



ENGLISH HERITAGE

WELL DONE!

Congratulations on completing the trail!

We hope you've learnt a lot about the story of Rievaulx Abbey. Feel free to continue to explore the abbey with your group leaders.

WHAT NEXT?

Back at school, you could:

- **Write** a letter to English Heritage about what you learnt today.
- **Draw** an arch from the abbey church, and decorate it with medieval patterns and colours.
- **Compose** a poem about what you would smell as a medieval monk (for example, food in the refectory, herbs from the garden).
- **Create** a soundscape of what medieval abbey services sounded like (for example, male monks singing in Latin, church bells, footsteps, chanting).

Step into England's story

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This activity trail was inspired by an initial proposal developed by students at the University of York.

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KS2
KS3



NAME:

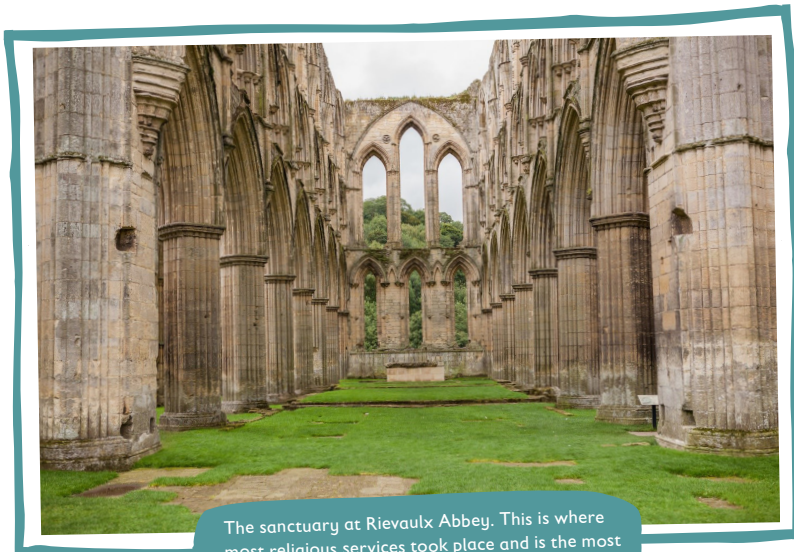
CLASS:

SCHOOL:

WELCOME!

Rievaulx Abbey (pronounced ree-VOH) was founded in 1132, and a community of monks lived here, devoting themselves to worshipping God. It quickly became one of the most spiritual places in medieval England.

There were also young men called novices. They lived at the monastery, spending lots of time in church, as well as gaining an education. The purpose of being a novice was to become a monk.



The sanctuary at Rievaulx Abbey. This is where most religious services took place and is the most holy part of the church.

Today you'll consider:

- what life was like for the monks and novices
- how the abbey has changed over time.

This booklet should take you around one hour to complete.

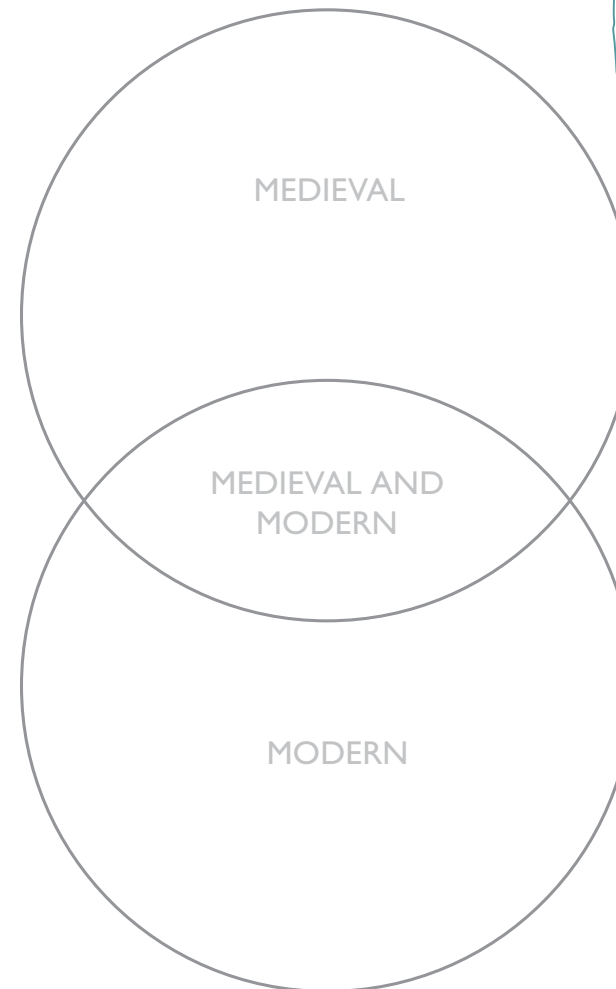
ACTIVITY 7 – TANNERY PART TWO

What were the uses of Rievaulx Abbey in the Middle Ages compared to how we use the abbey now?

Write your answers in the Venn diagram below. Some ideas to get you started are in the hint box.

HINT

- worshipping God
- learning about the past
- a place to live
- a place to work



ACTIVITY 6 – TANNERY



An abbey like Rievaulx was expensive to run. The tannery helped to make the abbey money by selling the leather made here to other towns and counties.

The tannery is where the monks would turn animal skins into leather, to be sold. When the monasteries were dissolved by King Henry VIII, part of his reason for doing so was so that he could have the wealth of monasteries such as Rievaulx.

A What valuable things did the abbey have that were removed in the Dissolution of the Monasteries? Hint: watch the video in the museum to help you and **write** your answers below.

.....

.....

B The abbey also had a fulling mill, swinehouse, forge, corn mill, blast furnace and pond. **What** happened in these places to help make money for the abbey? Use the display boards to help you and **write** your answers below. (We've done one for you.)

Fulling mill =

.....

Swinehouse =

.....

Forge = where metal was melted down and shaped into tools.

Corn mill =

.....

Blast furnace =

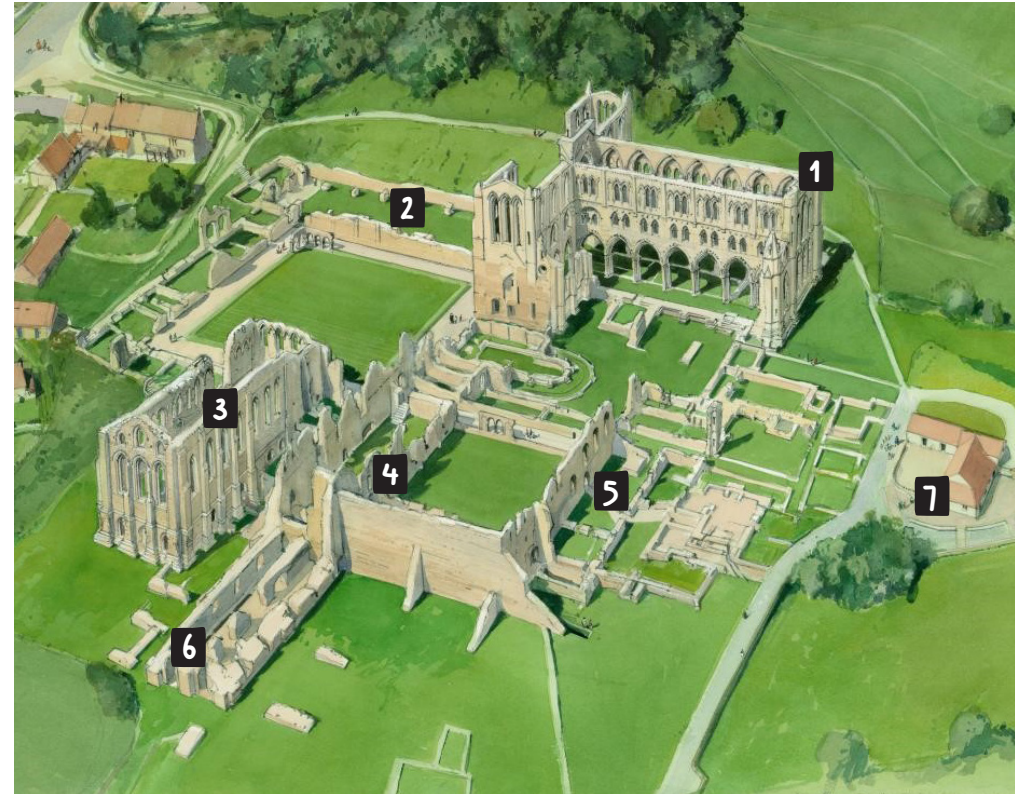
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Pond =

.....

RIEVAULX ABBEY PLAN

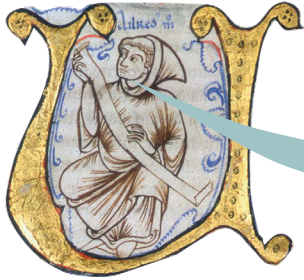
Use the plan to help you find your way around the site and keep track of the activities.



KEY

- | | |
|---|--------------------|
| 1 Outside the abbey | 5 Infirmary |
| 2 Nave | 6 Tannery |
| 3 Refectory | 7 Museum |
| 4 Day room and novices' chambers | |

ACTIVITY 1 – OUTSIDE THE ABBEY



Welcome to Rievaulx. My name is Aelred. I am the Abbot, which means I'm in charge of the abbey.

A Look at the picture below of the monks in church and **imagine** you are there. What would it be like to be a new novice? What would it be like to be a new novice? **Complete** these sentences:

I feel

.....

I see

.....

I hear

.....

I smell

.....

B Novices lived in the abbey with the monks, spending lots of time in church and studying. What qualities do you think make a good novice? **List** three of them below. (We've suggested one for you.)

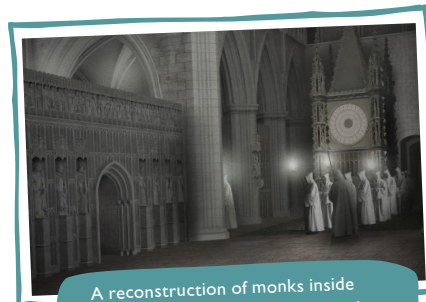
1. Patience

2.

.....

3.

.....



A reconstruction of monks inside Rievaulx Abbey for a church service.

ACTIVITY 5 – INFIRMARY



Medieval monks used herbs in many aspects of their lives, and often arranged their gardens to reflect this. There were three main uses of herbs: to heal the sick, to mask bad smells and to add flavour to food and drink.

Draw lines to **match** the herbs to their names and descriptions. Most of these herbs can be seen in the garden next to the museum, but they might not have the flowers seen in the images if they flower seasonally:



Chamomile

Used as a medieval cure for poison. It is a popular tea today due to its relaxing properties. It has white flowers.



Sage

Chewed to whiten teeth and used in cooking today.



Hyssop

Medieval people mixed this with oil, wine or syrup to cure coughs and colds. They also rubbed it on bruises to help soothe them. This plant has blue, purple or pink flowers.



Rosemary

Monks used this to help digestion, arthritis and baldness. Today it is popular in cooking.

ACTIVITY 4 – DAY ROOM AND NOVICE'S CHAMBERS

Novices had to live, work and sleep in the same room, every day. They shared all their possessions and food. Part of being a novice was giving up personal property and living in poverty with each other, whilst remaining friendly.



Arguments between novices would not be allowed, because it goes against Christian teaching. If novices fall out, or don't share, it is the novice master's job to punish them, as the senior monk in charge of novices.

He who seeks from friendship some profit other than friendship itself has not yet learned what friendship is.

(Abbot Aelred, speaking about friendship.)



A **Discuss** in pairs what you think Aelred means here. Do you agree with him? **Write** your thoughts below.

.....

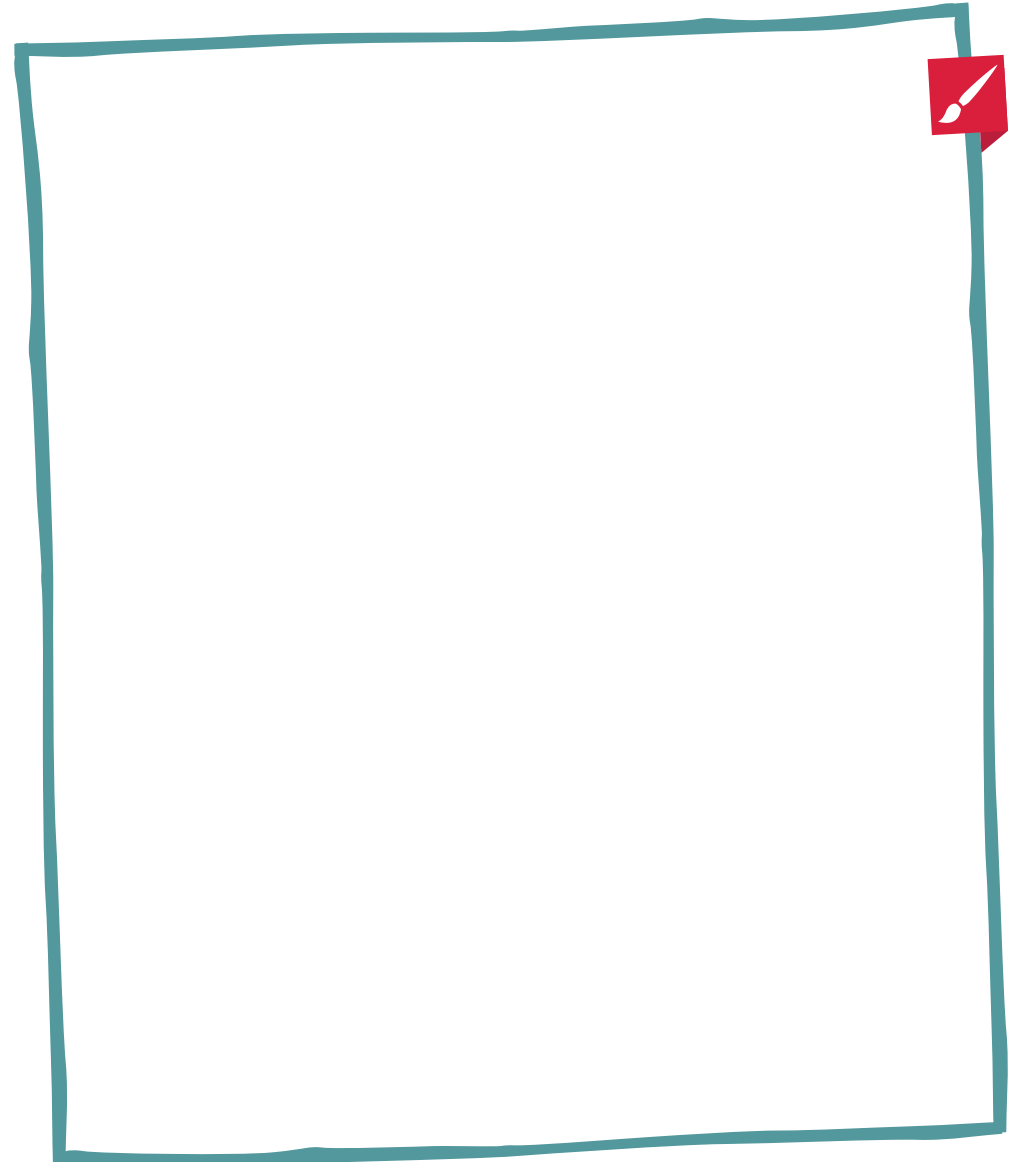
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B **What** do you think makes a good friend? **Write** down three qualities here.

1.
2.
3.

Since the 18th century, Rievaulx has been considered a romantic ruin that artists have visited for inspiration. The abbey is decorated with detailed carved stonework.

C **Find** a small section of carved stonework on the outside of the abbey. **Draw** this pattern in the box below.



ACTIVITY 2 – NAVE



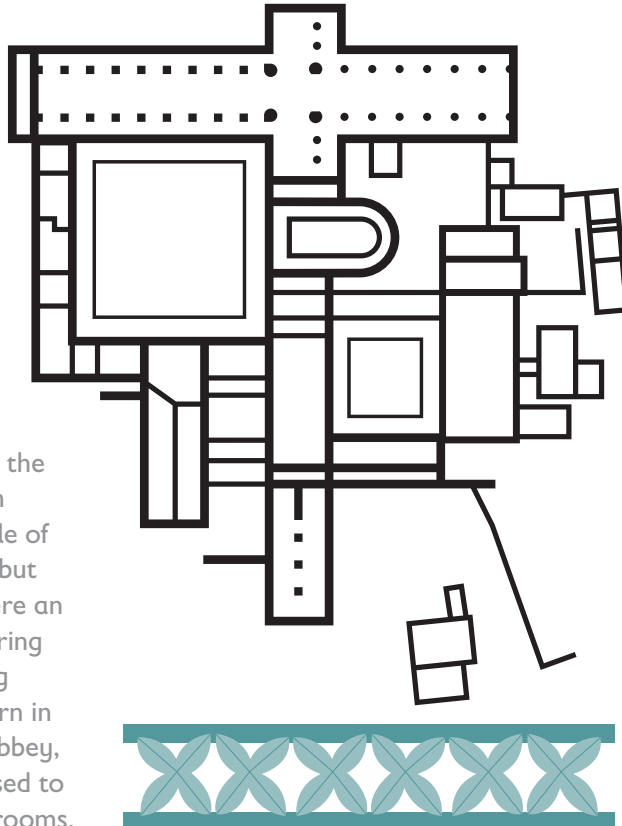
There are three main parts to the abbey:

- the nave, used for processions and burials
- the presbytery, where monks and novices came to pray eight times a day
- the transepts, which held small chapels where monks said prayers for the souls of people who gave money to the abbey.

The abbey is in the shape of a cross, representing the death of Jesus.

A Label this plan of the abbey with:

1. Nave
2. Transepts
3. Presbytery



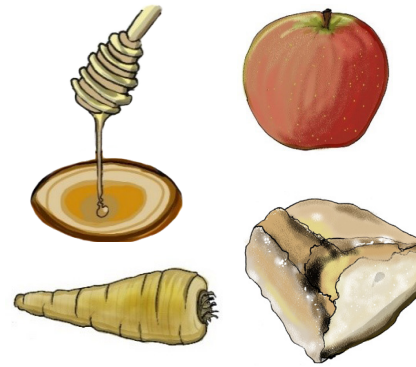
B Some of the decoration on the church is called a dogtooth pattern; there is an example of this on the right. Beautiful but simple carvings like this were an act of worship, meant to bring glory to God without being distracting. **Find** the pattern in the nave and around the abbey, and **discuss** why it was used to decorate these particular rooms.

ACTIVITY 3 – REFECTORY

A Look at the walls on either side of the door. Under each arch, on a Saturday, the novices would sit to have their feet washed by the abbot, an action to demonstrate showing kindness towards others.

1. **Spot** the water trough for the novice's feet.
2. **Discuss** why you think washing is important for religious people.

Washing is important in many world religions. Mosques, synagogues and temples all have special areas for washing before or during religious practices.



Being a monk means focusing your whole life on God and Jesus. When a novice entered the abbey, they would give up things in order to dedicate themselves completely to God.



The refectory was where the monks and novices ate their meals, including foods like apples, honey and parsnips. Most fruits and vegetables were grown by the monks and novices. They would not have eaten meat or fish.

B Use the table to rate what you would find challenging to give up as a novice (1 being the easiest, 6 being the most challenging).

Meat and fish	
Chatting and laughing	
Living with family	
Romantic relationships and the chance to have children	
Friends outside of the abbey	
Personal possessions	