Pierre Trésaguet Biography

Pierre Trésaguet

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Biography

Pierre Marie Jerome Trésaguet launched an eighteenth-century road building revival. Not since the decline of the Roman Empire in the fourth century had roads received such attention from planners. He began his road-building career at the École des Ponts et Chaussées in 1747, which put him in control of 25,000 miles (40,000 km) of roads and bridges.

In 1764, he began working on the road at Limoges, introducing a road foundation consisting of large base stones over which a shallow layer of smaller stones was laid. Trésaguet also introduced the use of pitch as a binding material.

In 1775, Trésaguet was named France's inspector general of public works. Under his direction, the country developed the finest road system of the time, one which used the same routes the Romans had surveyed thirteen hundred years earlier.

Trésaguet's reliance on foundation stones and pitch was adopted in England by Thomas Telford on the Holyhead Road in the 1820s. However, the roads of Tresaguet and Telford were expensive to build and were later abandoned for the simpler methods of John McAdam.