

4E Mining after Roman times to 1780

Lead in the Middle Ages

The production of stained glass windows, in which small pieces of coloured glass are fitted together with strips of lead, provided a new use for the metal. Important buildings, whether palaces or cathedrals and churches, were frequently roofed in lead because of its long lasting qualities. One of the oldest lead roofs in the country is on the tower of Shrewbury Abbey. It was repaired in the 17th century, but is clearly medieval.

Once gunpowder had been introduced to Europe, lead was in demand for shot. With the invention of the printing press, lead provided the material for movable type.

People started to realise, after the Black Death and other plagues, that a supply of clean water was essential to health, and lead pipes were vital in helping to bring water to towns.