



Adult Learning Within Reach

Member Lecture – 20 June 2024

The history of the watermill
Michael Turner, WEA tutor

Questions answered post-lecture

Q1 Did the Romans invade England in search of Cornish Tin or Gold?

The Romans certainly invaded Britain for its rich reserves of tin and gold, plus copper, iron, lead and silver. The tin came from Cornwall and the gold from Wales.

Q2 What heating material did they use in Scotland?

I am afraid I don't know the answer to this, but I would expect wood.

Q3 In Spanish, a lot of watermill vocabulary comes from Arabic. Presumably the Arabs must have used water power a lot to power their irrigation?

Yes, the Arabs used waterwheels for irrigation and there is some evidence that watermills for other purposes were imported into Spain in the 12th century.

Useful links and resources for further reading

Books

Water Power and Watermills – Jonathan Brown (The Corwood Press Ltd, 2011)

Watermills – Martin Watts (Shire Publications, 2006)

Websites

[spab.org.uk – mills](http://spab.org.uk)

millsarchive.org

[National Mills Weekend 2024 – Youtube](#)

Forthcoming WEA courses by Michael Turner

None currently but keep an eye out on the website for 2024/25 courses coming soon – www.wea.org.uk. You can search using Michael's name.