

## Landscape perception on-line survey responses – Llanthony

### Summary of responses

The on-line survey received 37 responses, of which 45% were from people who farm, work or live in the area and 55% were regular or occasional visitors.

The main general responses to the Vale of Ewyas were that it is a beautiful, peaceful, spiritual and ancient landscape, but one partly or largely shaped by a rich history of human activity and subject to change.

60% of respondents felt that the priory had a major impact on the local landscape, with just over 30% identifying some impact. The priory ruins are seen as a focal point of the valley and an integral and highly visible part of the landscape (both perceptual and physical), helping to define its special character and atmosphere; it is hard to imagine the valley without the priory and also the major draw for people and tourism into the valley, though the volume of visitors is not too overwhelming. A few see the priory as a more localised feature, with little impact on the wider landscape.

75% of respondents had a general awareness of the priory and its canons as the lord of the manor for the local area during the medieval period, putting forward a range of responses, from control and management of the land and population to a more limited landlordship, as to what this actually meant in practice. Only 35% of respondents felt that active land management and agriculture was the key image conjured up when considering the imprint of the priory on the landscape, with 65% opting for a place of monastic tranquillity as the dominant image.

Nevertheless, over 85% of respondents felt that the priory was a major actor in the development of the landscape during the medieval period, with the remainder recording some impact. Seen as to some extent an alien, somewhat resented and controlling outpost in a previously isolated community, the priory is perceived to have impacted significantly on the extent and efficiency of agricultural activity and land management in the landscape and also provided a focal point for communications and communal and economic activity.

Respondents identified a range of different topographical features within the landscape resulting from the priory's presence and activities, including the valley's dense network of roads, tracks and paths (some radiating out from the priory), boundaries, farmsteads (with many surviving to this day) and their geographical distribution, field systems, fishponds, mills, quarries. Some responses also mentioned later additions to the landscape influenced by the location of the priory in the valley; others were not able to identify any particular landscape features or emphasise self-contained isolation as the main feature.

95% of respondents felt that the priory, combined with the secluded beauty of the surrounding landscape, was a major factor in the valley becoming a magnet for artists and writers of the Romantic era and later generations, a range of unconventional and non-conformist people and those seeking a peaceful and historic escape in modern times. Many also suggested that the very same

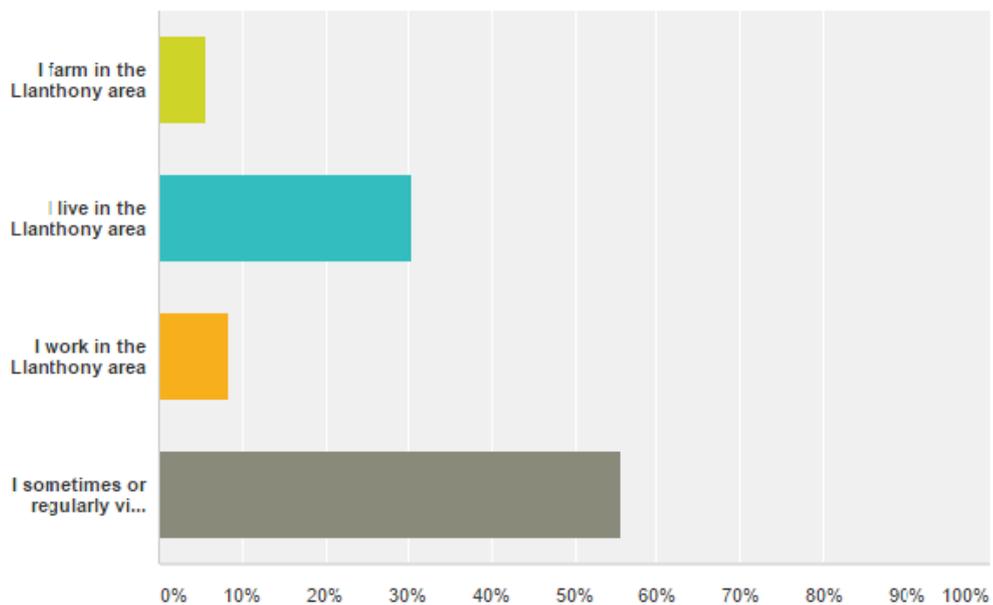
elements of remoteness, tranquillity and spirituality that attracted the founders of the priory have been a draw and creative inspiration for many others; it is hard to disentangle the two.

The ruins themselves are the most obvious legacy of the priory and its period as the main landowner in the valley for 67% of respondents but the presence of the priory also influenced the interaction of people, land management, systems of tenure and agriculture that have shaped the wider landscape up to the present day.

Just over half the respondents felt that there is scope for the National Park and CADW to provide a greater degree of promotion and interpretation of the story of the priory and the landscape, although it is also felt that this can potentially be overdone and become intrusive. The simplicity and light touch of the valleys tourism infrastructure is something that is valued by respondents and should not be lost; to many it is important to get the balance right through sympathetic and innovative means and avoiding over-commercialisation.

### Which of the following best describes you?

Answered: 36 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses
▼ I farm in the Llanthony area	5.56% 2
▼ I live in the Llanthony area	30.56% 11
▼ I work in the Llanthony area	8.33% 3
▼ I sometimes or regularly visit the Llanthony area	55.56% 20
Total	36

**What are the main thoughts, words or feelings that come to mind when you are in or look at the landscape of the Vale of Ewyas/ Llanthony Valley?**

**Responses**

Outstanding natural beauty

How little I know about it?

Remoteness, grandeur, historical depth, sense of mystery, fun day out secluded, remote, mysterious, a lost world

Dramatic landscape, accessible on foot as threaded with public footpaths, some of which follow ancient tracks. A feeling of history, relatively free of modern development.

Serene setting

Nicely out of the way of the rest of the UK

It is both an historic and still iconic area perhaps partly due to its position in the Black Mountains as well as its history.

That I am very lucky to live in such a beautiful area.

Exceptionally beautiful area. Uplifting.

incredibly beautiful but a landscape which is the result of generations of farming practices which have changed and are changing beyond measure. i.e. farmsteads to relatively wealthy retirement or 2nd homes with no one to farm the ground. with greatly diminished farming population and increased age of those left farming there are fewer graziers turning out and so less sheep grazing=change in upland flora.etc.

Reflecting on the lives of those who have lived here in the past and trying to get a feeling of what life was like two hundred and more years ago.

Spiritual - but not necessarily religious. A world set apart. An ancient landscape gently crafted by farming and tradition. Characterful and wise.

Fascination with the many layered history of the valley

A beautiful and awe inspiring landscape, shaped by geography/geology/weather and the people who have lived and worked here for thousands of years.

A beautiful and unspoilt landscape of great historical resonance.

Lovely, but a bit ranched

I feel so moved that my ancestors lived in this amazing area for hundreds of years

Peace and tranquility; remoteness; continuity

That it is both very beautiful and very interesting; that it is a place of significance

Beautiful, mystic, home

Feeling at home; desire to go to a ridge; recent thoughts about what made it as it looks today; how what happens in the landscape has changed in the last forty years

It's a quiet, rural location which is enjoyed by many who walk and visit the valley. It feels like a peaceful community.

A beautiful but managed/fenced landscape. Hemmed in by the hills. Varied nature, varied through the seasons. Difficult to feel the sublime of Turner's sketches.

It's deep and very old

Tranquility

Beauty

Peaceful, stunning, green, remote

beautiful; hidden; secluded; tranquil

A beautiful, man-made landscape

Peaceful, spiritual, ancient

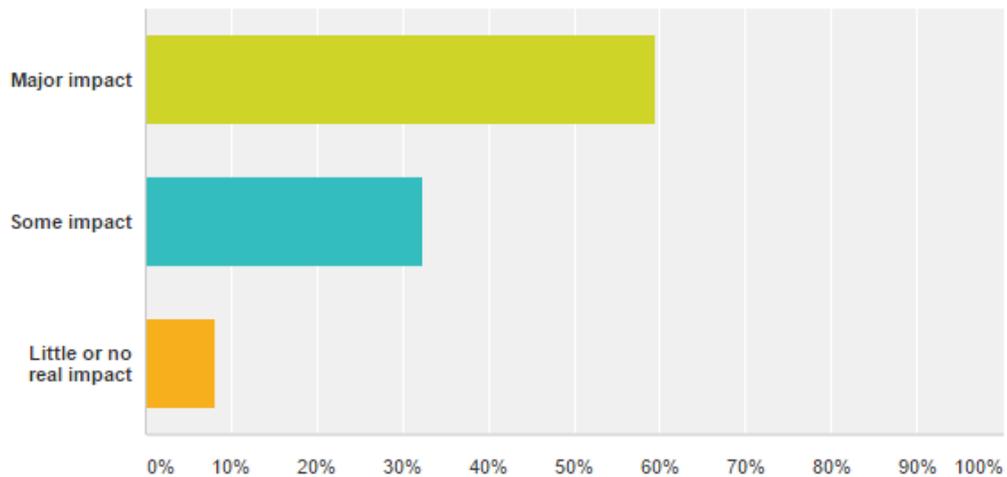
Special, beautiful, romantic, spiritual, farmland.  
 Peaceful, open, sense of history in the landscape high ridges, wildness  
 Off the beaten track & isolated.  
 Peace and tranquillity  
 What a wonderful valley with a rich history  
 Awe inspiring, beautiful, wish I could afford to live there

**Summary of response content**

*The Vale of Ewyas is a beautiful, peaceful, spiritual and ancient landscape, but one partly or largely shaped by a rich history of human activity and subject to change.*

**How do you feel the ruins of Llanthony Priory impact on the landscape of the Vale of Ewyas/ Llanthony Valley today?**

Answered: 37 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
Major impact	59.46% 22
Some impact	32.43% 12
Little or no real impact	8.11% 3
Total	37

**Comments**

The ruins easily stand out and it is almost possible to imagine back to when it was a fully functional Priory  
 Tourist roads  
 Very important as a destination for tourists - by car as well as for walkers and trekkers - with the great amenity of a pub/B&B.  
 It's a while since I went to the ruins (been to other parts of the valley more recently) but I seem to remember thinking that if they weren't there you might need to invent some! Part and parcel of the atmosphere.

The ruins of Llanthony Priory are incredibly romantic and attract a number of visitors. However, I have never found it overcrowded and wonder if this is because of the scarcity of tourist facilities, which I believe works in its favour as it retains its atmosphere of tranquillity and peace.

It is the foundation of the concept of the Llanthony area.

It still seems to retain some significance even though it is now a ruin.

Because they are situated away from the road they are not immediately evident to anyone passing by.

the character of the landscape changes from the bottom of the valley to the top at the gospel pass. the abbey ruins are a something of a focal point midway in that journey up or down the valley.

The impact of the ruins is now limited to the immediate environment of the abbey. Major visual impact on landscape of the upper valley. Also a key destination site for the area - would like to see it more actively interpreted by Cadw.

One of the best loved ruins in the UK I imagine.

The eye is drawn to the ruins whenever they can be seen, but their presence is felt (perhaps through long familiarity) even when not in view.

They provide a focal point, both visually and historically; as well as providing the best pub garden in the country!

I have lived in or near the valley since birth (50 years) so the priory is just part of the landscape for me.

Visible when walking on both sides; beautiful high shapes from inside; draws all sort of people into the valley

entices visitors up into the valley

It is a major tourist draw but not over-welmed by visitors. This is also very seasonal.

Somewhere to park when I go walking there

To me The priory does not feature/impact much outside Llanthony

In one sense, Llanthony is the Priory, and vice versa. It should be a major tourist draw - but visitor numbers to Llanthony have been perhaps less than one might expect over the years. However, the Abbey Hotel seems to be on the up & up under its new owners. The Priory is on the Beacons Way, it features on walks arranged by local walking festivals, and it also provide a starting point for the annual pilgrimage walk along the eastern side of the valley to Capel-y-ffin organised by the Fr Ignatius Memorial Trust.

The Priory ruins are now part of the landscape in a positive way. I like the way you can view the ridge through the window arches

When I think of Llanthony it is the priory I see in my mind

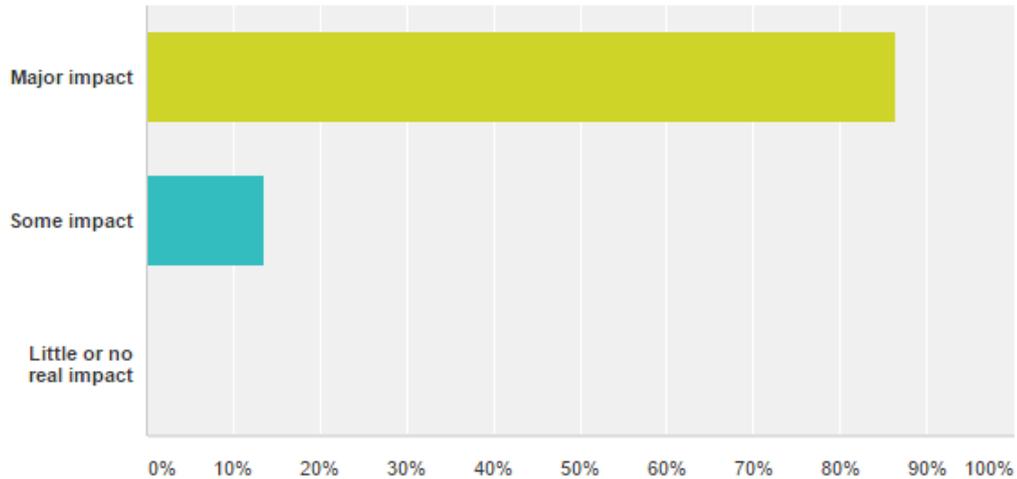
The visual impact may be relatively small but knowing that it is there has a perceptual impact over a much greater area. They provide historical and cultural context

### **Summary of comments content**

*The priory ruins are a focal point of the valley and an integral and highly visible part of the landscape (both perceptual and physical), helping to define its special character and atmosphere; it is hard to imagine the valley without the priory and also the major draw for people and tourism into the valley, though the volume of visitors is not too overwhelming. A few see the priory as a more localised feature, with little impact on the wider landscape.*

## How do you feel the Priory might have impacted on the wider landscape when it was an active monastic community during the medieval period?

Answered: 37 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
Major impact	86.49% 32
Some impact	13.51% 5
Little or no real impact	0.00% 0
Total	37

### Comments

#### Jobs

Location of the Priory probably politically determined, as an outpost of Norman control in a corridor through the Black Mountains. Ongoing conflict with the Welsh thereafter

Without having done the research, as you have, I'm not sure to what extent the monastic activities would have been visually evident in the landscape. I imagine large numbers of sheep would be grazed on the surrounding hills (more than now) and maybe, closer to the Priory, some vegetable / crop growing - but it can't be easy ground to work, so that may have been meagre.

Agriculture was probably more efficient as a result of the ownership of the land by the Priory, so more land under cultivation and grazing.

The centre of a sparse community, an anchor to the people that live nearby, the people providing services and the spiritual base of the area.

The Priory was the major force in the valley for many years.

Because it was the hub of an active and successful community. Everyone who lived within a reasonable distance would have been affected by it.

When the abbey was the focus of a wider community the impact would have been extensive. The life of the abbey would have involved many people in the local area, Farms both large and small would have been dependent on the monastic community for their livelihood.

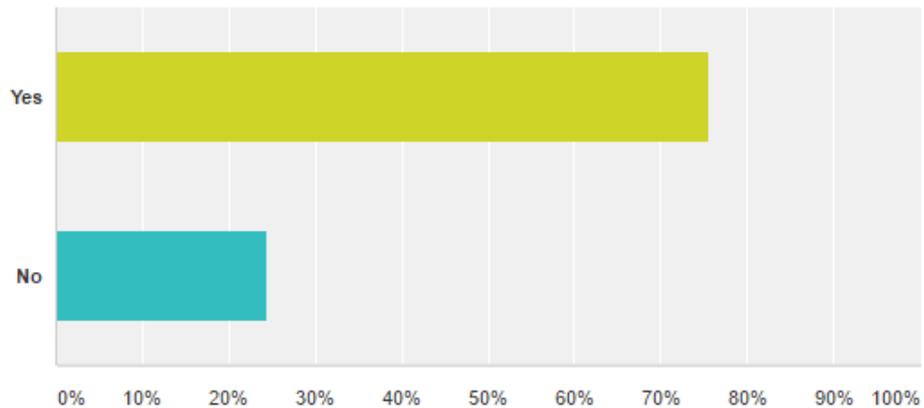
Wealth, purpose and control over the population - tenant farmers.  
See your question 5. The Priory, as landlord, must have had a significant impact on the organisation of holdings and on land use  
The monastery's impact at the head of the valley must have been considerable; elsewhere, it seems more likely that prosperous farmers ran their own holdings with relatively little monastic input.  
I imagine the presence of the Priory completely dominated the valley.  
I am assuming, without checking my facts here, that the monastic community was active in the area in various aspects of life at that time. eg growing healing plants, vegetables etc . I dear! I've just seen question no 6  
In its heyday it must have had tentacles everywhere local - milling, farming, hospitality, brewing etc.  
Though I suppose the active period(s) was/were rather brief  
I'm aware of a track over the top that provided food to the abbey. I assume they cleared the surroundings of woodland to cultivate to be as self-sufficient as possible through winter  
The rhyws and lanes, probably the field layout and the watercourses  
Major landowner, presumably influencing land management and agricultural practice in the area.  
The complete building would have appeared more solid and obstructed views of the landscape. There would have been many more people which would also impact on the landscape, the religious community as well as others to supply them.  
The priory would have been the cbd of Llanthony  
When the Priory was active I suspect that it would have had a relatively larger impact on people living nearby and visiting. Communications would have been more difficult and the impact of a relatively large institution within a closed agricultural community would have been huge.

**Summary of comment content**

*In some ways an alien, somewhat resented and controlling outpost in a previously isolated community, the priory would have impacted significantly on the extent and efficiency of agricultural activity and land management in the landscape and also provided a focal point for communications and communal and economic activity.*

**Were you aware that the canons of Llanthony Priory were the landowners of most of this valley and other surrounding estates for over 400 years during the medieval period?**

Answered: 37 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
Yes	75.68%	28
No	24.32%	9
Total		37

### Comments

So what the crown owned most of the surrounding area as well  
The valley was ceded to the Canons by the Lord of the Manor of Ewyas Lacy. This land grant fragmented an area which had been part of the Welsh commote of Ewyas prior to the Norman conquest.

Nothing specific - just remember reading about Llanthony Priory somewhere years ago after our first visits (29 years ago?). The enormous impact of the entire monastic system was something I became intrigued by even longer ago than that; it's so hard to imagine today the power and control on almost every aspect of daily life (from access to mills and water supplies, trade and business to spiritual guidance) that this matrix of organisation must have had - for good and less good! I was aware that they had extensive land holdings, but not aware of the timescale. During the medieval period I think the priory was essentially the lord of the manor of a huge area and as such dictated daily life in the valley.

They owned the land and allowed the rents to fall behind over the generations. Sorry but a bit hazy about the detail here.

The canons' ownership of farms and forests has shaped the economy of the valley.

Not much! I know they were the owners of the Llanthony estate and therefore must have shaped the valley, or at least those parts of it that are/were farmed greatly. I know that at some point (the dissolution of the monasteries?) the estate passed into private hands and that, with some changes, it went through a number of owners until it was finally broken up in 1967.

Information acquired through membership of the recently formed Community and local history groups.

That their occupation lasted from foundation in the C11th- C12th but went through difficult times and was ended when they moved to Gloucester, well before the Reformation.

Mostly what you have written...

Just that they ran everything, don't know what they did with it

But it does not surprise me

Not very much - just that the monastic houses were powerful economically as well as spiritually

Didn't know it was as long as 400 years. Augustinian canons held their property in common according to their Rule, and were reputed to have an interest in farming and improving crops.

I know there were links with Longtown on the other side of the ridge. Beer was produced by the Priory and sold in the many inns in Longtown.

I was aware that this was probably the case

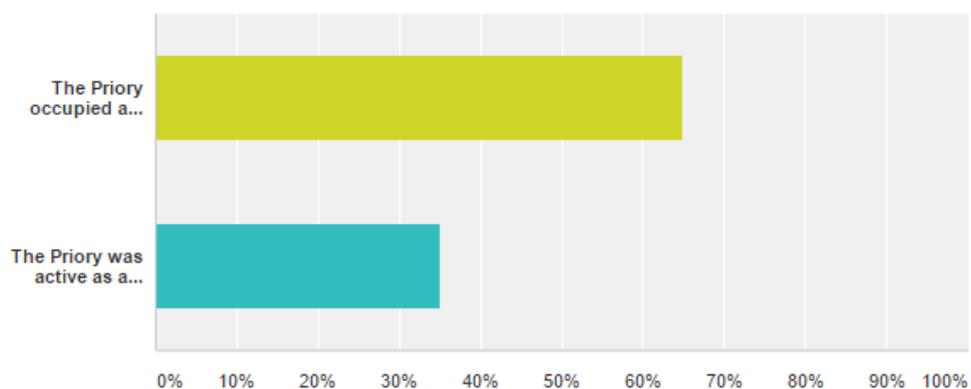
Very little

**Summary of comment content**

*General awareness of the priory and its canons as the lord of the manor during the medieval period in the area but a range of responses as to what this actually meant in practice.*

**Medieval monastic communities sought places of tranquility for their abbeys and priories but were also active landowners and agriculturalists; which of these do you feel is more evident in the landscape around Llanthony?**

Answered: 37 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
▼ The Priory occupied a place of tranquility	64.86% 24
▼ The Priory was active as a landowner engaged in agriculture	35.14% 13
Total	37

**Can you think of any particular features of the landscape (other than the Priory ruins themselves) which are the result of the Priory being located here?**

**Responses**

I imagine it was chosen for the peace and tranquility of the valley

Self contained

Ancient houses suggest relatively prosperous landholdings becoming more assertive in competition with the Abbey.

Presumably paths and routes along the valley and up and down the hills would have been important to the Priory for their agricultural practice and subsequent exchange of produce.

The presence of numerous farmhouses and cottages in the valley, some abandoned and ruined, others still inhabited. Remains of fish ponds, the mill, the gatehouse.

The isolation.

No

Probably such features as boundaries, and tracks

Evidence of quarrying and farming for their own sustenance.

The ruined barn nearby. The settlement around but not the church since that was built at an earlier date.

the cwrhiw, not sure of the spelling- the big rhiw going up from the abbey ruins which i assume was associated with the abbey but quite possibly was already in use before the monks arrived.

The geographical distribution of the farms has shaped the social life of the valley. The pattern of fields and the way the farms have evolved over time with buildings with specific historic uses.

Layout of tracks?

I suspect the number of medieval houses and farms, as well as ruins, that still exist today.

St David's church and probably a nearby farm

Landor's later additions of tree avenues, his ruined house, etc.

I wonder whether the network of tracks and paths in and to the valley would have been so dense if the Priory had not been established here.

No

Granges; houses built with purloined stones

The beer trail and other footpaths from the Priory.

the tracks/roads. fewer houses?

The rhyws that go up the hills and into the next valley

Old paths

Not really

No

a blind valley - safe(ish), controllable, secluded, ideal for meditation and reflection  
grazed fields

Pubs, campsites, the road through the valley

The path (Rhiw Cwrw) running diagonally up the hill behind the Priory was said to have been used by the monks to fetch beer from the Longtown valley. Walter Savage Landor owned the Priory in the 19thC and planted many larch trees nearby. The Sharples ruined house above the Priory also dates from Landor's

time. The Monastery at nearby Capel-y-ffin was built because its founder, Fr Ignatius, failed in his bid to buy the Priory and restore it.

Field systems, some of the tracks leading to other communities in the valley and on the other side of the ridge.

The River Honduu & nearby springs

The road system

Possibly the Grange

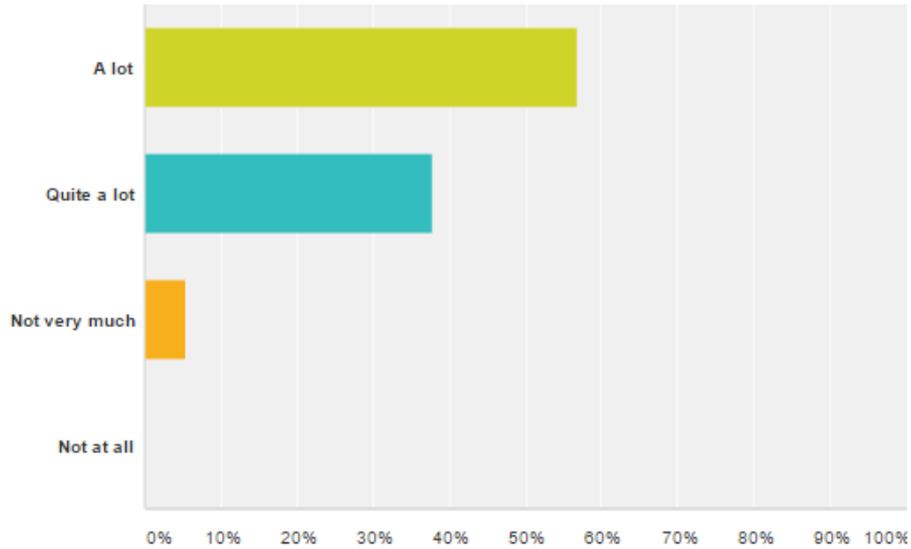
Probably various paths and roads. Pillow mounds. Probably some of the field boundaries.

***Summary of responses content***

*Respondents identified a range of different topographical features within the landscape resulting from the priory's presence and activities, including the valley's dense network of roads, tracks and paths (some radiating out from the priory), boundaries, farmsteads (with many surviving to this day) and their geographical distribution, field systems, fishponds, mills, quarries. Some responses also mentioned later additions to the landscape influenced by the location of the priory in the valley; others were not able to identify any particular landscape features or emphasise self-contained isolation as the main feature.*

**Many artists, writers and other creative or non-conformist people have been attracted to live or visit this valley; how much do you think they have been influenced to come by the Priory's location here?**

Answered: 37 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
A lot	56.76% 21
Quite a lot	37.84% 14
Not very much	5.41% 2
Not at all	0.00% 0
Total	37

**Comments**

Old guide books

A magnet to Romantic painters & poets depicting ruins and a nostalgic past; the Hermitage inspired by proximity to Llanthony Priory. After demise of the Priory, the remoteness of the area made it attractive to non-conformists seeking a place of safety for their congregations.

I'm not really sure how much it's the Priory and how much the place as a whole, nor can I imagine what the valley would have been like if the Priory hadn't been there, but the tranquility has such a draw, and the U-shaped valley(s) with spring heads in the north west flowing into rivers along the valley floors may provide for some people a kind of sense of a natural-cycle, and maybe that was a feature that determined the siting of the Priory???.

It does seem to be unique in its fascination for creative visitors and inhabitants. I don't know of anywhere else which has inspired so many people.

The abbey obviously provided an interesting place to paint. The general atmosphere of the place is very conducive to creativity.

the answer depends entirely on what period in time you are looking at. i'm sure in the 18thC the ruins might have been one of the main attractions as well as the awesome (not in the contemporary slang usage) landscape. today the whole

landscape effect, it's feeling of remoteness, it's dark skies, it's lost in time feeling all appeal to the 21stC urban/suburban visitor

The ruins of the abbey combined with the beauty of the landscape have been powerful magnets which have drawn many to the valley.

The Priory is without doubt a draw for people searching for something... be it peace, inspiration or spiritual renewal.

From the late C18, the Priory ruins themselves were a draw for antiquarian tourists and for artists. The draw for others, e.g. Father Ignatius, Gill etc. was perhaps more the remoteness and spirituality represented by the priory ruins in the wider landscape.

I think the fact that the priory's ruins are such a dominant presence in the valley gives a very strong sense of the history of human occupation to the whole area which makes it attractive to some people.

But it is misleading to use the word 'non-conformist' in the context of artistic creativity because it has a very specific religious meaning. 'Alternative' or 'unconventional' might have been better.

Like Tintern, it was on the tick list of artists and antiquarians

A lot I think but you could say that what attracted the monks in the first place still attracts creative and non-conformist people. There is a thin veil here between that world and the next.

Not necessarily because of the ruins, but also because of the reason that the Priory was located here - namely the remoteness and tranquillity.

Of course, for the most part, they did not settle in the immediate vicinity of the Priory, but I am sure it must have been a major part of the draw of the place.

Many came to paint the ruins; for others not sure what the atmosphere of the valley would have been without the Priory - so even if the Priory was not the main attraction

The 'Grand Tour' and 'ruins' would be the big influence

Probably looking for the same tranquility and isolation that the Priory was looking for, rather than looking for the Priory

The location feels like the palm of the hand of the mountains, drawing people in  
The inspiration sought by artists and writers may come from the same source of peace and tranquillity which inspired the monks in their contemplative life. And the Abbey Hotel has provided many artists and writers with a base from which to explore the area.

The valley has been a site of pilgrimage; a 'spiritual' and material resource

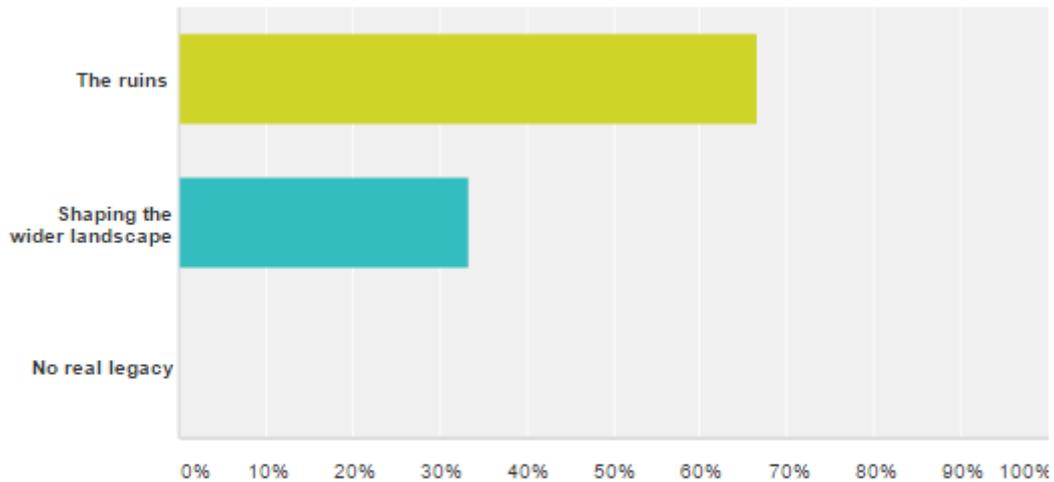
The rich history and stunning views would inspire them

### **Summary of comment content**

*The priory, combined with the secluded beauty of the surrounding landscape, was a major factor in the valley becoming a magnet for artists and writers of the Romantic era and later generations, a range of unconventional and non-conformist people and those seeking a peaceful and historic escape in modern times. The very same elements of remoteness, tranquillity and spirituality that attracted the founders of the priory have been a draw and creative inspiration for many others; it is hard to disentangle the two.*

## What would you say is the main legacy in the landscape of the 400 years that the Priory was active and the main landowner here?

Answered: 36 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses
▼ The ruins	66.67% 24
▼ Shaping the wider landscape	33.33% 12
▼ No real legacy	0.00% 0
Total	36

### Comments

Farming and landholding practices in the wider landscape are a hugely significant legacy, but the Priory as a unique landmark the Black Mountains is possible the most significant.

The ruins are the most evident, but as mentioned above, without doing a bit more research myself, it's hard to know how the Priory would have shaped the landscape - no sheep would probably have led the hillsides to becoming scrub/woodland; and with sheep one would need to know the comparison of numbers at the peak of the Priory's existence compared to now to assess the kind of impact their grazing over several hundred years would make!

Probably the existence of the village of Llanthony arose from the presence of the Priory - other similar valleys tend to have scattered farmhouses but no village.

The ruins are a link with artists as well as still being a memorial to a way of life long since past. They still do attract visitors offering a unique inspirational experience

At first glance the ruins might seem to be the most obvious but the establishment of farms, the enclosure of fields and all the changes that an economic system makes in the landscape have been part of the shaping of the field pattern and settlement we see today.

The ruins did attract much interest but the main legacy is the interaction of people who have settled here with the landscape.

The ruins are the main visual legacy for today's visitors and residents. We need to understand and celebrate the Priory's role in shaping the wider landscape. I am not equipped to know how the landscape might have evolved in the absence of the Priory, so stand to be corrected on this.

Fewer houses built

Keeping it agricultural and isolated

The tenanted farms owned by the Priory estate eventually became owner-occupied family farms, so all these farms have a common historical origin.

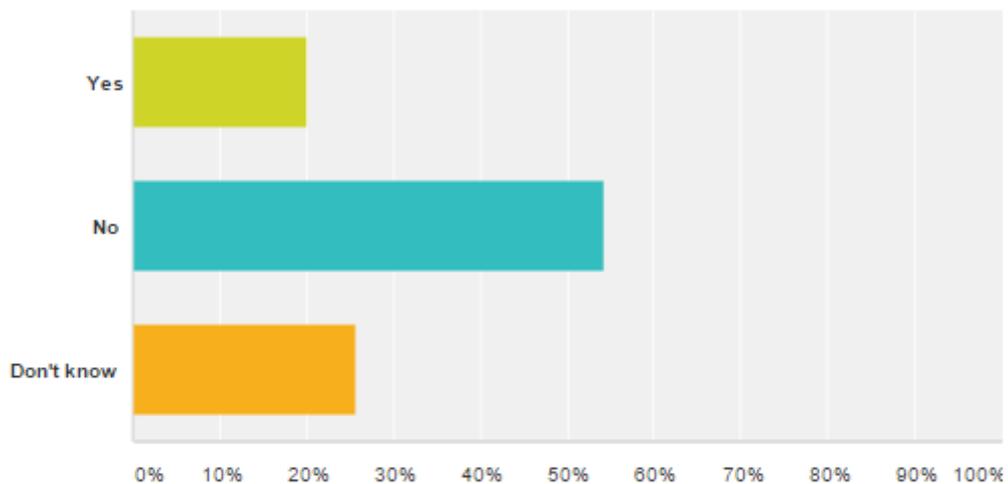
The Priory is well known locally at least and acts as a draw for tourists. The ruins are a very obvious artefact that most people would 'see'. However many people take little notice of other less obvious landscape features

**Summary of comment content**

*The ruins themselves are the most obvious legacy but the presence of the priory also influenced the interaction of people, land management, systems of tenure and agriculture that have shaped the wider landscape up to the present day.*

**Do you feel that the Brecon Beacons National Park promotes the story of the Priory and its impact on the landscape sufficiently?**

Answered: 35 Skipped: 2



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	20.00% 7
No	54.29% 19
Don't know	25.71% 9
Total	35

**Comments**

Competing against different stories

Information from public notices at the Priory is negligible. I don't know what literature is published by the National Park, but would hope there are guide books at the Information Centre. An excellent guide to the history by OE Craster, 'Llanthony Priory' published by HMSO in 1963 can hopefully be reprinted. I don't know what the Parks people have done in the way of promotion but I'm really torn about things like interpretation boards - I do often appreciate the information they convey but equally it's often so much more enjoyable and immersive to NOT be given any information, or not in that form, so you have the sense that you've discovered the place yourself - and if you are interested you can research it yourself. I would be saddened to see such things in this valley! But some subtle clues that might trigger a personal response or inquiry could be OK, but then you don't necessarily want bits of inappropriate artwork littering up the landscape either!!! (I speak as an artist, married to man who has worked on Interpretation projects for years and he would agree with my sentiments on all this!)

Visitors can always find out more if they want to, without active promotion on the part of BBNP. It is refreshing and rare to find somewhere as beautiful as this which is not regarded as an opportunity for commercial exploitation.

But could do more still. Feature days in the summer etc.

But more could be done to engage visitors with the valley

The Priory is a quiet gem and I am sure most people would prefer it to stay that way - so promotion is a bit of double edged sword!

Easy to say this - bit feel there is scope for BBNP and Cadw to do more

But too much publicity can be detrimental to a site

It's always a trade-off between wanting people to come but not wanting it to become 'Blackpool'. It feels to me that the balance is right here.

Lots of people know of it and visit. Too many more would be undesirable.

I guess my previous comment bears on this.

I don't know a great deal about the priory but I haven't looked for information either. I think sometimes when you live in an area you become a bit blasé about its history and for me the priory in the past has been a pub in the first instance!

The BBNP has good links with some of the people who live in the valley, not sure it promotes the story of the Priory as it no longer has walks based in the area.

They are always involved with Llanthony show.

more could be made of it without commercialising the area

We visited Llanthony whilst walking Offa's Dyke and it was worth the extra effort (20 mins up/ 20 mins down) even as part of a full day's walking. I think the information could extend to the priory's impact on the wider landscape.

The National Park does feature the Priory on its website and in leaflets but perhaps could do more to make people aware of the large estate associated with the Priory in the past, and the evolution of this estate over time, both in the Llanthony valley and further afield.

### **Summary of comment content**

*Although there is clear scope for the National Park and CADW to provide a greater degree of promotion and interpretation of the story of the priory and the landscape this can potentially be overdone and become intrusive. The simplicity and light touch of the valleys tourism infrastructure is something that is valued and should not be lost; important to get the balance right through sympathetic and innovative means and avoiding over-commercialisation.*

## Landscape perception on-line survey responses – Tintern

### Summary of responses

The on-line survey received 25 responses, of which 44% were from people who farm, work or live in the area and 56% were regular or occasional visitors.

Tintern and its Wye Valley landscape is a tranquil, atmospheric place, a combination of historic, natural and mystical beauty; its sense of place shaped by the history of the abbey, Romantic artists and poets and the, not always sympathetic, modern touristic imprint.

56% of respondents felt that the abbey had a major impact on the local landscape today, with just over 30% identifying some impact. The abbey ruins are a focal point of the valley, a magnet for visitors that blends into its surroundings. Dominating the immediate landscape physically and perceptually, the abbey is also a touristic and economic figurehead for the Wye Valley generally though the scale of the surrounding river, woods and valley absorb the gaze a short distance away.

72% of respondents had a general awareness of the abbey and its monks as the main landowners in the local area during the medieval period with grange farms on both sides of the Wye. Only 32% of respondents felt that active land management and agriculture was the key image conjured up when considering the imprint of the priory on the landscape, with 68% opting for a place of monastic tranquillity as the dominant image.

Nevertheless, 92% of respondents felt that the abbey had a major impact on the landscape during the medieval period. A busy economic and transport centre, the abbey would have been the main hub of human activity in the area with many of the local population deriving a living from the abbey economy directly or indirectly. The monastic community would have had a profound spiritual and economic influence, controlling and transforming the cultural and natural landscape, particularly agriculturally through arable and sheep farming on their grange farms, also roads for travel and trade, the quarrying of stone, operating fish weirs and industrial activity.

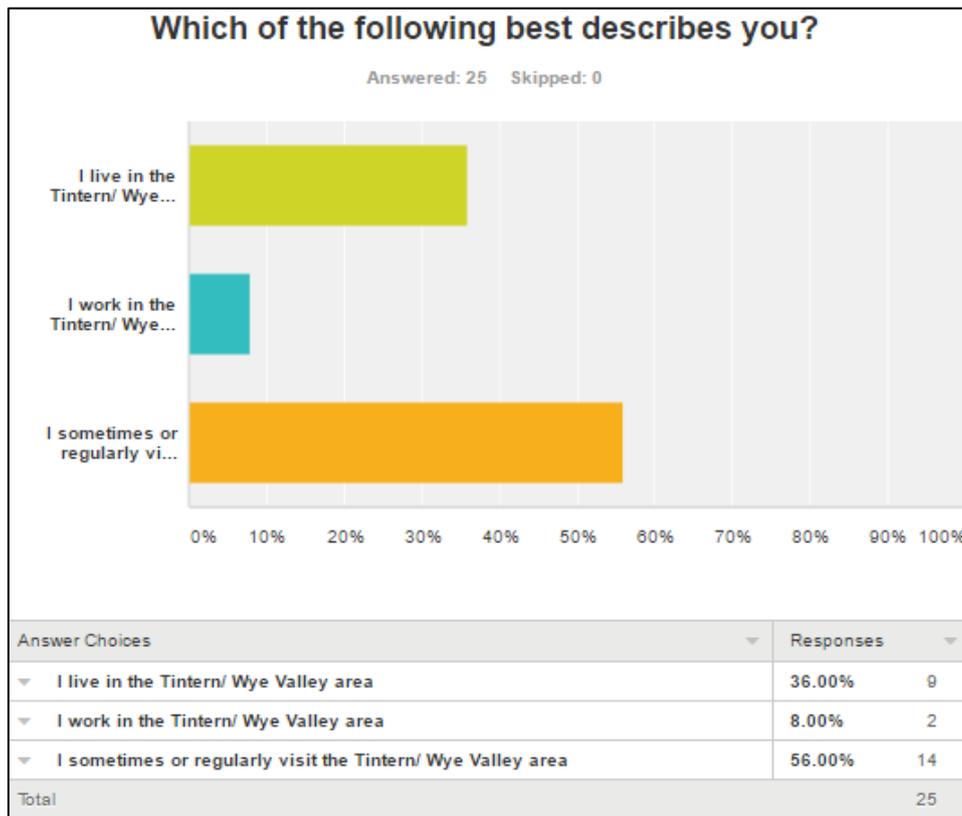
Respondents identified a range of different topographical features within the landscape resulting from the abbey's presence and activities, including the grange farms and their fieldscapes, stone buildings around the abbey, roadways, mills, drainage systems, fishponds and wharfs on the river. Some focussed on the meadows and land in the immediate vicinity of the abbey, others suggested that the agricultural landscape would have been more evident and active during the monastic period.

88% of respondents felt that the abbey had been a factor in attracting artistic people to the area. A special configuration of elements coming together in the picturesque and sublime landscape centred on the abbey ruins, a dramatic combination (with relative accessibility via the river) resulting in the valley becoming a magnet for artists and writers of the Romantic era and later

generations: a portal into the past; a legacy that remains today with a high proportion of artistic and creative residents in the area.

The ruins themselves are the most obvious legacy of the abbey and its period as the main landowner in the valley for 75% of respondents. Combined with the subsequent artistic response they are now the main factor in drawing people to the area. Although the ruins are the most visible and tangible legacy there would have been a profound shaping of the wider landscape, although this is more difficult to interpret and may have been superseded by later developments.

Current interpretive information and promotion provided by heritage and touristic bodies such as Cadw and the Wye Valley AONB is somewhat patchy in terms of quality and accessibility and tends to focus on the history and architecture of the abbey itself rather than its wider landscape context. There is scope for improvement but also a danger of over-interpretation.



**What are the main thoughts, words or feelings that come to mind when you are in or look at the landscape of Tintern Abbey in the Wye Valley?**

**Responses**

Overrun by traffic & tourists

Thoughts - a food mixer blitz which includes elements of a public information film from 1974 about byways of Britain featuring a hooded apparition, a vague idea of a weary Wordsworth looking down on the landscape, Cadfael/Derek Jacobi, Gothic/Byronic fetishism... while trying not to get upset by signs of 21st century ruining my fantasy like plastic windows, four wheel drives, over-interpretation aimed at visitors.

I feel completely at home.

Quiet, Woods, River, Peaceful,

Stunningly beautiful and a major asset to the area

Honey-pot, cars, unsympathetic woodlands, river erosion

Beautiful and tranquil, historic and mystical

Awe, power, secluded worship and productivity

Beauty, history, architecture in landscape

Breathtaking

Iconic, awe inspiring

Time to stop for a swift half in the days when I used to visit parents and other family in Hereford from Exeter. Wordsworth and other landscape related literature.

How remarkable it is that it has survived relatively intact.

Cistercian; beauty; sheep; destruction; monastic; peace; celibacy; shelter; healing; desert as in Cistercian terms; busier then; huge achievement by its builders; Wordsworth; dislike tourism

Time, decay, remains of, Wordsworth, thou wanderer thro' the woods, before.

River. Valley. Trees. History

Hysteria

Awe inspiring Breathtaking Beautiful Vast

Beauty, atmosphere, tourist

I have known this landscape all my life. It has associations with births, marriages, deaths, other rites of passage. Memories of all these come into my mind when I visit. I feel sad about the increased vehicular traffic and the commercialisation of the site.

The peace of the setting, and its appropriateness to the Cistercian perception.

Calm, peaceful

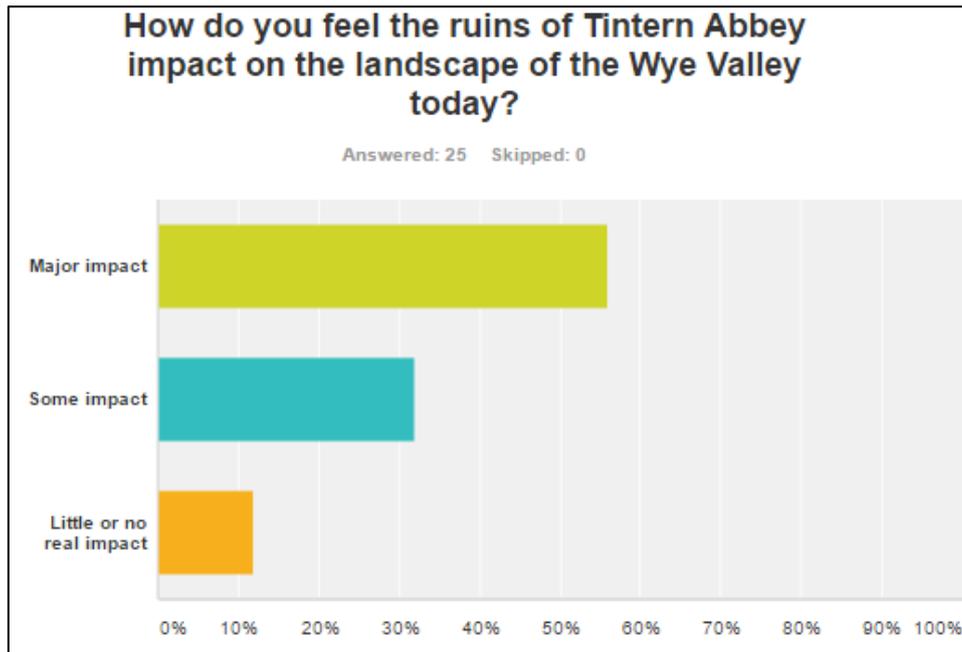
Tranquility, shelter, dramatic seasonal variations, mystique.

Feels like a lost domain; mysterious; easy to become absorbed by the landscape in some way that seems to open up perception - or skew the vision!

Its impact on artists and poets e.g. Turner, Wordsworth.

### **Summary of response content**

*Tintern and its Wye Valley landscape is a tranquil, atmospheric place, a combination of historic, natural and mystical beauty; its sense of place shaped by the history of the abbey, Romantic artists and poets and the, not always sympathetic, modern touristic imprint.*



### Comments

I'm a bit with Gilpin...

A focal point - something that inspires you and feeds the landscape with all the associations we project on to it, a sense of being able to reach into the past, provided you're not close up - like a painting or a flat-screen TV it has to be viewed at a distance for the associations to work.

The eyesore that used to be the Beaufort Hotel opposite detracts from the approach to the village.

Impact in a positive way, and although stark, blend into the surroundings too.

Its effect is very localised, and the wooded landscape, excepting vehicle flows, absorbs most visitors more the 200ms away.

The abbey acts as a magnet, or at least focus of interest, for visitors

The Abbey ruins still physically dominate the landscape of Tintern, they remain a major attraction for visitors and continue to have a positive socio-economic benefit on the area. They also have a strong emotional / spiritual / memory link for many people (locals and visitors).

As well as its historic and visual importance, it is presumably a major tourist destination and thus an important economic contributor

The windows frame the trees in Autumn as though there were stained glass in them.

Only really visible from the immediate vicinity.

But not in a negative way. I feel that it forms a focal point in the landscape as it opens out, especially coming from the south, my usual route.

I love Tintern and other Cistercian ruins especially Strata Florida and regret the modern road/ tourist facilities there - which hypocritically I use.

The abbey exists, it exists in the Wye Valley, it would be impossible to not have some impact on the landscape but, to modern aesthetics at least, there is a beauty in it's impact.

They allow you to connect with the landscape as the Abby draws your attention to different focus point within the landscape.

I find it impossible to envisage the landscape at Tintern without the Abbey. Having known it for 70 years, it can still surprise.

Sadly, visitors today may be more interested in craft shops, refreshments, etc than in the Abbey and its history.

It is the focus, particularly when seen from Offa's Dyke.

It's been there for so long that it forms part of the landscape.

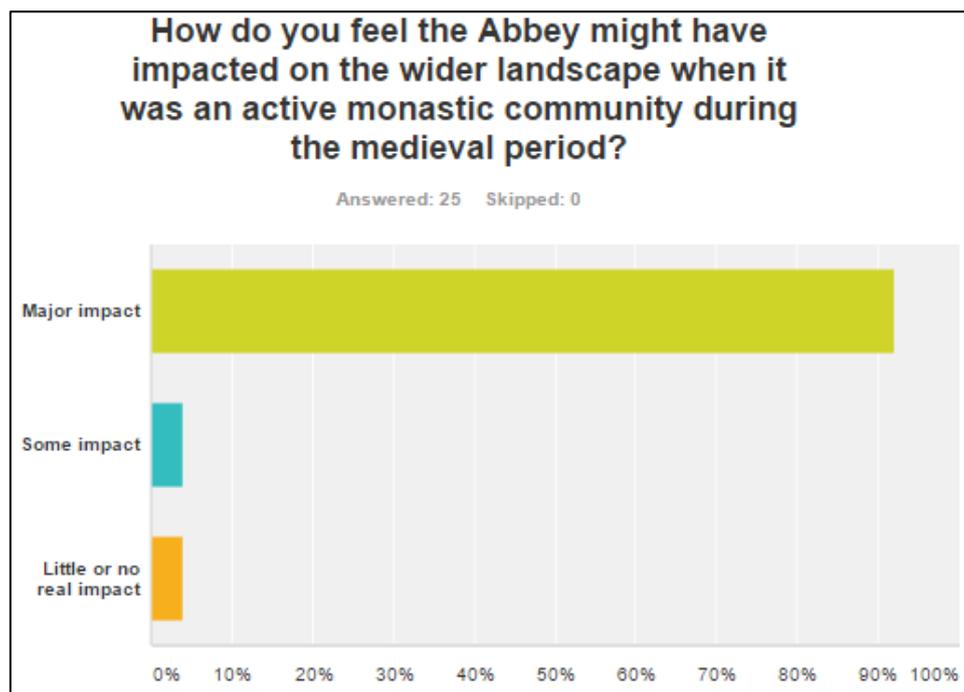
It has great impact on the Tintern area, the wider impacts appear to be more economic as it's pushed as a figurehead for the Wye Valley.

Certain vistas of the ruins that are revealed as you drive along the road coming from the north I still find quietly thrilling / stirring / stimulating even though I'm familiar with them

My feelings are affected by thinking about Keith Arnatt's more contemporary work of Tintern and the Wye

### **Summary of comments content**

*The abbey ruins are a focal point of the valley, a magnet for visitors that blends into its surroundings. Dominating the immediate landscape physically and perceptually, the abbey is also a touristic and economic figurehead for the Wye Valley generally though the scale of the surrounding river, woods and valley absorb the gaze a short distance away.*



### **Comments**

I suspect they were more important in industrial working than is generally assumed. The Cistercians were technologically advanced.

Imagine the landscape being shaped and twisted, packaged and processed, fortified and controlled.

Because the Cistercians chose remote places to build their abbeys, the buildings would have been very imposing. Stone needed to be quarried locally and transported along new trails. Also, agriculture was developed in the surrounding

area and on their grange farms, which would have meant more arable cultivation and later many sheep. The construction of weirs along the River Wye would also have meant changes to the water channel, as would the construction of about 4 corn mills on their lands.

Sheep farming most have been instrumental in extending and perpetuating woodland limitation, but the scale of activities of the 'locals' was likely to have otherwise been largely absorbed. Fishing weirs were contentious, apparently, and may well have inhibited river trading and its effects.

It would have dominated the landscape; physically, economically, socially, spiritually and probably politically & judicially too. If 'landscape' is the interaction between nature and culture, the Abbey in its heyday transformed both!

Like a castle's its local, national and international influence would have been wide spiritually and practically but, in terms of landscape, the road to Monmouth would be more significant; also the river, used for travel to other monasteries and for moving wool? might have been wider? Though the abbey is very close to the Wye. Floods? Fields? Granges?

My understanding is that an abbey, any abbey, would have been a major hub for trade and travel when it was fully operational. Trade because there would have been people there and people mean money. Travel because of the aforementioned trade but also because pilgrimage would have been a major part of the spiritual lives of most people in the area at that time.

Main hub of human activity within the landscape.

The activities of the monks from Tintern changed the landscape and was not limited to just that one spot

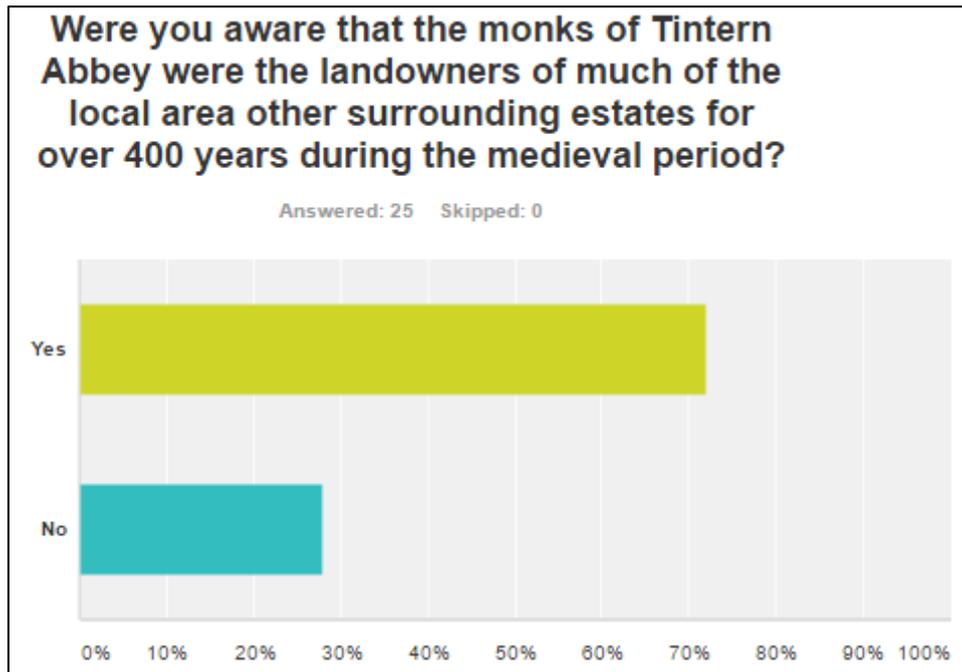
Spiritually uplifting, economically significant.

It would've presumably been a hive of trading activity between the monks & locals. Both visually and organisationally the presence of the monastic site would have had a powerful effect on those living in the area, many of whom probably derived income (or some equivalent in-kind benefits) directly or indirectly from the abbey as lay workers (guessing a bit here!), or at the other end of the scale there would have been people who were in a position (either geographically and/or from a status point of view) that required them to provide tithes or donations.

Significant as a focal point. Sheer scale and presence of the place. Travel would have been very difficult beyond the valley so the Wye assumed great importance too

### **Summary of comment content**

*The abbey was a busy economic and transport centre, the main hub of human activity in the area with the many of the local population deriving a living from the abbey economy directly or indirectly. The monastic community would have had a profound spiritual and economic influence, controlling and transforming the cultural and natural landscape, particularly agriculturally through arable and sheep farming on their grange farms, also roads for travel and trade, the quarrying of stone, operating fish weirs and industrial activity.*



### Comments

Place names, granges, land clearances, and knowledge gleaned from wide reading and the internet. Personal exploration on foot & discussion with fields archaeologists

To be honest most abbies and monasteries merge into one, but for some reason I think of Tintern as being like a human beehive harvesting cash... could be thinking of somewhere else.

The monks were granted 1200 acres of land in the Angiddy Fawr area (Trellech Grange) by Richard of Pembroke on the foundation of the abbey. There were other grange farms at Porthcasseg, Penterry, the lower Angiddy, Redding Grange, St. Arvans, Brockweir and Aswell Grange in the Forest of Dean.

Only what the statement above describes. All abbeys in that period were major landowners.

But somehow they never got their hands on Tintern Parva, I believe

There were numerous Granges including Trellech, Tidenham and Penterry / Porthcasseg. Their influence (and commerce) would have extended up and down the Wye.

I assumed so

They were Cistercians I think. Flaxley Abbey was another big land owner. They farmed fish, vegetables and herbs and had tenant farmers.

Just that in general terms, but not specifics.

I have read much about Cistercian abbeys, visited them, and used them in my fiction so I would know where to find details of the holdings e.g. David H Williams Welsh Cistercians.

I believe abbeys were culturally and financially powerful institutions.

The Abbey owned land on both sides of the river and employed a considerable number of the local population

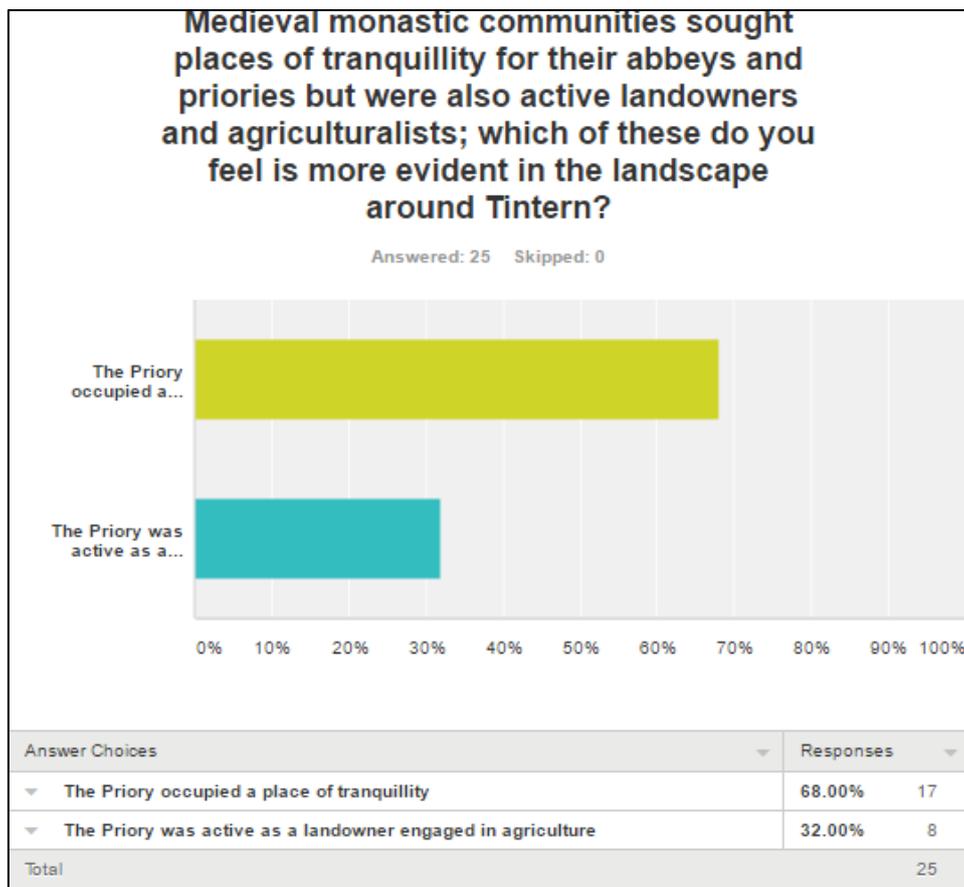
I'm not good at retaining information on the whole, but things do seep into me via a slow kind of osmosis through years of visits and reading bits of local and more general history, and over 35 years ago attending a course about the history of Medieval Monasteries. All this exposure means that I have acquired a sense of

the sequence of things (which is often close to the what happened!) but not the detail. Maybe I'm just too lazy to learn things properly, but another reason could be partly that this information gathering is usually about trying to find the context to the sense of place of locations that I am drawn to, rather than generating a framework of knowledge for its own sake.

Religious communities including the Anglican church held tremendous wealth and power along the Wye

**Summary of comment content**

*General awareness of the abbey and its monks as the main local landlord during the medieval period with grange farms on both sides of the Wye.*



**Can you think of any particular features of the landscape (other than the Abbey ruins themselves) which are the result of the Abbey being located here?**

**Responses**

Things evolve, so a chicken & egg situation. Fish pools or millpools, oil mill or wire drawing mill?

I can't because I'm more interested in Devil's Pulpit which has to be the most fantastically Gothic location, and Offa's Dyke and all those associations. Very clear thoughts of sheep meadows (or maybe just the same one).

The Abbey Mill site. The grange farms as above. The cold baths, below the A466 at Temple Doors. The linen well, beside the A466 just past the Reddings farm. Old

Stoney, the main roadway from Penterry and Porthcasseg. The quarry on the Gloucestershire side of the Wye. The erstwhile Beaufort hotel, said to be the site of the Abbey's stables and pottery.

The Abbey forge ruins

The nearby wharves probably originated due to the abbey and the village too.

St Mary's (ruined) Church, Open farmland of The Grange farms, Fish ponds of The Angiddy valley, a few tracks/roadways

The road running nearby the abbey and the cluster of buildings surrounding it; the clearing of trees; and intervention in the river course.

The surrounding historic stone buildings, The Monks Way and Abbey Passage across the river, Abbey Mill, the granges at Trellech, Tidenham and Penterry / Porthcasseg.

River - for fish ponds and water. They had a drainage system as well. Valley setting is a wide open space surrounded by trees. It's on the border with Wales which was strategic. Castles could offer protection maybe?

Links to the river, border of England/Wales

Not really

The settlement of Tintern itself must have been a result, from the date of the founding of the abbey

I think it is still possible to see that the lands immediately by the Abbey extended across the present roadway maybe where the now closed? hotel stands. The mill and its water supply. The meadows in the bend of the river

I suspect the land between the current A446 and the river would have been cleared by people from the abbey, it remains clear today. I wonder if there would have been less woodland when the abbey was functioning as there would have been a need for wood for building and cooking.

Fields, Industrial remains.

Roads.

docks at various points along the river - that was the major access route. The area was probably even more wooded before the arrival of the monks

Probably, the pastoral landscape.

Probably land recovery and improvement along the river valley, drainage.

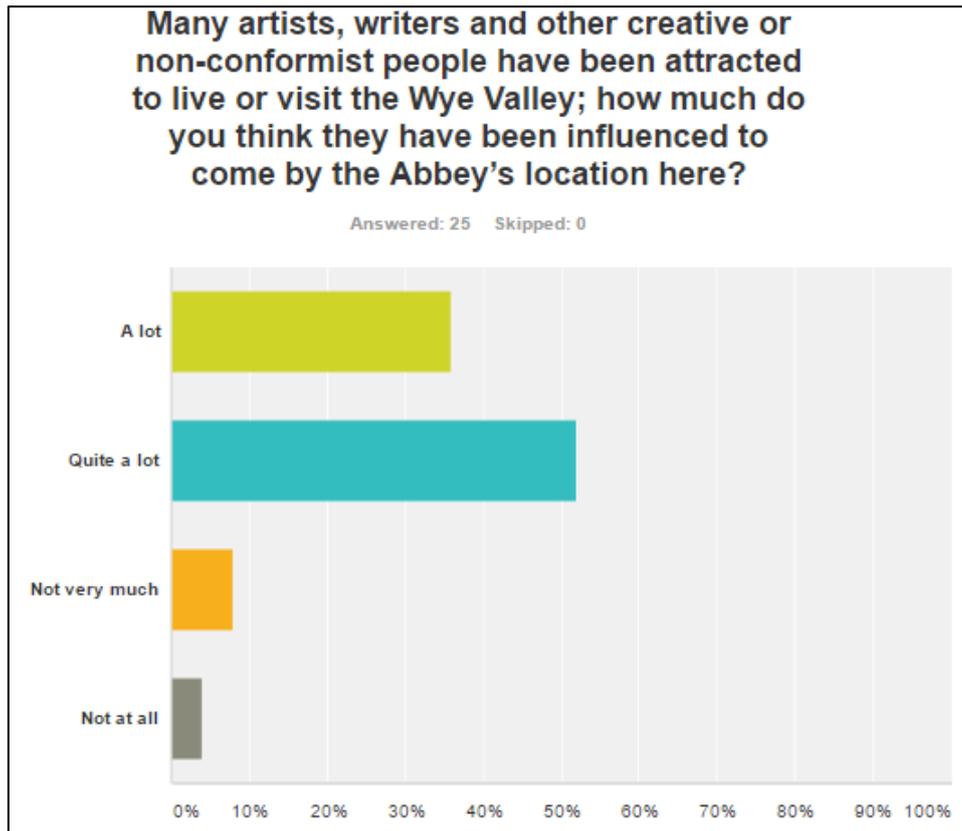
No

Fields around the valley floor used for grazing, but PS to 6 above and related to this question too - my answer to 6 is based on evidence of today, but I'm guessing the evidence of sheep farming and wool processing would have been much more apparent in the landscape when the monastery was fully active, and even up to the 18th/19thC when industry emerged in the valley.

Remote and therefore to certain degree protected from English - Welsh feuding

### **Summary of responses content**

*A range of different topographical features within the landscape resulted from the abbey's presence and activities, including the grange farms and their fieldscapes, stone buildings around the abbey, roadways, mills, drainage systems, fishponds and wharfs on the river. Some focussed on the meadows and land in the immediate vicinity of the abbey, others suggested that the agricultural landscape would have been more evident and active during the monastic period.*



### Comments

Think of it like a magnet - will draw anyone looking for some kind of portal into the past.

The birth of British tourism and the Picturesque movement meant that the Abbey became one of the major destinations for artists, writers and poets, famous or otherwise. In the 17th/18th century, there was said to be a very radical and alternative school at what is now The Nurtons. It may be said that the current inhabitants are still creative and non-conformist. Tintern does seem to have a high proportion of artists, craftspeople, writers and people who work in the media. The Abbey has been an inspiration to many people for many years.

The landscape, or the Abbey? I suspect that in most people's minds the two are wedded together.

The topography, making the Wye Valley so picturesque and sublime (and tranquil), was given added grandeur by the romantic ruins of the Abbey and the castles, but also the innovative industrial development in the 16th-19th centuries...along with the accessibility of the Wye.

The topography, making the Wye Valley so picturesque and sublime (and tranquil), was given added grandeur by the romantic ruins of the Abbey and the castles, but also the innovative industrial development in the 16th-19th centuries...along with the accessibility of the Wye.

People have lots of different reasons to come.

The Wye river was a major attraction for visitors who used boats to explore the Wye valley before the now defunct railway.

I feel that, even today in a secular society, Christian tranquility or perceived tranquility, influences many, not just artists and writers. Tintern was also made famous by the Romantics.

How could the observer not be influenced by the ruins? Whether seen close up or from above I think the abbey would draw the eye and the mind.

Ruins offer a place of romanticised tranquility more so (in my opinion) than intact historic buildings- the Abby is such a vast ruin it encourages visitors to utilise their imagination.

People come to visit the area because of the ruins made famous by Wordsworth and that painting of the abbey by moonlight. They then like the area and want to settle down there. The landscape is "pretty" in a Romantic way but it is not too far from civilisation.

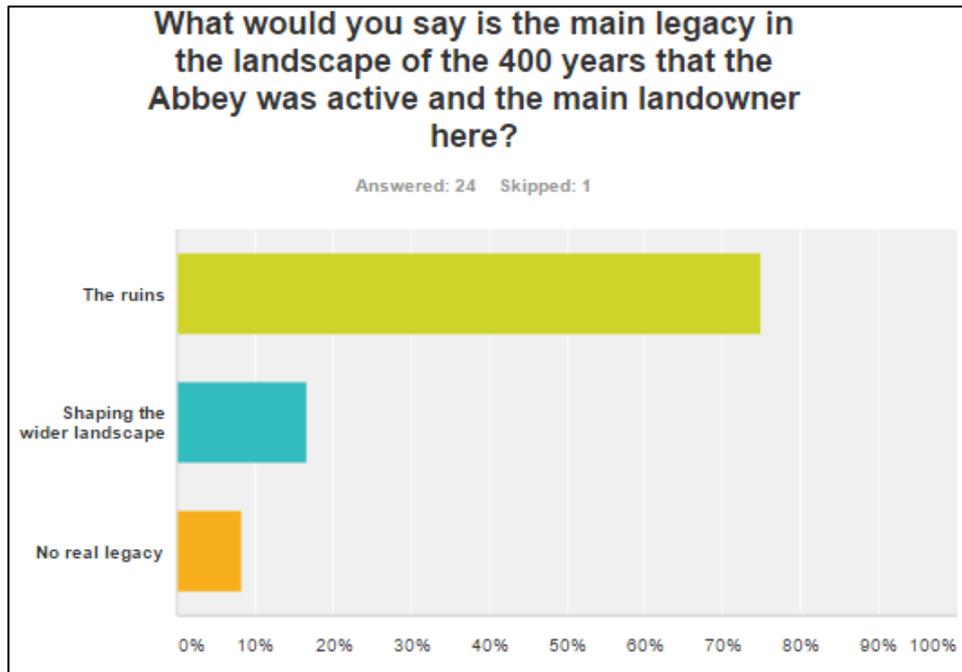
The area is beautiful and full of mystery and intrigue, the draw of the Abbey will likely have been down to the individual.

There are all sorts of clichéd things that could be, and probably have been, said about the place (as well as some beguiling things, e.g. Wordsworth) but just to add to clichés...there's something about the configuration of elements of the natural landscape (the meandering river along a narrow valley flanked by a few flat green fields, with steep wooded hillsides and cliffs) that in itself is pretty dramatic, and even magical, but the placing of the Abbey in this spot is a powerful statement, a stunningly elegant statement of monastic power and control in/over the landscape, yes, but it's eloquent as well (there's a danger of being lured into mystical geomancy stuff here!); it feels that at the time of construction there may have been an understanding of how to express some higher religious ideas (or aspirations, mystical/transcendental thought?) through the articulation of carefully wrought and placed stone structures within an already potent landscape (a mineral equivalent of plainsong perhaps?) On the right day the place can be thrumming with resonance for me and I'm guessing it was that quality that others have picked up over the centuries.

Many artists and poets associated with the Lake District also responded to the Wye Valley. Of course one could argue about whether both are equally 'Picturesque'. The Wye Valley in its lower reaches is quite enclosed/confined - a contrast to the Lakes?

**Summary of comment content**

*A special configuration of elements come together in the picturesque and sublime landscape centred on the abbey ruins, this dramatic combination (and the relative accessibility via the river) a major factor in the valley becoming a magnet for artists and writers of the Romantic era and later generations: a portal into the past; a legacy that remains today with a high proportion of artistic and creative residents in the area.*



### Comments

I should say shaping the landscape, but the lure of the ruins over the last couple of centuries would seem to be what gives the area an enduring magic and pulls people to it.

The situation of the ruins within the valley are so iconic that most visitors come to see only this. This has been augmented by the work of artists, writers and poets over the years. When I worked in the TIC at the Abbey, I was amazed by the number of people from all over the world, especially the USA, who had come to see the ruins. They often knew more than local people about the paintings, poems etc. than local people.

Not quite true! The 'divide' in local ownership between the Beauforts and Pembrokes after the dissolution might be more significant

The abbey has sustained occupancy of nearby housing; impacted upon local forestry

The shaping of the wider landscape, though profound, has been superseded by the industrial development and subsequent rail and road transport infrastructure. Sorry, don't know the area well enough to comment

The ruins now, but I would guess that post-Reformation there must have been a significant impact by the previous shaping of the wider landscape which may well still be in the wider landscape if one researched the situation

It's quite hard to interpret landscape.

The ruins are the most obvious legacy as they are tangible and focused in one place. The wider influence of the abbey of the surrounding landscape is perhaps less easily seen today but will no doubt be there.

Both the ruins and wider landscape leave a legacy behind. The ruins are the most obvious legacy but without the Abby the landscape surrounding it would also be very different. It time the ruins may crumble- but the landscape will continue to flourish.

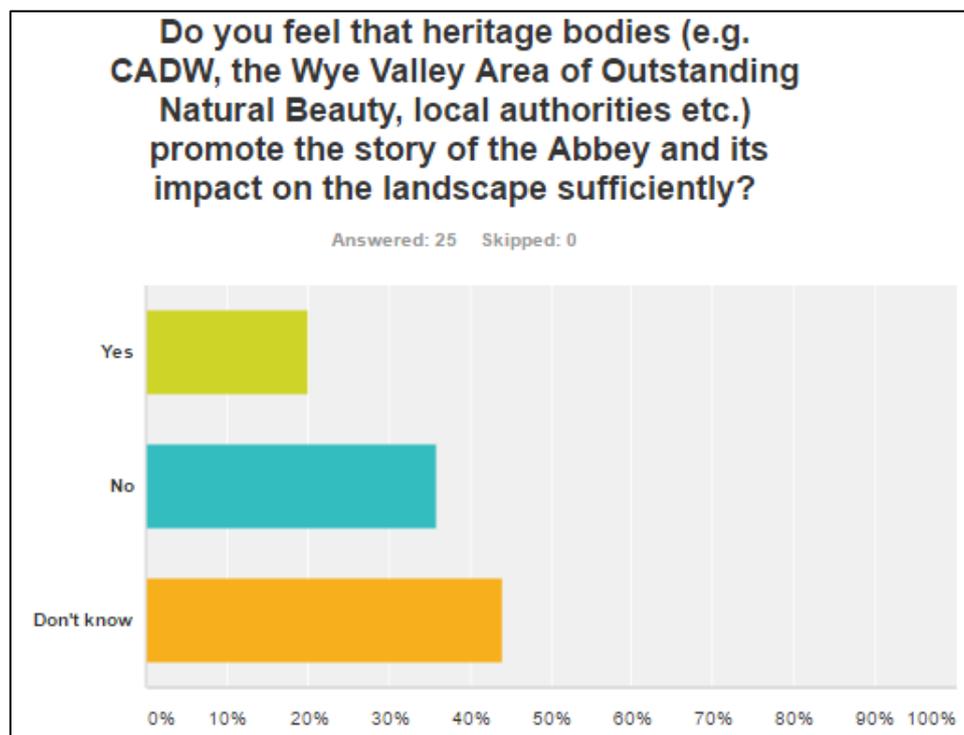
This is really because the ruins are so visible - it is more difficult to see/understand the wider legacy of the Abbey as landowner

Not sure what impact the Abbey would have had on the trees within this landscape or whether the hillsides would have been bare from sheep grazing? But some of the slopes must be too steep except for goats so guessing those steeper slopes would have had tree cover for centuries - further south there is a great section of yew and beech wood on the valley side, visually very rich in the autumn, with some fairly ancient looking yews...Food for thought!

Being a ruin one becomes mindful of why/how it became so and at the same time given it is incomplete we are able to imagine what the complete building would have felt.

### **Summary of comment content**

*The ruins themselves are the most obvious legacy of the monastic period and, combined with the subsequent artistic response are now the main factor in drawing people to the area. Although the ruins are the most visible and tangible legacy there would have been a profound shaping of the wider landscape, although this is more difficult to interpret and may have been superseded by later developments.*



### **Comments**

They all bang on about the Abbey - jewel in the crown etc - but disseminate little real information about the Cistercian's effect on the landscape or its relationship with the wider area

I'd rather heritage was a blank canvas to project my thoughts onto, so while it's great to have sensitive interpretation, I wouldn't want it theme-parked for families like the National Trust does with some properties/locations.

This is the 'best kept secret' in Wales. Despite Cadw's publications and the AONB's recent 'Overlooking the Wye' project, people in Monmouthshire, Wales

and Britain as a whole are still not aware of the Abbey itself and even less of the surrounding area. I think that Cadw's publications are 'preaching to the converted'. The AONB have held 2 River Festivals and will hold another in 2018. These were mainly 'performance art' events and failed to either involve local people or attract many tourists. Tourism is the main industry of Monmouthshire. Monmouthshire County Council is facing cuts, like all other authorities, but by closing TIC's and failing to promote the area, it is ensuring the decline in tourism. Local businesses depend on visitors to the area and they are finding it more difficult than ever to survive.

(Just a note, "Cadw" is a Welsh word, not an acronym, so should not all be in upper case) Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Tourism use the abbey's image and history a great deal as it is such an iconic and major draw to the Wye Valley. Rather they over-promote the Abbey, forgetting there's a couple of millenia of man around here, that 'Jo-public' is largely left unaware of; maybe that's not bad, though? CADW fits that description, AONB try, and our LA seems to follow its own agenda from a distance.

There is plenty of inference in local interpretation of the Abbey's wider influence/impact. However in the past there has been a disconnect between the 'realm' of Cadw and that of other parties with an interest in the historic environment. Thankfully that is now changing.

Find the information at the Abbey and surrounding area severely lacking.

Particularly a lack of info aimed at young visitors. My son was very interested in the site but struggle to find any information at his level.

The architecture and functions of the Abbey are covered but there's not so much about the landscape

I am not sure of the direct influence the bodies mentioned have on the story of the abbey and how it is promoted. That said promoting an understanding of the landscape, any landscape, is vitally important to help people connect with their environment. If people connect with and understand their environment they are more likely to love it. If they love it they are more likely to want to protect it, not necessarily from any and all forms of change but protect it from change without understanding.

Not enough- it is difficult to find any information about the landscape. The story most told is that of the Abby itself.

I do know that promotional activity takes place and the comparatively recently introduced river festival has attracted interest but I think it is mostly just about the Abbey as part of a scenically beautiful landscape and not so much about its impact on that landscape. However I have not made any attempt to find out if such information is available

I think it would be contradictory to the abbey's purpose and ethos to promote it more as a tourist honeypot.

A while since I've looked at this kind of material at Tintern itself but did only very recently discover the adjoining Angidy Valley with its faint ghosts of its once furious industrial activity and I did learn quite a lot from the interpretation material on offer. However, I'm ambivalent about interpretation boards (think I mentioned this in your last questionnaire about Llanthony area?); discovering the quality of a place, getting to understand it, and take some kind of temporary ownership of it on your own terms while you're there can be hindered, or just spoiled by well-meaning knowledge-mongers! How about an epic and historically accurate film about Cistercian conspiracy theories?!!!

Not really 'Don't know' but not sure whether leaflets in local libraries is enough. By contrast the Lakes has walking. Most visitors to Tintern would probably travel by car or coach from Chepstow or Monmouth direction.

***Summary of comment content***

*Current interpretive information and promotion provided by heritage and touristic bodies such as Cadw and the Wye Valley AONB is somewhat patchy in terms of quality and accessibility and tends to focus on the history and architecture of the abbey itself rather than its wider landscape context. There is scope for improvement but also a danger of over-interpretation.*