

COMPLEMENTARY HISTORICAL REPORT
for the EXCAVATION OF THE PRIVATE AND PAROCHIAL VAULTS
at CHRIST CHURCH AND ALL SAINTS, SPITALFIELDS

C.A.S. - 84

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

THE WOODEN COFFIN

THE LEAD COFFIN

INTRODUCTION TO COFFIN FURNITURE

HANDLES

GRIP PLATES

UPHOLSTERY NAILS

BREAST PLATES

LID ORNAMENTS

ESCUTCHEONS

SHROUDS AND GRAVE CLOTHES

COSTS - COFFINS, COFFIN FURNITURE, LININGS AND GRAVE CLOTHES

MISCELLANEOUS COFFIN CONTEXTS OF INTEREST

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

FOREWORD

It is a paradox that for the mid 18th and early 19th century - an epoch in which death appeared as such an intimate and consuming "occupation" of the living - there is so little extant documentation and recent published material available with regard to the disposal and treatment of the dead. This was a time when London's confined but expanding population was constantly hampered by epidemics such as smallpox and cholera, together with a high infant mortality. Unlike the Middle Ages in which the elements of pestilence and internal wars dictated attitudes in the practicalities of burial, social development by the 18th century embraced burial with fashion.

The excavation and subsequent results at Christ Church and All Saints Spitalfields have undoubtedly unveiled information regarding the design of coffins, use of the vaults, economics, and treatment of the corpse. However, some questions still remain unanswered. For example, documentary evidence shows that "searchers" were employed to deposit the coffins in the vault after the funeral service. Some of the adult lead coffins recorded at Christ Church had been moved and stacked in such confined spaces that to place them in these positions without damaging the fittings would have needed either a large number of men, or trollies and winches in order to cope with the weight of a solid oak or elm coffin with lead lining, an inner wood shell and the cadaver itself.

It was not possible to pinpoint or identify the work of individual undertakers (the upholstery nail patterns being the only clue) but an appendix is included of local undertakers who may have provided the service for patrons of Christ Church.

The Undertaker at this time 'undertook' to furnish the funeral by employing: an Upholder (upholsterer): a Cabinet Maker and a Plumber to fit the lead coffin. Lining material would have been obtained from a Mercer and coffin covering from a woollen Draper, who in turn would have purchased this from the Blackwell Hall Factory, London, mentioned in the 'London Tradesmen 1747'. In many cases, however, an upholder would offer the complete service. Imported timber was probably used for coffins in London, as vast reserves of English oak and elm had been used to construct ships for the British Royal Navy and Mercantile Marine. The timber would have been bought retail from Yard Keepers by the carpenters or cabinet makers.

Coffins at Christ Church exhibited a variety of treatments in construction and decoration indicating that undertakers were at liberty to use their own traditions and techniques.

"Generally speaking most tradesmen have some ways particular to themselves which they either derived from masters who taught them or from the experience of things or from something in the course of business" Daniel Defoe. *The Complete English Tradesman*. 1745.

THE WOODEN COFFIN

Although the use of stone coffins predominated for the wealthy until the end of the 14th century, wooden coffins were not unknown as evidenced by the discovery of a triangular Anglo-saxon example at Barton-on-Humber in 1981¹.

The introduction of 'the wooden coffin on a much wider scale was interrupted by the outbreak of the Black Death in 1349 when, in that year deaths in London alone totalled 25,000 thereby necessitating speedy burial rather than courting the nice ties of an individual coffin: "corpses piled up in pits, layer by layer, until they overflowed. The dead were dragged out of their homes and left rotting in the fronts of doorways."² With the mortality rate on a more even keel at the close of the century opportunity was afforded for the provision of coffins for the more affluent with shroud burial remaining the norm for the general folk. The standard coffin was of oak, wide at the head and narrowing towards the foot end, with gabled lid and iron ring-handles at each end and possibly also in the middle of each side panel³. Though no wooden examples have been found to date, stone representations of this style exist on a series of five early 17th century sepulchral monuments by the Christmas brothers (4) thereby illustrating that the type survived for at least two hundred and fifty years. The 15th century witnessed the introduction of the hired, or Parish coffin; this was the property of the local burial guild or fraternity and formed part of the funerary equipment. Further modifications in style followed and by c.1600 obtuse angles were to be seen at the shoulders though the gabled lid remained, giving the appearance of a kite with truncated points; this new form provided for a closer fit and an economic use of wood. An example of 1608 was recorded in 1984 at Exton, Devon (5). The return of the plague on an epidemic scale in the 16th century again placed intolerable burdens on the graveyards; nevertheless, coffins were now introduced for all to dispel the fear of contamination by physical contact with the deceased - the parish coffin fell from favour for the same reason.

We know from illustrations on contemporary broadsheets that coffins of both the tapering sides and Exton type were used for plague victims though the flat-lidded shell we are used to today had made its appearance in 1603 at the funeral of Queen Elizabeth (6).

CONSTRUCTION OF THE 18TH CENTURY COFFIN

Evidence from Christ Church, Spitalfields has shown that the basic 18th and early 19th century coffin (or shell) consisted of six main components: base, two sides, two ends and a lid. No specific jointing seems to have been employed in their construction apart from simple butting, gluing and nailing. In order to secure the components, an ingenious variety of bolts, screws and nails were employed (7) depending on the thickness of the wood and possibly what the coffin-maker had in stock. The most common shape was that of the truncated kite with flat lid, though variations such as the Lancashire coffin and the fish-tail are apparent elsewhere in London at that time (8).

In assembly, the base was cut slightly smaller than the lid so that the sides and ends tapered both upwards and outwards towards the top. To date, the best preserved typical example has been that of an infant (Cont. 123). Once the sides, base and ends had been fitted then the size of the inner and/or outer lid was established. Prior to assembly the component parts would have been covered with fabric and the grips and handles affixed; once assembled the inner joints were caulked with Swedish (wood based) pitch, though in some instances the entire internal faces were so sealed (Cont. 109) as well as the underside of the lid (Cont. 29).

Lumps of pitch were broken up from 1.1b blocks (normally 3.1bs was sufficient for an adult's coffin (9)). The lumps were placed in a metal pan and heated until resembling a boiling oil-like consistency. The coffin was then tilted up on its side with the head uppermost. All the pitch was poured onto the corner of the shoulders allowing it to run down the inside edge towards the foot. The coffin was then tilted so as to allow the flow of pitch to cover the inside of the foot end. The

process was repeated until all corners and edges were covered. The process was repeated until all corners and edges were covered. Sable Plume mentions that any surplus pitch would have been utilised for sealing the holes cut to house the handle fastenings. This process of applying the pitch was done with great speed, the pitch probably taking only minutes to dry. After pitching, the basic calico lining could be put in. This was fastened either with the use of tacks or glue. As evidence at Christ Church demonstrated, it may have been affixed before the pitch was dry. See Linings

The final acts were the fitting of the inner lining and the application of the outer upholstery pins and motifs.

The stock size of the coffin was determined by its internal dimensions of length and width at shoulders. One coffin (Cont.265) had "5.6 19" chalked on its side - this indicated an inner length of 5' 6" and a shoulder width of 19". In the accounts of William Tookey & Sons of 1840 (10) we find a reference to a "stout elm coffin 5ft X 17". Coffins were readily available in sizes ranging from 5' 3" thereby increasing in 3"units to a maximum of 6' 3". Out of eighty coffins excavated at Christ Church the maximum length was 6' 3" (1990mm). The smallest case held in stock would of course have been for a still-born infant; a trade catalogue of 1938 gives the smallest in-stock shell as 16" in length (11) which can be compared with one found at Spitalfields (Cont123) of 20".

Christ Church yielded many instances of the single shell coffin with double lid (Conts. 17/19,20/3, 24/25, 103/104, 125/128, 184/186197/199 and 200/202.) The inner lid was fitted, or let in, supported on beading tacked to the inner face of the coffin flush to the top edge: the outer lid spanned the whole. Examples of inner beading were noticed in a number of coffins (Conts. 24/25, 75 and 125/128); in some instances the inner lid had been given a shallow chamfer (Cont. 107) (figs 1 and 2).

Differences in the construction of the outer cases and some inner shells are to be seen in the butt joints when the outer case had its end within the sides (Cont. 46) (fig.3) or vice versa (Cont. 75) (fig.4); with style (Cont. 75) the foot and bead ends of the sides are rounded at the contact point (fig.5)

KERFING

In order to allow the sides of a coffin to bend to the shape of the shoulders a method known as kerfing was adopted. The plank was scored with a row of parallel grooves. or kerfs, perpendicular to the base at the shoulders on the inner face of each side (fig.6) to within ½"(7 mm) of the thickness of the panel. The wood was then tempered with steam to achieve suppleness to allow for its shaping without splitting. The space between kerfs on coffins at Spitalfields varies from 10 mm (con.109) to 60 mm (Cont. 196).

WOOD THICKNESS

Gauge of wood used at Spitalfields varied, some coffins comprising wood with a multiplicity of thickness. Of a sample of seventy five coffins, the range varied from 15 mm to 50mm with the majority being between 20mm and 30 mm. The particularly wide examples recorded often tapered towards the base (Conts. 101 and 109) (fig. 7). Turner (12) specifies a variance of one to one and half inches.

FINISHES

Finishes can be categorized into four types:-

1. Rough: more likely employed when shell was to be cloth covered.
2. Smooth: more likely employed when shell was to be velvet covered.
3. Covered: indicating the lack of planing

4. Waxed and polished: employed when no fabric covering was used. This type of coffin was not introduced until the early 19th century and was not generally accepted until the 1860's. Their availability is mentioned only as an after-thought in Turner's catalogue of 1838(13) and only one such example appears in Tookey's ledgers(14) .

TIMBER TYPES

The regular use of oak for coffins can be traced back to the 14th century but from the 16th century onwards, when much of the oak was being used for domestic and marine architecture, substitutes such as elm were introduced. Queen Elizabeth I had an inner shell of 1" elm and an outer case of oak(15) whilst the Tookey ledgers show only one entry during the: period 1740-1850 of an oak shell, all others being of elm. Of the six types of stock coffins held by Turner in 1838 only one was of oak: "Good inch elm, smooth oiled; inch elm covered black or grey; double-lid elm; elm-shell, elm-case, double-lid inch and a half oak"(16).

From a sample of twenty-eight coffins at Spitalfields, twenty-two were of elm, four (of three different species of conifer and only two of oak. Amongst other known variants are a series of 17th century coffins at Llangor, Merioneth, where the lids and bases are of oak with the sides and ends of ash. In rural areas it appears that what was adopted depended on what was in stock at the time and the use of both black poplar and horse chestnut are not unknown. Cheap conifer or deal tended to be used only in the manufacture of infants' and paupers' coffins (16).

FABRIC COVERINGS.

Although the practice of covering a coffin with fabric emulated the grand travelling trunks of the 17th century, it also allowed the coffin-maker some license in using unplanned timber and jointed planks. At Spitalfields a number of instances were recorded of lids and/or bases being made up of two or more sections of wood (Conts. 29, 33, 35, 37, 45, 171, 189, 196, 271, 281.) fastened together with double-ended nails; in one instance metal straps had been used for jointing (Cont. 270). An early example of such double-headed nail fixings has been recorded at Llangor, Merioneth (18).

VARIATIONS

The passage entrance to the lower tower vault yielded two rectangular elm coffins (Cont. 65 and 113) of rough construction (the sides being of two planks each 10 mm in thickness with wooden braces at each inner corner and metal straps to the external elevations) more likely having been made by a Joiner rather than a coffin maker. These boxes housed a multiplicity of bones with Cont. 65 containing the remains of at least twelve persons. The precise reason for their construction has not yet been identified but it seems likely that it was provided to receive bodies whose coffins had decayed; a number of diseased bones were amongst the contents together with an autopsied skull.

Evidence that coffins and/or coffin wood was re-used has been recorded. cont. 238 had a re-used coffin as its inner shell, whilst one coffin was composed entirely of a re-used specimen but with the dignity of the earlier fabric covering and fittings having been placed on the inside so that the original outer left side became the inner right and vice versa

PHOENIX SAW MILLS. DEAL & ENGLISH TIMBER YARD.

Mr. Thomas
London Dec 18th 1852

Bought of James Thomason,

Deal & Timber Merchant.

N. B. Montague, Street, Brick Lane, Spitalfields.

of the good quality of the timber
of the

due by request 2 Aug 1853

James Thomason

Plate 1. Depiction of a receipt from Phoenix Saw Mills

FIG. 4.

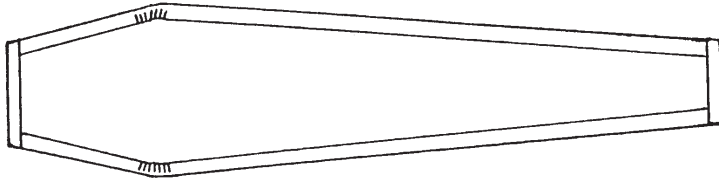
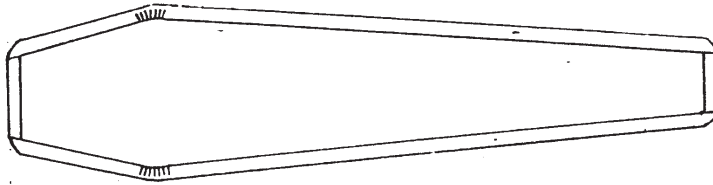


FIG. 3.



PLAN VIEW

SIDE VIEW.

FIG. 6.

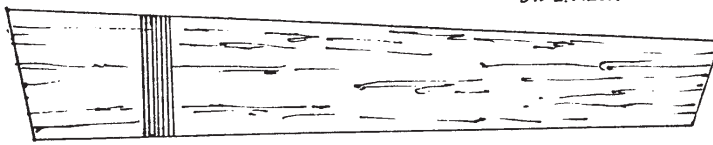


FIG. 1.

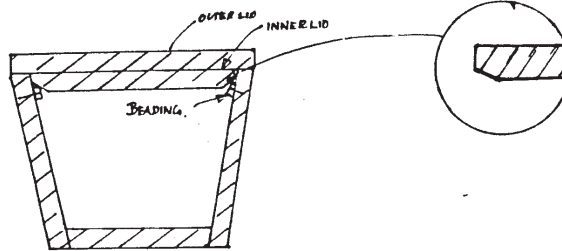


FIG. 2.

Plate 2: Fig 1-6. Coffin plan and side views

List of coffins showing these characteristics

Sections making up lid or base

<u>Contexts:</u>	<u>No.of Pieces</u>	<u>Inner or Outer</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
189	2	ICFL, ICFB	
208	2	OCFB	210 with beading
213	2	OCFB, OCFL	
215	2,3	OCFB, OCFL	
219	2	OCFL	
229	2	OCFL	Child's coffin
231	2	OCFL	
232	2	OCFL	Has inner lid 233
243	2	OCFL	
265	2	OCFL, OCFS X2	
273	2	OCFL	
276	4	OCFB	Made up with small pieces
278	2	OCFL	
279	2	OCFL	
280	3	OCFL	
287	2	ICFL	
290	2	OCFL	Small section nailed
293	2	OCFL	
298	2	OCFL	
300	2	OCFL	
301	2	OCFL	
316	2	ICFL	

NOTES:

1. Letter with accompanying sketch from Warwick J. Rodwell to Julian Litten, 1981.
2. B. Tuckman A Distant Mirror, London (Macmillan) 1979, p.96
3. W. Lilley, Monarchy or no Monarchy, London 1651
4. East Barsham, Norfolk; Chelsea Old Church; Iwer, Buckinghamshire; Rodney Stoke, Somerset; Steane, Northamptonshire.
5. Discovered during relaying of floor in a disturbed clay-puddled grave.
6. A.P. Stanley, Historical memorials of Westminster Abbey, London (John Murray). 1869, p. 669.
7. SEE: report on metal artifacts.
8. Lancashire and fish-tail coffins were noticed in the vaults of St. Marylebone parish church in the summer of 1983.
9. Sable Plume Coffins and Coffin making (London)
10. Westminster (Marylebone) Public Library, ref. 948/65. Cost Books. of William Tookey & Sons, August 1840 to December 1859
11. J. Turner, Information for Undertakers, London (Cunningham & Salmon) 1838
12. J. Turner, op cit. p.
13. J. Turner, op.cit.
14. Westminster (Marylebone) Public Library, op. cit.
15. A.P. Stanley, op cit p.669
16. J. Turner op cit, p.
17. S. Plume, Coffins and Coffin Making, London, c.1910 p.6
18. R. Shoesmith, "Llangar Church, Merioneth"

THE LEAD COFFIN

It would seem that the first lead coffins constructed for the complete body appeared in England during the later Roman period, lead ore being plentiful and easily available. Examples excavated (1) show their construction was fairly simple in style, a tapered cast lead box with base, sides and ends made up from a complete sheet and sealed with a crude solder. An example recently excavated at Dorchester " had been suitable cut, folded, beaten into shape and soldered along the four edges. The two long edges have been double-folded, almost crimped, for strength, giving a decorative 'beaded' effect". The separate lid had been fitted shoe-box fashion. It is not known whether burial in this way was attributed to rank as cremation urn burials took place concurrently.

With the end of the Roman Empire, as with the wooden coffin, the lead coffin did not reappear until the end of the 11th century, but with the significant addition of a funerary inscription replacing the anonymous stone sarcophagus (2). It is believed that the preference for lead for those of high rank may be attributed to the fact that a lead coffin could be made air-tight, thus protecting and preserving the corpse in its original state, and at the same time preventing the escape of odor. "Lead coffins preserve, which is why great men of the world preferred them to other materials" - Paul Zacchiae 1596 (3). A recent example of the success of this technique was recorded at St. Bede's with the recovery of the near perfect body of a 13th century Knight Robert de Harrington.

The 16th century saw the introduction of anthropomorphic, (shaped to the body) lead coffins. The most significant examples were recorded at Westminster Abbey. In 1869 a survey of the vaults there was carried out in order to find the body of James I. During this survey the tomb of Henry VII was opened up. In Arthur Penryn Stanley's Historical Memorials of Westminster Abbey, he wrote:

"Of the three coffins, the third coffin lying on the northern side was immediately found to be that of King James I, as indicated beyond question in the long inscription engraved on a copper plate, soldered to the lead coffin. It was surrounded with the remains of a wooden case, this case had been made out of two logs of solid timber which had been scooped out to receive the shape of the lead coffin. The other two coffins were indisputably those of Henry VII and his Queen."

The use of simple lead coffins for the nobility was more common in France at this time. A will of 1652 declared :

"I wish and ordain that 24 hours after my decease, my body be opened, embalmed, placed in a lead coffin, and carried - in the event that I die in this town - to the Dominican Monastery and there placed for safe keeping near the tomb containing the heart of my former wife" (4).

The lead viscera chest, the use of which became popular in the late seventeenth/early eighteenth century was a lead chest designed purely to house the organs and/or viscera. Early evidence of the introduction of this practice was that of Thomas Loore who met his death on the block: in 1580). His daughter Jane Roper recovered the decapitated head of her father and had it placed in a lead box and interred in the Roper Vault, St. Dunstons, Canterbury. Evisceration of Monarchs had been common in the West since the 12th century (5) but it was Dr. Benjamin Bell of Edinburgh, 1749 - 1806 who, for those who could afford it practiced the 'cavity technique' of the removal of viscera to a lead receptacle. The rest of the body was then placed in a traditional lead coffin. The viscera lead receptacle was not carried during the funeral ceremony.

Burial and vault interment using lead coffins became more widespread during the late 18th and 19th centuries following the trend for a respectable' funeral. "the desire for a good funeral was the strongest feeling amongst the working classes" at this time (6). Pressure for reforms to improve public hygiene resulted in churches limiting vault interments to lead-lined coffins only e.g. in the Vestry minutes of 1812 at Christ Church Spitalfields, the committee recommended that as "a very offensive effluvia proceeds from the public vault in its present state occasioned by the decay of the coffins and the consequent exposure of their contents, ... are of the opinion that no corpses should in future be deposited under the church, or steeple in the public or private vaults except such as are enclosed in lead on any account or pretence whatever"(7) .

CONSTRUCTION OF THE 18TH CENTURY AND EARLY 19TH CENTURY COFFIN

By the 18th century the lead coffin was only used in conjunction with an outer wooden case. The lead shell would normally have included either an inner wooden lid or a complete inner wooden shell. The specified inner wood shell or outer case would have been needed as a matrix for the lead coffin. As with the wooden coffin the lead coffin was stocked in readiness. Turners' Catalogue (8) advertises "Outside lead coffins of 4lbs lead which are kept in readiness and may be had immediately". Sable Plume mentions stock lead coffins of 3lb and 5lb lead (9).

Results at Christ Church showed that a number of lead coffins had been fashioned by lining the outer wooden case, demonstrating technique 1. Alternatively, the lead coffin had been shaped and wrapped to the inner wood shell, technique 2. By the turn of the 19th century the practice of lining the outer coffin had apparently become unfashionable.(10). Lead coffins with a single inner wooden lid would probably have been constructed within the outer case as in technique 1. Cont.138 shows one method as to how the inner wooden lid only was affixed: - Four Horizontal indents each approximately 15mm wide were made on the outside (one on each side and each end). The wooden lid then rested on the inside ridges. See fig.1. The lead lid was soldered on pie-crust fashion. Cont. 415 had been constructed in a similar way but a wooden wedge had been secured or trapped in each indent. See fig. 2.

The most common practice of constructing the basic shape of the coffin was to cut the six panels and base in one piece from a single sheet of lead in order to avoid having to join edges at the base. See fig. 3. The sides were then folded upwards and the edges either (a) crimped and soldered, or (b) overlapped, riveted and soldered. The lead lid rested on the inner wooden lid and was either crimped and soldered to the edge of the sides or over-lapped and soldered. Evidence of waste solder trapped in the kerfs (Cont.152) would suggest that the shoulder Joints were soldered while the coffin sat within the outer case. This example has a pie-crust style lid.

A common form of construction for adult coffin at Christ Church was to rivet the edges (3 or 4 rivets each side of the shoulder joints) and then coat the whole edge with a band of solder. The lid was constructed to fit shoe-box style and riveted at intervals. Examples Cont. 97, 139, 171, 221, 112, 121, 120. The pie crust type lid seems to have been more common at Christ Church for infants and adolescents.

A method of punching nails through the corner edges from the inside projecting outwards in order to aid the fixing of the lead to the outer coffin seems to have been employed occasionally for both the shoe-box and crimped type coffins. See Cont. 97 and 138.

Another method of over-all construction was observed from Cont.175, 157. Two separate sheets were cut and each shaped to encompass half the head end, complete side and half the foot end. The two sections were joined with solder at the centre seam at each end. Fig. 4. The lid and base were separate.

Methods of joining at the shoulders varied, for example Cont. 157, 364 397, 403 had all been cut, folded and riveted but the method of cutter: often differed slightly. See fig.5.

Of particular note is the lead coffin Cont.152. This appears to have been constructed from one sheet of lead, excluding lid and fashioned within the outer wooden coffin as the top of the sides project outwards forming a slight ridge that fits the shape of the outer coffin. See fig. 6

FINISHING - DIAPER PATTERNS

Sable Plume writes "Lead coffins are usually ornamented by scraping with the shave-hook or burnishing in some way. It is really no use but serves to take away the plain appearance and it is easily and quickly done" {11}. It is evident from Christ Church and other vaults dating from the 18th century that this method was customary. The usual pattern was a regular cross-hatching of scribed diagonal lines creating a diamond formation. At Christ Church this process had only been undertaken on the shoe-box or folded edged coffins before inner breast-plate had been fitted. Cont. 187, 175, 105, 97, 139, 211, 393.

The origins of this particular pattern are uncertain but some examples of early English medieval lead coffins were decorated with the very same diamond hatching {12}.

INNER LEAD BREAST-PLATES

Lead coffins were usually fitted with a lead plate bearing the identical inscription of the outer breast-plate. (It is interesting to note that at Christ Church this was done inaccurately e.g. Cont.129,130, outer breast-plate: 'Mrs. Sarah Pontardant died 5th May 1781 aged 36 years" inner breast-plate: "Mrs. Sarah Pontardant died 5th May 1780 aged 35 years"). The plates themselves varied in size and were normally plain, however several plates at Christ church were decorated with simple hand-punched borders. one exception were Cont. 121, 171 in which the inscription had been directly chased on to the coffin lid. Fastening of the breast-plates to the lid was done by soldering or riveting either the corners or the top and bottom edges.

THE INNER WOODEN COFFIN SHELL

Few of these were recorded in their entirety due to the low rate of survival, but there was sufficient evidence to show that 'the construction differed only from the outer coffin in the butt joint at each end, See Cont. 2180, 2179. The inner wood coffin Cont. 394 had had a central groove cut on the outside to help facilitate the soldering of the centre end seam of its lead coffin. Cont.157.

NOTES

1. (a) Proceedings of the Dorset natural History and Archaeological society. Volume 103 for 1981.
(b) Roman Lead Coffins, British Archaeological Report 38.London 1977. Society Antiquities Library.
2. Philippe Aries The Hour of Our Death (Allen Lane) 1981. p. 216.
3. Op cit Philippe Aries. p.359
4. Op cit Philippe Aries. p. 362
5. Royal Mummies Ciba Symposium 1964 . Welcomes Institute Library.
6. J. Dorley. Death Heaven and the Victorians (Studio Vista) 1971 p.13.

7. Christ Church Records, Vestry Minutes. Ref. No. S.94 Dep. Local History Library, Bankcroft Road, Tower Hamlets, London.
8. J. Turner, Information for Undertakers London (Cunningham & Salmon) 1838, p.12.
9. Sable Plume, Coffins and Coffin Making London, c.1910, p.62.
10. Sable Plume, Op cit. p.57
11. Sable Plume, Op cit. p.62
12. L.Weaver, A Note on Lead Coffins The Antiquary (London) Vol. XLIII, p.372.

INTRODUCTION

COFFIN FURNITURE 18th - MID 19th CENTURY

Early use of metal handles and coffin decoration may be observed from Roman chests made to house cremated remains, indicating that a ceremony or procession may have been involved during the burial. The classical tradition was the prominent influence from the early Christian era, Roman treatment of monuments and the belief in material resurrection becoming the basis for burial and respectability in England {1}. However, the advent of heraldry in the Middle Ages set the trend for the ceremony of the funeral that was to last well into the 19th century and to a lesser extent, to the present day.

From the Middle Ages to the end of the 16th century, the funeral of the nobility had been organised by the College of Arms {2}, but by the beginning of the 18th century the professional undertaker had secured the complete monopoly and the face of the public funeral became immediately recognisable by its oppressive preponderance of sombre black pageantry. The culmination of these two influences can be seen in, and was probably responsible for, the conservative nature of coffin furniture design during the 18th and early 19th century. For example, provision for the inscription was normally made by a shield breast-plate. Even if the deceased was not entitled to a coat of arms, the shape of the shield still complied with basic laws of heraldry. The shield (heater, square or vair fig. 1,2 and 3) signified a male; the lozenge a spinster; the oval a married woman, a cartouche (either "florid" or based on the "A bouche" shield fig.) For both male and female. It seems evident from Christ Church and St. Mary Little Ilford, that an element of "undertaker's licence" probably due to limited available stock, affected this choice. i.e. At Ilford a 'lozenge' had been adapted for a young male and at Christ Church a superior quality 'Lozenge' breast-plate had also been used for a married woman (cont. 156). Other good examples of lozenge breast-plates are at Christ Church (Cont. 264, 291). Elements of decoration that normally surrounded this shield, oval, square, or (perhaps with the exception of the plume: a symbol that saw frequent use from the mid 18th century to the mid 19th century. Comparison (cont. 156) dated 1761 and (Cont.395) dated 1847) but a mixture of Baroque and Neo-classical symbolism, Rococo, Doric and Gothic revival.

The long survival of symbolism was particularly evident in the 18th and 19th century coffin furniture, with the unceasing attention to the truncated cherub head and wings (an image adopted in the 17th century, recurring in the 18th century on domestic furniture and sepulchral monuments), sweeping angels, laurels, crematory urns and obelisks {3}. These classical images were probably imitations of those used on contemporary sepulchral monuments; the cherub's head can be seen on the tomb of William Morgan in Westminster Abbey 1683. The typical use of the obelisk, an influence deriving from the designs of Bernini, can be seen on the tomb of John, Duke of Argyll and Greenwich 1748 by Louis Francois Roubiliac, in Westminster Abbey (see Cont. 313), lid motif. In some cases these symbols were combined with Carolean flower motifs, acanthus sprays and shells images characteristically Rococo in style (from influences such as Berretti) {4}.

The trend for using disputably non-Christian symbols, such as the snake with the tail in its mouth (symbolising eternity) (Cont. 313) upturned torches (symbolising life extinguished) draped urns, palms. etc., did not go unchallenged. W.C. Aitken wrote:

"These cherub heads, bodiless, but winged, though guillotined, still smiling and puffy-cheeked - this tall damsel, trumpet in hand about to announce the crack of doom thereon, - this disconsolate but no less classical matron embracing the urn over which the cypress, if indeed it be not a weeping willow, is drooping so impossibly - these terrible pagan inverted torches, symbolic of a fire that is quenched and of nought beyond if it be not of a fire unquenchable, these serpents of eternity diligently engaged for ever in the mastication of their own indigestible tails (Cont. 313).... Who shall tell how architecture classical, gothic and barbaric- have been ransacked to furnish the

ornamentation of coffin breast, foot, and handle plates " {5}.

Diversity in coffin furniture design brought about by the gothic revival in the 1840's by reformists in ecclesiastical design such as August Welby Pugin, rejected the indiscriminate combinations of "pagan ornaments"

"Nothing can be more hideous than the raised metal work called coffin furniture that is so generally used at the present time, heathen emblems, posturing angels, trumpets, death's heads and crossbones, are mingled together in glorious confusion."

His alternative philosophy is stated in his Glossary of Ecclesiastical Ornament {6}:

"Ornament in the true and proper meaning of the word signified the embellishment of that which is in itself useful-in an appropriate manner.....The symbolical association of each ornament must be understood and considered, otherwise things beautiful in themselves will be rendered absurd by their application".....

Eminent Birmingham designers who contributed to the gothic style such as G.E. Street, Richard Cooksey, A. Lister, Edward Neville, George Lingard, John Hands, J .R. Clive and Hickman{7}. Incorporate Christian crosses, ivy and maple leaves, geometric patterns, ring handles and acorns. An example at Christ Church of the change in the traditional 18th century design of handle can be seen from a coffin of 1849 (Cont. 100). And examples of pure rococo design can be seen from the copper alloy grip plate (Cont. BF 73) and the iron grip plate (Cont. 156).

The basic elements of coffin furniture seem to have altered little from the beginning of the 17th century. The wooden coffins of the Middle Age normally included handles of cast iron rings but the {8} but the addition of an inscription plate did not come into vogue until the 16th century {9}.

The full complement of coffin furniture for an 18th century coffin no really consisted of one to three rows of domed-headed nails, that served to form a decorative adornment on an outer-cloth covering; four pairs of handles and grips (only three pairs were generally used for a child) three on each side and one at each end. Each handle was complemented by the addition of a decorative plate (grip plate) that fitted behind the handle itself. It was pierced and held in position by the handle fittings (See Gripes).

Additional decoration included escutcheons (or drops){10 }. These were small decorative plates that were normally pinned with small tacks in the corners or at regular intervals along the inside of the rows of upholstery nails. Nail lace, a type of fine metal trim {11}, was occasionally preferred to the double row of upholstery nails, from Christ Church although no examples were recovered and this probably confirms Aitken's observation {12} that it was unfashionable in London. Remaining space on the lid was reserved for the breast plate (plate of inscription) and two lid ornaments, (supplied in pairs) {13}. The breast plate, lid ornaments and grip plates were normally sold as sets {14}. An illustration showing a contemporary arrangement can be seen from the Trade card of Joseph Turner 1838 {15}. The use of lead, brass or copper breast-plates during the 17th century would appear to have been a practice reserved for the gentry. They normally consisted of a flat plate with engraved inscription but with minimal decoration. Examples can be seen at the City of London Guild Hall museum {16}. Heavy decorative lead breast-plates, though expensive, were still common in the 18th and early 19th century exhibiting a variety of different designs. An alternative to the elaborate lead and brass plate was the availability of pewter, tinned iron or Britannia metal (a combination of these two) - enabling those of lower financial position to acquire a respectable facade. Previously cast or beaten, both lead and other breast plates, lid ornaments, grip plates, lace and escutcheons, were manufactured by a process of die-stamping (sinking), thus giving an embossed appearance.

The invention of an improved machine for this process was patented in 1769 by John Pickering and again in 1777 by John Harston and Samuel Bellamy of Birmingham. Originally, a London

monopoly, Birmingham had become the centre of the decorative metal work industry since 1760. First tinned iron was rolled out between rollers (milled) until a thin sheet was formed. It was then cut to the size required for the design. If the tin was to be silvered or gilt it was first sized, then lacquered or varnished. The plate was then placed flat over a bed and impressed on to the cast iron die. Pickering's Patent describes how the Press consisted of "an oblong square frame with two rods in which an iron hammer faced with a softer metal is worked by the assistance of three wheels upon a striking block with a die fixed thereon." (The raised part of the die being on the hammer).

An alternative method besides stamping was the screw press, introduced by Bellamy and Harsden {18}. This was operated by means of a horizontal turning wheel, the die was attached to the screw thread and in turning the wheel it was lowered on to the metal. The finished embossed plate was then lacquered with spirits of wine and Gum-Sandarac which was applied with a brush. Grip plates etc. were produced in the same manner. Examples of lead breast plates at Christ Church show that the basic pattern or design of the die was fairly simple and a certain amount of hand chasing and punching, particularly on the borders that the die did not cover had been carried out in order to bring out the best in the repoussé design. Numerous lead breast-plates at Christ Church confirm this additional technique. The usual inscription giving name, date of death and age having been painted {19} or engraved on lead or brass case in the case of tin, probably individually letter-punched. Lead plates were also punched but the lettering was created by a series of chased dots. The recovery at Christ Church of a number of lead and stamped tin inscription plates that were additional to the breast-plate-varied in size. The smallest end plate was Cont. SF 326, this was of stamped tin and measured 105 mm X 30mm. The largest was Cont. BF 290 and measured 205mm X 180mm. An example of a square end plate was Cont. BF 259 measuring 105mm by 105mm. The breast plates had been attached to the side or foot-end of the coffins. The reason for this may have been to enable identification of the coffin once it had been interred in the vault, possibly when stacked. This was not particular to Christ Church as examples had been noticed at St. Narylebone Church vaults {20}.

A number of these plates would probably have been stocked by the undertaker and fitted at the last moment during interment. Stamped tin breast-plates, escutcheons and grip plates were supplied with different finishes. If white furniture was required, the natural silver of the metal was left untouched, or enamelled white; but for black furniture a bitumen based lacquer was painted on to the front surface {21}. This work was generally done by women and known as 'japanning'.

Some grip plates and handles at Christ Church appeared to have been given an olive-green primer (cont. 109 and 395). Choices included bright black (gloss finish) consisting of a mixture of pontipool varnish, spirits of wine, seed lake and ornato {22}; or a dead black (matt) made from vegetable black ground with turpentine and a "drier". In some cases, white furniture was silvered (Cont. 393,392.). Black furniture was sometimes picked out with gilt on the raised surfaces {23}.

Colours for coffin furniture in London seem to have remained much the same throughout the 18th and 19th century. The choice of black alone appears peculiar to England; Scotland and Ireland preferring gilt and Wales a mixture of black and white; white only being used in London for the funeral of a child. However, an exception at Christ Church was the lead breast-plate of Susannah le Maistre of 1761 (Cont.156) that was seen to be gilt with matching handles and grip plates. In the later Victorian period other colours were occasionally used.



Plate 3. Flyer of 'Joseph Turner-Coffin Maker & Furnishing Undertaker'

COMMON SYMBOLS ON 18TH/19TH CENTURY COFFIN FURNITURE AND THEIR DEFINITIONS*

<u>Anchor:</u>	Hope, or 'at rest'. An early Christian symbol.
<u>Angel:</u>	The agent of God, often pointing heavenwards; also the guardian of the dead.
<u>Bed:</u>	A deathbed, sometimes only a pillow.
<u>Book:</u>	Often with a cross lying on it symbolising faith;
<u>Butterfly:</u>	The Resurrection.
<u>Circle:</u>	Eternity; incorporated into the Celtic crops.
<u>Clover leaf:</u>	The Trinity
<u>Column:</u>	The broken column traditionally signifies mortality, the support of life being broken.
<u>Cross:</u>	(Celtic) Immortality (Greek or Latin) Christianity (Latin on 3 steps) The Trinity, or Faith Hope and charity. (Maltese) Bravery. (St. Andrew's) Martyrdom.
<u>Crown:</u>	The emblem of the Christian martyr who may expect reward in heaven.
<u>Cypress tree:</u>	Mourning and death on account of its dark colour; and because once cut down it never grows again
<u>Dove:</u>	The Holy Ghost or peace.
<u>Gates :</u>	Entry into Heaven. Victory over death.
<u>Hands:</u>	When clasped are a symbol of farewell
<u>Heart:</u>	Love and devotion
<u>Horse:</u>	Strength, courage or the swiftness of the passage of time.
<u>Hourglass:</u>	The traditional symbol of Father Time, who also carries a scythe
<u>Ivy:</u>	The evergreen, symbolising immortality or friendship.
<u>Labyrinth:</u>	In popular usage, symbolises eternity; used in esoteric tradition to represent the inward path.
<u>Lamb:</u>	Innocence, sometimes used on a child's grave.
<u>Lamp:</u>	Immortality, knowledge of God.
<u>Laurel:</u>	Fame, often of a literary or artistic figure
<u>Lily:</u>	Purity.

<u>Lion:</u>	Courage, strength. the Resurrection.
<u>Obelisk:</u>	Eternal life, from the Egyptian sun-worshipping symbol.
<u>Palm:</u>	triumph of a martyr over death.
<u>Passion Flower:</u>	Christian passion, sacrifice and redemption.
<u>Phoenix:</u>	Christ's Resurrection.
<u>Rocks:</u>	The Church of Christian steadfastness.
<u>Rose:</u>	Sinless, usually associated with the Virgin Mary or Paradise.
<u>Scythe or sickle:</u>	The passage of time and death.
<u>Shell:</u>	Pilgrimage, the badge of the pilgrims who travelled to Compostella in Spain.
<u>Ship:</u>	The Christian church. symbolically carrying the faithful through the world.
<u>Skull:</u>	Immortality.
<u>Snake:</u>	With its tail in its mouth, symbolises eternity. Resurrection (Oroburos).
<u>Sundial:</u>	Passage of time.
<u>Sword:</u>	Justice. constancy or fortitude.
<u>Torch:</u>	Immortality; upturned, symbolises life extinguished.
<u>Tree:</u>	Life, regeneration and immortality.
<u>Urn:</u>	Draped and empty. symbolises death, derived from classical cinerary urns; if flaming indicates new life.
<u>Water:</u>	A hand pouring water from a flagon may occur on Jewish tombs of the Levites whose duty in the synagogue is to pour water upon the hands of the priests
<u>Wheat:</u>	Fruitfulness harvested.
<u>Willow:</u>	Grief and mourning.
<u>Yew:</u>	Mourning, on account of its dark colour and its association with churchyards.
<u>Violets:</u>	Humility.

* Reproduced from "London Cemeteries - An illustrated Guide and Gazette" Meller H.. p.32, 33.

Barbara Jones "Design for Death" Ipswich (M.S.Cowell Ltd.) 1967. p. 229

NOTES

1. James Stevens Curl, *A Celebration of Death* London (Constable) 1980 p. 73.
2. Nichols Penny, *Mourning* London (H.M.S.O.) 1981 p. 16.
3. J. S. Curl. op cit p.128. 129
4. Furniture History Society Journal, Leeds (W. S. Maney & Sons) Vol. 11 Plates 155 to 160 - Shows variations in rococo foliage patterns by P. Beretti.
5. Aitken W.C. Coffin Furniture, in The Resources Products & Industrial History of Birmingham & the Midlands Hardware District ed. S. Timmins 1866 p. 706.
6. Stuart Macdonald, The History and Philosophy of Art Education University of London Press Ltd. (London) 1970 p. 234.
7. Records of Registered Designs to the Patent Office and Industrial Property Department Registers and Representations of Designs. ref . BT 43 nos.100201, 1775, 59432, 97297, 93430, 6436, 52906, 71745, 90777, 69061, 56165, 38051, 95987, 62451. Public Records Office, Kew.
8. Archaeologia or Miscellaneous Tracts relating to Antiquity. (Society of Antiquaries from London) Vol 1 . XXXII p . 60 illustration of the coffin of Joanna be Bohun.
9. A.P. Stanley, *Historical memorials of Westminster Abbey* , London (John Durray) 1869.
10. Listed in the Accounts of William Tookey & Sons. The Guide to Undertakers, by J. Turner and various trade cards, Guildhall Library.
11. R. Gentle and R. Field. English Domestic Brass 1680-1810. London (Paul Elak) 1974 Plate 361.
12. J. Morley, Death Heaven and the Victorians London (Studio Vista) 1971.
13. See Lid Ornaments.
14. See Lid Ornaments.
15. Trade card of J. Turner. Collection Guildhall Library.
16. Examples reproduced in Gentle and Field Plates 349, 350
17. John Pickering, Specification of Machinery for Chasing, or Producing Metal Ornaments for Coffins, Coaches, etc. London (Eyre and Spottiswoode) Great Seal Patent Office, 1856. A.D.. 1769 No. 920.
18. Karston & Bellamy's Specification of Stamping Metals. (Eyre & Spottiswoode) Great Seal Patent Office, 1856. AD. 1777 No. 1165.
19. W.C. Aitken op cit. p. 705
20. Additional name plates were noticed on coffins in the vaults of St. Marylebone parish church in the summer of 1983.
21. W.C. Aitken op cit. p. 708

22. Marston & Bellamy op cit. p.2

23. W.C. Aitken op cit. p. 707. Example Registered Designs Patent Office op cit. Coffin Furniture registered by A Lister. BT43 No. 93430 vol. 8.

HANGLES

Early examples of the drop handle type can be seen on numerous medieval box-chests. These were made from round section iron rod widening at the centre {1}. Coffin handles of the 18th century were predominantly sand-cast and wrought from bar-iron. Brass handles were available but would have been expensive (see costs). In 1750 Britain was producing 18,000 tons per year of iron {2} of which several hundred tons in the form of coffin furniture was sold to metropolitan undertakers. (An adult handle Cont.53 weighed approximately 5oz.) No brass handles were recorded at Christ Church, Little Ilford or Warham Percy. Coffin Cont.156, possibly the most affluent example at Christ Church of undertaking had cast handles and grips with a gilt finish only.

Results at Christ Church show that all handles were held in place by custom-made mounting rings. These consisted of two loops fashioned from strips of iron - a good example at Christ Church (Cont. 119) measured 145mm long and 2mm thick. The strips were each shaped to form a collar with two tangs. These could be threaded through location holes in the coffin itself. The handles 'trunnions' slotted into the loops, then the tangs were prised apart, trapping the loops in position (see fig.). It was observed from coffins at Christ Church that the tangs had frequently been bent down together in the same direction {3}. Two exceptions in this design were 1. For a coffin dated 1849 (Cont. 100) which had a hexagonal bolt-type head with similar tangs projecting from a smaller inner nut. The trunnion of the handle slotted into the built giving a more impressive appearance and 2. Cont. 437 had specially made ball and socket type head with rivets instead of tangs. Similar mountings of this type were recovered at Wharum Percy Church burial No. LII. It was unusual that no handles were recovered from these mountings, at Christ Church. All three of these techniques were employed and probably copied from traditional 18th century loop handles on domestic furniture {4}.

Although the handles were fixed so that they were free to move in these mountings, it is unlikely that they would have been used to take the weight as the coffin was carried on the shoulders of bearers. (It was noted on coffin Cont. 100 that one handle had been left and corroded in the upright position, indicating that it may have been used to help to shift the coffin into plan once in the vault).

Designs of handles recorded at Christ Church fit into two main categories:

- (a) those with a decorative or raised design -7 variations.
- (b) plain with no decorative elements - 7 variations.

- Variation 1(a): Two central cherubs heads with wings, separated by & stylised cloud motif. with similar motif on either side. Palm leaves extend to each terminal. Sizes of span, inclusive of terminals, ranged from 125mm to 165mm. Examples cont. SF 201, 203, 225, 28, 280. 211, 395, 313, 302. BF 206, 176, 36. Fig 1(a).
- 2(a): Two small central winged cherubs heads with small swags of roses (symbolising sinless) and small cherubs head at each terminal. Sizes 85mm (child) to 144mm. Examples Cont. SF.242.109,237, BF 387
- 3(a): Central floral spray with scroll at head of each terminal. Sizes 45mm (child) to 155mm. Examples Cont. SF 123 BF 124, 351, 392.
- 4(a) Asymmetric pattern of scrolls and flowers culminating in large central flower. sizes 150mm to 155mm. Examples Cont. 5F.96. 8F74.137 Fig 4(a).
- 5(a) Central shield (vair) stylised rays extending to terminals with matching shields at the terminal heads. sizes 140mm to 145mm. Examples Cont. SF

304 BF 38 Fig 5(a).

- 6(a) Half rectangular and rectangular in section with central kink, emblazoned with a single flower. Scroll border with intermittent over-lapping leaves. Sizes 190mm. one example on Cont. SF 100 (See photo)
- 7(a) Horse-shoe shape with trunnions facing inwards. Heavy cast-iron scroll work and central florid shield. Size 160mm -one example only BF &05.
- Variation 1(b) Half oval loop, oval in section, shallow triangle shape with shouldered terminal. Sizes 80mm child to 150mm. Examples Cont. SF 87, 94, 295.
- 2(b) Similar to No. 1 but more acute in angle and flat faced. Sizes 140mm. Example Cont. SE 215.
- 3(b) Half oval, oval in section, widening to centre, gentle curve. sizes 85mm to 165mm. Examples cont. SF 92,101
- 4(b) Similar to No. 1 but straight shallow triangle with right-angled arms. sizes 85mm (child) to 160mm. Example SF 115, BF 38, 74, 148.
- 5(b) Straight handle similar to 4. but rounded at centre in section. Sizes 80mm (child)to 160mm . Examples BF 143a,148b, 351, 392, 206, 387. SF 340a, 3340b
- 6(b) Half oval, rounded in section widening at centre. Sizes 145 to 155 mm. Example Cont. SF 293, 296.
- 7(b) Half oval, oval in section, narrow bar. Sizes 120mm to 140mm. Examples Cont. SF 357, 299 BF 206.

Available patterns of decorated handles appear fewer than the varieties of grip plate and evidence at Christ church shows that one pattern handle had been adapted for several different patterns of grip plate. Pattern 1(a) proved the most common being used in conjunction with at least four different styles of grip plate. I.E. Cont.119 (stamped pewter), 108 (lead), 109(stamped tin), and Cont. BF 38 (stamped tin), BF 36 (stamped tin). pattern 4(a) with grip plate Cont 120, and 129 (lead, 96 (stamped tin). In each case the grip framed the central cartouche of the grip plate. Pattern 4(a) was also recorded at Wharrum Percy burial No. (from a lead coffin). See Report Wharrum Percy, C. Harding). Handle 5(a) seems to be designed together with its own specific grip plate (See Cont. 304 and 38). This is also the case with regard to Cont. SF 100.

In Turner's Catalogue {5} listed sizes go from 4 ins to 6 ins. It is not clear whether these sizes refer to the span between the terminals or the overall span. Various descriptions include head, metal, middling shell, small coronet, large coronet, half oval, small angel with gripes, small cherub with gripes, large cherub with gripes.

Examples of black japanned gripes can be seen from Cont. BF 53, 392, SF 96, 120. Traces of gilt were observed from BF 137 4(a). Several examples of children handles were recorded some showing traces of silvering Cont. SF. 242 BF 176.

Proof that smaller gripes were used for each end with larger versions on each side can be seen from SF 340a, and SF 340b. 5(b).

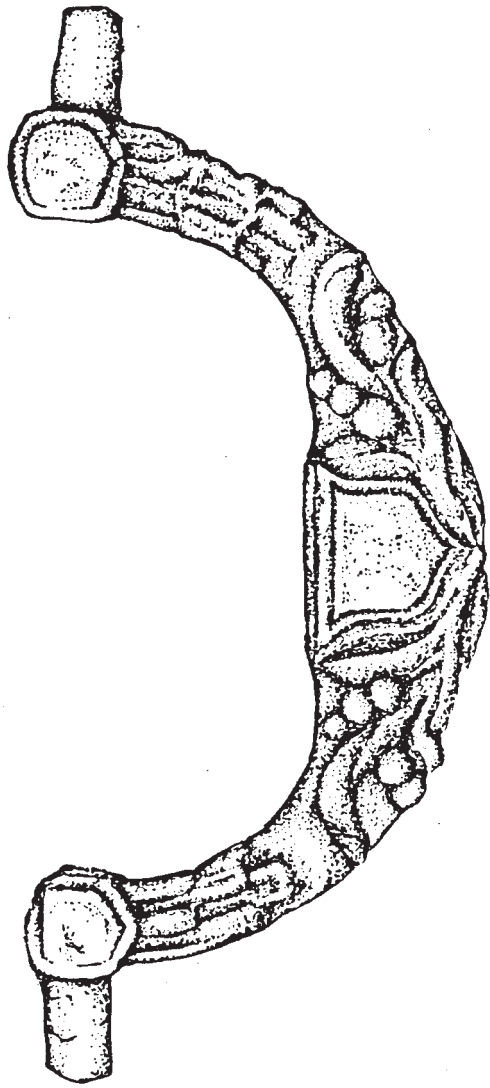


Plate 4 Handle detail

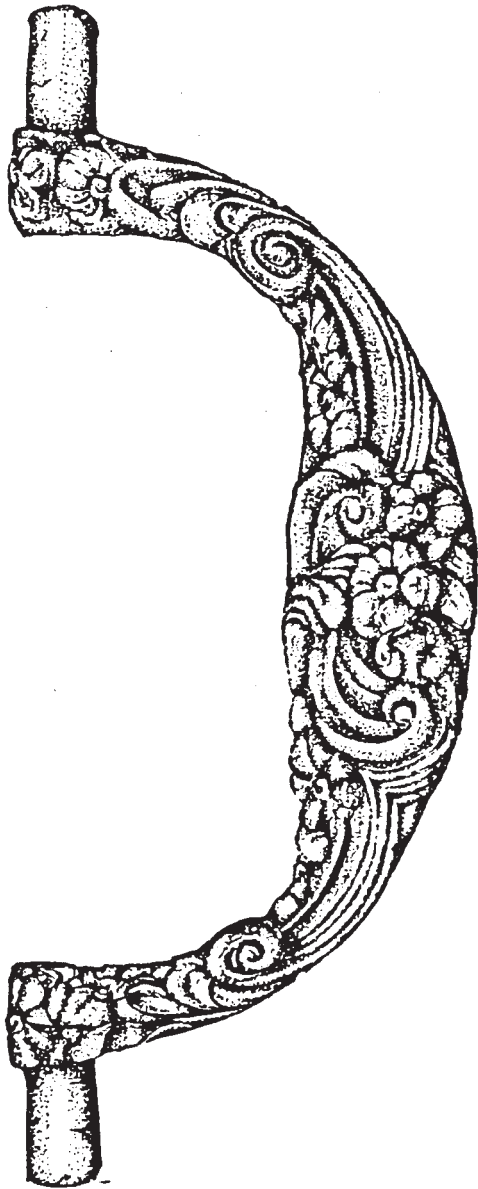


Plate 5 Handle detail

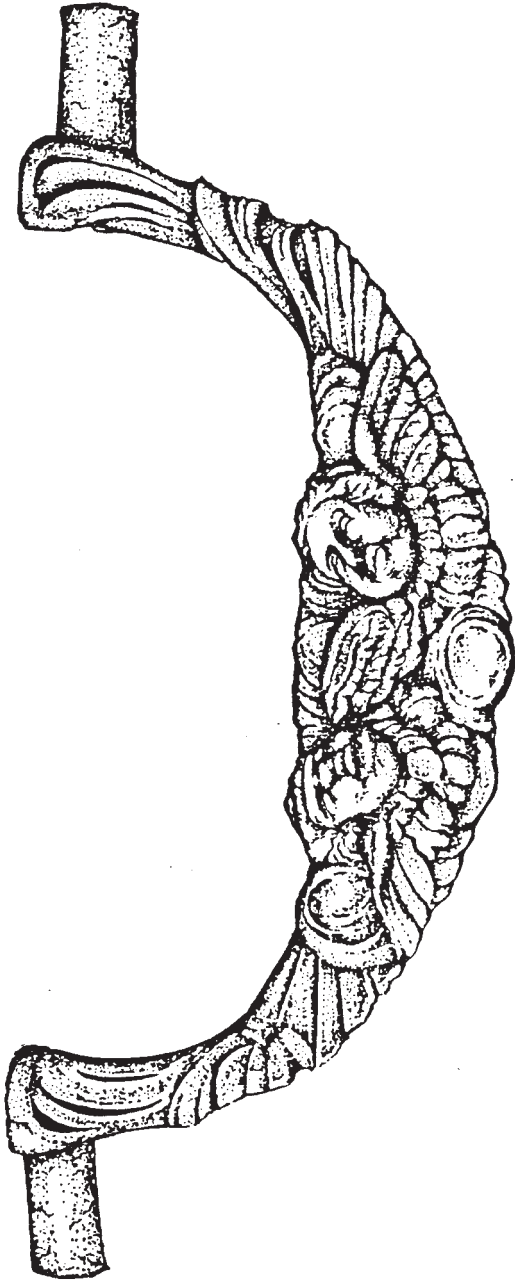


Plate 6 Handle detail

NOTES

1. The Journal of the Furniture History Society (W.S. Maney & Son) Leeds 1977 Vol. XIII.p.171
2. Hanson A. The State of Manufacturing of iron in Great Britain Considered. (London) 1750. Ref. 15p 8np 1750 6423. Goldsmith Library, Univ. London.
3. Note: This method was considerably easier and was possibly done to save time.
4. The Journal of the Furniture History Society op cit. Vol XII Plate 3
Nos. 3475 and 3476 show decorated drop handles of the mid-18th Century with tang loops. These are taken from pattern books housed at the V. & A. museum.
5. J. Turner, Information for Undertakers. London (Cunningham & Salmon) 1838. P. 10.

GRIP PLATES

Grip plates or 'Gripes' (the eighteenth century undertakers term for the decorative plate that backed the handle) were frequently employed with 'Drop handles' on drawers, etc., from the Middle Ages {1} the main practical purpose being to protect the wood directly behind the handle from wear. However, by the seventeenth century this detail had become a distinctive decorative feature in its own right. Evidence at Christ Church would suggest that its use on coffins was as necessary as the bangles and breast plate. All coffins that exhibited the use of furniture included remains of grip plates.

The introduction of die stamping decorative metal work in the 1760's opened the doors for a large number of varied designs that could be produced at relatively low cost. These designs could be manufactured from sheet brass, Britannia metal, pewter, copper-alloy, tinned iron, milled lead and later Albion metal {2} . At Christ Church the most common material used for grip plates was tinned iron, other metals included copper-alloy, tinned pewter and lead.

Of the two patterns produced in lead, Cont. SF 156 Design Variant 1. may not have been die stamped, but individually sand-cast. It had been solidly made and measured approximately 3mm in thickness. The plate was taken from a coffin dated by the breast plate 1761, but its original date of manufacture may possibly have preceded this. The design of the plate appears highly rococo in style, incorporating a central cerulean flower cartouche surmounted on shell patterns, interleaved with small flowers and encompassed by a scroll pattern border, totting a roughly triangular shape. Specific location holes to facilitate the handle mount tangs and securing pins had been allowed for in the design. The plate had been given a final finish of gilt paint.

The second pattern of lead grip plate D.V*. 2. differed in many respects. It was of a much thinner lead, the design demonstrating an embossed appearance more likely to have been the result of a stamped technique. The overall composition consisted of: a horizontal oval formed by a border of two laurel leaves, the stems of which crossed at the lower intersection of the minor axis. These stems are crested with a central raised oval cartouche made up of scrolls and acanthus leaves, with outward projecting palms. This cartouche is crested with two winged cherubs facing each other and surmounted on a stylised sunburst, all on a fine grooved field. All plates of this type had been black japanned. This was the only other design adapted for lead. Another indication that these plates were mass produced was that examples matching this description were identical in dimension. However, two different types of grip had frequently been fatted. (see Cont. SF 129 grip 4(a), SF 120 (4a), SF 108 1(a), BF 53 1(a)).

A stamped tin plate of the same design and dimension can be seen from Cont. BF 38, although the finished article varies slightly in definition it was probably produced from the same die. Cont. SF 313 also stamped tin, appears at first glance to be identical, however, the direction of the sunburst on the left of the cherub is tilted downward, as opposed to the above contexts which are horizontal D.V*.3. A reprise station of D.V*.3 can be seen from the Pattern Book M63e, Twesly & Cooper No. 37.

*D. V.= Design Variant

D.V.2 had also been used for pewter plates Cont. BF 68 (measurement along major axis 250mm) and Cont. SF 350 (measurement along major axis 210mm) black japanned. This same size in stamped tin was also recorded (Cont. SF 269 (incomplete)).

The only other pattern produced in pewter was Cont. SF 119 D.V.4. The composition included a horizontal oval bordered with two laurel wreaths with a single winged cherub's head at the base of the minor axis, the left wing spread, the right folded. A central cartouche is bordered with spreading palm sprays and swirling acanthus leaves. Above the cartouche is a flaming lamp with material draped from the handles. It had been japanned black (dead). This was fitted with a grip 1(a).

The following grip-plate designs were all of stamped tin: Cont. SF 96 D.V.4 consisted of a central horizontal oval cartouche supported by sun-bursts and winged cherub's head at the base. The cartouche was crested with a seated angel, wings folded, be left hand holding a palm branch and the right pointing to heaven. The angel's legs extend half-way down the same left side of the cartouche. Rococo scrolls and flowers surround the whole, encompassing intermittent passion flowers. No specific pin location holes have been afforded. Other Contexts of the same design can be seen from Cont. SF 309, 46, 279, 230. SF 96 (see photo) was fitted with grip 4 (a) . A design similar to D.V. 4 SF 96, but varying slightly in detail of the wings and cherub's head were recorded from SF 184 and 203. These examples however were incomplete.

Grip plates that incorporated a motto in the design can be seen from Cont. SF 109, 142, SF 36 D.V. 4(a). The motto 'Gloria Deum' is supported on either side by two cherubs in flight and is centrally mounted on an irregular cartouche. An urn with paten projects up from the base of the cartouche. The whole is bordered with scrolls of foliage with three cherub beads at the base. SF 109 had been treated with an olive green primer and finished with black lacquer. It was fitted with grip 2(a). SF 36 was associated with grip 1(a).

Cont. BF 302 and 300 and SF 215. The motto 'Merior In Spe' (To die with hope) is suspended from location holes situated each side of the base of a horizontal oval with scroll borders squared at the top with a geometric border. Laurel leaves decorate the whole with intermittent flowers. A similar example of this paten is illustrated in pattern book E3120 No.8, this is exhibited with a plain handle, whereas Cont. BF 302 was associated with grip 1(a) SF 215 was associated with grip 2(b). Other decorative stamped tin designs included D.V.5 SF 304, a central shield (vair) surmounted on a symmetrical stylised sun-burst and crested with an urn with paten. This is supported and bordered by two branches of foliage, the stems crossing at the base of the shield, probably a 19th century design. This was associated with grip 5(a).

D.V. 6 Cont. SF 100 Specifically designed for grip 6(a) and recovered from a coffin dated 1849. This consists of a shallow shield (vair) with gothic type border pointed at the top and at each side (see photo). Of particular interest is the incorporation at the base of the plate of the maker's name and pattern number: 'R. S. DAWES OGT 261841'. This pattern number was also stamped on to the back of the matching handle.

D.V. & Cont. SF 395 central Roman type sarcophagus with ball feet: mounted on a plinth and bordered with two palm leaves crossing at the stem and meeting centrally at the top. A similar design can be seen from pattern book E 3123 1910 No.22. Associated with grip 1(a) 1783.

D.V. 8 Cont. SF 353, 344. Incomplete, but of a central semi-oval cartouche scalloped at the top, supporting the crown of life with a cherub on each side. Examples can be seen from a pattern book, M.63 No. 1028, 1029.

D.V.9 cont. SF 244. Large central angel with wings spread and arms crossed, symmetrical design of acanthus leaves, carolean motifs, laurels and passion flowers creating a roughly rectangular shape. A similar example to this design is shown in the 1783 pattern book No. 23.

D.V. Cont. SF 201. Incomplete. but with central oval cartouche, with scroll borders and lobes with three winged cherubs' heads below. It is uncertain whether this had been deliberately custom trimmed before use or not. This particular plate had been given a gilt finish and exhibited a different design of handle mount. (See 'Handles' Cont. 437).

D.V.11. Cont. SF 158. Incomplete but with serrated stylised spirals.

D.V.12. SF 295. Incomplete but with oval cartouche serrated border crested with scrolls and crown.

Simpler designs of grip plate were recorded from the following: D.V.13 Cont. SF 276. A decorated bow-shape with central flower and shell at each end. This design is represented in the 1783 Pattern Book No.61. A semi-oval plain handle is illustrated with this but grip 4(b) is associated with SF 276.

D.V.14 Cont. SF 103, 340, 345. This is of an elongated knuckle-bone shape with a raised studded border measuring 26mm in width, associated with grip 5(b).

D.V.15 cont. SF 325. This is similar to D.V.14 but with a central flower and surrounding foliage.

D.V. 16 Cont. SF 350. A smaller version of D.V.14 measuring 170mm in width.

The following grip plates were of stamped copper alloy (brass): D.V.17 Cont. BF 73281. It is a shell shaped central shield with shell pattern and crown of flowers, supported by two neo-classical angels, measuring 240mm in width.

D.V.18 Cont. BF22. a smaller version of D.V.17 measuring 200mm in width.

D.V.19 Cont. SF 437. The plate is of a similar composition to D.V.2 and 3 but consists of a larger cartouche. The sunburst on the left points upward and the laurel surround and field had been cut away leaving only the palm leaves, cartouche, winged cherubs heads and sunburst.

UPHOLSTERY NAILS

The fashions for decoration of the coffin of the 18th century, early 19th century appear to emulate the traditions of contemporary domestic furniture, and the adaptation of upholstery nails for pinning the cloth to the coffin illustrates this. The securing of textiles by a studding technique to achieve decorative borders on trunks and chairs was in use from the Renaissance {1}. The emphasis on decoration for the 18th century coffin rather than on practical use however, seems logical since results show that different tacks (possibly Flemish) {2} were used to secure the cloth to the coffin before it was assembled. However, the use of dome-capped nails or studs (with square shanks tapering to a point) would have helped to restrain any billowing of the fabric during the funeral.

The individual nails were generally applied in two to three rows, shoulder to shoulder 'close drove' {3} approximately 2,000 per adult coffin (Cont. 192) along the edges of the coffin lid and sides. A number of variations from this basic pattern were apparent at Christ Church. In some cases smaller nails were used to form rows or symbols within the rows of the larger nails (Examples Cont. 38, 100, 281, 304, 313) At Christ Church several distinctive patterns (See Table) were recorded. The most common was that of a triangular shape of nails in a 3-2-1 formation, pointing inwards at regular intervals along the outer row.

It is possible that each specific pattern represented either a particular firm of undertakers' work, or the area of London from which the coffins were supplied. Alternatively, it may have been a derivation from the 17th century practice of using the studs as a tool for specific representation, i.e. indicating initials and date of death {4} , or images such as the skull and crossed bones {5}.

Analysis of both large and small upholstery nails excavated from Wharram Percy {6} showed them to be of brass, (copper alloy) and gun metal. Examples of upholstery nails recovered from St. Mary's Little Ilford {7} consisted of brass with a gilt knish (burials in vault) and silvered finish (child in nave){8}. The majority of nails at Christ Church had been japanned black {9}. Examples in good condition may be seen (Cont.313). Only a small number of child coffins were excavated from Christ Church of which one example of silvered nails representing 'white' was recorded. Sizes available from a pattern book of 1770 {10} range from head size 6mm to 14mm diameter with shank lengths 25mm to 75mm. A later pattern book of 1829 {10} gives sizes 7mm, 10mm and 15mm in diameter. These were supplied per thousand. The catalogue of William Turner of 1838{11} lists 13 different varieties of size and finish including "3d or 4d white or black, common or burnished".

Upholstery Nails at Christ Church :

Pattern Classification	Type	Example Cont.No.	Head Diameter	Shank Length	Shank Max.width	Description
1	SF	101	15mm	12mm	2mm	Japanned Black bright
2	SF	156	15mm	12mm	2mm	Copper alloy gilt
3	SF	96	17mm	10mm	3mm	Japanned black dead
4	SF	313	17mm	10mm	3mm	Japanned black bright
5	SF	313	11mm	10mm	3mm	Japanned black bright
6	SF	313	8mm	8mm	3mm	Japanned black bright
7	SF	364	14mm	12mm	2mm	Copper alloy
8	BF	393	14mm	12mm	2mm	Copper alloy silvered
9	SF	273	14mm	12mm	2mm	Copper alloy gilt, double shank
10	SF	273	15mm	12mm	2mm	Japanned Black dead
11	SF	100	10mm	10mm	2mm	Japanned Black bright
12	BF	14	15mm	14mm	3mm	Copper Alloy coppered
13	BF	383	11mm	10mm	2mm	Copper Alloy
14	BF	383	11mm	10mm	2mm	Copper Alloy
15	SF	28	27mm	20mm	3.5mm	Unknown (corroded)

NOTES

1. W.S. Maney & Sons. The Journal of the Furniture History society, (Leeds) Vol. 20 1984 Plate 65A: (Shows examples of Medici furniture incorporating the use of upholstery nails.)
2. J . Turner, Information for undertakers, London (Cunningham & Salmon) 1838 p.11.
3. This term was used in the Accounts of William Tookey & Sons, The Guide to Undertakers by J. Turner and various trade cards, Guildhall Library.
4. Llangar Church Merioneth SHO 64425 R. Shoemith/DoE 1973. Coffin No. G1 and G9.
5. Recorded from Excavation at St. Mary's Little Ilford LISM 84 0043.
6. Wharam Percy Church 1983 see Harding Burial KK and Burial No. XXII
7. St Mary's Little Ilford. Op cit.
8. St Mary's Little Ilford. Op cit.
9. The bubbling corrosive effect indicates that these nails had been black japanned as a result of trapped impurities. P. Advice H.Stickins, D.A.M.
10. Pattern Books in the Prints and Drawings Department, Victoria & Albert Museum, ref. M60f. M.60d.
11. J.Turner, Information for Undertakers Op cit. p. 11.

BREAST PLATES

LEAD

The lead breast plate at Christ Church varied in size and quality but were fewer in number than those of stamped tin. It seems reasonable to assume that this was due to the higher price that lead commanded without necessarily significantly improving the appearance of the plate itself.

The grandest example recorded was Cont. 156 inscribed 'Mrs. Susanah Lemaister' (incidental misspelling of 'Lemaistre) died 8th December 1761 aged 78'. This plate had probably been sand-cast the design consisting of a flat lozenge shield set within a pattern of scrolls, crested with a carolean flower motif. Spandrels are filled with stylised roses and flowers that make up a rectangular shape. Strict compliance with heraldry has not been observed in this case, the use of a lozenge would normally have represented a spinster or peeress. (Another example of this discrepancy' with heraldic law can be seen from the stamped tin breast plate of Cont. 428, this is inscribed "Mr. Isaac Lefevre" on an oval cartouche within a rectangle. The oval should be reserved for a married female).

The best examples of superior quality die-stamped, as opposed to sand-cast, plates were observed from Cont. 109 a raised decorated border surrounding florid shield bordered with scrolls and miniature carolean motifs in each bottom corner, situated between the raised border and shield spandrels. The shield is crested with a neo-classical angel blowing a trumpet to the right and clutching an urn with the left arm. The wings are spread. A sunburst projects doom from the right-hand corner and is heralded by a cherub with its wings folded. In the top left stands an urn on a plinth supported by stylised clouds. At the bottom is a cherub's head and spread wings. The plate is inscribed "Mr. David Pontardant, died 23rd Nov. 1791 aged 92". This plate was black japanned. The identical design had been used for Cont. BF 129 this was inscribed "Mrs. Sarah Pontardant. died 5th May 1781 aged 36".(The inner lead plate on the lead coffin differed the year being 1780 and the age 35.)

Another example was Cont. IF 108, a raised decorated border surrounding a shield with florid base. The sides consist of a Doric column mounted on a plinth, one with crossed-bone motif and the other a skull. A neo-classical angel stands on each plinth facing in towards the inscription. Each holds a palm branch in the outer hand. The two columns support an arch with three cherub heads with wings folded, suspended in the centre. The shield is crested with a flaming urn surmounted on a sun-burst and heralded each side by a trumpeting angel carrying palms. see Pattern Book E. 3112, 1910, 1826. No. 036.

In other lead plates the die used to produce the design appears to have been simpler Cont. IF 120 is probably representative of the next best purchase to the above. A rectangular breast plate with raised border enclosing an irregular wavy a bouche style shield scrolled at the base, bearing the inscription "Mr. John Lemaistre, died 14th June 1779 aged 59 years" This is crested with a carolean shell motif supported with two flowers each side. Additional hand chasing and punching has been added to the borders in the form of leaves and the spandrels have undergone stippling. Of a similar design and quality is Cont. IF 159 a rectangular breast plate with a similar shape shield crested with a carolean flower motif supported by a rose on the right and stylised flower on the left. The bottom spandrels have a rose and leaves on each side, the raised border has been chased with shells in each corner (this style was seen on examples at St. Mary Little Ilford{1}). The shield f s inscribed "Mrs. Judith Lemaistre, died 8th January 1784 aged 78 years".

Three examples of plates also similar in design, shape and quality to the above are as follows:- Cont. IF 211 - A punched stippling effect has been used in the spandrels and some hand chasing on the raised border. This rectangular plate contained a wavy shield scrolled at the bottom,

crested with a carolean flower and other smaller flowers each side. This shield bears the inscription "Mrs Mary Huch died 20th July 1798".

Cont. IF 158 - Also demonstrated the wavy shield with scrolled bottom, within a raised rectangular border. The shield is crested with a carolean flower motif supported by a rose on the left and a stylised flower on the right. This plate bears the inscription " Mr. Daniel Lemaistre died 11th April 1772 aged 61years".

Cont. IF 119 is very similar to Cont. IF 211 but the 'wavy' shield is not scrolled at the base.

Cont. IF - 228 is a rectangular plate with raised hand chased border and wavy edged shield, this is crested with a large central styluses flower supported with smaller flower 'and leaves one side, and smaller flower and leaves on the other. A somewhat cruder imitation of these can be heavily hand punched and chased. Similar treatment has been applied to the waste-edge. The shield is crested with carolean flower motif supported with a rose and accompanying flat-petalled flower. A large central flower is situated at the base of the shield with two smaller ones. This plate was basically a very simple embossed design heavily embellished with hand-chasing in order to improve its general appearance

The largest adult plate recorded 390mm X 460mm was Cont. IF 381. This plate is of florid shield with raised border and a narrow waste edge. Much of the decoration has involved band punching of various designs such as bars, circles and crescents.

It is interesting to note that in cases where coffins displayed breast plates identical in design i.e. Cont. IF 109 and 129 that as much as 10 years separates their date. It is possible that several plates could have been purchased together by the family from the undertaker planning in advance for funerals was certainly not unusual during this period.

INFANTS-LEAD

These were generally scaled-down versions of the adult plates. A good example is Cont. IF 396, measuring 165mm X 225mm inscribed "Master David Pontardant died 29th November 1768 aged 2 years 7 months". Cont. IF 160 is a much simpler design being of a plain rectangle with raised border only inscribed "Miss Susan Lemaistre, died May 11th 1755 aged 8 weeks " and measured 140mm X 195mm.

The predilection for using white on infant coffins seems here to have been ignored for both these plates appeared uncharacteristically black japanned.

Two lozenge shaped child's plates were recorded, BF.170 consists of a raised chased border with flowers and shells, encompassing a scalloped bordered shield inscribed "Miss Elizabeth Daze, died May 31st aged 9 months 16 days". This shield is crested with a flower and at the base a spray of leaves. Cont. BP.178 is: similar but larger and cruder in finish. This was inscribed "Harriet Lachumette, died 11th October 1771 aged 8 months"

STAMPED TIN

The stamped tin examples recovered at Christ Church were considerably more difficult to identify owing to their poor condition and low rate of survival.

Conservation of many of these will of course add further information. As in the grip plates, the same designs adopted for lead appear to have been used for those of tin also. Cont. IF 315, 217, 309 and 50 (stamped tin) seem to be of the same composition as Cont. 108. See Pattern Book E.3112-1910 No.035. Cont. IF 312 (stamped tin) dated 1792 is similar in composition to a lead breast plate Cont. IF 109 dated 1791. Differing in design but equally as decorative are Cont. IF 232 dated 1810 and 353 dated post 1800. These consist of rectangle with raised border

decorated with flowers framing a central oval with studded border. In each spandrel is an acorn motif facing in towards the oval supported by two leaves. The oval is crested with a small florid shield and repeated at the base. This last detail distinguishes these two plates from a similar design in the 1826 Pattern Book E.3109-1910 No.137, in which a flower is illustrated.

Two variations from the usual rectangle were recorded from Cont. 273 this is rectangular but crowned with a dome which is crested with a cherub's head and scrolls. A winged cherub's head faces diagonally inwards from each spandrel into the oval shield. This plate is inscribed "Mr. John chevalier, obiit Dec.31st 1751 aged 61 years". The second variation can be seen from Cont. SF 215, 279 and 36. This is composed of a heater shield scolloped at the top and crested with a large crown surmounted on clouds with two winged cherub heads and a sun-burst, surmounted by three further winged cherub's heads, a dove with wings spread descends from the crown. Each side of the shields is a standing angel looking down and turning away from the shield. Each angel holds a palm branch in one hand and flowing laurels in the other. This particular design is illustrated in the 1826 Pattern Book E.3100-1910 No.49, and the 1783 Pattern Book M.63e No.1039.

Examples of the lozenge in stamped tin breast plates are Cont. IF.291 264, and 206. These have a raised outer border framing an oval with studded border, crested with a flower. The design can be seen in Pattern Book 1826 E 3118-1910 so. 0132, however, this design depicts a winged cherub as opposed to a flower.

Plain rectangular breast plates with raised borders only were recorded from Cont. IF 318 331 and 340 . Cont. 340 was the earliest example recorded at Christ Church, the date of 1729 is raised or embossed with a florid 17th century style inscription (1729 was the date in which the vaults were completed.)

It seems from evidence that a practice of backing the plate with a type of paper was sometimes employed. It is not known whether this was done specifically when the breast plate was fixed to the coffin or whether it was an integral part of the packing which the undertaker had not bothered to remove. Examples of this Cont. IF 325 a plain rectangular plate with flowers only in each corner and raised border inscribed "Joseph Turnbull died December 24th 1750 aged 68 years", and Cont. IF 330 a plain rectangular breast plate with raised border.

The only example of a tapered or trapezoid breast plate is cont. IF. 100 identical in shape to IF 395 (lead) but of stamped tin, however the design enclosed varies slightly. The raised border is of a rope pattern the inner shield is bordered with a column and mourner each side, the base consisting of a cross tilted over a skull and a crown above, surmounted clouds and flowers. The shield is crested with a sarcophagus and sunburst with a cherub's head in each corner. See Pattern Book / . 3112 - 1910 1826 No. 655 for details of design. The Plate is inscribed "Mary Kilner died 12th January 1849 , aged 57." (Wife or sister of John)

Differing designs involving an oval within a rectangle were recorded from Cont. BF 38, this has a scroll border and distinctive sun-burst (incomplete). Also BF 261 a small floral oval (with olive green primer) dated 1808. Other variations included BF 46 a florid shield dated 1809 crested with a wreath surmounted by a small angel with two large cherubs in flight facing opposite directions, a shell motif decorates the base of the shield. BF. 42 is similar to Cont. 46 but with a sunburst as opposed to a wreath. this is dated 1794. Another BF 261 consists of a rectangular plate with raised border and florid shield within, this is crested with two large reclining angels with legs crossed (i.e. left angel has right leg crossed with the left extending dove holding palm in left hand and the right angel vice versa .

INFANTS -STAMPED TIN

The smallest breast plate recorded is Cont. IF 277 dated 1751 and measured 107mm X 75mm, consisting of a rectangular plain plate with raised border only.

The only stamped tin lozenge recorded is Cont. IF 123 to cont. IF 170 (lead), bearing the inscription "Miss Mary Ann Pontardant died 17th December age 2 weeks".

A more interesting example of infant coffin furniture is Cont. IF.231, represented in the 1826 Pattern Book do. 562 it consists of a draped cloth design supported by a winged cherub and knotted at each corner. A winged cherub head appears at the base. The inscription was applied on the flat part of the cloth.

LID ORNAMENTS

Evidence at Christ Church would suggest that the distribution of lid ornaments in any metal other than tinned iron, was rare. Only 3 examples of lead were recovered. (BF Cont. 53) a classical style flaming urn with draped wreath suspended at the handles and bunched at each side. A stamped tin version of this same design was also recorded (IF Cont. 228). This design is represented in Pattern Book N.63e No. 86 .

Cont. 424 was a stamped lead equivalent of Cont. 329 a classical flaming urn with fluted bowl and stem with central horizontal cartouche bordered with scrolls, illustrated in Pattern Book E.1022-1978 No.29. Cont. IF 406 An upturned torch surmounted on a serpent with its tail in its mouth (Oroburos) similar in design, but longer (275mm X 150mm) to Cont.302.

Cont. SF 437 one example of copper alloy was probably adapted from the grip plates that were used on the same coffin. The only difference between the two was that the lid motif had had the palm leaves cut away.

The Trade Pattern Books indicate that lid ornaments were normally supplied in pairs - one pair per coffin. The most popular combinations were:

(i) A flaming urn with varying decoration (signifying new life) or "flowerpot" (classical vase) adorned with flowers.

and

(ii) Angels with crown and palms, or single angel (signifying the Agent of God and the Guardian of the Dead

Only two recognisable examples of vase and flowers were recovered at Christ Church and were identical in design. (Cont. BF 49 and Cont. IF 329). A design not dissimilar to Cont.329 is illustrated in Pattern Book E. 3125 -1910 {2} consisting of draped laurels, supported by a central winged cherub. The arrangement of flowers includes a central passion flower supported by two roses and a surrounding wreath of violets. On the same coffin lid was the corresponding angel ornament (Cont. 329). This pair is illustrated in the Pattern Book E 3125 -1910 No. 86,87 and Pattern Book{3} M63E and No. 56,57.

Other examples at Christ Church of pair combinations can be seen from:

- I. Cont. 228 - A flaming urn with fluted bowl and narrow stem with central cherub's head and wings with supporting drapes and laurels bunched at the handles. Angels supporting crown (of life), central cherub on cloud, three cherubs' heads and wings at the angels feet.
- II. Cont. SF 313 - Two angels in flight, holding palm leaves in the left and right hand respectively and supporting a flaming crown symbolising life and eternity with the other three winged cherubs looking down from stylised clouds below. Also Cont. SF 441. Pattern Book E.1022 - 1978 No. 28 and 29 respectively.
- III. Cont.119 - Flaming urn, wide fluted stem and narrow neck, draped foliage bunched in

the middle and at handles, and angel.

- IV. Cont.96 - Flaming urn in the shape of an hour-glass and angel supporting crown.
- V. Cont.395 - Flaming urn and two angels, similar to Cont. 313 but with the addition of a supported motto "Gloria Deo"
- VI. Cont. 100 - Tapering shield with stylised geometric scroll border and urn with pattern of the medieval style.
- VII. BF Cont.336 - Flaming urn and angel

Varieties of single lid ornaments recovered were:

(a) BF Cont. 38 - Overall heart-shape with central shield (vair) bordered with one sprig of foliage each side, curving in towards the centre at top and bottom, crested with a sunburst.

(b) Cont. 381 - motif made up of inter-twined flowers. Further identity was difficult as it was in a friable state.

(c) Cont. 215 - Angels supporting crown (incomplete).

(d) cont. 408 - Angel (pewter) with palm in right-hand facing left (incomplete)

Two examples of ornaments that were recorded as Bulk Finds but could possibly have been supplied as a pair were:- BF Cont. 302 - a classical obelisk (eternal life from the Egyptian sun-worshipping symbol) on a plinth with two seated fates clothos and atropos facing in opposite directions. A motto above reads "RESURGAM" (I shall rise again), and BF Cont. 302 - an upturned torch (life extinguished) surmounted on a serpent with its tail in its mouth (Oroburos - Resurrection). A lead version of this design was also recorded see Cont. IF 406. 275 X 150 mm. A culmination of these same designs (in brass) was recorded from a 19th century coffin at Wharram Percy in Yorkshire {4}, the obelisk at the head end and the serpent and torch at the foot end*. The Accounts of Tookey and Sons 1845 show the pyramid and serpent being supplied as a pair "japanned nails, close drove, massive rose handles and rose loops and pyramid and serpent {5}.

The obelisk design is very similar to the style of furniture produced by Edward Neville, a Birmingham manufacturer of the 1830's. The practice of using three ornaments was not uncommon and occasionally, in order to fill in space, a cockade or rosette was made up of four segment escutcheons. Example at Christ Church IF Cont.100. Another example of this practice was also seen on 19th century coffins in the vaults at St. Paul's, Shadwell. Most of the lid ornaments appeared to have been black Japanned, indicating that a child's coffin would probably have been too small to accommodate them (a child's coffin ornaments would have been white or silvered). Evidence of a matt olive green prime was observed on Cont. 395.

*Records at Christ Church show that the flaming urn was normally at the foot end and the other ornament in the centre or at the head.

NOTES

1. M63E No.86 - Part of a collection of Trade Pattern Books of coffin Furniture, housed in the print Room of the Victoria and Albert Museum

2. E. 3125 - 1910 op cit. V & A.

3. E.1022 - 1978 op cit. V & A

4. Wharram Percy Church. C. Harding M.O.L. 1982. Burial (XX)
Accounts of William Tookey and Sons 1845 p.52

ESCUTCHEONS

Results at Christ Church show that the practice of using escutcheons, or drops, on coffins was fairly common in this area of London. The earliest dated use of these being seen on coffins Cont. 340 1729: and the latest Cont. 100 1849. The types of escutcheons recorded at Christ Church can be classed into two groups. Stamped tinned iron and stamped pewter.

The variations in design of the stamped tin escutcheons are as follows: Design Variation 1 SF Cont. 119, 108, 301 (examples). Central shield with acanthus foliage border overlapping the cartouche at the top and bottom. A lobe of foliage on each side encompasses the pin location holes (Note: these holes do not generally appear to have been used but the fixing pins peared each outer edge of the foliage). The top of the shield is crested with a forget-me-not supported by a swirl of foliage and traditional sub-burst. The base of the escutcheon is made up of two scrolls supporting a swirl of foliage with four studs below. Measurement 60mm X 65mm. See Pattern Book M.63E No. 454. It was observed that several examples of Cont. 119 had at least one straight cut edge indicating that these escutcheon designs could have been en masse on single sheet and individually cut out.

D.V. Cont. SF- 330 similar to 119, but crested with a leaf as opposed to the forget-me-not and without provision of location holes. 55mm X 45mm. See Pattern Book M.63E No. 456 .

D.V. 3 Cont. SF 159, 344. Central cartouche with scroll border, forget-me not on the right-hand side, crested with small angel head and shoulders and folded wings surmounted on a sunburst. The left arm points upward towards heaven and the right band holds a palm leaf. A shell is situated at the base of the cartouche. 50mm X 60mm. See Pattern Book M. 63E. No.450 (Note: this does not show the sunburst).

D.V.4 SF. Cont. 395,350. These are of the same design and composition as D..V.1 but the die used was probably different as 395 and 350 did not possess the same standard of definition.

D.V.5 SF Cont. 336. Central cartouche crested with angel with palm but the whole is of a kite-shape (Note: possibly cut from Pattern D.V.3)

D.V. 6 Cont. SF 100,306. This is a right-angled sunburst with two cherubs heads in the apex used specifically for corner decoration. (Note: four of these were used together to form a circular cocade to decorate the lid). Black japanned.

D.V. 7. Cont. SF. 406. Larger version of D.V.6 measuring 80mm X 130mm.

D. V. 8 Cont. SF.406. Single sun-flower rosette.

D.V.9. Cont. SF 406. Large cherub with folded wings and surmounted on a sunburst.

D.V.10 Cont. IF 407. Single stylized, pointed leaf design. See Pattern Book E.3129 - 1910 No. 127.

D V.11 BF Cont. 378. Large angel holding palm (Note: As this was incomplete it is possible that this particular sample is of a small grip plate, or lid motif.

There were two variations of pewter escutcheons recorded, these are as follows: SF Cont. 120. 92. Central cartouche bordered by two scrolls and foliage crested with a small angel head and shoulders with folded wings, palm in the right hand and left hand pointing to heaven and a shell motif below. Escutcheons of this type were stamped in such a way giving a flatter profile than the stamped tin counterparts.

D.V. 12 Cont. BF 313. Similar to D.V.1 but probably from a different die as the definition on this escutcheon also varies slightly.

NOTE: See respective on Cont. Sheets for position of Escutcheons on coffin.

SHROUDS AND GRAVE CLOTHES

The term 'shroud' takes its name from the Saxon 'scrud' or 'scrydon' meaning to clothe but its origins can be traced further back. The preoccupation for covering the corpse from the eyes of the living before burial by the use of a shroud or winding sheet seems accentuated by the fact that the very poor and even individual victims of the plague, were covered with a crude woollen or linen or at least sacking shroud {1}. A rare alternative was a liberal sprinkling of herbs only. There is little published material regarding the changing shape and style of the shroud between the 14th and 18th century, but an illustration of a late 17th century burial form {2} shows the body to be wrapped in a large sheet covering the feet and tied at the ankles and tied again at the top of the head. A small aperture is left for the face. The knot at the foot and head facilitated the carrying of the corpse, the addition of a flat board under the body inside the covering kept the body rigid. An illustration showing a similar shroud slightly more refined and represented within a coffin with the material around the face frilled and only the ankles bound can be seen from a late 17th century funeral invitation in the Collection of the Bodleian Library {3}. The 18th century saw the progression to a worked, more decorative shroud. This was due to the growing practice of viewing the body in the coffin.

In 1719 Henri Misson recorded that "the English shroud was of a thin beize called flannel and the shirt was modish, purfled about the wrists and the slit of the shroud down the breast -bone in the same manner{4}.

More relevant to results at Christ Church is the trade card of William Grinly 1745 {5} (Coffin Maker) which shows an illustration of a shrouded figure with a cap frilled around the face. The shroud is fashioned more in the manner of night wear with sleeves, ruffled at the cuffs and the feet are covered and bound at the ankles. A pillow is also represented bound at one end only. The front of the shroud across the chest has been gathered or ruffled to form pleats from right to left. An example of this ruffling can be seen from a section of shroud Cont. 113, the pleats in this case being approximately 10mm and each pleat 20mm apart. The above mentioned illustration is closest in style and design to the only complete shroud recorded at Spitalfields. The lead coffin Cont. 153 dates 1755 (see photos) when opened showed the occupant (infant) and grave clothing within to have been perfectly preserved inside the hermetic seal of lead.

The shroud consisted of a gown-type shirt with roughly stitched sleeves, probably attached after the gown had been put on, with scallop-frilled ruff-type cuffs (purfled) attached by a running stitch to the sleeve. These had been punched to form a decorative floral-type pattern. The head was covered with a cap similar to an infant's foundling cap and was of the same fabric as the shroud. This was close-stitched, with box pleats, giving a fluting effect known as 'quilling' {6}. The cap, or bonnet, had been given a pinked (known as 'punched') {7} border or frill around the face with a ribbon to draw it in at the neck. Samples of ribbon can be seen from Cont. 76, 32.

Grave clothes at this time would have been made by women and instructions for the making of an early 19th century shroud and cap not wholly dissimilar to the example at Christ church can be seen in the Workwoman's Guide of 1838{8}

"It is made of a breadth and a half, full length, so as to cover the feet; one seam is sewed up, leaving the other open behind, like a pinafore; slits are cut for arm-holes, and plain long sleeves, without gussets set in; the front is gathered at the waist, and drawn up into a narrow piece; this is twice repeated, at intervals of three nails down the skirt, upon each of these gatherings, round the neck and at the wrists, a kind of border of the same flannel, punched at the edge in a pattern, is painted, and an edging of the same is made at the bottom.

For men, the shroud is made exactly the same as the above for women, excepting that there is

no gathering in the front.

There seems to be little change in the basic style until the third quarter of the 19th century, when shrouds became far more complicated, resembling more closely the night-wear of the period, examples of these can be seen in the Castle Museum of York, the Victoria and Albert Museum and Registered Pattern Nos. 116493 116494 and 254079 {9}.

SHROUD PINS

These were used to secure the back of the shroud or to fasten any loose ribbon or fabric. At Christ Church up to five pins were recovered from a single coffin. These varied in length between 20mm and 30mm. Made of copper alloy, the basic 'wire' was imported and the pins were manufactured locally by pin makers, who sold quantities by the lb. The London Tradesman published in 1747 describes the processes of cutting, head making and pointing {9a}.

In addition to the shroud within Cont.153 was a single sheet of fine material with a scalloped, frilled and punched edge. This had been used to cover the body. Finally, a heavier hessian or calico sheet (possibly winding-sheet) had been used to wrap the body completely. This had also been frilled and punched at the edges. Although not recorded in this case, other results from Christ Church show that a practice of binding the legs separately with a single piece of ribbon wrapped around in a figure of eight was not uncommon. An example can be seen from Cont. 343 and SKEL 2176 (see photo).

TEXTILES.

The textiles from Christ Church have yet to be identified, but research has shown that a variety of materials may have been used.

During the Middle Ages linen appears to have been the most popular material for the manufacture of shrouds. Becks {10} describes linen as cloth of lint or flax or hemp. The use of 'linen' can be traced back to the mummies of Egypt constituting the bandages in which they were wrapped. Indeed when Edward I who died in 1307 was exhumed, he was found to have a fine linen shroud, dressed close to every part of the body. The quality of this linen varied enormously; a rougher variation was that wrapped around a body circa 1400 which was discovered in St. Stephen's chapel, Westminster {11} in 1852. However, the use of linen was curtailed in the 17th century by the introduction in England of the Acts of 1622, 1666 and 1678. These introduced and enforced the use of wool only for burial, the reason being to promote the sale of wool on the home market, and reduce the shortage of rag for paper manufacture. Affidavits or burial forms had to be signed by the family of the deceased in compliance with this rule. The act of 1678 read that:

"no corpses of any person (except those who shall die of the plague) shall be buried in any shirt, shift, sheet, or shroud or anything whatsoever made or mingled with flax, hemp, silk, hair, gold or silver, or in any stuff or thing, other than what is made of sheep's wool only.... or be put into any coffin lined or faced with any other material but sheep's wool only." {12}.

When an infringement of this rule occurred a fine of £5 was levied on the family of the deceased by the church warden or inspectors. The money was divided into three parts £1.5s to His Majesty, another £1.5s to the poor, and the third part £2.10 to the informer. A member of the family often took the part of the informer in order to reduce the fine to £2.10 only so that the deceased might be buried in linen, the more dignified alternative. By 1700 the enforcement of such an Act was considerably reduced and in 1814 the Act was repealed, paving the way for a number of textiles based on flax or cotton to be re-introduced into the funerary trade.

Trade cards and undertakers accounts show that by 1830 glazed cambric had become the most

common material used for both coffin linings, mattresses, winding sheets, and shrouds. Wool in the 18th century was divided into ten qualities the best being: (i) picklocks, (ii) prime, (iii) choice, (iv) super, (v) Head wool, (vi) down rights, (vii) seconds, (viii) abb, (ix) livery, (x) short course. A similar grading was evidently given to cambric. The accounts of Garston and Tookey and Sons mention (i) super fine, (ii) fine and (iii) best.

Cambric or cameryk from Cambrai in France was first recorded in England in 1580 and was considered a great luxury. A product of linen cambric was in common use by 1780 and the average market value was 6s8d per yard. Its importation was restricted in 1745 and again in 1748.

Although cambric was without doubt 'the most popular material adopted by the undertaker contemporary accounts {13} show occasional entries in which other textiles were used. These were: Muslim, described by Beck as "a fine fabric cotton having a downy nap upon its surface, derived from the city of Mossul in India, its manufacture did not begin in London until 1780." Crape, better known for its use in mourning dress, was however: used occasionally for linings and grave clothes, but used in this capacity it was limited because of the high price. A Trade Card of John Cooke Undertaker. 1783 contains a receipt of 10s for a Crape shroud and that of William Spiers of 13 Church Lane, Whitechapel, Coffin Maker, a crape shroud, cap and pillow complete f1.2s. This particular textile was a silk-based material whose origins come exclusively from France. Manufacture was begun in England by Huguenot refugees settling in London and Norwich in the 1680's. Chambers dictionary of 1741 describes it as a "light transparent stuff in the manner of gauze made of raw silk, gummed and twisted on the mill and wove without crossing". All crapes were normally died black. The invention of this 'stuff' occurred in Bologna but the chief manufacture was in Lyons.

Welsh or Shrouding Flannel, a derivative of "gwlanen" (Welsh meaning woollen known in the Middle Ages as "flanella". Flannels were made of woollen yarn, a soft and spongy cloth usually sold white, milled and double-milled. This material was still being used in London for making shrouds in the second quarter of the 19th century {14}.

LININGS

These should be divided into three stages, first the lining of the coffin to seal it, which was done shortly after pitching, (results from Christ Church produced evidence of material impregnated with pitch); second the pinning of a decorative lining, and third the addition of ruffling, this latter was a fine pleated material that covered the inner sides of the coffin to take its bland appearance. Turners Catalogue of 1838 {15} lists ruffling to be sold by the yard in 3 grades of cambric: common, fine, and super-fine. Calico - a material bought over by the East India Company in 1631 (its name derives from the City of Calicut on the coast of Malabar) a mixture of cotton and linen it was used to line the bottom of the coffin (see William Tookey and Sons Accounts of, 1845 p. 63). If a mattress was not provided a layer of bran or sawdust was placed at the bottom of the coffin beneath the calico lining; this proved at Christ Church to be a common practice. Two sheets of cambric were cut from a single piece, one half covering one side and the foot end, the other the other side and head end {16}. The side linings were tacked at the top, an example of how these tacks were situated can be seen from Cont. The ruffling was added afterwards. A lambs wool or horsehair filled cambric mattress tacked and tufted was then placed in the coffin See cont. 95.

COVERINGS

The introduction in the 17th century of a fixed outer covering for the coffin had two advantages. First it signified immediately the status of the deceased (white or grey for a child, and black or occasionally blue-green for an adult) {17} and secondly it served to hide either mistakes made by the cabinet maker or poor quality wood. any coffins at Christ Church had been roughly constructed using separate pieces to make up the lid and other sections. The fabric covering was fixed to each separate part of the coffin before assembly.

Records show that this cloth was of a wool varying in quality, the best being of baize. Chambers describes this material as "a kind of course open woollen stuff having a long nap 4 1.n the 1740's retailed at 4s. 6d per yard. Its manufacture was stimulated by the Huguenot immigrants on their arrival in this country in 1585 {18}. This baize was dyed black by 'black dyers' before going to the woollen draper. A manual published in 1705 describes this process.

"Black is prepared or galled with galls which come from Aleppo or Alexandria, called Gallé a l' Epire. Thorn galls and sumach, and in places where they have no sumach, with Rodoul or Fovic, which grow in several places in France and which are equivalent to sumach. A black is also made of Copperas and Indian wood, which last, though alone it produces a bastard colour. Yet when used with Galls and Copperas it affords a more durable bright soft and blacker colour upon stuffs and wears better than if Galls and Copperas were used without it. Additional usage: - woad and Madder, Indian Wood and Yellow Wood."

Instructions were as follows:-

" Pour six pails of water into the copper to which add two pounds of beaten galls, four pounds of Sumach, a quarter of a pound of Madder, half-a pound of Antimony beaten to impalpable powder, four ox galls, 2 ounces of Gum Tragacanth, let them dissolve in proper time then put in a convenient quantity of dry Alder bark powdered, four pounds of vitriol, one pound and a half of filings of iron then pour off the water as above and let them boil together, two hours after which fill it up with a pail full of .barley, or rather malt water which the Brewers draw off and let it boil again for half an hour. Then put in the woollen stuff, let boil gently for half an hour, take it out and rinse it in a copper full of water and throw it again into the dye and after that rinse it perfectly clean in river water. When dry take good lye and add to it the eighth part of apoun of good pot Ashes, rinse the woollen stuff very well in this liquor and lastly in river water - then dry it."

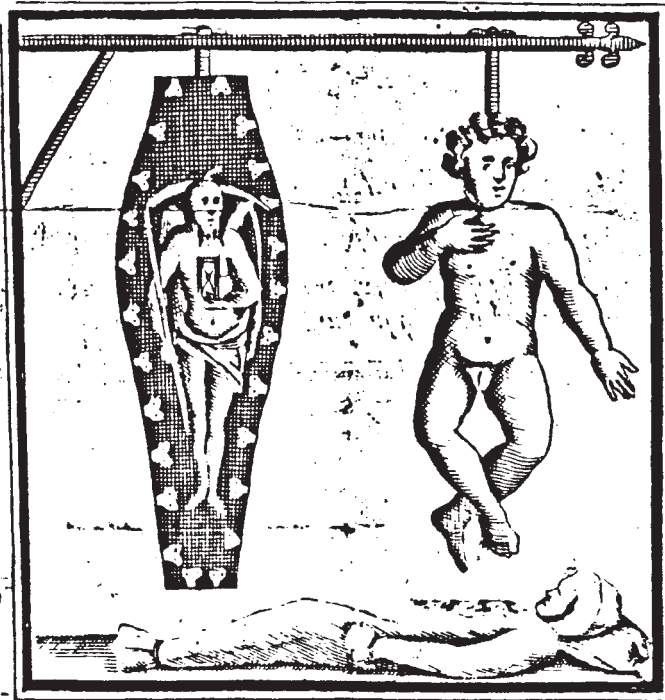
Although iron filings are mentioned in this description the manual later states that iron filings are forbidden. In 1723 Jacques Savary de Victor Bruslon described the use of "Spanish Black" as a direct method of dyeing black without a preliminary stage of dyeing the fabric blue. Finely ground and black burnt cork was used in a cold dye as opposed to a hot dye. This process was also used for silks and remained little changed until the discovery in the 1860's of aniline dyes{21}

The appearance of a velvet covering during this period would have been extremely rare made from silk, velvet commanded exceptionally high prices; fees of 10s. to £1 in the 18th century were levied simply for the hiring of a velvet pall. Although the funeral of the Duke of Wellington 1952 included a canopy of Spitalfields velvet the pine coffin remained uncovered. Only in Cassell's Household Guide of 1870 is both black and crimson velvet mentioned as a covering. Even in the 17th century velvet, (from the French 'villuse') commanded high prices. Black velvet was priced at 24s.6d the yard. Originating from Genoa the French took the monopoly from the Italians in the 16th century and when Huguenots were forced to leave their country by the revocation of he Edict of Nantés in 1685 velvet weaving became known and was domesticated in Spitalfields.{22}

NOTES

1. Philippe Aries. The Hour of our Death London (Penguin Books) 1983. p.168,207.
2. Faut Grinke Collection, reproduced in Rupert Gentle and Field English Domestic Brass 1680 to 1810 London (Paul Elak). 1974 Plate No. 357.
3. Reproduced in op cit. Gentle and Field Plate No. 348.
4. Henri Misson M. Misson's Memoirs and Observations in his Travels Over England 1719 .

5. Trade Card and Collection at Guildhall Library, London.
6. Anon. *The Workwoman's Guide* 1838 reprinted Bloomfield. USA.1975. p. 124.
7. Personal Comment Sarab Levitt. Department of Textiles, Bristol Univ.
8. Op cit. *ibid.* *The Workman's Guide*.
9. Patent Office and Industrial property Department Registers and representations of Designs, Public Record Office, Kew.
- 9a. T. Gardener *The London -Tradesman* London 1747 p. 256.
10. William Beck, *The Drapers Dictionary*, (*The Warehouseman and Drapers Journal*) London 1886.
11. *Archaeologia* Vol. XCVIII
- 11a. *Archaeologia* Vol. XXXII.
12. W. E. .Tate *The Parish Chest* 2nd Edition 1951. p. 67
13. Trade Cards Guildhall Library. Parish records. *The Accounts of Garston and William Tookey and Sons and J. Turner Funeral Furnisher.*
14. Op. cit. *The Workwoman's Guide*
15. J. Turner. *Information for Undertakers*, London (Cunningham & Salmon) 1838.
16. Sable Plume *Coffins and Coffin Making* (London) p.22. Also Highgate Cemetery see Article Julian Litten, Victoria and Albert Museum.
17. An example of blue-green baize covering is preserved at St. Paul's, High Shadwell, London.
- 18 Op. cit. William Beck. See 'Baize'
19. William Pearson *The Whole Art of Dyeing* (London) 1705
20. Lou Taylor, *Mourning Dress* A Costume and Social History (George Allen and Unwin (London) 1983. p.210.
21. Op. cit. Lou Taylor p.146
22. Op. cit. *The William Beck.* See Velvet.



At the lower Corner of Fleet Lane at the Signe of the Naked Boy
 & Coffin you may be Accomodated wth all things for a
 Funerall as well of meanest as those of greater Ability
 upon Reasonable Terms more particularly Coffins Shroues
 Palls Cloaks Sconces Stans Hangings for Rooms
 Heraldry Hearses & Coaches Gleees &c all other things
 not here mentioned by W^m Grinly Coffin Maker.

Plate 7 Wm. Grinley coffin maker, shop sign or trade card

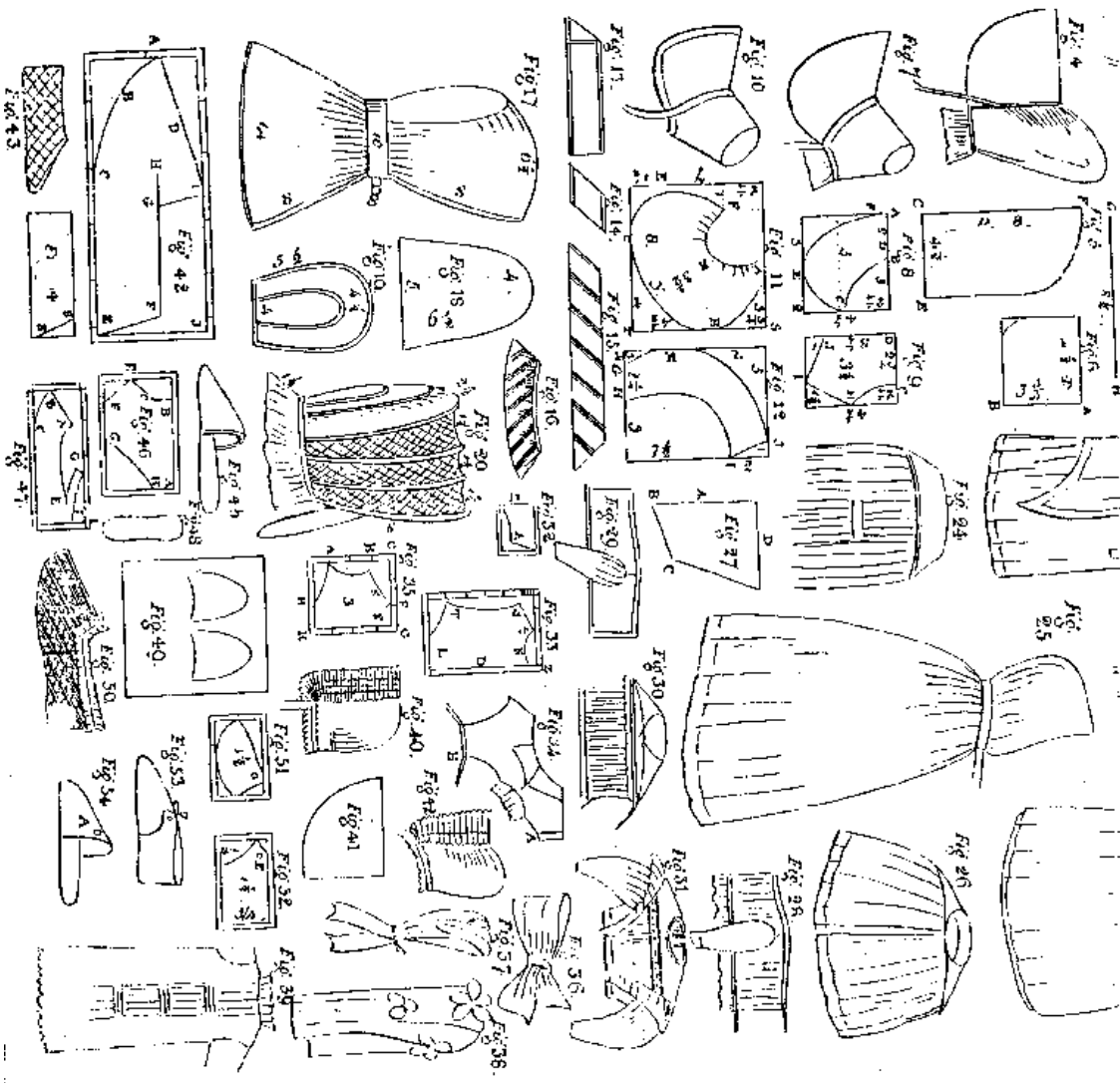


Plate 8 Card showing funeral garments and patterns

COSTS OF COFFINS, COFFIN FURNITURE, LININGS AND GRAVE CLOTHES

Costs of coffins and coffin furniture in the eighteenth/early nineteenth century varied according to size, quality and finish required. The cheapest coffin available would have been the parish coffin (that provided by the church, but originally purchased from the undertaker). In 1760 a large deal coffin cost 3s 9d and a small one 1s 6d^{1}. However, these prices rarely included any fittings and the poor were often too proud to let the parish subsidise them^{2}.

The addition of basic furniture and furnishings and better quality wood contributed to a significant rise in price. A trade card of John Cooke dated 1799^{3} includes a receipt of "A smooth elm coffin with yellow (brass) nails, a plate and three pairs of handles, lined, ruffled, shroud and pillow £1.7s. A receipt of Aynscough and Sons 1779 ^{4} demonstrates the more affluent end of the market - "A strong elm coffin with double lid, covered with fine black cloth, ornamented with double rows of silvered nails, a metal plate of inscription, and eight handles, five doz. drops (escutcheons) silvered lined and ruffled £4.10s".

By the end of the 18th century records show that general rates for coffins and coffin furniture had not greatly increased. In 1803 a "5ft 3 X 17 smooth elm coffin row of black nails, a chased plate of inscription, four pairs of handles, lined ruffled shroud cap and pillow £1.15. In 1843 a coffin could still be purchased from the undertaker for as little as 3s. 6d.^{5} but this was of extremely poor quality including a shroud, but no fittings. Turner's catalogue for Undertakers, published in 1838^{6} lists deal shells from 1s - 1s. 6d, inch elm coffins 5ft 6, rough 9s 3d.; smooth double lid 13s 3d. With the addition of fittings and furnishing, the lowest price quoted is for. "A good inch elm coffin. smoothed, oiled, finished with one row round of black nails, a plate of inscription, four pairs of handles. lined and ruffled, shroud, cap and pillow 17s".

Textiles of this period commanded high prices and the addition of a cloth or superior baize covering could nearly double the cost: "Coffin, covered, finished two rows, three pairs of half oval handles, dotted single oval plate, lined ruffled, and pillow - £1.15s." A one-and-a-half inch oak case covered with super fine cloth, finished all round two rows close drove best nails, lead or brass plate of inscription, angle and flower, four pairs of cherub head handles with gripes and drops £5.15s. The individual cost of a milled lead coffin in 1840 was £6.7s. Standard costs regarding individual items of furniture, coverings, linings and grave clothes are difficult to assess as undertakers' accounts for coffins were normally inclusive of furniture. However, the cheapest set of coffin furniture available in the 1850's was 4d, probably consisting of an iron breast plate and handles. For a middle-class coffin costs ranged from 8s-10s and for an upper class coffin £5-£6 ^{7}. This set is likely to have comprised brass, gilt or silver finish ornaments, back plates and breast plate with inscription retailed at £2. 3s; an embossed and chased lead plate 5s-7s according to finish, the basic lead breast plate was 5s an engraved brass plate 10s - £3^{8}

A trade pattern catalogue produced by Tuesly and Cooper in 1783 ^{9} illustrates some articles of coffin furniture that match examples at Christ Church. Trade prices for escutcheons (costed by the gross) representing two types recovered at Christ Church include N454 (See Cont.119) White 5s 6d, coloured 7s 6d. A similar Pattern Book published in 1826^{10} represents N450 (See Cont. 92) white 3s 6d, black 5s 6d (per doz.) N5 (See Cont 100) white 1s 6d, black 1s 8d (per doz.) A design of grip plate (see Cont 38 1137 15s (per doz pair). Grip plate (see cont. 96) N1033 white 15s black 16s, coloured 18s(per doz pair).

Lid ornaments from the 1826 pattern book include:- N86 (See cont 329) white 12s coloured 18s (per doz pair).

N96 (see Cont 313) White 14s coloured 20s (per doz pair). Lid ornaments available from Tuesly

and Cooper include N 86 (see Cont 228) white 5s coloured 6s (per doz). (See Cont. 313) N 28 white 7s coloured 10s (per doz).

Breast plates: N99 (see cont. 279) white 11s, black and white 13s. Coloured 17(per doz) and 3s 8d, and 4s 6d, respectively (per set). N.035 (See cont 50) white 11st black shield 13s, gilt laquered or black 17s (per doz) and 4s, 4s6d, 5s respectively (per set with handles).

N137 (See Cont. 232) white 12s black 14s whield gilt lacquered or black 18s (per doz), 3s, 9d, 4s 6d, 5s, respectively(Per set with 3 pairs of handles)

N0132 (See Cont. 264,291) white 11s, black shield 13s black 17s per set. 3s 6d, 4s 5s respectively (per set, with handles).

Turners catalogue lists four inch handles at 2s 2d (per doz pairs) and large cherubs 24s (per doz pairs).Coffin Furniture registered by A. Lister (Design BT 43 93430 PRO Kew) includes brass yelps at 3s each, silvered 3s 6d each. A page from a late 18th century pattern book, part of a collection of pattern books held at the Winterthur Museum (pre produced in Gentla & Field Plate 365) showed two patterns of iron handles, both of which have been identified at Christ Church (examples Cont. 387, 302), respectively 25s per gross, pair and 32.6d per gross pair. Upholstery nails were sold by the thousand and varied in cost from 1s - 5s according to size and finish. Victoria and Albert Pattern Books give prices of upholstery Nails 7 mm and 10mm diameters 4s. 6d; 15mm in diameter 31s (per thousand), Cat. M60d pp. 43.45. Also 6 to 14mm diameter 2s. 4d - 8s per thousand. Cat. M60f .

LININGS AND GRAVE CLOTHES

The cheapest shroud available at the turn of the 18th century was for a pauper and cost 2s{10}. By 1760 woollen shrouds could be obtained, for prices varying between 4 - 5s{11} . It is unlikely that poor quality shrouds would have been used in vault burial, as space was reserved there for those with income. In 1840, a cambric shroud could be purchased for 7s and for that of superfine cambric £1.8s. Alternatively. cambric winding sheets with pillow were available from between 10s and £1.8s., with the addition of a cap and pillow £1.11s{12} . William Turner's catalogue offers winding sheets at 10s 6d and "full trimmed" shrouds at 6s 6d, ruffling (superfine) 6d per yard and "tacked mattresses" from 4d - 5s according to size.

It should be mentioned that the total cost of the coffin and its embellishments was comparatively little in relation to the funeral expenses as a whole. The importance of the pomp and the apparent display of social status was of primary interest, the coffin furniture playing a temporary role for the spectical of the funeral itself. With the average cost of a middle class funeral totalling £50-£60, that of Thomas Clifton, recorded in 1851 by the undertaker William Tookey {12} gives an example of the breakdown of these expenses:

) A stout elm inner coffin, lined and ruffled with cambric	£2. 2s.
2) Super cambric winding sheet and wool mattress and pillow	£1.1s. 6d
3) Stout milled leaden coffin (probably of 4 lb)	£6.10s
4) Lead inscription plate	5s
5) Men bearing in the coffin	12s
6) Plumber soldering down	5s
7) Inch and a half oak case covered with supervise black-cloth, handsomely finished with best brass filt nails, triple rows, panelled two rows of small brass gilt nails, 8 chased handles and grips, pyramid serpent on lid No.1471	£4 14s 6d
8) Handsome brass plate with inscription with coat of arm	

engraved	£2 12s 6d
9) Men bearing in case and enclosing complete	18s
10) Use of rich silk velvet pall in town	10s.6d
11) State lid of black ostrich feathers and men to carry them	£1. 1s
12) For the medical attendance of Dr. Thorpe (this was possibly an embalming fee)	£11. 5s
13) Butler, Valet and Attender	£1. 1s
14) 4 pairs of kid gloves, four silk hatbands for two coachmen and two footmen to family carriage	£2
15) 5 pairs of kid gloves for the above and 1 other servant	17s. 6d
16) Eight pairs of kid gloves for female servants	£1. 2s
17) Use of six cloaks for four coachmen and two footmen	6s
18) Hearse and four horses and mourning coach with four horses	£6
19) Feathers and velvets for the above	£3. 12s 6d
20) Velvets and two large hammer cloths for family coaches	15s
21) Eight men as bearers and coach pages	£2
22) Eleven silk hatbands for coachmen and footmen	£3. 17s.
23) Eleven pairs of gloves, six truncheons, two wands	£1. 11s.
24) Attendance for conducting the funeral - three days	£11.18s
TOTAL COST:	£66.17s.

However in 1839 the labouring Londoner did not normally spend less than £5 for the complete funeral. The average price calculated for all above the status of pauper was £14.19s 9d per head.{13}



Plate 9 An illustration of a horse drawn coffin carriage

NOTES

- 1 Accounts of St. Giles Cripplegate - Guildhall Library Ref. Ms. 8481
- 2 J. Morley, Death Heaven and the Victorians. London (Studio Vista) 1971. P. 26
- 3 Guildhall library Dept. of manuscripts.
- 4 As previous
- 5 Edwin Chadwick Supplementary Report on the results of a special Enquiry into the practice of Interment in Towns 1843. .
- 6 J. Turner Information for Undertakers a List of Prices 1838 p. 3-12 ref Pam 5713.
- 7 J . Morley P. 22
- 8 William Tookey & Sons. Account Books Aug. 1840 - Dec. 1859. Marylebone Library Ref. 948/65.
- 9 Metal work Pattern Books 1783. Victoria & Albert Museum, Dept. of Prints & Drawings. Ref. 63e, 60f, 63r.
- 10 Metal-work Patterns Books (as above) ref. 63f 60d
- 11 Accounts of St. Ann Soho - Overseers bill for shrouds. Victoria Library, Westminster, Ref. 2346/1.
- 12 Accounts of Katherine Creechurch. Guildhall Library, ref. Ms 7720
- 13 Edwin Chadwick.

MISCELLANEOUS COFFIN CONTENTS OF INTEREST

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| Cont. IF 442 | Wedding ring high carat gold, hall marked assayed an London - can be dated 1824. |
| Cont. IF 342 | Small cylindrical glass bottle (clear), with fluted lip, diameter 18 my length 70 mm. Possibly scent bottle or posy of lavender. rosemary, etc. |
| Cont. IF 442 | False teeth. upper and lower, high carat gold plate for mandible and maxilla with fixed bone or resin teeth with attached spring on each side. |
| Cont. IF 2075 | False teeth, as above. |

APPENDIX 1

Tradesmen and Undertakers. Listed in London Directories

Kent's Directory of London for 1738. Henry Kent. Ref. pp. 2505 Y6 11.
(one registration for Undertaker - Philip Morris, Fleet Street.)
John Turner. Stuff-Men, - Booth Street, Spitalfields.

Robson's Commercial Guide 1826 - 27 - (164 Undertakers registered)
Cressall & Co. Undertaker - 5 Whitechapel Road
William Spiers. Undertaker - Church Lane, Whitechapel
Geoffrey Smith. Coffin Furniture Maker. - 1 Oxborne Street, Whitechapel
William Walker Pewterer and Tin Foil Beater. - 15 Browns Lane, Spitalfields
Robert Youell Undertaker. - 11 Fashion Street, Spitalfields

Johnson's Commercial Guide and Street Directory Aug. 31st 1817
(82 Registered Undertakers)

John Cammergh. Upholder and Undertaker.- 217 Whitechapel Road.
P. Chambers. Undertaker. - 147 Whitechapel Road
John Smart. Carpenter and Undertaker. - Bishopsgate, (Without)
W. Bartshorne. Carpenter and Undertaker.- Church Lane
J. Smallwood Cabinet maker, Undertaker. - 25 Greenfield Street, Whitechapel.
John Spiers Undertaker. - Church Lane, Whitechapel

OTHER SUGGESTED READING

CHIPPENDALE T.	The Gentleman and Cabinet Makers Directory.
DAVEY R.P.B.	A History of mourning.
DEFOE D.	The Complete English Tradesman London Rivington 1745.
DURIE A.	The Scottish Linen Industry.
EDWARDS H.C.R.	Georgian Cabinet Makers.
FLANAGAN J.F..	Spitalfields Silks of the 18th and 19th Century.
HARRIS J.F.	Regency Furniture Designs.
HARTE N.B.	Rise and Protection of the English Linen Industry.
LATHAM E.B.	Timber and its Distribution.
MORANT & CO.	The Morant Collection of Old Velvets with Description of English upholstery during the 17th and 18th century.
OWEN M	Antique Cast iron
PLUMMER A.	The London Weavers Company 1600-1970.
POLSON	The Disposal of the Dead.
SABIN A.K.	The Silk Weavers of Spitalfields.
STAAL C.	English Furniture 1550-1900.
JOY E.T.	The 18th Century London Furniture Industry.
WARD-JACKSON P.	English Furniture Designs of the 18th Century.
WILLIAMS A.	The Nail Makers of Northfield.
WILLIAMS N.H.	Spitalfields and the Huguenot Weavers.
WILSON A.T.	Burial Reform and Funeral Costs.
BROWING W S	History of the Huguenots 1598-1838.

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August 85. M.L. BOWIS

While nought divides thee from the vulgar dead
Except the dull cold stone that hides thy head
The mouldering 'scutcheon, or the heralds
That well-emblazon'd but neglected scroll,
Where lords, unhonour'd in the tombe may find
One spot to leave a worthless name behind.
Their sleep, unnoticed as the gloomy vaults
That veil their dust, their follies and their faults"

Lord Byron 1788-1824.

APPENDIX II

Burial and Funeral Service Fees:

Table of Fees for burial due to the rectors wardens, parish clerk and sexton.
G.L.C. Record Office - Ref . P.93/CTC I/ 123.

For Christ Church Spitalfields.
24th July 1729

Burial:-	For burial under the Church portico steps, Church yard in any vault.		
	Fees to	Church Warden.....	£1.00s
		Clerk	2s
		Sexton	1s
	Burial Services	Rector	5s
	Burial Service to include all ornaments of the pulpit and desk escutcheons, cloth and hangings	Rector	10s