19m from the fence along its eastern side.

It was about 215m E of the Pegsdon Grange pig meadow test pit (PEG21/2).



The deepest finds were at 53cm below which the subsoil merged into the underlying rock. We reached grey chalk marl at 70cm although digging continued as deep as 95cm in one place to confirm this.

TP	Cntxt	HG		LMT		GRE		VIC		Date Range
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
3	1							8	20	1800-1900
3	2							6	9	1800-1900
3	3	1	1			1	9	5	6	1150-1900
3	4							3	4	1800-1900
3	5			2	6					1400-1550
3	6			1	5					1400-1550

*The pottery from this test-pit shows that there was low-level activity at the site during the medieval and early post-medieval periods, after which time it was abandoned until the modern era. (PB)*

Other finds included:

- several pieces of brick, tile, slate and tarmac
- numerous rusty nails
- a metal toothpaste tube
- a metal bottle top
- a pce. of aluminium foil
- 1 pce. of copper wire
- 1 cylindrical copper item 12mm long x 60 mm long,
- 1 plastic plant marker
- 1 shirt button
- 6 pieces of modern glass and 2 pieces of older glass
- 1 graphite pencil
- 2 pieces oyster shell
- 2 pieces animal bone
- 1 clay tobacco pipe stem

### Analysis

The limited amounts of early and late medieval pottery are inadequate to confirm settlement here between 1,000 and 1550. This is likely to have been farmland until dwellings were built nearby and their inhabitants left the Victorian and more recent pottery found here.

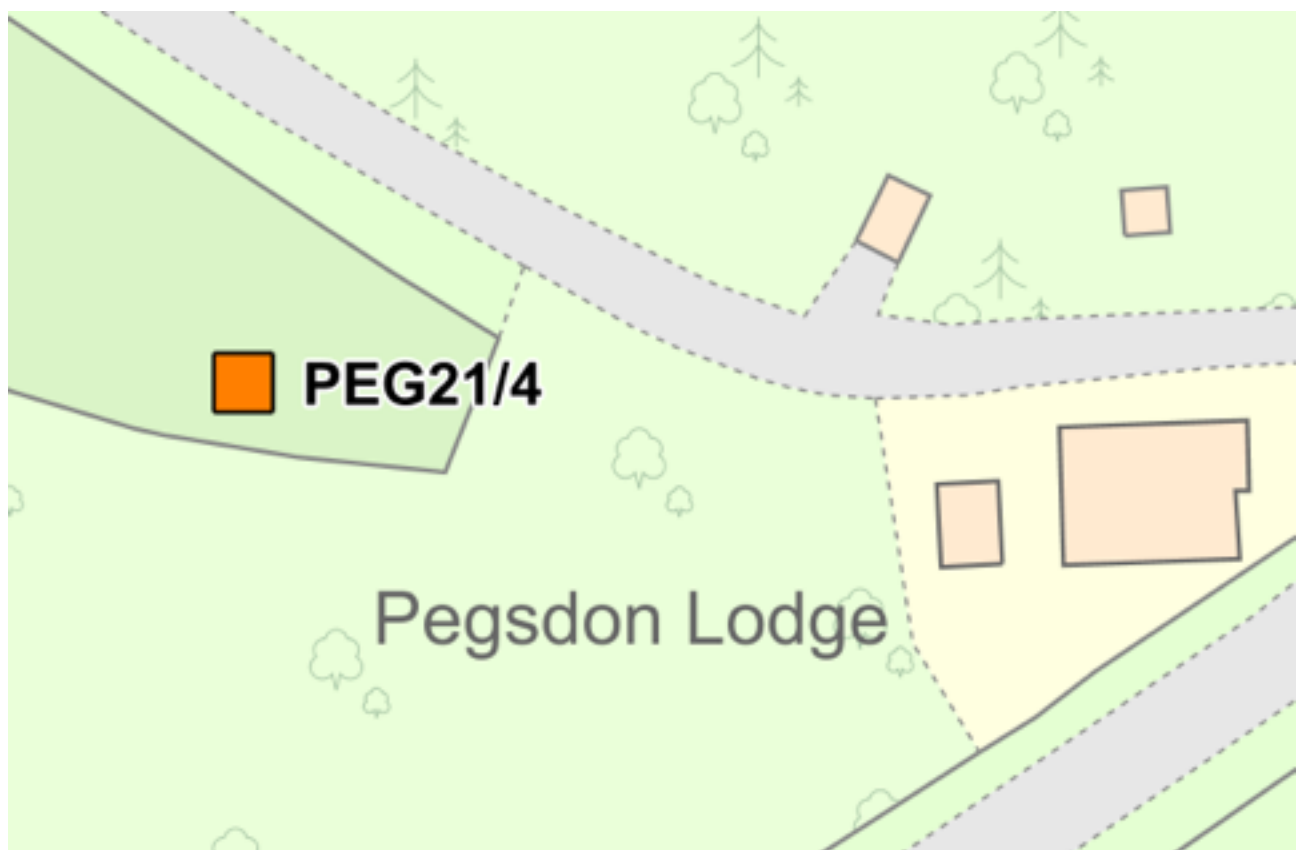
### **Pegsdon test pit 4 (PEG21/4)**

**Hexton Park, adjacent to sunken way. Nearest postcode SG5 3JS (TL 1173 3014)**

8-9 August 2021

This test pit was excavated in the pasture at Hexton Park south of the tree-lined avenue linking Hexton Manor with the entrance at Pegsdon Lodge. The location was on the W side of a linear sunken feature running NNW - SSE which represents the beginning of a track that began in medieval Pegsdon and headed south over Pegsdon Hills towards Lilley Hoo(now Shillington Bridleway 3). This part of the track was abandoned when Hexton Park was enclosed. The 1777 estate map shows that the public highway had been diverted around its southern perimeter.

The test pit was excavated about 50m W of the nearest dwelling- Pegsdon Lodge. It was 13m from the fence along the S side of the avenue and 11 metres from the fence on the E side of the grazed area.



It was located about 94m SW of the test pit N of Pegsdon Lodge (PEG21/1) and 110m SSE of the Pegsdon Grange field 2, SW cnr (PEG20/4) test pit. There were no finds from below 30cm. The natural grey chalk-marl surface was reached at about 35cm. Excavation continued in one part of the test pit to 55cm to confirm this and digging stopped. The opportunity was also taken to use a metal detector in the surrounding area.

TP	Cntxt	SN		HG		LMT		SS		VIC		Date Range
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
4	1							1	2	1	2	1640-1900
4	2	3	6	5	8	1	11					1000-1550
4	3	3	7	4	10							1000-1200

*The pottery from this test-pit shows that there was activity at the site from around the time of the Norman Conquest to the 12<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> century, after which time it was largely abandoned. (PB)*

Other finds from the test pit were:

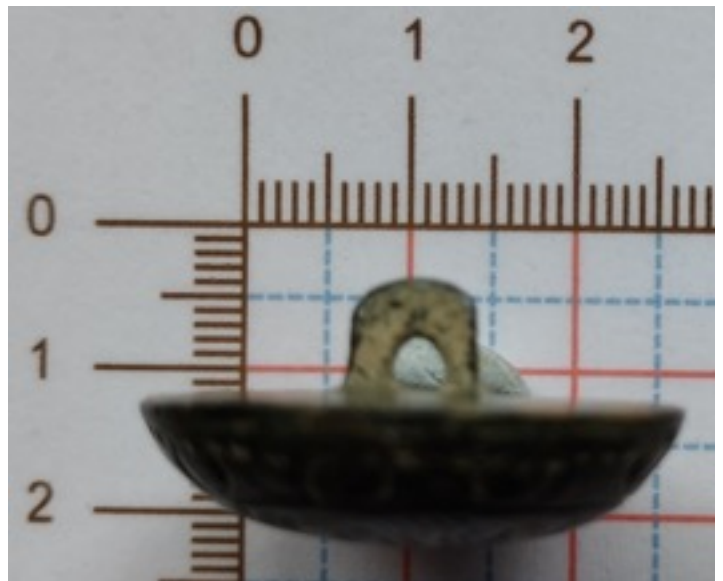
- 6 pieces of red brick and 1 piece of red roof tile
- 13 pieces of animal bone
- 1 large and 1 small animal tooth
- 1 piece of oyster shell

Within a 15m radius of the test pit, the metal detector found some interesting items:

- 1 silver hammered long cross penny, Type 10cf1. Approximate diameter: 35mm. Made during the reign of Edward I in the London mint in 1305 or 1306



- 1 no. 17th century domed button (below) weighing 17.41g, probably made of pewter



- A slightly damaged 27mm diameter crotaled bell with a sunburst design and with the 'pea' missing  
(Many thanks to Dave Pengelly for information about the above finds)



- The metal detector also found 1 no. lead pistol bullet for shooting pheasants

### Analysis

The quantity of late Saxon and early medieval pottery suggests that this location was close to the medieval village of Pegsdon but any settlement here was abandoned subsequently. After this area became part of Hexton Park, the button may have come from the military uniform of a C17 resident of Hexton Manor or a visitor there. The coin is the first found from the C14. The crotaled bell may have fallen from an animal being taken to graze on Pegsdon Hills.

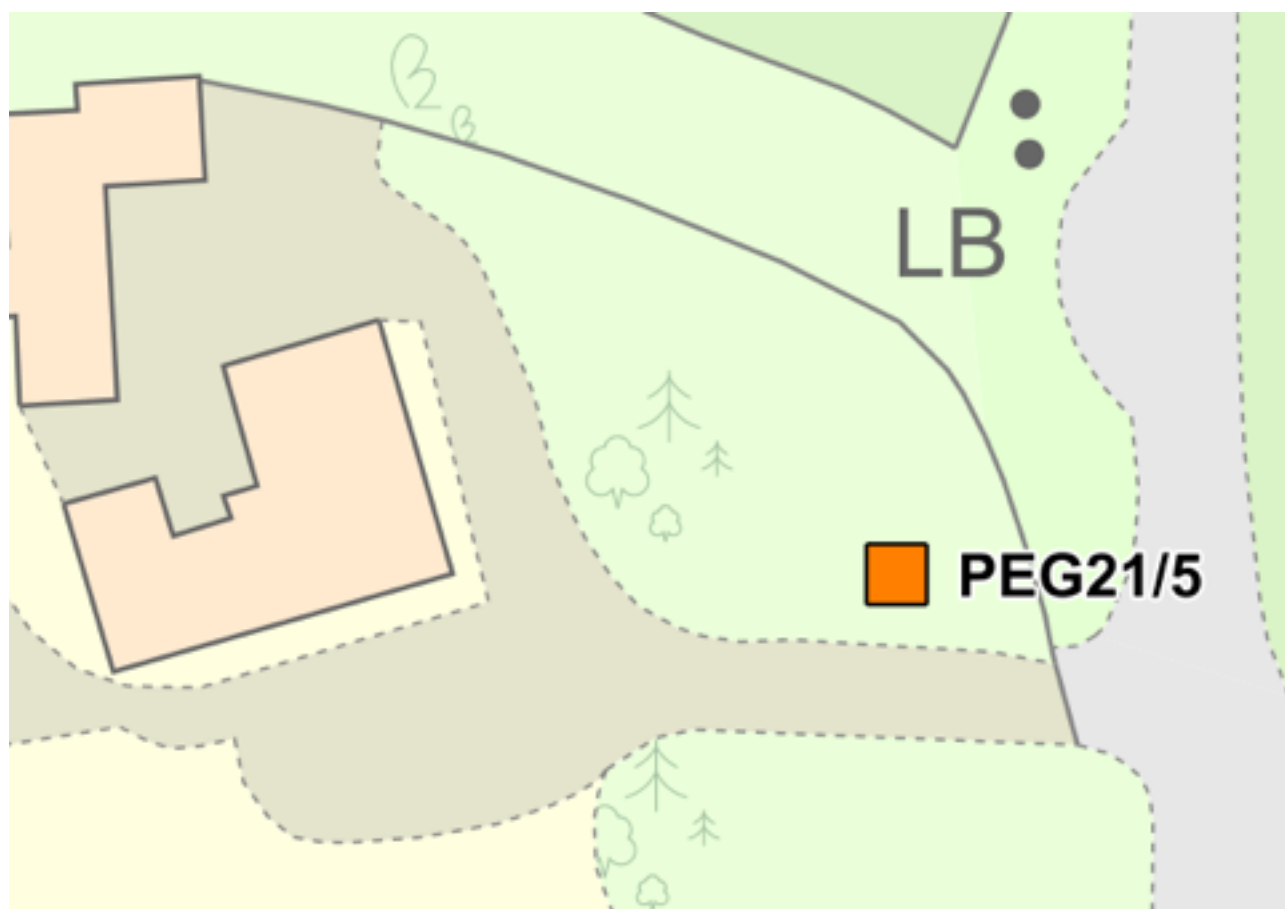
## Pegsdon test pit 5 (PEG21/5)

Pegsdon Grange, SG5 3JZ (TL 1188 3036)

1-2 May 2021

This test pit was excavated under trees about 4m N of the entrance drive to Pegsdon Grange and just inside the line of the gates, about 22m E of the SE corner of the house and about 12m from the nearest surfaced part of the highway. It was also 150m E of test pit SH20/1 and 107m NNE of SH20/3.

Pegsdon Grange is a Grade II listed building dating from the 16th century, though extended or modified on several occasions since then. Until about 2000, it was known as Pegsdon Barns. The 1882 OS map shows farm buildings close to the site of the test pit.



TP	Cntxt	THET		HG		BB		LMT		VIC		Date Range
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
5	2			1	1			1	5			1150-1550
5	3									1	1	1800-1900
5	4			3	10			1	3			1150-1550
5	5	1	5			2	4					850-1400

*The pottery from this test-pit shows that there was low-level activity at the site during the medieval period, after which time it was largely abandoned. (PB)*



Other finds included

- Several pieces of red tile and brick
- 11 pieces of animal bone
- 3 pieces of glass
- Corroded metal including rusty nails, a metal strap with a hook one end
- A plastic plant marker
- The leg of a plastic model figure
- 1 piece of flint showing percussion marks

Much of the material in the test pit had been disturbed, possibly due to the construction or demolition of farm buildings that appeared on the 1882 Ordnance Survey map.

### Analysis

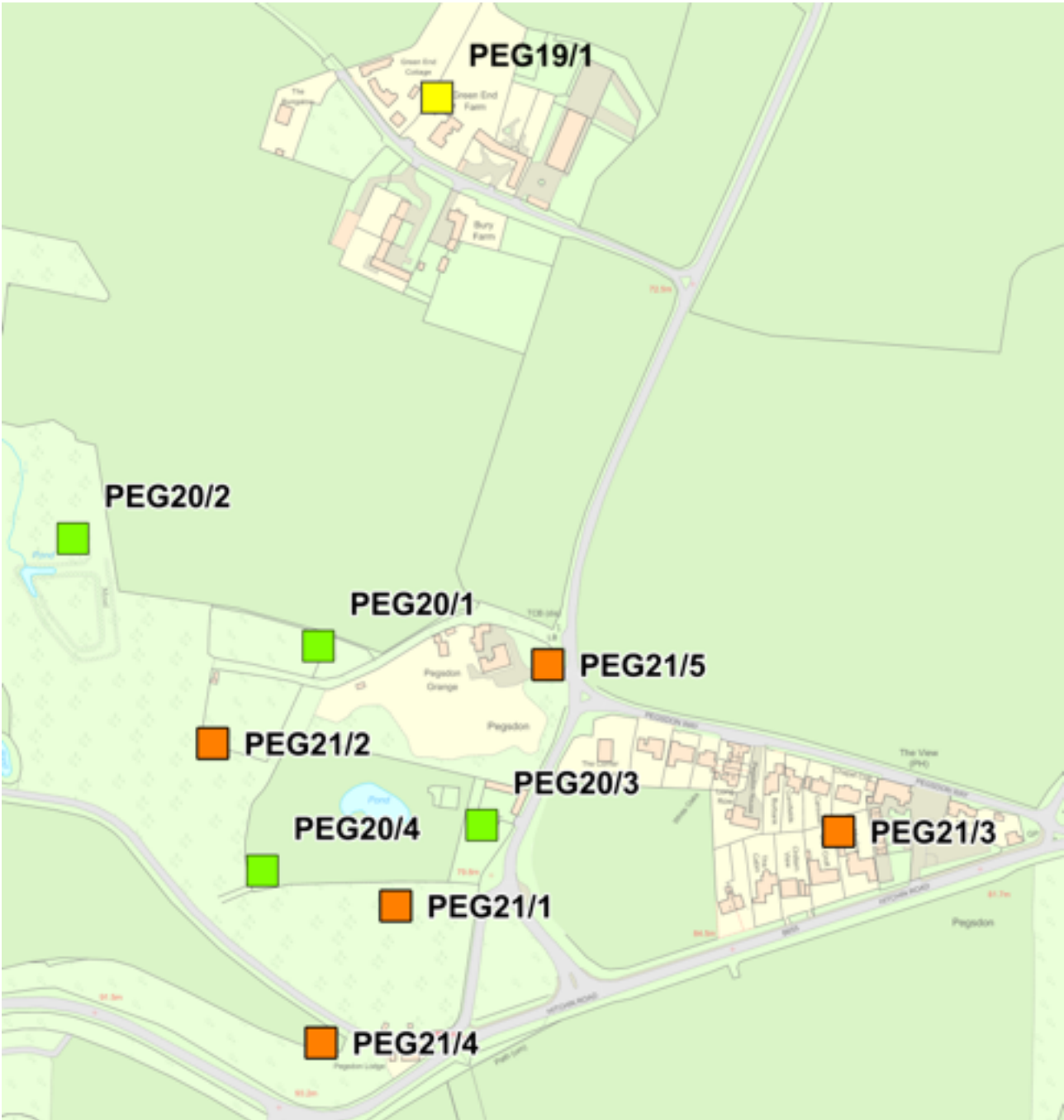
The evidence of flint working suggests activity in this area before the start of the Iron Age.

This is only the second occurrence in Pegsdon of late Saxon Thetford ware, albeit only one sherd weighing 5g. A smaller sherd of 2g had previously been found in a test pit about 500m to the W of here in Hexton Park near the moated site (PEG20/2).

Post medieval Brill/Boarstall ware (4g) also appeared here for only the second time in Pegsdon. There had been a single sherd weighing 1g about 120m W of here in the test pit W of Pegsdon Grange (PEG20/1).

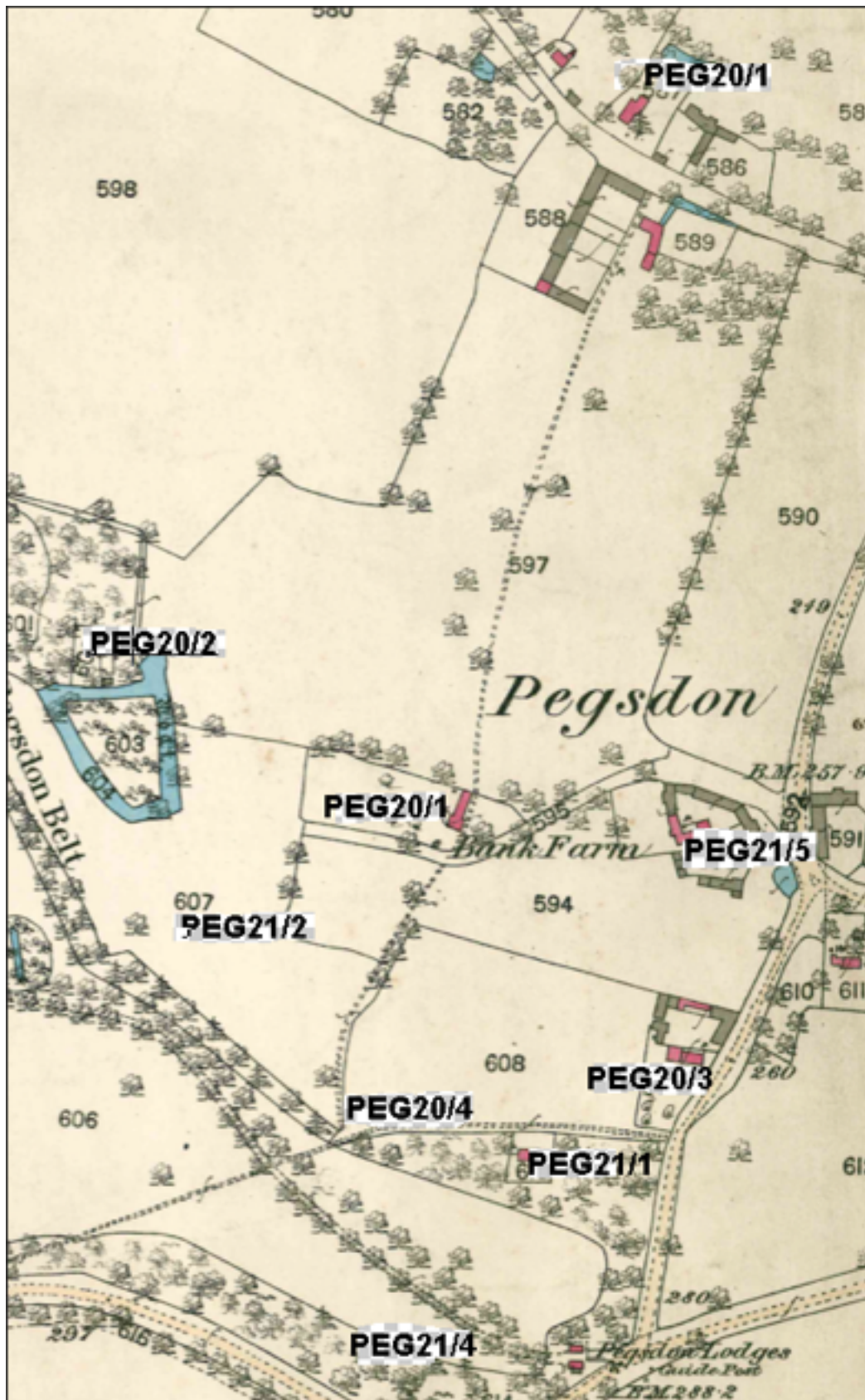
The small quantities of pottery and disturbed soil suggest that there was unlikely to have been settlement here in the past although there may have been some nearby. If this is the case, 15th century Pegsdon Grange would have been built on or close to the site of an earlier house.

**Location map of all Pegsdon test pits**



## Approximate positions of nine of the test pits plotted on the 1882 Ordnance Survey 6 inch map

Houses are in red. PEG21 is at Green End Farmhouse with the Bury Farm complex nearby. PEG21/5 is at Pegsdon Grange. The road to Hexton (left) and Hitchin (right) crosses at the bottom of the map. Most of modern Pegsdon is off the bottom right hand side of the map.

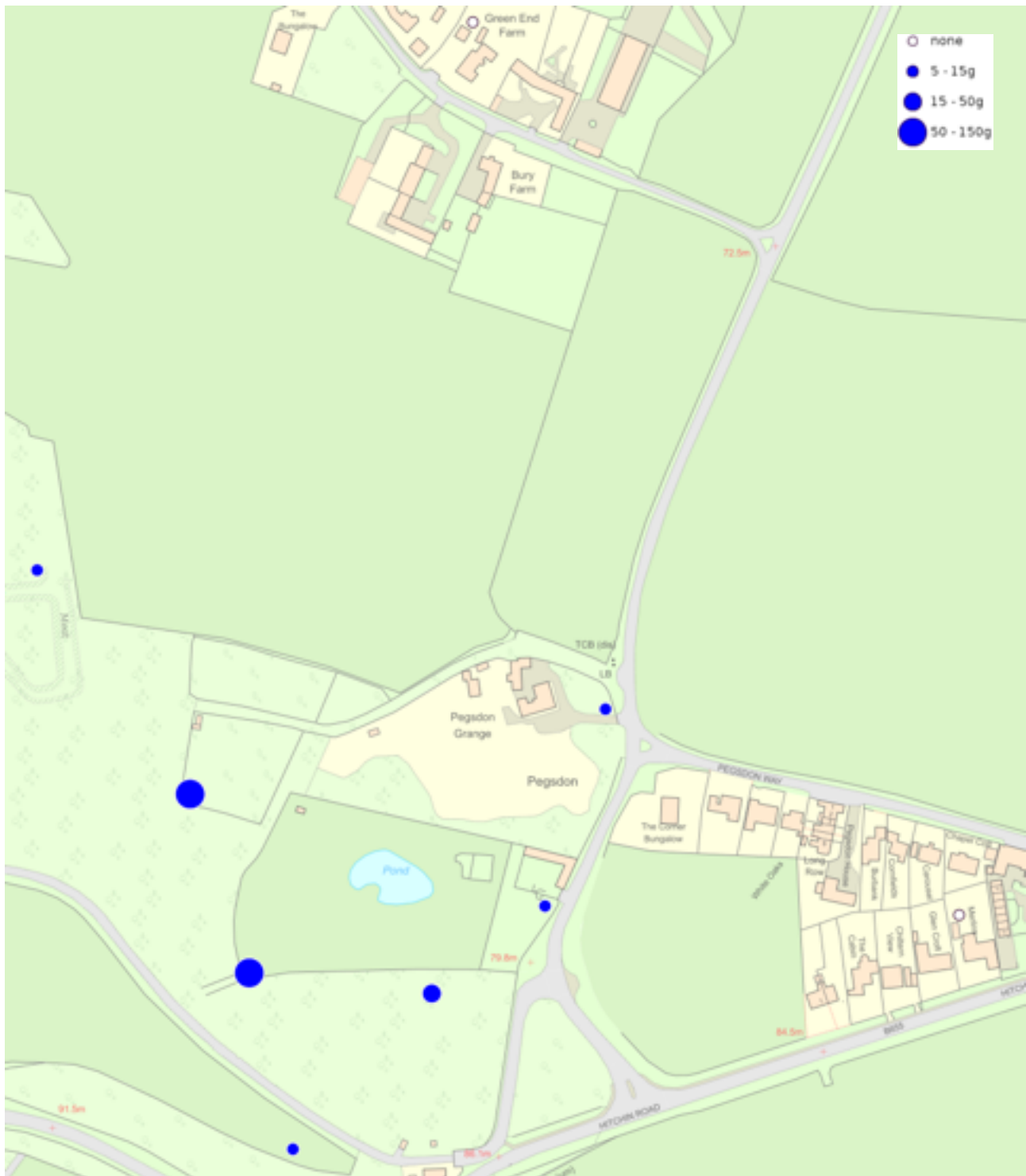


## Test pits with Iron Age/Romano British (RB) pottery 600BC - AD100



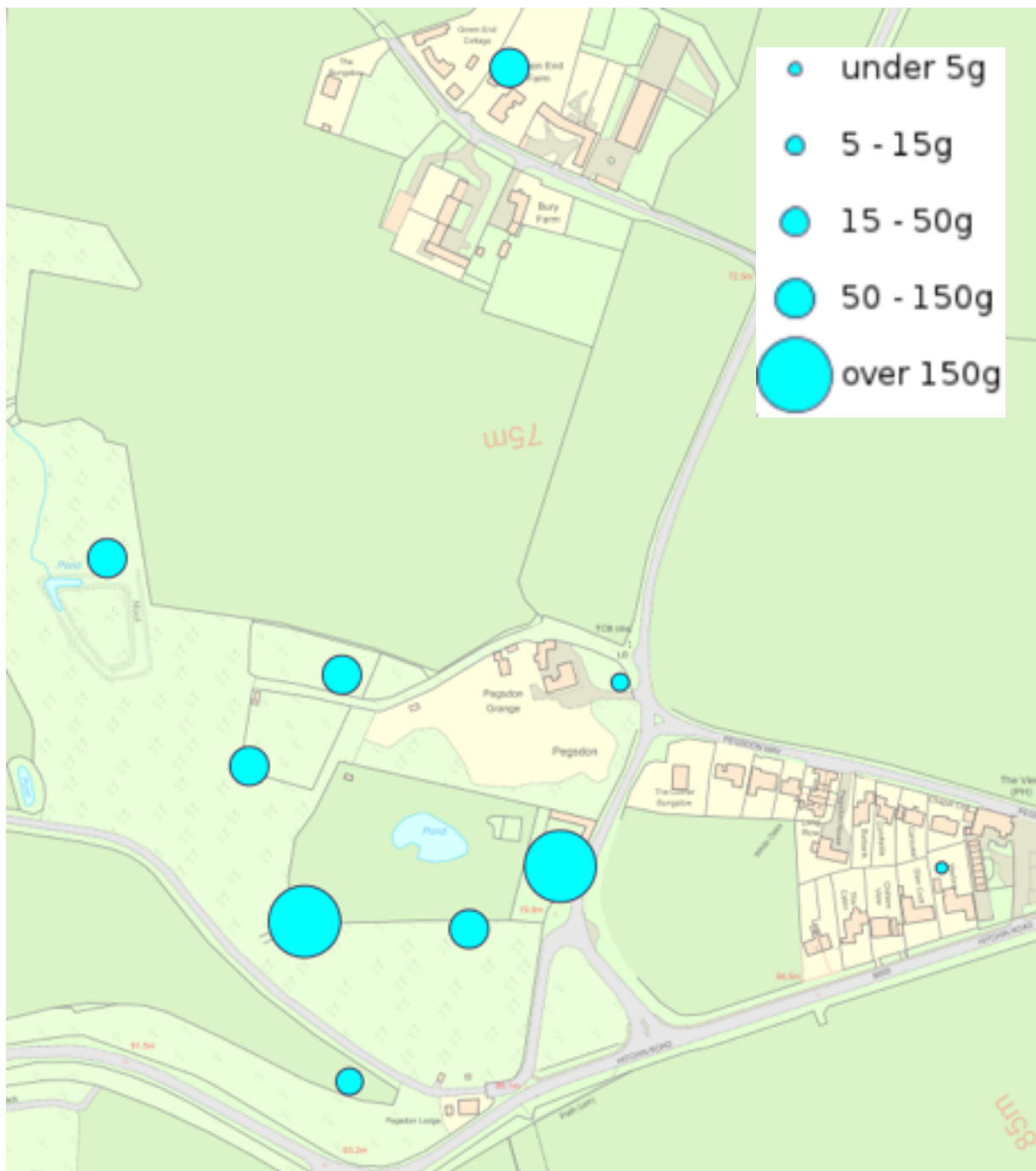
- Test pit PEG21/2 is the first and only test pit to contain Iron Age/Romano-British pottery with 4 sherds weighing 25g.
- It suggests that there was a settlement here beefier and after the Roman invasion.
- A piece of this type of pottery found on Pegsdon Hills nature reserve in 2020 may have been part of a burial urn.
- No Roman, early Saxon or middle Saxon pottery has been found yet in Pegsdon test pits.

## Test pits with Late Saxon pottery 850 - 1050



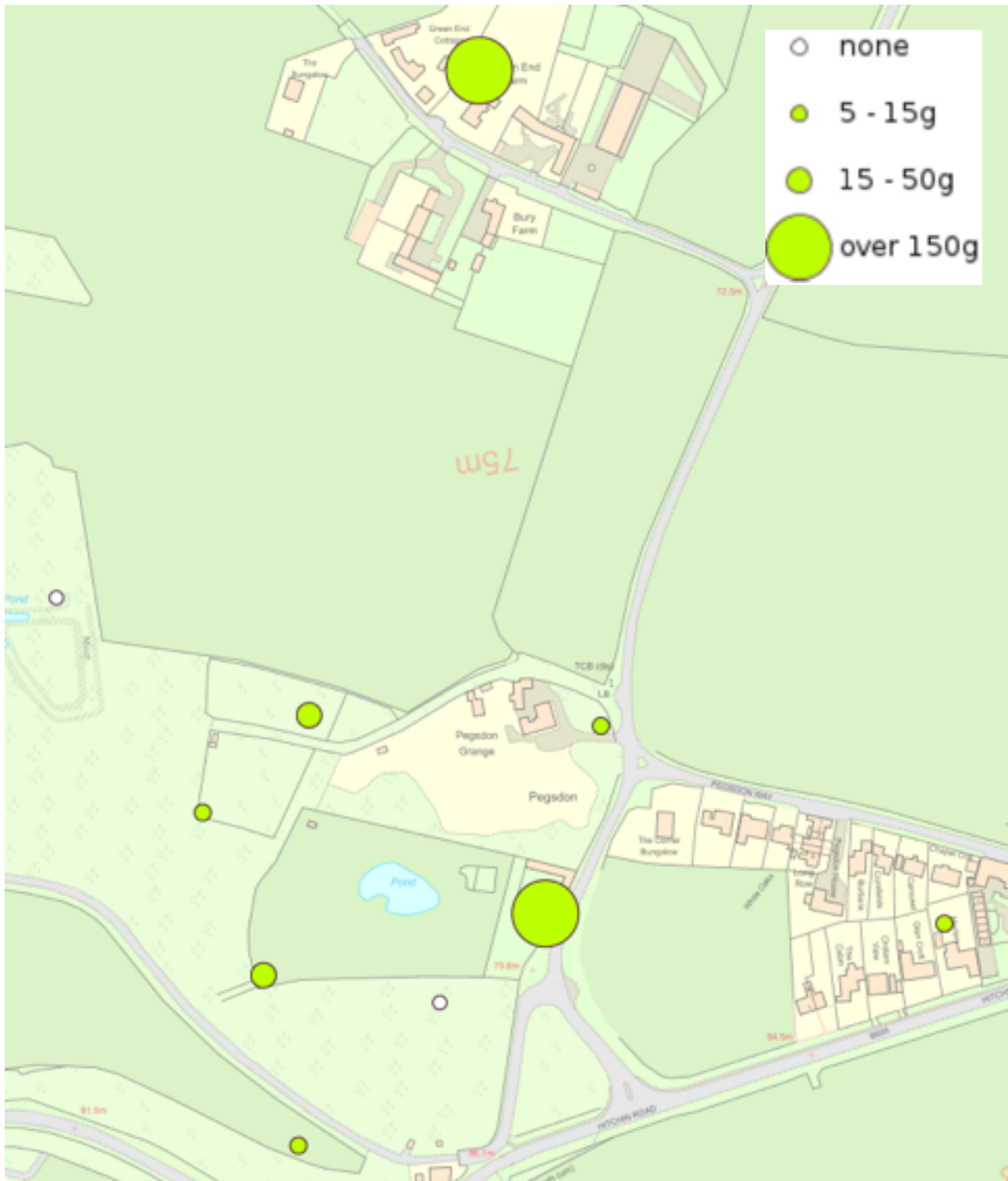
- Late Saxon pottery has been found in 8 of the 10 or 80% of the test pits, a much greater proportion than the 29% in Shillington.
- The 27 sherds weighing 68g from Pegsdon Grange pig meadow (PEG21/2) is the most found in any test pit in either Pegsdon or Shillington.
- Its distribution shows the village of Pegsdon was already established by about AD1,000 in the area W of the modern settlement.

## Early medieval pottery (1,050 - 1,400)



- Early medieval pottery has been found in all 10 Pegsdon test pits.
- The 1,517g of early medieval pottery makes up over 40% of all the pottery recovered from Pegsdon test pits.
- The test pit with the most was Pegsdon Grange field 2, SW cnr (SH21/4) with 732g.
- The weight of early medieval pottery compared with late Saxon demonstrates that Pegsdon had expanded rapidly after 1,000.
- Only one test pit in Shillington has produced more early medieval pottery than this- Shillington Bury front garden (SH14/4) with 1,812g.

## Late medieval pottery 1400 - 1550



- Late medieval pottery was found in four of the five 2021 test pits in modest quantities with 11 to 13g in each.
- Late medieval pottery occurs in seven or 70% of all Pegsdon test pit. No late medieval pottery was found in two of the test pits near the moated site (PEG20/2) N of Pegsdon Lodge (PEG 21/1).

- For comparison, the number of test pits in Shillington with late medieval pottery fell from 51 to 30 (or by 41%)
- In seven (70%) of the 10 Pegsdon test pits, the weight of pottery had gone down. This compares with 42 test pits out of 51 (82%) in Shillington.
- The pottery in four test pits fell by 67% or more.
- Eight of the test pits produced only 109g of late medieval pottery between them, averaging 13.6g each.
- One test pit had substantially more late medieval pottery compared with the early medieval period-  
Green End Farmhouse (PEG19/1), up from 107g to 183g
- The most late medieval pottery (190g) came from Pegsdon Grange field 1, NE corner (PEG20/3)
- From the early to the late medieval period, the total pottery yield was 62% down from 1,517g to 482g. (In Shillington, 88% down from 7,003 to 931g)
- After correcting these figures for the length of these periods (early medieval- 350years, late medieval- 150 years), the average yield of pottery declines from 43.3g to 32.1, a fall of just over 25%.

### Analysis

An abrupt decline in the country's fortunes took place after 1348 as the plague or Black Death spread across England. Some authorities have suggested that it may have killed up to half of the country's population and there are many abandoned or shrunken settlement sites that it is thought to have affected.

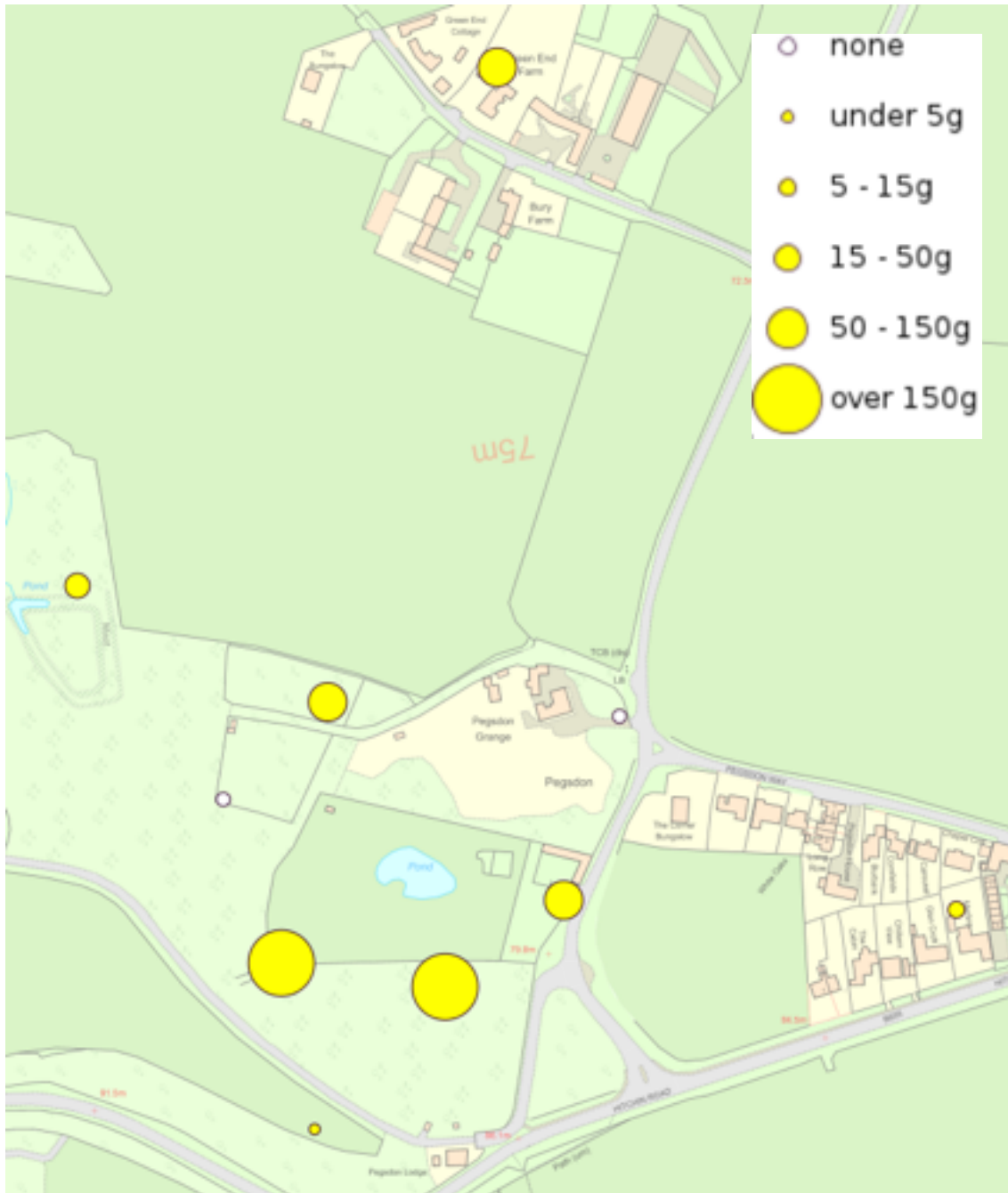
The total weight of late medieval pottery from Pegsdon decreases from 1,517g to 482g. After correcting for the different lengths of these periods, the average weight of pottery per test pit falls from 43.3g to 32.1g or by just over 25%.

However, one of the test pits at Green End farmhouse (PEG19/1) produced more pottery in the post medieval period (up from 107 in the early medieval to 183g) and there was 190g (down from 267g) at Pegsdon Grange meadow 1, NE corner (PEG21/3). That two test pits should produce substantially more pottery than the others may indicate that they were occupied continuously while others were abandoned, either completely or at times.

If the yield from these two are discounted, the total pottery yield declines to 109g, an average of 12.1g per test pit and a much more significant fall of 77%. Overall, the decline in pottery yields suggest that the plague had a significant adverse impact on the population.

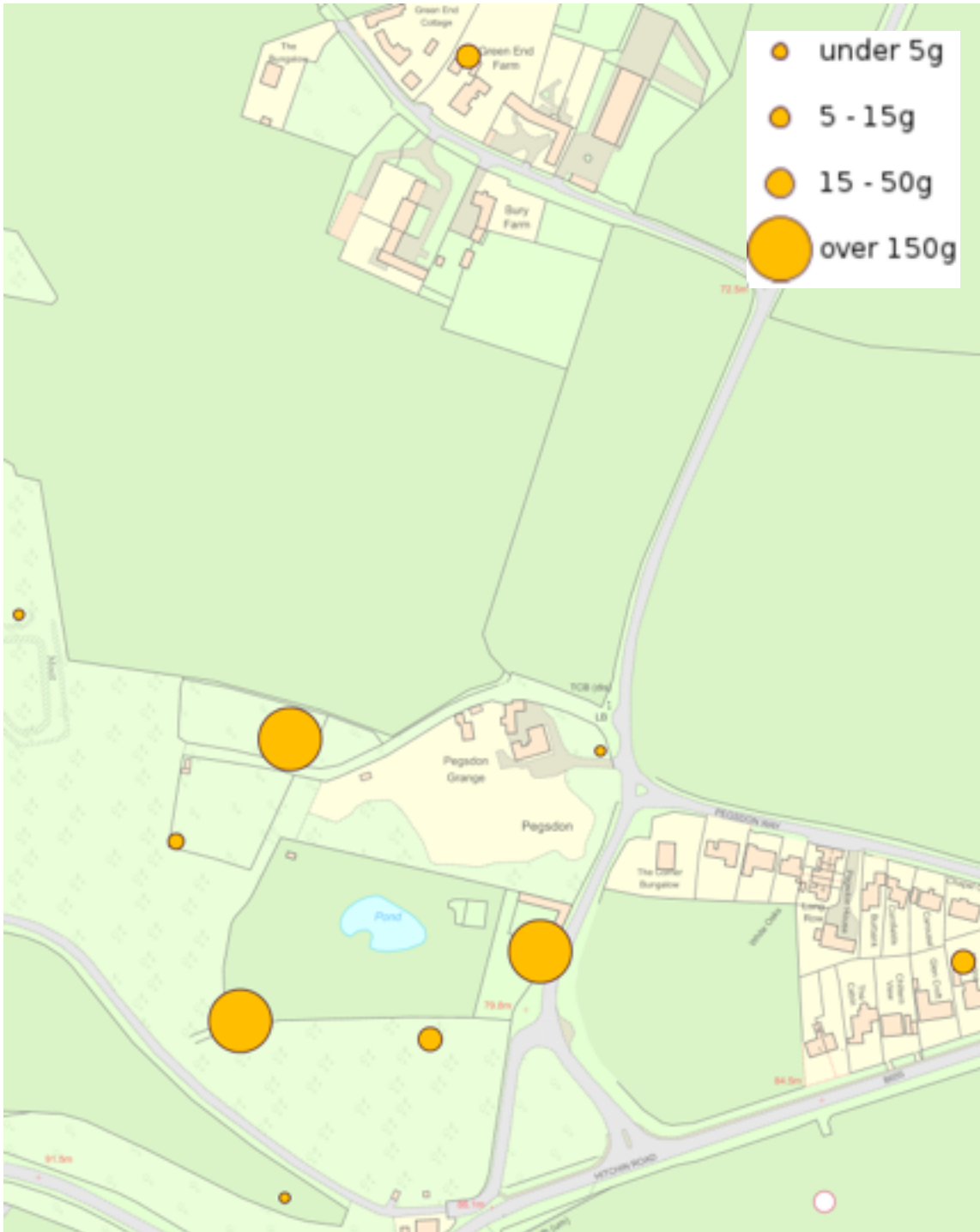


## Post-medieval pottery (1550 - 1800)



- Post medieval pottery was found in three of the five 2021 test pits
- There was 150g in PEG21/1 N of Pegsdon Lodge where there was no late medieval pottery.
- It occurs in eight or 80% of the ten Pegsdon test pits
- The greatest weight of post-medieval pottery, 245g, was at Green End Farmhouse (PEG20/1), up from 40g in the post medieval period. This test pit also had the most early medieval pottery.
- After correcting for the length of this period compared with the late medieval, the average yield of pottery has declined from 32.1g to 26.3g, suggesting that the population of Pegsdon was still struggling to recover.

## Victorian and modern Pottery made after 1800



- Amounts in the 2021 test pits were modest and varied from one to 39g
- Modern pottery made since 1800 has been found in all 10 Pegsdon test pits.
- The 292g found W of Pegsdon Grange (PEG 20/1) and 261g at NE corner of Pegsdon Grange meadow (PEG20/3) were both sites where late 19th century maps show houses.
- The 187g at the SW corner of Pegsdon Grange meadow (PEG20/4) suggests that there had been a home near this site too.
- Surprisingly little (38g) was found near the mapped house site N of Pegsdon Lodge (PEG21/1) and it is possible that it did not stand for long.

## Appendix 1

### IA/RB: Iron Age/Romano-British:

The native British people were making this at the time of the Roman invasion in AD45

PEG21/2 (Pegsdon Grange former Pig meadow)

1 test pit

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### 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 (N of Hexton Pk moat, W of Pegsdon Grange)

PEG20/3 (Pegsdon Grange field NE corner)

PEG20/4 (Pegsdon Grange field SW corner)

PEG21/1 (House site on Hexton Manor land north of Pegsdon lodge)

PEG21/2 (Pegsdon Grange former Pig meadow)

PEG20/4 (Pegsdon Grange field SW corner)

PEG21/5 (near Pegsdon Grange entrance)

8 test pits

Also PEG20/BF1 (Rabbit spoil in pasture S of Bury Farm)

**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 (N of Hexton Pk moat, W of Pegsdon Grange)

PEG21/2 (Pegsdon Grange former Pig Meadow)

2 test pits

**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 NE corner)

PEG20/4 (Pegsdon Grange field SW corner)

2 test pits

**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 SW corner)

PEG21/2 (Pegsdon Grange former Pig meadow)

2 test pits

Also at PEG20/CF2 (Arable field off Shillington Rd and bordering Hitchin Rd)

**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 (N of Hexton Pk moat, W of Pegsdon Grange)

PEG20/4 (Pegsdon Grange field SW corner)

PEG21/2 (Pegsdon Grange former Pig Meadow)

5 test pits

Also PEG19/BF1 (Rabbit spoil in pasture S of Bury Farm)

**HG: Hertfordshire-type Greyware**, mid/late 12<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> 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.

Present in all 10 test pit: PEG19/1, PEG20/1, PEG20/2, PEG20/3, PEG20/4, PEG21/1, PEG21/2, PEG21/3, PEG21/4, PEG21/5

10 test pits

Also PEG19/BF1 (Rabbit spoil in pasture S of Bury Farm), PEG20/BF1 & 2 (Rabbit spoil in pasture S of Bury Farm), PEG21/FP 60 (Footpath 60 near PEG20/1) and PEG 20/CF2 (On FP45, c30m N of PEG19/4)

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

**BB: Brill/Boarstall Ware**, 13<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> 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.

PEG21/2 (Hexton Pk 1, NW of Pegsdon Grange)

PEG21/5 (near Pegsdon Grange entrance)

2 test pits

**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, 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 NE corner)

PEG20/4 (Pegsdon Grange field SW corner)  
PEG21/2 (Pegsdon Grange former Pig meadow)  
PEG21/3 (Merlins, Hitchin Rd)  
PEG21/4 (Hexton Pk adj sunken way)  
PEG21/5 (near Pegsdon Grange entrance)  
8 test pits

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

**CW: Cistercian Ware:** Made between 1475 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 NE corner)  
1 test pit

**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 NE corner)  
1 test pit

**GRE: Glazed Red Earthenwares.** Just about everywhere in Britain began to make and use this type of pottery from about 1550 onwards, and it was still being made in the 19<sup>th</sup> 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 1680, black glaze was also used.

PEG19/1 (Green End Farmhouse)  
PEG20/2 (N of Hexton Pk moat, W of Pegsdon Grange)  
PEG20/3 (Pegsdon Grange field NE corner)  
PEG20/4 (Pegsdon Grange field SW corner)  
PEG21/1 (House site on Hexton Manor land N of Pegsdon Lodge)  
PEG21/3 (Merlins, Hitchin Rd)  
6 test pits  
Also PEG20/BF2 (In rabbit spoil in pasture S of Bury Farm)

**MB: Midland Blackware,** 1550 – 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 field SW corner)  
2 test pits

**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 1600, and soon after in London. Continued in use until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The 17<sup>th</sup> century pots were expensive table wares such as dishes or bowls, but by the 19<sup>th</sup> 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 SW corner)

PEG21/1 (House site on Hexton Manor land north of Pegsdon Lodge)

2 test pits

**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 SW corner)

1 test pit

**SS: Staffordshire Slipware.** Made between about 1640 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 NE corner)

PEG20/4 (Pegsdon Grange field SW corner)

PEG21/1 (House site on Hexton Manor land north of Pegsdon lodge)

3 test pits

**CP: Chinese Porcelain.** Very hard, thin and light white pottery, usually with blue painted decoration. First imported from China around 1650.

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

1 test pit

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### **Victorian pottery- 19<sup>th</sup> century or later (1800-present)**

**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 1800.

Present at all locations

10 test pits

## Appendix 2 Pottery analysis by test pit and period

Period> Test pit	Romano British	Roman	Late Saxon	Early medieval	Late medieval	Post medieval	Victorian & modern	Totals
	800BC - 0	0- AD500	850- AD500	1050- 1400	1400- 1550	1550- 1800	1800- 2021	
PEG19/1 Green End Farmhouse				107	<b>183</b>	50	26	366
PEG 20/1 W of Pegsdon Grange			13	97	22	69	<b>292</b>	493
PEG20/2 near moat			5	62		22	5	94
PEG20/3 Pegsdon Grange field 1, NE cn'r			10	267	<b>190</b>	111	<b>261</b>	839
PEG20/4 Pegsdon Grange field 2, SW cnr			<b>57</b>	<b>732</b>	40	<b>245</b>	187	1,261
PEG21/1 N of Pegsdon Lodge			30	79		<b>150</b>	38	297
PEG21/2 Pegsdon Grange pig meadow	25		<b>68</b>	143	13		12	261
PEG21/3 Merlins				1	11	9	39	60
PEG21/4 Hexton Pk sunken way			13	18	11	2	2	46
PEG 21/5 Pegsdon Grange entrance			5	11	12		1	29
<b>Pegsdon totals</b>	25	0	201	1,517	482	658	863	3,746
Period as %age of total weight of pottery	0.7	0.0	5.4	40.5	12.9	17.6	23.0	
No. sites with pottery from this period	1	0	8	10	8	8	10	
Ave wt pottery per test pit (g)			20.1	151.7	48.2	65.8	86.3	
<b>CORRECTED PER 100 years</b>								
Length of period in centuries	8.0	5.0	2	3.5	1.5	2.5	2.0	
Ave wt of pot/test pit/ century			10	43.3	32.1	26.3	43.2	