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).

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.
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.

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.

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
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.

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 =  
Pond =  

B 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.

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

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

www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/rievaulx-abbey/school-visits
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.

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.

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:

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.
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.

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.

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.
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.

Label this plan of the abbey with:
1. Nave
2. Transepts
3. Presbytery

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.

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.

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

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.

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).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Item</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meat and fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chatting and laughing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Living with family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Romantic relationships and the chance to have children</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Friends outside of the abbey</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal possessions</td>
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