Pottery from Test-pits at Histon and Impington 14/15 May 2016

Paul Blinkhorn

The following pottery types were noted:

BB: Brill/Boarstall Ware, c. AD1200-1600 (Mellor 1994).
BD: Bourne ‘D’ Ware, c. 1450-1637 (McCarthy and Brooks 1988, 409).
CSW: Cambridge Sgraffito Ware, 14th – 15th century (McCarthy and Brooks 1988, 424).
ELY: Ely Ware, mid 12th -14th century (Spoerry 2008).
EMW: Medieval Sandy Ware, 12th – 14th century (eg. Jennings 1981).
HED: Hedingham Ware, mid 12th – 14th century (Walker 2012).
HORT: Modern Horticultural Earthenwares. Flower-pots etc
LBA: Late Bronze Age, 1200-800BC.
LMT: Late Medieval Transitional Ware, 1400 – 1550 (McCarthy and Brooks 1988).
MET: Metropolitan-type Slipware, 17th – 18th C. (Davey and Walker 2009).
MOD: Miscellaneous 19th and 20th century wares.
PT: Potterspury Ware, AD1250-1600 (McCarthy and Brooks 1988, 432).
RB: Roman. All Romano-British. 1st - 4th century.
SHC: Medieval Shelly Ware, AD1100-1400 (McCarthy 1979).
SN: St Neots Ware, c. AD900-1100 (Denham 1985).
ST: Stamford Ware, c AD900-1200 (Kilmurry 1980).
THET: Thetford-type Ware, 10th – 12th century (Rogerson and Dallas 1984).

Overview

The pottery from the test-pits has provided an interesting insight into the shifting settlement patterns at Histon and Impington. The two sherds of Bronze Age pottery occurred in test-pit 4, with the slightly higher ground being a typical location for prehistoric activity. The small group of Romano-British pottery is mainly concentrated in test-pits 3, 6, and 9, suggesting that there was Roman settlement centred on or near the eastern side of the core of Histon village.

Early and middle Anglo-Saxon pottery is entirely absent, despite being fairly common on other sites in the area, so there is no evidence of continuity beyond the Roman period, and it seems at this time that the area was deserted between the 5th and 8th/9th centuries.

Re-occupation of the site, and the roots of the modern villages, appear to lie in the 10th century, which is a typical pattern for many villages in the East Midlands (eg. Chapman 2010). The largest groups of late Saxon pottery are from test-pits 1, 3 and 7, shows that Histon and Impington were both founded around the same time, but were entirely separate entities. The villages seem to have continued into the medieval period, with most of the test-pits producing good evidence of occupation from the 12th – 14th centuries.
Pottery deposition dropped off significantly after the 14th century, suggesting that both villages shrunk dramatically after the Black Death. Test-pits 1, 6 and 9 are the only ones which produced definitely evidence of human activity during the 15th – 16th centuries, and then only in the form of a few sherds in each case. This is a pattern which has been noted elsewhere in the region.

Bibliography


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RESULTS

Test Pit 1  School Hill

|   | TP | Cntxt | No | Wt | No | Wt | No | Wt | No | Wt | No | Wt | No | Wt | No | Wt | No | Wt | No | Wt | No | Wt | No | Wt |
|---|----|-------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1 | 1  |       |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 1 | 2  | 1     | 6  | 3  | 6  | 2  | 4  | 8  | 24 | 1  | 2  | 1  | 1  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 1 | 3  | 2     | 5  | 8  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 1 | 4  | 2     | 8  | 1  | 1  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | 4  | 144 |
| 1 | 5  |       |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | 2  | 2  |
| 1 | 6  | 3     | 12 | 2  | 11 | 4  | 13 |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 1 | 7  | 1     | 1  | 1  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |

This test-pit produced a relatively large amount of late Saxon and early medieval pottery suggesting that there was settlement at the site during that time. Pottery deposition dropped off somewhat after the 14th century, indicating that there was a fairly significant reduction in activity.

Test Pit 2  Melvin Way

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The only pottery from this test-pit was a single sherd of 17th – 18th century material. This indicates that the site was peripheral to the villages until fairly recently.

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The small group of Roman pottery from this test-pit indicates that there was activity during that period, possibly on the periphery of a settlement. There is no evidence of continuity into the Anglo-Saxon period, with no pottery dating to between the 5th and 8th centuries. The large quantities of late Saxon material shows that there was probably settlement here in the 9th – 11th centuries, but very little medieval material, suggesting that the site was abandoned soon after the Norman Conquest.
This test-pit produced two sherds of Bronze Age pottery, one of which was fairly large, indicating that there was activity here during that period. The two small sherds of Roman-British material suggest a marginal use at that time, perhaps as fields, followed by a period of abandonment until the 10th or 11th centuries, when it seems to have once again had a marginal use until the 14th century, when it was again abandoned.

The pottery from this test-pit suggests that there was settlement at the site between the 10th/11th – 13th/14th centuries, after which time it was abandoned.

The small group of Roman pottery from this test-pit indicates that there was activity during that period, possibly on the periphery of a settlement. There was then probably settlement at the site between the 10th/11th – 13th/14th century, after which pottery deposition dropped off somewhat, indicating that there was a fairly significant reduction in activity.
The single small sherd of Roman pottery from this test-pit indicates that there was activity during that period, possibly on the periphery of a settlement in the form of fields or similar. There was then probably settlement at the site between the 10th/11th – 13th/14th century, after which time the site appears to have been abandoned.

The pottery from this test-pit indicates that there was activity at the site between the 11th – 14th century, after which time it appears to have been abandoned.

The small group of Roman pottery from this test-pit indicates that there was activity during that period, possibly on the periphery of a settlement. There was then probably settlement at the site throughout the medieval period.