The first and second courses, which are foundation, are off-set 3 in. and 6 in. respectively, and the new ground level in front of the wall occurs at the fourth course, indicated by a slight spread of mortar. Nothing is known about the ditch on the Park Row line; if, as seems likely, material piled up fairly rapidly against this face (so preserving the finish and the tooling of the masonry), this was in part because the ground rises steadily on this side of the town for $\frac{1}{4}$-mile outside the wall, and the light soil would readily move down the slope.

This section of town wall is different in construction from those pieces E. of Chapel Bar seen in the last century. There the wall was 7 ft. 4 in. thick in its foundations, rising to 6 ft. above two chamfered plinth courses.[14] A photograph of a section at the end of Market Street (near Cow Lane Bar) shows one chamfered plinth course and a plain off-set below. The town wall is therefore a construction of various dates.

The most significant feature of the Chapel Bar fragment in that the face has diagonal, not vertical, tooling. This can scarcely be later than *c.* 1200,[15] and the stepped plinth is in itself suggestive of a 12th- rather than a 13th-century date. In any case this length of town wall cannot have been erected with whatever income the town got from the murage grants of 1267 onwards. Many problems remain to be solved in connexion with the walls, but we can at least be certain that they began to be built in the 12th century.

This conclusion raises two further questions; first, whether the French borough, to which this length of the town wall belongs, had any defences prior to its building, and, second, under what circumstances was the work done? If the French borough had earthen defences, there was no evidence of them in the small area revealed on this occasion. The bank of earth behind the stone wall had none of the appearance of an earlier rampart, and it remains likely that the French borough, unlike the pre-conquest borough on St. Mary's Hill, was an open settlement, which is one reason why the stone wall was begun at this comparatively early date. The only clue to the circumstances of building is that between 1170 and 1188. Henry II spent £1,816 on Nottingham Castle, and a further £453 or more was spent by John between 1198 and 1207.[16] Whether or not the Crown contributed to the beginnings of a stone wall for the town, the opening of quarries to provide material for transforming the castle from an earth-and-timber to a stone fortress and the presence of large numbers of masons in the town for two periods of 18 and 9-10 years must indicate the occasion. M. W. BARLEY

THE SOUTHAMPTON CONFERENCE, 1959

The Second Annual Conference of the Society was held at Southampton from Friday, 17, to Sunday, 19 April, 1959. The theme of the conference was 'The Growth of the Medieval Town'. After a tour of medieval Southampton led by Miss E. M. Sandell, Mr. R. Douch, and Mr. Norman Cook, the session opened with an introduction to the region in the form of three short papers. Professor H. Rothwell spoke on the hinterland of medieval Southampton, Mr. M. R. Maitland Muller on Hamwih, and Mr. J. S. Wacher on medieval Southampton. This was followed by a Civic Reception given by the Mayor of Southampton in the Art Gallery.

On 18 April Professor M. W. Beresford spoke on 'Medieval Town Plantation in Southern England'; Mr. G. C. Dunning on 'Some aspects of the South Coast Trade in the Anglo-Saxon and Medieval Periods'; and Sir Frank Stenton on 'The Anglo-Saxon Town'. There was also a symposium in which Professor E. M. Carus-Wilson, Mr. R. H. M. Dolley and Dr. A. R. Bridbury took part.

On Sunday, 19 April, the conference visited Corfe Castle, Wareham, Lymington and Christchurch. On Monday, after the main conference was over, some members

[14] J. Shipman, *The Old Town Wall of Nottingham* (1899), pp. 3, 9.

[15] I am indebted to Dr. E. A. Gee for guidance on this question.

[16] R. A. Brown, 'Royal castle building in England', *Engl. Historical Rev.*, LXX (1955), pp. 380-5.

took part in an excursion to the Isle of Wight, visiting Carisbrooke Castle and Museum, Newtown, Chessel Down and the site of the medieval lighthouse on Chale Down.

About one hundred people participated in the conference and great credit is due to Mr. R. Douch, who acted as local secretary.

D. M. WILSON

THE VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE GROUP CONFERENCE AT CAERLEON

The fifth annual conference of the Vernacular Architecture Group was held at Caerleon, Monmouthshire, at Easter, 1959. This centre was chosen in order to see some of the houses described in *Monmouthshire Houses*, and to honour the authors, Sir Cyril Fox and Lord Raglan. Two and a half days were spent in the field, and they provided impressive examples of the rich and massive carpentry and joinery found in such features as door-heads, framed staircases and moulded beams, well known from illustrations in *Monmouthshire Houses*.

The papers all dealt with one aspect or another of cruck construction. J. T. Smith, in a paper which it is hoped will soon appear in print, made the case, on distributional grounds, for a prehistoric origin of the cruck method of building, associating it tentatively with the Celtic peoples. V. R. Webster described Leicestershire cruck houses, which are of cruder construction than those further west. He maintained that they appear to be of medieval or sixteenth-century date rather than later. J. G. Dunbar gave a paper on Scottish crucks, in which he pointed out that in Scotland, as in England, they have a westerly distribution and are not found, for example, in the Lothians, an area of intensive Anglian settlement. Scottish crucks are of extremely primitive construction but, since they are found in the houses of lairds, they are certainly carpenters' work.

A paper by T. L. Marsden illustrated the contrast between the eastern method of box-frame and trussed-rafter construction and the western cruck method, and also produced examples from midland counties where elements of both are found in the same building. L. F. J. Walrond discussed the jointed cruck which is common in Dorset, Somerset and Devon, and which he related to the arched-brace construction of the collar-beam roof.

Now that the distribution of this method of building has been clearly plotted,[17] the principal directions in which further research should proceed are becoming apparent. One of them is the publication of documentary references to cruck building, about which E. A. Gee spoke at the conference. The earliest relates to the building of a bakehouse at Harlech Castle in 1278.[18] The Guildhall at Leicester may well be dated 1347-50, and the barn at Church Enstone, Oxon., 1382. The variations in cruck construction, e.g. the straight and curved blades, and upper cruck construction, must be isolated and their relations defined. It is not yet clear whether storied construction is an original feature of any cruck house. The principal need is to separate the instances of crucks of architectural quality from those of inferior technique. Only further investigations on such lines will solve the problems which have been pinpointed by the work of the past twenty years.

M. W. BARLEY

THE COUNCIL FOR BRITISH ARCHAEOLOGY CONFERENCE AT TRURO

Following the successful conference held at Norwich in April, 1958, for the study of Anglo-Saxon pottery (pp. 1 ff., *supra*), a meeting was arranged to discuss the wares of the Celtic west. This conference, organized by the Migration Period and Early Medieval Research Committee of the Council for British Archaeology, met from 25-27 September,

[17] See J. T. Smith in *Archaeol. J.*, CXV (1958), 139.

[18] L. F. Salzman, *Building in England, down to 1540* (1952), p. 195.