Pottery from Longstanton test-pits (site LON/15)

LBA: Late Bronze Age. 1200-800BC. Simple, hand-made 'bucket-shaped' pots with lots of flint, mixed in with the clay. Mainly used for cooking.

RB: Roman. An assortment of common types of Roman pottery such as shelly ware and Nene Valley Colour-Coated Ware, and was made in many different places in Britain. Lots of different types of vessels were made.

E/MS: Early Anglo-Saxon. Crude pottery made by the pagan Anglo-Saxons. Most people probably made their own pottery of this type, dug from clay close to where they lived and fired in bonfires. Most pots were plain, simple forms such as jars and bowls, but some, often used as cremation urns, were decorated with stamps and scored linear patterns. First made around AD450, very rare after AD800.

SN: St Neots Ware. Made at a number of as-yet unknown places in southern England between AD900-1100. The pots are usually a purplish-black, black or grey colour, but 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.

SHC: Medieval Shelly Ware. AD1100-1400. Made a several different places in Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire. The clay that the potters used has a lot of small pieces of fossil shell in it, giving the pots a speckled appearance. Sometimes, in acid soils, the shell dissolves, giving the sherds a texture like cork. Mainly cooking pots, although bowls and jugs were also made.

EMW: Medieval Sandy Ware: AD1100-1400. Hard fabric with plentiful quartz sand mixed in with the clay. 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.

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 AD1690, black glaze was also used.

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.

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.

WCS: Cologne Stoneware. Hard, grey pottery made in the Rhineland region of Germany from around 1600 onwards. Usually has lots of ornate moulded decoration, often with blue and purple painted details. Still made today, mainly as tourist souvenirs.

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.

VIC: A wide range of miscellaneous mass-produced 19th century wares, particularly the cups, plates and bowls with blue decoration which are still used today. First made around AD1800.

RESULTS

Test Pit 1

		RB		E/MS		SN		GRE		MB		
TP	Context	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	Date Range
1	1									1	2	1550-1600
1	2					1	1	1	32			900-1600
1	3							2	3			1550-1600
1	4	2	15	4	18							100-850
1	5					1	1					900-1100
1	20			1	4							450-850

The pottery from this test-pit suggests that the site had a largely marginal use in the Roman, late Saxon and early post-medieval periods, but seems to have been occupied in the early/middle Saxon era.

Test Pit 2

		RB		VIC		
TP	Context	No	Wt	No	Wt	Date Range
2	1	1	1	1	1	100-1900
2	2	3	9	1	1	100-1900
2	3			1	1	1800-1900

The site of this test-pit seems to have been largely unused, with evidence of perhaps marginal use such as fields in the Roman and Victorian eras.

Test Pit 3

		RB		HG		VIC		
TP	Context	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	Date Range
3	1					2	5	1800-1900
3	2			1	10	1	1	1150-1900
3	3	1	1					100-400

The site of this test-pit seems to have been largely unused, with evidence of perhaps marginal use such as fields in the Roman, medieval and Victorian eras.

Test Pit 4

Not excavated

Test Pit 5

		LBA		E/MS		SN		EMW		SHC		HG		VIC		
TP	Context	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	Date Range
5	2													1	1	1800-1900
5	3			3	13			2	6	1	4					450-1200
5	4	1	5	5	19			2	6			3	15			1200BC-1200
5	5					1	1			1	1					900-1200

The pottery from this test-pit suggests that the site had a largely marginal use in the Bronze Age, late Saxon medieval and Victorian periods, but seems to have been occupied in the early/middle Saxon era.

Test Pit 6

		GRE		HSW		WCS		EST		VIC		
TP	Context	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	Date Range
6	1							1	5	15	20	1700-1900
6	2	3	55							76	99	1550-1900
6	3	2	5			1	7			38	41	1550-1900
6	4	1	19	1	5					18	15	1550-1900

All the pottery from this test-pit is post medieval, and suggests that the site was not used before that time. It then seems to have had a largely marginal use until the Victorian era.