

A FIND OF MEDIEVAL POTTERY AT REPTON.

By JOHN STOW.

EXCAVATIONS were begun by the Repton School Archæological Society in the Vicarage Paddock at Repton in 1951 on the suggestion of the Vicar, who had come across some stones when digging up a Christmas tree. The Paddock lies between the church and the Repton-Willington road, about eighty yards west of the church tower. It is therefore on the side of the church on which the Saxon Abbey is generally thought to have stood, and it was some trace of this abbey which we were hoping to find.

In this we were disappointed. The stones proved to be a rough flooring, extending over a considerable area, but only a few inches below the surface, and with medieval pottery buried beneath it. We presume it to be the remains of a cattle-shed or stable-yard of no very great age.

But underneath and beside this floor we found a considerable quantity of interesting fragments of medieval pottery. They have been dated by the British Museum as belonging to the 13th or 14th centuries. The majority of the pieces originally had a green glaze, but in most cases this has worn off, leaving a brown lustrous undercoat. Some were quite unglazed.

The most interesting single piece, which was fitted together from a number of fragments, is a long, narrow, shallow dish, about 18 ins. x 6 ins. It would appear from its shape, which is an unusual one (The British Museum had not seen one like it), to have been used for fish — probably for both cooking and serving, as there are marks of fire on its under side and there is a pourer in the rim at one end. There are traces of green glaze on the inside, but it is largely brown. It is complete except for two holes in the bottom, which have been filled in with plaster by Mr. Hughes of the Derby Museum.

We also found fragments of two more dishes of

a similar shape and many other interesting pieces: one which looks rather like an oil lamp; a number of fragments of jugs with handles; and most notably the very well executed face of a man, about three inches high, showing ears, eyes, nose, mouth and beard, which would seem to be part of a medieval Toby-jug. It is remarkably well-preserved with a fine green glaze on it.

There were no signs of building on the site, with the exception of the later flooring, and as the pottery was scattered fairly uniformly over an area about twenty feet square we presume it to have been a rubbish dump.

During July of this year the excavation became a rather hurried rescue dig as we heard that the G.P.O. had purchased the site for a new telephone exchange. Large quantities of fragments were discovered and it is hoped that from these we shall be able to piece together some more interesting objects during the winter months.

The more interesting pieces of pottery will be exhibited in the School Museum, in the Undercroft of the Priory.

CROMFORD BRIDGE CHAPEL.

BRIDGE-CHAPELS, where travellers could worship on their journeys, were not unfamiliar features of the medieval scene, though to-day only five survive in this county. Derbyshire had at least three. There are the remains of the foundations of one at the north end of Swarkestone Bridge, on the south bank of the Trent. In Derby, there is St. Mary's Bridge Chapel, restored in 1929-30 under the direction of our Society. The third is at the crossing of the Derwent at Cromford, and members will recall the appeal made in 1951 for funds to repair this.

The Cromford Chapel was built in the late fourteenth century or early fifteenth. It probably ceased to be used for religious purposes about the time of the Reformation, but the building itself survived—complete to a gable which appears over the wall of the bridge in a contemporary water-colour — as late as 1786. It was afterwards converted into cottages. These in their turn fell into disuse,