

R E V I E W

Medieval and Later Pottery in Wales. (Bulletin of the Welsh Medieval Pottery Research Group) No. 1, 1978. Edited by D. H. Evans.

Everyone complains of the cost of publication; everyone complains of the impossibility of keeping up with publications; far too few people support the C.B.A.'s Bibliography and Abstract services; publications still pour out at what seems to be an ever increasing rate. As Horace Walpole wrote 'The world is a Comedy to those that think'. (He went on ' a Tragedy to those that feel', but let that pass).

This bulletin is A4 in size, typewriter set and litho printed. The first issue consists of 73 pages and is bound with that plastic loop binding which makes storage so difficult. It contains a general article 'Medieval Pottery Studies : the Future, by Stephen Moorhouse; four articles publishing groups of medieval pottery; a synthetic article on French Medieval Pottery in Wales; a very useful bibliographs of 198 items with a subject index under seven headings; and a review.

Mr. Moorhouse's opening essay is an attempt to be fairly comprehensive in surveying the history of medieval pottery studies and possible future trends. He mentions and discusses ideas such as quantification, the definition of pottery types and the use of distribution maps, but, it seems to me, he thinks always from the standpoint of the pottery - what new methods can be applied to the study of the pottery? How can familiar methods be made better or more reliable? Too little emphasis seems to be placed on what kind of information can be extracted from a pottery group which will be useful in the archaeologist's ultimate task - the recreation of a part of the way of life of some people isolated with greater or less precision in space and time. In other words, not only how to study medieval pottery, but why?

The straightforward articles on pottery call for little comment. One wonders whether the work necessary to produce the textured effect of the Gwbert drawings (figs. 7 and 8) is sufficiently repaid by the results.

One hopes that, with such 'starters' as the Moorhouse general article and the bibliography out of the way, the Group will be able to maintain the standard of their first issue.

B.J.N. Edwards.