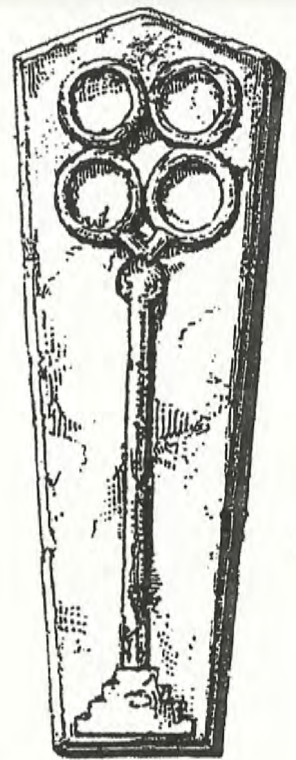


EAST MEON CHURCH

MEDIEVAL INCISED MEMORIAL SLAB

Limestone 'coffin' shaped memorial slab with pointed head and chamfered border. c.13-14th Century. (Probably 14th Century)
Approximate dimensions.
Length 70 in. Width at shoulder 23 in. Width at foot 14 in. 8 in Depth.



Rectangular memorial grave slabs are the usual form in the medieval period, so it is extremely interesting to find a 'coffin' shaped incised slab, with pointed head and chamfered border in East Meon churchyard. This form was in vogue from c.1100 till about 1350, although there are a number of later examples.

The surface of the slab is badly eroded, but just enough survives to identify the original design. It consists of two linked lateral circles, with sections of two lower circles directly beneath. This would have formed a cross head which would have been attached to a cross shaft, and possibly a stepped base at the foot. There may have been additional decoration that has not survived.

There are many medieval incised grave slabs from this period with elaborate foliated crosses, and crosses within a quatrefoil. But as far as I am aware, there are not many, where the cross head is formed by four interlinked circles.

The quality of this memorial slab and its position so close to the church wall indicates a person of high rank. Possibly an ecclesiastic or patron of the church. It is highly likely the burial was originally inside the church and was moved outside during alterations.