

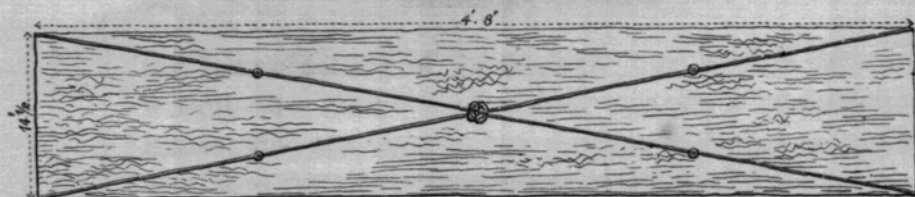


<http://kentarchaeology.org.uk/research/archaeologia-cantiana/>

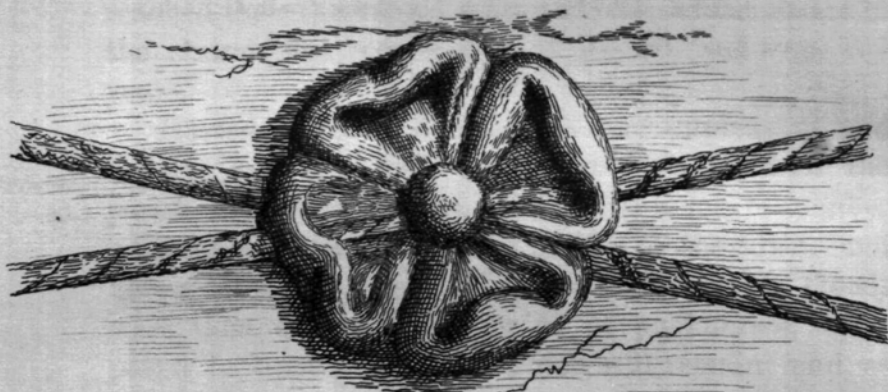
Kent Archaeological Society is a registered charity number 223382

© 2017 Kent Archaeological Society

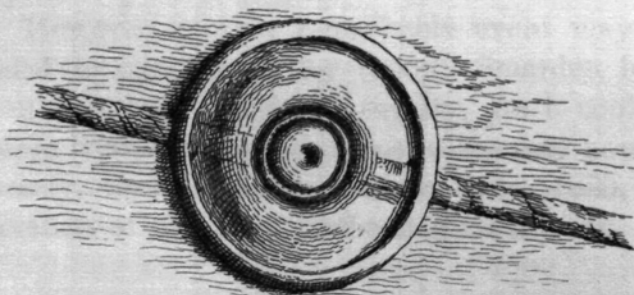
ROMAN COFFIN OF LEAD, FOUND AT CANTERBURY.



*View of the Coffin lid,  
The lead (cast)  $\frac{1}{16}$ th of an inch thick.*



*The "Rose" or centre Ornament.  
Raised  $\frac{1}{16}$ th of an inch at the fullest part.  
Actual size.*



*The Circular Ornament.  
Actual size - (4 in number)*



*Section of the Circular Ornaments.*

*Canterbury.  
Discovered 1868.*

*James Pylbrow, 1873.  
See "Archæologia" vol. 43, p. 160*

## ROMAN LEADEN COFFIN DISCOVERED AT CANTERBURY.

MY DEAR SIR,—In 1869 Mr. Pilbrow communicated, to the Society of Antiquaries, an account of “*Discoveries made during Excavations at Canterbury in 1868.*” This included, among other interesting matters, a description of a leaden coffin, to which I now draw your attention, in connection with a sketch kindly given me by Mr. Pilbrow, and my brief remarks.

Mr. Pilbrow thus describes the coffin :—

“In Bridge Street, at the upper part, were found four skeletons, four feet deep. Still nearer the top of this street, a leaden coffin was found entire, lying north and south, having a skeleton within it, head to the north. The coffin was six feet below the present surface; but when placed there it could not have been more than three feet below, as was proved by the natural and made ground. This coffin was four feet eight inches long, very sound, and of thick cast lead; ornamented at the top only, which was a parallelogram, by two diagonal lines or cords crossing in the centre, at which place there was a rose ornament; and four other simpler circular ones half way up the lines towards the corners. This centre ornament and one of the others will be seen in the specimens exhibited, as also the thickness and quality of the lead. The skeleton was that of a female, not more than twelve to thirteen years of age. The body appeared to have been laid within the coffin on a thick bed of lime, and then packed closely round with clay. The coffin had also been coated thickly on the exterior with whitewash. No ornament of any kind was within the coffin.”

As the Society of Antiquaries has passed over this interesting work of Roman art, I forward to you Mr. Pilbrow's drawing, feeling that it is quite worthy of being engraved, and placed by the side of other examples given by the Kent Archæological Society. There was, at first, some hesitation in appropriating this coffin to its proper class. This was dispelled, beyond doubt, by the discovery, a few years since, of a similar coffin in a Roman cemetery attached to the *castrum* at Irchester, near Wellingborough. Sir Henry Dryden kindly sent to me a drawing and rubbings of the ornaments upon the Irchester coffin; they are precisely similar to those upon the Canterbury example,\* which is, I hope, preserved in the museum of our Metropolis.

Believe me, my dear Sir,

Yours most truly,

C. ROACH SMITH.

To the Rev. Canon Scott Robertson.

\* Engraved in Plate xix *a*, *Collectanea Antiqua*, vol. vii., figs. 1 to 3.