

## *Floor tiles at Shaftesbury Abbey*

Over 6500 pieces of medieval tile have been found at Shaftesbury Abbey, from over 100 different designs. They lasted so well because they are made of fired clay, which does not decay in the ground. You can see some of the tiles in the Abbey Museum. Use this activity to try designing and making some of your own.

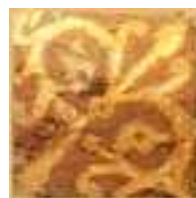
You can see some of the tile designs on this website:



Tile with dog design  
design



Tile with lion design



Tile with fleur de lis



Tile with shield design

We have put these into a group:



Tile design

## **Activity 1 - Make a tiled floor on your computer screen**

Choose one of the tile designs on the website and either open it in your Internet browser or save it as a file on your computer. Right click with your mouse and select 'Set as Desktop Background'. You should end up with a tiled floor on your computer screen! Try making different floors with the other tiles.

## **Activity 2 - Design your own tile**

Tiles can either have their own design or be part of a larger one. Look at these three tiles. The first one can be used on its own but if you put four together they make a circle design. The other two are already quarters and have to be used in fours.



Now design your own floor tile. For a group of quarter tiles, draw four squares together and draw out the design. Otherwise you could try a group of nine (3x3 tiles) or a group of 16 (4x4). Print out copies of your tile designs using a photocopier or scanner and make them into posters. Why not try a modern idea for a design, with modern colours.

### **Activity 3 - Make a tile**

Medieval tiles were made using two different colours of clay.

The brown clay was pressed into a mould for the main tile, with the paler clay making the pattern. To make the pattern the same every time, the tile maker made a raised design on the bottom of the mould so that the brown clay had the pattern pressed into it. The hollow pattern was then filled with white clay. The tiles were allowed to dry before being painted with a glaze and then fired in a kiln. If you don't have facilities to make real clay tiles, you could make them in two colours of modelling clay. Have fun!