

ROMAN REMAINS FOUND AT CHATHAM
AND AT BARMING.

BY GEORGE PAYNE, JUN., F.L.S.

ROMAN LEADEN COFFIN FOUND AT CHATHAM.

ON the 16th May, 1878, the grave-digger employed at the New Cemetery, Chatham, came upon the remains of a leaden coffin, at a depth of seven feet, containing a human skeleton and a pale green glass vessel. Two other glass vases were found, outside the coffin, at the head; and two earthen vessels at the feet. The latter are both of hard brownish coloured pottery, and measure in height five inches and five and three-quarter inches respectively. The glass was unfortunately all broken into fragments. The coffin, which was six feet in length, was made in the usual way, from a sheet of lead cut at the corners and folded up to form the sides and ends. The lid was ornamented with a kind of billet moulding, composed of small raised blocks placed diagonally about a quarter of an inch apart, running along the lid, about two inches from the edges. One end of it was formed by means of this moulding into a compartment, in which was a triangle formed with the same billet design, there being in the centre an escallop shell. Two pairs of these shells appeared on one end of the coffin, the other end was destroyed. Doubtless the lid was decorated throughout its entire length, but the decayed state of the lead rendered it impossible to trace any further pattern. Of the lime which had been placed upon the body at the burial, one piece had become solid, and it bore the impression of the shoulder of the deceased. Information was obtained that

many portions of urns have been found from time to time in this cemetery, probably the remains of other burials. The site of the present discovery is the S.W. corner of the graveyard, within a few yards of the road leading from Chatham to Maidstone. The coffin-lid and earthen vessels are now deposited in the offices of the Local Board of Health at Chatham.

REMAINS OF ROMAN BUILDINGS DISCOVERED AT BARMING
NEAR MAIDSTONE.

The foot-passenger, passing through the village of Barming to West Farleigh, on turning to his left by the farm buildings of Mr. Ellis, would pass the site of the discovery on the right, just before reaching the road leading to East Farleigh. Here the wood-land has lately been grubbed, and converted into a fruit plantation. During the process of grubbing the workmen came upon an oblong cistern or pit 4 feet deep, 9 feet 5 inches long, by 4 feet $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide. The floor of the cistern was paved with tiles $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches thick, 1 foot $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches long, and 1 foot wide; the walls were built of Kentish rag and tufa or travertine firmly embedded in mortar made of lime, sand, gravel, and pounded tile; about a foot from the top, a bonding course of tiles was inserted. The contents of the cistern consisted of broken tiles, mortar, a long iron nail, together with bones and teeth of animals, comprising the cranium of a young pig, portion of an antler of red deer which had been sawn off, the lower jaw-bone of a roebuck, molar of ass or pony, milk molar of calf, lower jaw-bone of lamb, lower jaw-bone of large hound or wolf; these were very courteously named for the writer by Professor R. Owen, C.B., of the British Museum. Intimation having been received of further discoveries, the writer visited the spot on the 3rd April, 1879, accompanied by Mr. Russell Day, a former resident at the adjoining farm, and with the kindly sanction of Mr. Ellis, the owner of the land, a portion of the ground was excavated, revealing foundations of a very substantial nature. Two walls were followed for a few feet, and at a depth of 7 feet a floor was touched paved with

large tiles. The débris thrown up during the digging consisted of broken roof-tiles, and boulders of tufa and ragstone. It appeared as though the roof had fallen in, the majority of the fragments of tile being found upon the paved floor mentioned above. Night coming on the work was abandoned, but it is hoped that Mr. Ellis may be induced to allow more of the foundations to be uncovered at no very distant date. From the character of the discovery, we are doubtless upon the site of a second Roman villa at Barming, in close proximity to one discovered upwards of three-quarters of a century ago, and described by the Rev. Mark Noble, F.S.A.,* then rector of the parish. That villa stood on the opposite side of the street, next the Church, and was not connected in any way with the one recently brought to light. Both, however, were erected on the slope of the valley, overlooking the river Medway, a spot well chosen and exceedingly picturesque. There appears to be a connecting link between the present discovery and a Roman cemetery, which Mr. Noble calls "The Lesser Cemetery."† They were but a few yards apart, and it would seem that each of the two villas here had its private burying ground. In order to be certain of these facts, the writer re-visited Barming on 30th August, 1879, on which occasion he received, from his hospitable entertainer Mr. Septimus Day, a Roman coin, a middle brass of the Emperor Titus, which had been found close to the "Lesser Cemetery."

* *Collectanea Antiqua*, vol. i., pp. 190-192.

† *Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 195.