TOP TREASURE

Find this at

BRADING
ROMAN VILLA

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Questions

- What do you think it is?
- Can you describe it?
- What do you think it is made from?
- How big do you think it is?
- What is it made from?
- What do you think it was used for?

FACT FILE

Door lock cover

What is it?

The cover for a door lock found at Brading Roman Villa. It hid and protected the workings of the lock.

Basic facts

Size: 200mm square. 2mm thick

Weight: 740g

Significance

This would have been on the main door to the Villa's West Range where the mosaics are. It would have been made in another part of the Roman Empire, probably Italy.

It tells us the owner only used the building for part of the year. When he and his family were not using it, they locked it so no one could get in. The farm workers continued to live in the other buildings all year. The only time the owner needed to be at the villa was in July and August. In these months he would have had to decide when to harvest the crops then organise people to do the harvest. He would then have to sell the harvest and pay people for their work. The mosaics tell us that the owner of the villa was rich. He must have made a lot of profit from the farm.

What is it made from?

A type of metal called bronze.

How old is it?

It was made around 280 AD when the Villa's West Range was built.

Other facts

This was found in the North Range and it is thought it was put there for safe-keeping after the fire. Sadly, Brading Roman Villa was found in 1880. At this time, the Victorians did not have the same level of skill in archaeology. This means that they were not able to work out when that fire was or how big the fire was.

It was rare to find locks on doors. You only need a lock when there is no one inside the building to use the bolt.

Why don't you?

- Can you make an exciting display label for the lock plate using the information from the fact file above?
- A modern mortice lock works exactly like the Roman one at Brading 1700 year ago. Watch this video to show how it works: tiny.cc/mortice
- Imagine what the key would have looked like. Draw a picture to show your idea.
- Make a list of the different places you have seen locks being used.

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The Isle of Wight Museums and Schools programme is supported by Arts Council England, funded through the Department for Education.

Supported using public funding by
Department for Education
ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

4787 NBH 2/21 LF