

THE CANTERBURY CONFERENCE, 1964

The seventh annual Conference of the Society was held at Canterbury from 3-6 April, 1964. The theme was 'The Anglo-Saxons in Kent'. The Conference was opened by the town clerk of Canterbury, who, on behalf of the mayor, gave a reception on the evening of 3 April. The following lectures were delivered on 4 April: Mrs. S. Hawkes, 'The Anglo-Saxon settlement of Kent — the archaeological evidence'; Dr. E. G. M. Fletcher, 'Early Kentish churches'; Professor D. Whitelock, 'The kingdom of Kent'; Mr. J. McN. Dodgson, 'The Anglo-Saxon communities in Kent — the place-name evidence'.

On 5 April the Conference visited St. Augustine's Abbey and St. Martin's Church in Canterbury, Richborough, and Reculver. On 6 April the Conference visited the Anglo-Saxon churches at Dover, Lydd, Lyminge and Whitfield.

About 120 people attended the Conference and the Society's thanks are due to Miss Helen Waugh, who acted as local secretary.

DAVID M. WILSON

A NATIONAL REFERENCE COLLECTION OF MEDIEVAL POTTERY

It is proposed to set up in the Department of British and Medieval Antiquities in the British Museum in response to suggestions put forward by the Council for British Archaeology's Medieval Research Committee, and with the full support of the Council and in harmony with the Museum's own plans to enlarge and make representative its sherd collection, a national reference collection of medieval pottery, to cover the period from the end of the pagan Saxon phase, i.e. around A.D. 700, to the end of the 15th century. It will be essentially a sherd collection, and will be divided into three sections:

A representative collection of sherds from closely and soundly dated deposits, to form a permanent reference framework for the dating of medieval pottery.

A representative collection of sherds from every known kiln or group of kilns.

A collection of sherds, built up on a geographical basis, illustrating, in a fully representative way, regional variations and conformities.

There will be a reference library of offprints dealing with the sites represented, and of articles and books of general relevance to the study of medieval ceramics. There will also be a collection of foreign sherds for comparison.

Space to enable a sound start to be made on this project and to house at least 30,000 sherds has recently become available at the British Museum in a detached house, no. 1A Montague Street (access only *via* the Department), and it is expected that the necessary furnishings will be supplied in 1965. It is proposed to house the sherds in light, easily-handled boxes, with hinged lids and metal label-holders on the front, in open metal racking, both racking and boxes being specially designed. Deeper standard boxes could each replace two of the normal standard ones in the racking, to allow for the inclusion at will of big sherds or half-pots in their appropriate place. There would be facilities for studying and drawing the pottery. The sherds will be catalogued and numbered, but a percentage will be left uncatalogued and available for loan, or for destruction in the interests of mineralogical analysis. Any accredited student would be given free access, during the normal opening hours of the Museum, except on Saturdays.

To build up this collection on a fully representative and really useful scale will take time, and can only be done with the collaboration of excavators, of provincial museums, and of individuals who have the ownership of crucial material.

A new Assistant-Keeper post has been established in the Department of British and Medieval Antiquities in the Museum, the holder of which, Mr. John Cherry, is to specialize primarily in medieval field archaeology, particularly pottery, and will have a special responsibility for building up and maintaining this collection.