

ACOUSTIC POTS: A PROPOSED STUDY

I am collecting material for a paper on so-called 'acoustic' pots. The only treatment of the subject as a whole has been the article by Professor T. McKenny Hughes in *Cambridge Antiquarian Society's Communications*, xix (1915), 63-90. This is now out of date both as a study of the theory of acoustic pots and in its discussion of the pots themselves. The question of acoustic pots and their (sometimes) associated resonance chambers is of interest in itself; while the pots, though sometimes specially made and thus of limited interest, are frequently of ordinary domestic types. The collection of this material, often from dated buildings (e.g., St. George's chapel, Windsor) will provide a corpus of closely dated examples, comparable to, if not more valuable than, that provided by pots which have contained coin-hoards. The normal searches in periodicals and museums have been or are being made; but it is felt that these rather obscure features may have escaped notice in many churches and other buildings, or perhaps in unpublished or little-known local studies. I should be extremely grateful for information leading to the identification of any such examples and should be happy to acknowledge fully any information received, if sent to me at the Dept. of History, University of Exeter, Devon.

MARTIN BIDDLE

CONFERENCE ON CASTLES AT LES ANDELYS, 1962

A *Colloque Archéologique*, with the general theme of the Norman contribution to medieval military architecture, was held at Les Andelys, Normandy, from 31 May to 4 June, 1962, under the auspices of M. de Bouard and the Centre of Medieval Archaeological Research of the Faculté des Lettres at the University of Caen. No finer place for so admirable a subject could have been found. Even the weather was excellent, and a brilliant sun was a great help to the many photographers present. The participants were drawn from Normandy, France, Germany, Holland and Belgium, and included a British contingent in which the Ancient Monuments Inspectorate of the Ministry of Public Building and Works was powerfully represented. The majority of the papers provided a survey or situation report on the progress of research into the early development of castles in the various countries concerned, that for France being given with special reference to Normandy, Perche and Berry. The value of this for comparative purposes and the cross-fertilization of ideas can scarcely be over-estimated. It would be invidious to single out papers for particular praise, but there were some which were particularly valuable for their proper combination of archaeology with documentation and history.

The conference included, as well as a lengthy visit to Château Gaillard itself (whose fabric is now in satisfying receipt of skilful care and attention), expeditions to Gisors and Château-sur-Epte, and also to Caen, where the current excavations have to be seen to be believed.

If any criticism could be offered of the general arrangements, it would be that a day (Saturday, 2 June) with three papers in the morning beginning at 9 a.m. (each running overtime, and no coffee break), followed by three in the afternoon (admittedly with a break for tea) forms a *séance de travail* too tough for some. But one hastily reverts to a renewed note of praise for the accommodation, food, drink and hospitality provided; and this participant, at least, is unlikely ever to forget the Sunday lunch of three hours' duration 'offered' by the mayor and municipality of Les Andelys. On that memorable occasion it was enthusiastically proposed that the conference should be repeated. Although M. de Bouard was then observed to maintain an enigmatic silence, it must be hoped that it will be.

R. ALLEN BROWN

THE KING'S LYNN CONFERENCE, 1962

The fifth annual Conference of the Society was held at King's Lynn from 13-16 April, 1962. The theme was 'Towns and Trade in Medieval East Anglia'. The Conference

started with an afternoon visit to various medieval houses in King's Lynn and was formally opened in the evening by the mayor of King's Lynn who welcomed the Society to the town. This was followed by a lecture by Miss P. M. Cunnington, 'The Restoration of Hampton Court, King's Lynn,' after which the Conference adjourned for an official reception by the mayor. Saturday, 14 April, was taken up with lectures: Professor E. M. Carus-Wilson, 'The Changing Economic Function of the Ports of the Wash' (see pp. 182-201 above); M. W. Barley, 'The Wash Villages and their Churches'; W. A. Pantin, *President*, 'Merchants' Houses in King's Lynn' (see pp. 173-81 above); G. C. Dunning, 'The North Sea Trade and Medieval Pottery'; and Miss V. Parker, 'Clifton House, King's Lynn'.

The 15 April was devoted to an excursion, during which Castle Rising, Wisbech, Crowland, West Walton and a saltern at Terrington St. Clements were visited. Further buildings in King's Lynn were visited on the morning of 16 April.

About 120 people took part in the Conference and the Society's thanks are due to Miss S. Mottram, who acted as local Secretary.

D. M. WILSON