

# MUSEUM OF LONDON

## Prehistory

Pottery photo pack



During the Neolithic period (New Stone Age) people began farming and making pottery for the first time. Clay was shaped into pots for storing and cooking food.

This pot was made and decorated around 5000 years ago! It was excavated from an archaeological site in Heathrow. Can you see where the person who made it used their fingers to make a pattern around the rim?



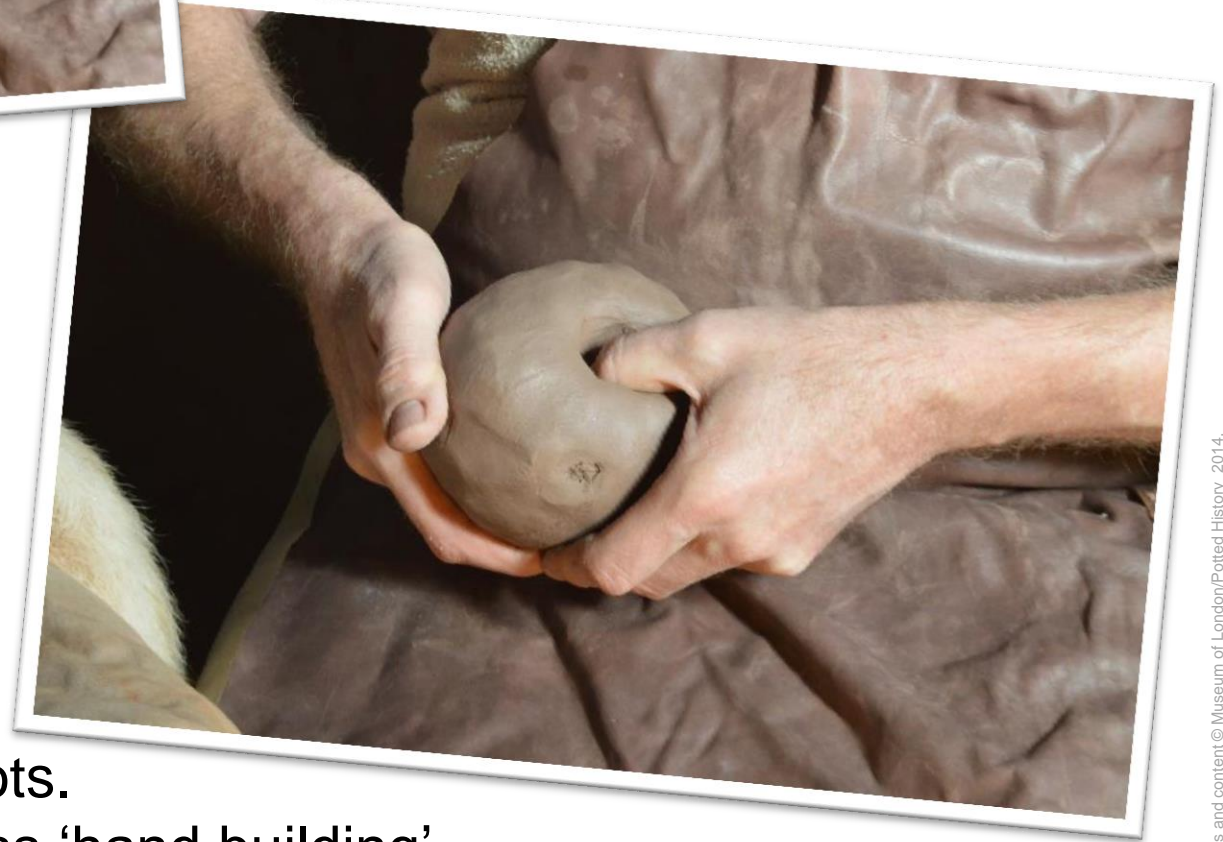
Let's find out more about how prehistoric pots were made.



First, natural clay is crushed before adding water.



When the clay is ready it is shaped into a sphere. Most small pots were made as pinch pots or thumb pots working from a single ball of clay.



To make larger pots, coils of clay were added to the thumb pots. Potters call this process 'hand building'.

The clay is opened out into a bowl shape using a pinching technique.



Next the rim of the bowl is formed.



The inside of the bowl is expanded and formed using a large pebble as a beater.

After drying the bowl for a few hours the inner and outer surfaces are smoothed using a flint pebble.



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The pot is ready to be decorated using a small whipped cord ring.

This pot is decorated with 'maggot' impressions.  
Why do you think it has this name?



Pots could also be decorated using bird bones or with fingernails.







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The finished pot is dried for several days before being fired.

Try making your own prehistoric pottery.  
What pattern will you add?



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