KENNETH Wiggins in his recent article on King John’s Castle, Limerick, makes certain statements and allegations which assume a considerable ignorance on my part at the time of the 1976 excavations.

1. Mr Wiggins assumed that we were not aware of the siting of the military barracks in the area that we excavated. In fact the reason for excavating on that exact spot was that we knew the barracks was there and assumed that the building we were excavating was this building. Mr Phelim Manning, the surveyor on the site, drew up a plan from the 1870 OS map clearly indicating that the walls we were excavating were those of the barracks (above).

2. Having excavated between the walls of the so-called barracks we were surprised to find that not only were post-medieval pottery-bearing archaeological layers stratified against walls 5 and 7 but medieval layers were also laid against the wall facings. Mr Wiggins takes my section of wall 5 showing these layers, but suggests we misrecorded them by leaving out a foundation trench in the profile which would have shown that the walls
were inserted from above. This statement implies gross negligence or falsification of archaeological evidence and is wholly insupportable. The published profile shows that there is no way these walls could be inserted, especially the stepped wall 5, without considerable disturbance to the archaeological layers. While wall 5 was stratified on some medieval layers, wall 7 was on boulder clay and was faced. In order to face and properly course these walls, a very wide trench would need to have been cut to accommodate them. If Mr Wiggins is correct, then we have to assume that if this is the barracks wall all the way down, its builders carefully reinstated the archaeological layers, thereby obliterating their foundation trench.

3. We did not commence the excavation with the assumption that the walls we uncovered were those illustrated in *Pacata Hibernia*; this was a later, tentative, post-excavation suggestion.

4. Although he has been excavating at the castle, Mr Wiggins does not offer one shred of archaeological evidence to counter mine and is merely basing his ideas on a drawing of which we were already aware in 1976 when he was in short trousers.

5. Does Mr Wiggins know what width the barracks walls were? What type of material they contained, how deep their foundations were, etc.?

Mr Wiggins’s article offers no new archaeological evidence and merely decimates my work, which is based on archaeological evidence. His final paragraph, in which he says my work should be a lesson for future archaeologists who do not undertake proper research prior to excavation, I consider to be grossly insulting. Mr Wiggins fails to come up with the obvious compromise, which is that since the barracks is on the same line as the medieval walls that the barracks building was founded on them, thus accounting for the different phases of building in wall 5.