

Overlooking the **wye**

Dros Ddyffryn Gwy



Final Completion Report



November 2012



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Discover the heritage of the Wye Valley through our four themes



Hill Forts

'Upon the Little Doward, a hill of peculiarly fine outline..... are the interesting remains of a British camp. Three circular terraces wind up to the summit.'

Fosbroke, 1818

Considering what striking features they are in today's landscape these massive hillforts, constructed by Iron Age tribes, have guarded their history secretively. Only recently, through a series of archaeological digs, are we finding evidence about who lived here and what their lives were like. Their brooding presence, commanding wide vistas high above the Wye, reinforces the feeling that this area has been border country since time immemorial.



Hidden Industry

Echoing to the sound of hammers and forges and with fiery furnaces belching out fumes and smoke the Wye Valley was one of the earliest places in the UK to industrialise. Pioneering ironmasters took advantage of the wood and water all around, putting the Valley's metal-making industries at the cutting edge of industrial development. Today woodland and water provide a picturesque backdrop for this hidden industrial heritage.

'great iron-works... introduce noise and bustle into these regions of tranquillity'

William Gilpin, 1783



River Connections

'If you have never navigated the Wye, you have seen nothing.'

William Gilpin, 1783

Think of the Wye as a watery highway linking the riverside villages with the wider world and you'll begin to understand its importance in earlier times. Boatmen navigated flat bottomed boats called trows, laden with cargoes of hops, coal, iron ore, cider and oak bark, between the quays and wharves from Hereford to Chepstow. Tourists preferred to travel by boat too, choosing the more commodious Wye Tour boats which could be hired complete with boatmen in Ross, Monmouth and Chepstow.



Viewpoints

'so uncommonly excellent, that the most exact critic in landscape would scarcely wish to alter a position in the assemblage of woods, cliffs, ruins and water'

Wyndham, 1774

Tourists first discovered the beauty of the Wye Valley in the 18th century when it became fashionable to take a boat tour down the river to view its romantic scenery. One visitor, William Gilpin, wrote a book describing the most significant viewpoints and developed a set of rules for appreciating the scenery. Generations of artists, writers and poets were influenced and inspired by the views on Gilpin's Wye Tour. Today, as woodland and farmland are managed in different ways the views are changing; but don't worry, the old favourites remain for us to enjoy!

Part 1: Outline



View from The Eagle's Nest

1. Synopsis

The Overlooking the Wye Landscape Partnership Scheme invested over £3.1million into the local economy between 2008 & 2012. The Scheme embraced a 'string of pearls' of 40 linked projects, all focusing on helping visitors and locals to understand, enjoy and become involved in the sustainable management of the historic environment in the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Overlooking the Wye took a co-ordinated and holistic approach to the heritage of the Wye Valley, incorporating Iron Age, Medieval, Picturesque and Romantic periods as well as the area's industrial and transportation past.

The Scheme focused on five themes of Hidden Industry, River Connections, Viewpoints, Hillforts and Outreach and Interpretation.

The Overlooking the Wye Landscape Partnership Scheme was supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund and ran from June 2008 to November 2012. The Scheme covered an area within the Wye Valley AONB of approximately 90km² (36 sq miles) extending from just southeast of the city of Hereford down the Wye Valley to Chepstow, incorporating parts of the counties of Herefordshire, Gloucestershire and Monmouthshire and straddling the border between England and Wales.

A map of the Wye Valley AONB detailing all of the Scheme sites is in Appendix I.

Herefordshire Council was the lead partner for the £2.8million Scheme which was supported by a strong partnership of local, regional and national organisations and individuals led by the Wye Valley AONB Partnership working together to deliver the scheme over 4 years. All were able to provide matched funding contributions, either in cash or in kind. By the end of the Scheme the outputs exceeded the original objectives of the Scheme.

2. Introduction

This report concentrates on the achievements of the implementation phase of the Overlooking the Wye Scheme. This was the culmination of a process driven by the AONB Partnership that was nine years in gestation with various preparatory and pre-application phases, starting in 1999 when the idea of Overlooking the Wye was conceived. This led to the AONB Partnership being granted into a 'Project Planning Grant' by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) in 2004/05 and the award of the Stage 1 application in 2006. The Scheme was supported by broad partnership including the Forest of Dean District Council, the Forestry Commission (England and Wales), Gloucestershire County Council, Herefordshire Council, Monmouthshire County Council, the Woodland Trust and the Wye Valley AONB Partnership.

Government agencies (Cadw, Countryside Council for Wales, Environment Agency, English Heritage and Natural England) were also participating partners, as were many smaller organisations, including town, parish and community councils, and both private and voluntary sector organisations such as the National Trust and Gwent Wildlife Trust.

The Stage II 'Development' of the bid detailed each proposed project, with defined costs and consents where needed, and promises of matched funding contributions. Thus all projects timetabled for Year 1 were ready to start. The Stage II bid was approved by the Heritage Lottery Fund in March 2008 which allowed the Implementation stage to start in June 2008. The Implementation team was appointed in September/October 2008 and finished in April 2012. The AONB Unit continued the wrap-up of the Scheme until completion in November 2012.

The final stage of the Scheme will be the 10 year commitment from the partners during which the organisations and landowners are obliged to maintain and manage the conserved and enhanced sites.

The Scheme was called 'Overlooking the Wye' because many of the sites physically overlook the River Wye. It is also a word play that highlights that this landscape had become culturally overlooked and its history was not well known to modern residents and visitors to the area. However, the area has long been recognised as an exceptional landscape of national importance, both as defensive borderland and for its natural resources, attracting tourists for over 250 years. During the 16th-18th centuries the valley saw intensive industrial development using the water power of the valleyside streams and the rich local mineral resources along with plentiful charcoal from the woodlands. Quays all along the river helped transport goods and people up and down the valley and to markets and ports world-wide.

The overall aim of the Scheme was-

'to improve and promote enjoyment and understanding, including accessibility, involvement, conservation and management, of the historic environment in the landscape of the lower Wye Valley. The Scheme was made up of five programmes as central themes:

- **Hillforts**, the Iron Age hillforts clustered in the landscape along the Wye Valley which used the steep valley sides and cliffs as part of their defences.
- **Hidden Industry**, focussed on the important industrial and archaeological heritage including ironworks, paper mills, copper and tin works, which represent some of the earliest technological innovations in British industry.
- **River Connections**, because the river was the vital route for transport, trade and communications linking these industrial sites with the quaysides and wharves along the River Wye, to Chepstow Bristol and the wider world.
- **Viewpoints**, focussed on the picturesque movement and romantic viewpoints with associations to the Wye Tour including both designed and natural vantage points that gave early visitors to the area a sense of the 'Picturesque'.
- **Outreach and interpretation** activities to engage both visitors and local communities in the Scheme, and to disseminate a joined up approach enabling intellectual access to the crosscutting issues of the above themes.

Towards the end of the Scheme a series of evaluation interviews were undertaken with a range of participants in the Scheme. Some of the comments from these interviews are included as quotes in this report.

2.1. Organisation Structure

The Wye Valley AONB Partnership drew together a strong partnership of local councils, government agencies, private landowners and voluntary conservation and heritage interests

to drive forward the Overlooking the Wye Scheme. A Partnership Agreement was signed at Stage 1 between the lead authority, Herefordshire Council, and the other local authorities and main landowning organisations (see Appendix II). This Agreement established the governance structures of a Partnership Board (drawn from the cross-section of public, private and voluntary sectors) and a Consultative Group (composed of the Partnership Board, supplemented by representatives from a wider range of projects) supported by a Technical Officers' Group (composed of the main Scheme partners). The Technical Officers' Group tended to meet one month before the Partnership Board, which met at six monthly intervals (although more frequently at the beginning and end of the Scheme). The Consultative Group also tended to meet at six monthly intervals, usually 2-3 months before the Partnership Board. The diagram below outlines the Scheme's organisational structure. The composition of these three groups is detailed in Appendix II.

The Implementation Team to deliver the Overlooking the Wye Scheme was established with four staff members. They delivered some projects directly and supervised other delivery via partner organisations. The Wye Valley AONB Officer, Andrew Blake, line managed the team and reported on the Scheme's progress to the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee. The team as a whole reported to, and serviced, the Technical Officers' Group, Partnership Board and Consultative Group. The team also reported to the HLF monitor every quarter as part of the authorisation process for each quarterly HLF grant claim form.

The management of the Scheme was commended by many of the participating partners.

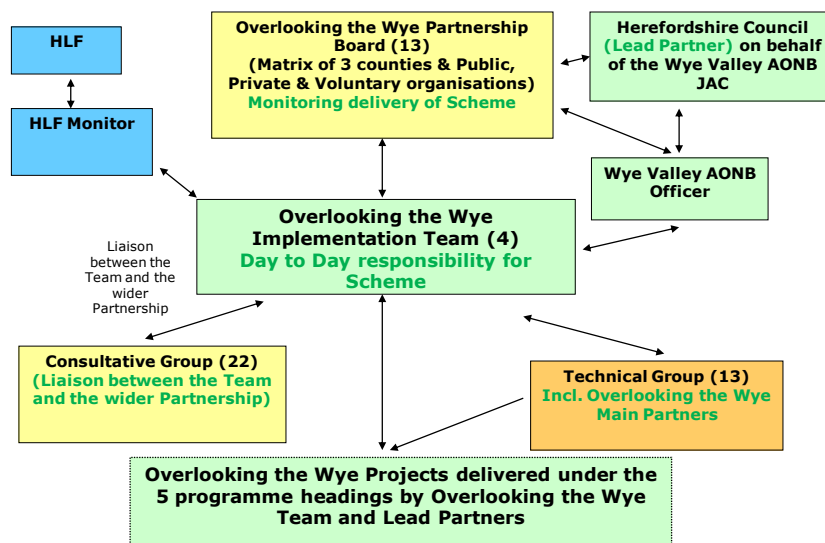
'It's been excellent, in a way in terms of the partnership side of it, we set quite high standards and expected to be OK because we have set partners which are principal partners who are very used to working with each other, so it wasn't like starting up a partnership and a Scheme from scratch. This is a natural flow out of partnership working that's been going on in the Wye Valley for 40+ years. Obviously this has ramped up that partnership to another level in a sense of a range of partners but really that's been quite smooth and has built on existing relationships but added new relationships as well. At a more micro level, the staff team just performed miracles in terms of just delivery and continually driving us forward.'

Matthew Lewis, Countryside Manager, Monmouthshire County Council

'I've been a councillor quite a long time, involved with Herefordshire Council mostly in that area, but to be able to get all the partners to work together, it's been excellent, one of the best Schemes that I've ever been on for partnership co-operation. You've got Monmouthshire, Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean, Herefordshire and of course, all the Parish Councils and all the other people who have been involved.'

Cllr Phil Cutter, Chairman of Overlooking the Wye Partnership Board

Fig.1: Overlooking the Wye Management Structure



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2.2. Implementation Team

The four posts for the Implementation Team were recruited in September/October 2008. The team skills were wide ranging and well matched. However there had been a delay in advertising the jobs due to the decision by Herefordshire Council, as lead partner and employing authority, to undertake Job Evaluation of the posts. Due to a low grading of the Interpretation and Outreach Officer post it was not possible to appoint first time round and the post had to have a Market Forces Supplement added before re-advertising. Consequently the full team was not in place until March 2009 (nearly a year after the Stage 2 award).

The Implementation Team were:

Sue Middleton	Scheme Manager (full time)
Kate Biggs	Project Officer (full time)
Julie Godfrey	Finance and Administration Officer (part time)
Victoria Oaten	Outreach and Interpretation Officer (full time)

After a year the Interpretation and Outreach Officer took Maternity leave and decided not to return to work. So the remaining three staff covered the Outreach and Interpretation role until Ruth Waycott was brought in as an external interpretive consultant from August 2010 onwards to lead on this area of work. However, the team worked extremely well together and were a key part of the overall success of the Scheme.

'I've been involved in a number of big HLF funding projects and I think this, by far, is the best. The team that Andrew has put together here have been excellent. They've been able to focus on the project itself; myself and the other partners in this, it's part of our job with lots of other things going on where Andrew's team and Sue have been able to focus on that and put the time and effort into keeping us on the straight and narrow. I do think that Sue especially in project management and keeping everyone on the straight and narrow has been exemplary. It's been excellent.'

Phil Morton, Forestry Commission

'It has been complex, and I have to say Sue, Kate and Julie have been fantastic in carrying that complexity through, because keeping 40 plates spinning at once is a pretty good achievement by anyone's account. They've done it all on time, on budget and to a phenomenally high level of quality.'

Andrew Blake, Wye Valley AONB Officer

'I think the way that the project team have actually run it has been very good. There are two levels that you look at in a project like this in particular – one of which is the financial discipline, of actually having a plan, a budget, contingency on a huge number of schemes, none of which are going to go exactly to schedule and budget – they have controlled that very well. They've controlled the contingency on the planning, they've looked at – there were very good reports, very clear reports on the projects so, as a Board, we could see how things were going. Sue Middleton in particular has been tremendous in the way she's got people to listen – she listens and then talks to people very calmly through things and it's been very good. The whole team's worked very well together.'

Lawrie Lowe, Coppett Hill Common Trust

3. Summary and Conclusion

3.1. Summary

The Overlooking the Wye Scheme has been very successful in both raising the profile of the heritage in the area and empowering the participating organisations and communities. This was achieved by completing both conservation works at designated and locally important heritage sites and by increasing awareness of the various historic and cultural aspects of the area, both tangible and non-tangible, using a variety of outreach events and interpretive media. The Scheme was able to attract significant additional funding augmenting the HLF grant and match funding contributions, taking the actual value to over £3.1million.

All of the works originally described in the Overlooking the Wye Revised Implementation Plan (Feb 2008) have been completed within the five themes: Hillforts, Hidden Industry, River Connections, Viewpoints and Interpretation & Outreach. Conservation works and

access improvements have been completed at thirty one sites and interpretive materials have been installed at all these. Due to the careful management of the budget and the contingency fund, it has been possible to undertake works on nine additional sites, including Whitecliff Furnace as a major additional project in the final year of the Scheme. The Scheme was also able to exceed the planned range of outreach activities in the final year.

It is in the nature of projects that identified proposals will change over time and the flexibility to accommodate this evolution has been a strength of the Overlooking the Wye Partnership. The organisational structure of the Scheme has facilitated communication and co-operative working amongst the various partners, building on the existing relationships within the Wye Valley AONB Partnership.

A fundamental element contributing to the successful completion of the Scheme has been obtaining the required level of matched funding contributions, and more besides. This means that not only have all works and additional elements been completed, but there are also funds remaining that will be retained by the Wye Valley AONB Unit to:

- Perform some maintenance tasks required on Overlooking the Wye sites
- Replace interpretation panels or re-print leaflets
- Invest in heritage related projects to lever in further funding
- Set up a Wye Valley AONB Fund for future community and heritage projects.

During the course of the Scheme members of the Overlooking the Wye team and partner organisations have developed management skills and professional expertise. Significant lessons have been learned, for example:-

- ❖ regarding the need for long term planning and accommodating change (particularly over the number of consents/permissions needed for sites with multiple designations and seasonal variations e.g. bird nesting, bats hibernating).
- ❖ The Overlooking the Wye seminars enabled good exchanges of views and the sharing of good practice between disciplines. For example the European Protected Species (EPS) seminar, that evolved out of the need to protect Scheduled Monuments whilst retaining habitat for EPS, resulted in conservationists from both the built heritage and ecological professions gaining a better understanding of each other's perspectives.
- ❖ The need for local community consultation to garner support for projects is not a new 'lesson' but the importance of identifying key individuals (and gaining their support) was reinforced, for example when works at Devils Pulpit and Symonds Yat Rock were refused planning permission. Whilst the latter project went ahead when planning permission was granted at appeal, the former site had a substantial re-design to produce a solution much more sympathetic to the local environment. In both cases all agreed that the works were excellent when completed.

A wide range of the activities engaging local communities enabled over 27,500 people to benefit and take part in the Scheme:-

- 4 students from local schools did their 'work experience' week with the Overlooking the Wye team
- 15 mature students attended two modules over two terms covering 'Exploring Heritage in the Field' and 'Heritage Story Telling'
- 181 volunteers took part in a range of activities, both working on sites and assisting at celebratory events
- 212 people benefited from 22 training courses
- 255 people were driven around sites on 18 minibus tours
- 385 people attended 20 walks and talks
- 389 people attended 3 Day school events
- 1,169 people came to a range of 16 other events
- 1,164 school students (including some staff) explored the area on summer learning days or Museum on the Move events

- 1,500 people attended the launch of the Scheme at Goodrich Castle
- 8,500 people visited the 4 main celebratory events in 2011 (Hands on History, Iron Age Rampage, On the Way to the Wye, Medieval Mayhem)
- 13,632 people attended The Wye Tour and its Artists exhibition at Chepstow Museum
- 103 people attended the final Overlooking the Wye seminar

These were reported in 152 articles in the local press and a regular 4 page feature in the Wye Valley AONB newsletter 'Picturesque', with 6,500 published and distributed twice per annum.

The Overlooking the Wye Implementation Team finished at the end of March 2012, however the legacy from the Scheme will continue for many years to come, under the continuing guardianship of the Wye Valley AONB Unit and the wider AONB Partnership. The benefits from the Scheme will take a number of forms, as detailed below:

- Heritage Assets conserved
- Footpaths and access improved
- Interpretive information; on panels, ceramic plaques, interactive displays, video clips, canoeing guidebook, walking trail leaflets, a book and the website
- The Heritage course material developed by the Overlooking the Wye Project Officer and the Interpretation Consultant for the University of South Wales can be re-used in neighbouring locations
- Education resource packs produced
- The Sustainable Tourism Strategy with its 5 year action plan
- The AONB Fund available for future investment and community applications
- The establishment of a Buildings Preservation Trust covering the area
- Phase 2 for conservation works at Whitecliff Ironworks, following on from the successful completion of works on the main furnace structure
- Wider more intangible benefits are more difficult to measure. For example, the significant number of people within the area that have an increased awareness of the area's assets and historical significance and an appreciation of how the landscape has changed over time will continue to trickle down.

3.2. Conclusion

The Overlooking the Wye Scheme has been very successful in meeting and exceeding its objectives and leaving a legacy of completed projects that will continue to enhance the understanding of the historic significance of the Wye Valley for many years to come.

Overall the Overlooking the Wye Scheme has been successful in meeting the Heritage Lottery Fund's four priorities for a Landscape Partnership Scheme. These are:

- Conserving or restoring the built and natural features that create the historic character of the landscape
- Conserving and celebrating the cultural associations and activities of the landscape area
- Encouraging more people to access, learn about, become involved in and make decisions on their landscape heritage
- Improving understanding of local crafts and other skills by providing training opportunities

The achievements of Overlooking the Wye have also helped strengthen the existing partnerships working in the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) that will conserve and enhance the legacy of the Scheme for future generations.

4. Finance

4.1. Expenditure

The value of the Scheme at Stage 2 was £2,816,438 with £1,915,000 offered from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) at an eligible grant rate of 69.24%. At the close of the Scheme eligible expenditure had exceeded the £2,816,438 reaching £2,866,018 with further accountable direct expenditure of £300,239 giving a Scheme total of £3,166,257 plus there were additional items of partner expenditure not included in these budgets (see 12.2 below).

Table 1, below, provides a comparison between the budgeted figures at the start of the Scheme with the final eligible HLF grant aided spend at the end of the Scheme. The largest underspend has been in the payment of staff. This is partially due to the re-scaling of the team's salaries before recruitment and partly due to the departure of one of the team members following maternity leave. However, the use of an external interpretation consultant has been categorised under 'staff' as she was partially fulfilling this staff role.

The River Connections theme showed minimal variations over the period of the Scheme (+1.9%). Both the Outreach and Interpretation activities and Hillforts theme were down on expenditure (-7.9% and -5.1% respectively). The former was due partly to not having to print the book about the Scheme, which is being published commercially. Both the Viewpoints and Hidden Industry themes were significantly increased (+8.2% and +20.7% respectively). These were due to major structural works. In particular, one of the Viewpoint structures (The Alcove) being larger than anticipated at the Development stage with consequent increases in costs. The Hidden Industry spend was higher because a reserve project was included in the third year, when it became apparent that there was sufficient contingency budget available to complete conservation works on the main furnace structure at Whitecliff Ironworks, a Scheduled Monument 'at Risk'.

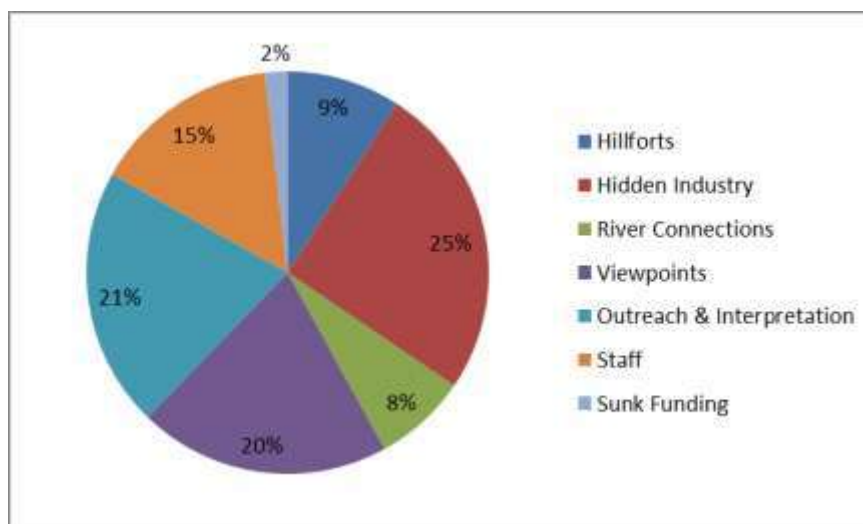
Table 1: Overlooking the Wye Initial Budget v. eligible Final Spend (£) by Programme

Programme	Initial Budget (£)	Final Outturn (£)	% Deviation
Hillforts	271,705	257,995	-5.1
Hidden Industry	591,447	713,756	+20.7
River Connections	207,251	211,231	+1.9
Viewpoints	527,207	570,378	+8.2
Outreach & Interpretation	638,546	588,306	-7.9
Staff	529,377	423,867	-19.9
Sunk Funding*	50,905	50,905	0.0
Total	2,816,438	2,816,438	0.0

*Sunk Funding relates to partner expenditure in the Stage I planning for the bid

Hidden Industry is the largest single 'segment' of the themes (25.3%), followed by Outreach and Interpretation just ahead of Viewpoints (20.9% and 20.3% respectively). The relative sizes of each theme spend category are shown below in Fig.2.

Fig.2: Overlooking the Wye Final Spend % by Programme



4.2. Income

Funding of £850,565 was required to match the £1,915,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) at a rate of 30.76% against the HLF 69.24%. At the Stage 2 approval much of the match funding had been offered from a wide variety of partner organisations. (The 'sunk funding' of £50,905 is counted as a partner contribution carried over from the Stage 1 bid). At the close of the Scheme £910,971 of cash contributions had been received along with £114,930 worth of in-kind contributions giving a total match funding value of £1,076,806.

The list of partners contributing cash match funding is detailed in Table 2.

Table 2: Overlooking the Wye Final Income by Partner Organisation

Source of funding	Amount received
Abbey Mill	£10,463
Adventa	£53,761
Bridstow Parish Council	£100
Cadw	£123,400
CCW	£30,000
Chepstow Town Council	£15,000
Coppett Hill Common Trust	£2,625
CPRW	£200
English Bicknor Parish Council	£1,000
English Heritage	£9,600
Ferrigan, M	£2,000
Forestry Commission (England)	£21,000
Forestry Commission (Wales)	£2,000
Forest of Dean District Council	£31,500
Francis, Barbara	£2,000
Friends of Coppett Hill	£2,500
Gloucestershire CC Archaeology	£21,000
Gloucestershire CC Rights of Way	£5,000
Gloucestershire Environmental Trust	£19,000
Hewelsfield & Brockweir Parish Council	£1,500
Llandogo - B Rosewell	£2,000
Monmouth Town Council	£9,800
Monmouthshire CC Community Action	£1,000
Monmouthshire CC Rights of Way	£16,621
Monmouthshire CC	£43,541

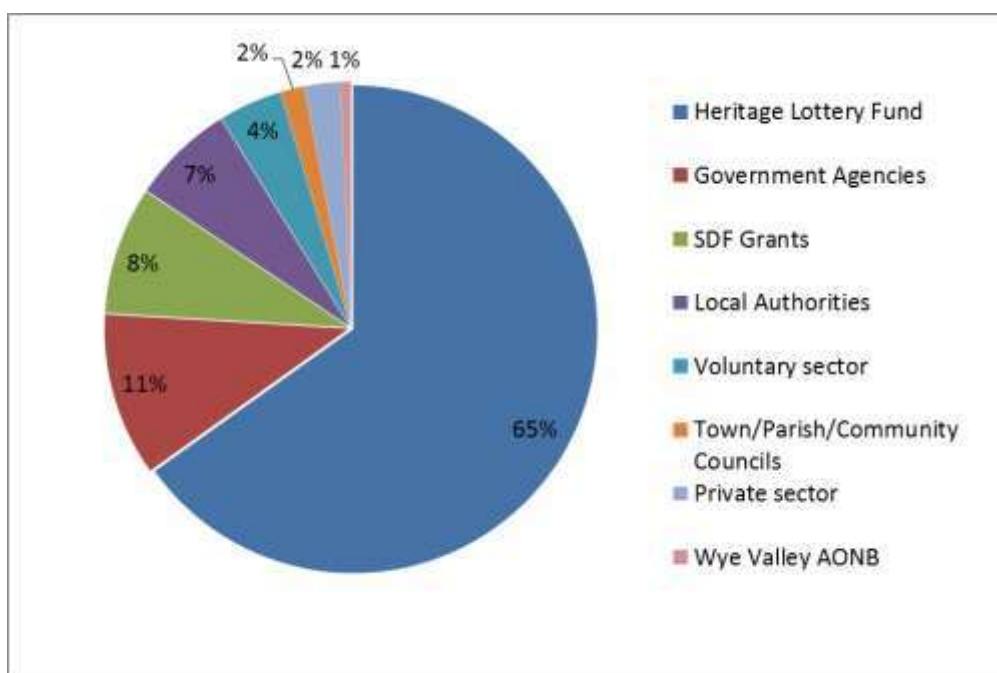
Monmouthshire CC – Highways	£24,272
National Grid	£10,000
National Trust	£9,738
Natural England	£66,356
Ross Town Council	£5,000
SDF (England)	£84,747
SDF (Wales)	£164,132
Tintern Community Council	£7,500
Trellech United Community Council	£6,000
Woodland Trust	£86,615
Wye Valley AONB	£20,000
Totals	£910,971.00

Table 3 below summarises the contributions from each sector for both cash and in-kind amounts. Figure 3 outlines the relative percentage split between sectors for all contributions.

Table 3 Summary Final Contributions by Type of Organisation (excluding Sunk Funding)

Type of Organisation	Contribution Cash (£)	%	Contribution In kind (£ value)	TOTAL contribution (£)
Heritage Lottery Fund	1,915,000	67.8		1,915,000
Government Agencies	306,117	10.8	12,224	318,341
SDF Grants	248,879	8.8		248,879
Local Authorities	142,934	5.1	56,397	199,331
Voluntary sector	101,678	3.6	21,980	123,658
Town/Parish/Community Councils	45,900	1.6		45,900
Private sector	45,463	1.6	24,329	69,792
Wye Valley AONB	20,000	0.7		20,000
Total	2,825,971	100	114,930	2,940,901

Fig.3: Overlooking the Wye Total Final contributions by Type of Funding Organisation (excluding Sunk Funding)



The total amount of cash matched funding contributions at £910,971 exceeded the target figure of £850,565 by £60,406. It was agreed by the Overlooking the Wye Partnership Board and the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee that this surplus would be held and managed by the Wye Valley AONB Unit in order to:-

- Perform some maintenance tasks required on Overlooking the Wye sites
- Replace interpretation panels or re-print leaflets
- Invest in heritage related projects to lever in further funding
- Set up a Wye Valley AONB Fund for future community and heritage projects.

One example comment about the financial aspect of the Scheme was:

'I think I've had value for money from the project. What we've got out of it and what the Forestry Commission put in, we put a lot of time, a lot of technical expertise into it. Our cash side of it – what we've got in return was excellent.'

Phil Morton, Forestry Commission

Appendix III details the Initial Budget (£) v. Final Outturn (£) and % Deviation, by Site.

Part 2: Programmes



5. Hillforts

Objective: To enhance the significance of the hillforts clustered in the landscape through improved access and interpretation to appropriate sites.

Conservation and enhancement works to the value of £258,000, including £22,517 of in-kind contributions, have been completed at three sites, Little Doward, Symonds Yat Rock and Chase Woods. The major works at Little Doward involved the removal of a conifer plantation in order to reveal the features of the Iron Age Hillfort beneath. In contrast, the challenge at Symonds Yat Rock was to raise awareness of the Iron Age hillfort features which were easily visible at this popular visitor destination, although not recognised as such. There were also some erosion repairs to the edges of the ramparts.

Both Symonds Yat Rock and Chase Woods now have improved access routes on their sites. The elevated walkway up to the viewpoint at Symonds Yat Rock is linked with the improved pathway through the hillfort to provide all ability access on 280m of pathway. The public right of way to Chase Woods hillfort has been re-instated with waymarkers and some new steps so that the improved route covers 1,350m.

Interpretation materials now enhance the information available on the three hillfort sites and the 'Head for the Hillfort' trail leaflet links the two largest sites at Symonds Yat Rock and Little Doward. The Destination Wye Valley exhibition at Old Station Tintern contains information on the Hillforts theme and the overall Scheme.

About 2,500 members of the public attended a range of activities relating to the Hillforts theme (including the 'Iron Age Rampage' event at Symonds Yat Rock). Dedicated volunteers spent many weeks on two phases of archaeological excavations at Little Doward and unearthed many interesting finds which have contributed greatly to the understanding of the site. A day school seminar attended by over 100 people further focused on the academic understanding of hillforts. Other events included guided walks at Little Doward (for archaeology, butterflies and ancient woodland) and Fun Days at Symonds Yat Rock.

5.1. Little Doward:

Hillforts & Viewpoints

Little Doward hillfort is a Scheduled Monument owned by the Woodland Trust surrounded by SSSI and SAC Woodland. It was also part of an 18th Century designed landscape of walkways and viewpoints created by the ironmaster Richard Blakemore.

The hillfort was constructed in two distinct phases with two conjoined enclosures of which the lower/eastern 'annex' is the earlier, as evidenced by soil samples from the latest phase of excavation. Until 2008 the hill fort was covered by mature conifer plantations which had the potential to cause damage to the archaeology as a result of wind blown trees.

The conifer plantation was removed in the summer of 2008 when two and a half thousand tons of timber were extracted to reveal the archaeological features beneath. Many of these relate to the Iron Age Hillfort, but there are also medieval and 18th Century landscaped features.

Little Doward before and after conifer clearance (Dec 2008)



English Heritage granted scheduled monument consent for the works and also completed a detailed archaeological survey (report ref EH no.72-2009) of the site over the winter of 2009, after the conifers had been removed. Two archaeological excavations were subsequently completed on the site with the help of volunteers under the supervision of Herefordshire Archaeology Service. The results have been summarised in a report, which is accessible on the Herefordshire Council Archaeology Service website, 'Herefordshire Through Time' www.herefordshire.gov.uk/htt/.

The Wyastone estate created by Richard Blakemore had designed walkways and viewpoints, including a metal viewing platform and a perimeter drystone wall to border the deer park. Another landscaped parkland feature was a 'Hermits hut' dug into the hillfort embankment. Both the perimeter wall and the Hermits hut were partially collapsed. These were repaired as part of the Scheme and the parkland wall restored, creating a stock proof barrier for the cattle which are being used to graze the cleared hillfort. This is part of the on-going site maintenance plan.

Following the removal of the conifers and remaining stumps and mulch, calcareous grassland flora has been recolonizing the hillfort. This is being monitored and encouraged with volunteers and contractors periodically topping of the bracken to reduce further spread.

Works completed:

- Removal of conifers to reveal the Iron Age hillfort features beneath the woodland.
- Archaeological surveys and two phases of excavations to explore and record the historic features on the site.
- Re-building of the dry stone walls, originally bordering the Wyastone estate.
- Conservation of the Hermit's Hut as an additional item.
- Stabilisation of loose rocks on the limestone cliff for health and safety in order to reopen a section of accessible walkway to complete a circuit around the Hillfort.

- On-going maintenance of the site managed partly through the introduction of grazing cattle.
- Archaeological recording of Lord's Wood, Merlin's cave and specialist analysis of recently discovered human remains.
- Interpretation panels at the entrances to the site to explain the features of interest.
- 'Head for the Hillforts' trail leaflet detailing a walk connecting Little Doward hillfort and Symonds Yat Rock hillfort (via King Arthur's Cave, the Biblins, New Weir Forge and Symonds Yat West limekilns).

'The benefit has been to actively carry out works which safeguard the fabric of those sites for the longer term, to bring them into a more sustainable manageable regime over time, and also to do some investigation and understand. We've really been able to advance our understanding of these sites, in particular New Weir and Little Doward through the project.'

Dr Neil Rimmington, Countryside Adviser, Herefordshire Council Archaeology

Iron Age toggle and dice from Archaeological Excavation



'The benefit has been to actively carry out works which safeguard the fabric of those sites for the longer term, to bring them into a more sustainable manageable regime over time, and also to do some investigation and understand. We've really been able to advance our understanding of these sites, in particular New Weir and Little Doward through the project.'

Dr Neil Rimmington, Countryside Adviser, Herefordshire Council Archaeology

5.2. Chase Woods:

Hillforts

Improvements have been made to a footpath that leads up from Ross-on-Wye to the Chase Woods hillfort, encircled by Forestry Commission woodland. Herefordshire Council Rights of Way department have re-instated the correct route for the footpath (that had fallen into disuse) and added in some steps to sections of the steep slopes.

Part of the Chase Wood path with new steps and waymarking (Mar 2009)



Works completed:

- Footpath improvement works to reinstate a public right of way, re-creating a circular route up the hillside and around the former hillfort (but no access to the hillfort itself as this is privately owned).
- Interpretation panel at the Fernbank Road car park, Ross-on-Wye, which is the start and finish point for the circular walk route.

5.3. Symonds Yat Rock:

Hillforts & Viewpoints



The Forestry Commission's Symonds Yat Rock site is famed for its view over the meandering Wye (above), appreciated by approximately 250,000 visitors each year. But the site is also an Iron Age promontory hillfort with 5 concentric embankments. The route taken by visitors from the car park up to the iconic viewpoint passes through these embankments. Although levelled by the Forestry Commission many years ago the route was rough and in places was a steep gradient that was not easy for people with mobility problems. The access has been improved with a wooden boardwalk through the trees with a gradient suitable for all mobility access and a resin bonded surface on the path from the car park.

As part of an on-going management plan the Forestry Commission has removed many trees from the hillfort ditches and embankments, making them more identifiable for visitors. Erosion damage to these edges of these ramparts beside the path have been repaired and new interpretation materials have helped raised the profile of the hillfort itself.

The main contractor completing the access improvement works on site was Mike Etheridge Construction Ltd under the supervision of Forestry Commission engineers and Gloucestershire County Council archaeologists with English Heritage Scheduled Monument consent.

Works completed:

- Creation of wooden all-ability walkway to enable all visitors to reach the iconic viewpoint at Yat Rock

- Creation of window 'cut through' sections in the wall to enable lower level sight of the view.
- Repair and clearance of the ramparts in the Iron Age Hillfort
- Interpretation panels to explain the geological and archaeological significance of the site as well as describing potential sites to visit within the wider Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- Creation of a 3D model of the Iron Age Hillfort on a rock at Symonds Yat Rock.
- 'Head for the Hillforts' Trail leaflet describing a walk from Symonds Yat Rock to Little Doward, linking the two hillforts (via the hand rope ferry, Symonds Yat limekiln, New Weir Forge, The Biblins and King Arthur's Cave)

Route up to Yat Rock viewpoint before works and after walkway completed (Mar 2009)



Mark Harper MP cutting the ribbon for Joe Coe to use the walkway up to the viewpoint (Mar 2009)



'I would like to extend very good congratulations to the works that's been done at the Yat Rock site. My son and I went there yesterday and the paths and all are absolutely wonderful. He pushed me in a wheelchair and it's the first time we were able to do that. We were very impressed with what was being done there. I would like to thank you very much indeed. It's a beautiful site as well.'

A visitor to Symonds Yat Rock

'Now, they're spending more time at the site, they're learning, they're absorbing more of what Symonds Yat and the Wye Valley is about.'

Phil Morton, Forestry Commission

The site won a CPRE Gloucestershire Award in 2010 *"For the enhancement of one of the finest viewpoints in England with improved access, site improvements and interpretation; and for making the experience available to everyone, including visitors with limited mobility and the very young"*

Damage to one of the hillfort ramparts. Repaired ramparts and new pathway (Apr 09)



'The work we've actually carried out at Symonds Yat Rock, the DDA improvements and making the site more accessible to more people, is something I'm really proud to have been involved with. If I finish my career with Symonds Yat Rock Overlooking the Wye project, it would be something that I would be proud to be associated with.'

Phil Morton, Forestry Commission



6. Hidden Industry

Objective: To encourage greater recognition of the changes in the landscape by conserving the more accessible sites of the largely hidden, yet significant, post medieval industrial heritage of the Wye Valley.

Conservation and enhancement works to the value of over £796,000, including £22,070 of in-kind contributions, were completed at fifteen sites. At eleven sites physical conservation works were successfully delivered: Abbey Mill, Abbey Tintern Furnace, Angidy Valley, Coppett Hill Limekilns, Little Doward Limekilns, Lower Wireworks, New Weir Forge, Old Station Tintern, Symonds Yat West Limekilns, Tintern Limekilns and Whitecliff Furnace. A further four sites, Lydbrook, Prisk Wood, Redbrook and Scutterdine Limekiln have interpretation only. Each site is covered in detail below.

Whitecliff Furnace had only been included in the original bid document as a 'reserve' site for interpretation, but with available budget and additional matched funding, this was upgraded to complete significant conservation works to the main furnace structure in the last year of the Scheme.

Interpretation was introduced at each of the above sites to tell the story of the industry in the Wye Valley and the connections with the other themes. A wide range of original descriptions and photographs were sourced from Monmouth Museum, Chepstow Museum, The Dean Heritage Centre and the Neil Parkhouse collection. The Destination Wye Valley exhibition at Old Station Tintern contains information on the Hidden Industry theme and the overall Scheme.

The Angidy Trail leaflet (one of a set five) details a walk along the Angidy Valley where access improvement works improved the route, linking a number of hidden industrial sites within the Tintern area. This walk starts from the Lower Wireworks site in Tintern where the history of the ironworking industry in the valley is depicted on a display of ceramic tiles installed on the wall. The leaflet has been well received with over 5,000 being distributed during the first season after publication and necessitating a reprint to maintain adequate stocks into the future.

Over 2,000 members of the public attended a range of activities relating to the Hidden Industry theme (including the 'Hands On History' event at Old Station, Tintern). Events included a guided walk about conservation methods at Tintern Abbey, paper making sessions and archaeological excavations at New Weir Forge. Training courses for lime mortaring, charcoal making, willow weaving, hedgelaying, drystone walling, coppicing and millstone extraction also proved popular. One of the 4 day-school seminars organised by Chepstow Museum on the Industrial Heritage of the Wye Valley attracted over 100 people from both a local history and university academic background.

Volunteers were involved at various sites; with archaeological excavations and clearing vegetation (and creating steps) at Coppett Hill limekilns, New Weir Forge and Abbey Tintern Furnace in preparation for the contractors starting on the specified conservation works.

They will continue to work on a variety of sites in future under the management of the Wye Valley AONB Unit to ensure that assets conserved by the Scheme continue to be managed in a sustainable way.

6.1. Abbey Mill:

Hidden industry & River Connections

The Abbey Mill Wye Valley Centre in Tintern is owned and managed by Chris and Shelley Rastall. It is a popular café/tea rooms and craft centre. The 19th Century waterwheel has been restored to working order through the Scheme and is now the only working waterwheel in the Wye Valley, representing the large number of industrial mills that used to work in the area. Interpretation enhances the experience for visitors and helps explain the context of the site as part of what was once one of the largest industrial complexes in Wales, along the Angidy River down to this site.

It is likely that a mill was established here in the 16th century as part of the sequence of iron working sites that stretched from the head of the Angidy Valley to a tidal dock joining the River Wye at this site.

The works were completed by Penybryn Engineering under the supervision of Opus International Consultants Ltd. Sian Brake of Penybryn managed the project, which contributed to her work experience towards a Bachelor of Engineering degree.

Works completed:

- Restoration of waterwheel to working order in 2009.
- Installation of two interpretation panels about the use of the waterwheel, the tidal dock and the links to the ironworking industry in the Angidy Valley.
- Creation of a mural of ceramic tiles designed and made by art students at Chepstow School illustrating aspects of the Wye Valley's history and heritage.
- Inclusion in 'The Angidy Trail' leaflet which details a walking route encompassing the numerous hidden industry sites in the Tintern area.

Waterwheel before and after works



Ceramic art display by Chepstow School students



'I think projects like this are absolutely fantastic. It's exciting to get involved in something that's very real and very tangible and the prospect of having something like this which could exist for several hundred years is amazing. I think everybody who's involved; staff and pupils alike are both very excited about it. We even joked with some of them that perhaps your grandchildren will see this in years to come and I think that's the reality of it to be honest '
Judith Lowery, Head of Art, Chepstow School

6.2. Abbey Tintern Furnace:

Hidden Industry

Abbey Tintern Furnace is a Scheduled Monument owned and managed by Monmouthshire County Council as a public open space with a small car park. It is the site of a charcoal blast furnace that was working from 1590 until 1828 as part of the industrial complex that extended down the Angidy Valley. It is likely that the furnace was rebuilt on a number of occasions, giving rise to a complex sequence of phasing in the visible remains of stonework.

It is noted historically that Angidy was the first site in Britain to use cylinders to power the blast into the furnace as opposed to bellows. These may have been installed as part of a refit in the 18th century. The ironworks complex extends to a much wider area than just the Scheduled area, including most of the adjacent cottage gardens.

The site had become waterlogged due to silting of the wheel pit and blockages in underground culverts. The first stage of work as part of the Scheme was to improve the drainage before conservation works to the Scheduled Monument itself could proceed. Volunteers began the process of clearing vegetation at the site and this facilitated an investigation by engineering contractors into the flooding of the site and a method of resolving it.

The main contractor completing conservation works on the site was Ascend (Cymru) Ltd, working within Cadw over the Scheduled Monument consent. Following clearance of the blockages in the underground culvert and emptying the wheel pit of silt and gravel, drainage improved. A significant amount of masonry conservation was undertaken following the removal of trees and vegetation, using lime mortar. Much of this was replacing cement mortar used in a previous restoration in the late 1970s. Unfortunately the -14°C temperatures in the winter of 2010-11 caused some deep failure of the lime which has been monitored and repaired.

Water continues to enter the site seeping from the Angidy river through the bank into the wheel pit and then through the culvert to re-join the river downstream. A section of the river bank was reinforced in order to limit the entry of water into the site in future, but not prevent it completely so that some water flow keeps the culvert clear.

A comprehensive record of both these investigations and the archaeological history of the site has been produced by Dr Neil Phillips, and is available on line. The report was deposited with the Glamorgan and Gwent Archaeological Trust and Monmouthshire County Council.

Works completed:

- Volunteers involved in preliminary clearing of vegetation from the site.
- Bat surveys and newt surveys prior to works starting.
- Removal of blockages in the wheel pit and underground culvert in order to improve drainage.
- Extensive re-pointing with lime mortar to conserve the furnace structure.
- Protective reinforcement of a section of the river bank bordering the site.
- Interpretation panels to explain the operation of the site, including a reconstruction illustration, and the context of the site in relation to the ironworking industry within the Angidy Valley.
- Inclusion in 'The Angidy Trail' leaflet following the historic path of the leats connecting the ironworking sites within the valley

Abbey Tintern Furnace before and after works



'(We've) undertaken a major conservation project to bring the site that had been excavated in late 1970s/early 1980s back to a reasonable condition – it had got to be in a very poor condition, partly because of the failure of the drainage of the site which had left the bottom part of the site, which is the most interesting part, to be almost permanently flooded...'

Matthew Lewis, Countryside Manager, Monmouthshire County Council

Works to clear blockages in underground culvert



The wheel pit when works completed



'When you specify a number of works for an historic site within a Scheme, it is very difficult to predict costs and unknowns and although we did very well in containing the costs on that site and didn't go too hugely over, it is very difficult to quantify situations where you don't really know what you're letting yourself in for. I think that is something that people need to be aware of when they're building projects like Overlooking the Wye that have difficult conservation issues in, they need to be mindful of the number of unknowns and the fact that it can be quite difficult to conserve sites where you have probably 20-30 years of neglect.'

Kate Biggs, Overlooking the Wye Project Officer

Reconstruction illustration of Abbey Tintern Furnace (Phil Kenning)



6.3. Angidy Valley

Hidden Industry

The Angidy Valley contains the remains of a series of post-Medieval early industrial iron and wireworks spread along the Angidy River, a tributary of the River Wye. This was chosen as the location for ironworks in the 16th Century due to the availability of water power, charcoal (from the surrounding woodland) and local iron ore, with up to 22 waterwheels in use by the 19th Century. Remains of the structures that were once dominant in the valley are visible if you know where to look. 'The Angidy Trail' leaflet points out historical locations and tells the story of this once heavily industrialised valley, with the route taking in Lower Wireworks, St Mary's Church, Tintern limekiln, Tintern Abbey and Abbey Mill waterwheel.

Angidy downstream of Abbey Tintern Furnace and with access improvements to route completed



The launch of the four Scheme trail leaflets, including The Angidy Trail, at Abbey Tintern Furnace



Works completed:

- Access improvement works to extend footbridge across wetland by river.
- 'The Angidy Trail' walk leaflet linking Abbey Mill, Lower Wireworks and Abbey Furnace with other sites of significance in the area.
- Improved signage and waymarking along the trail route and within Tintern.

6.4. Limekilns:

Hidden Industry

Four limekilns benefitted from conservation works during the Scheme (as the fifth originally included in the bid was deemed to be beyond economic repair in the implementation phase). The main contractor for these works was Ward and Co.

The four limekilns (and their landowners) were:

- Coppett Hill (Coppett Hill Common Trust and the Friends of Coppett Hill)
- Symonds Yat West (Private landowners)
- Little Doward (Woodland Trust)
- Tintern, Scheduled Monument (Forestry Commission Wales)

Works completed:

- Bat surveys completed prior to works starting: some crevices in structure retained for bat habitat.
- Removal of vegetation.
- Conservation works to the limekiln structure including re-pointing with lime mortar and (at some sites) addition of grills to prevent access.
- Ceramic plaques to explain how the limekilns functioned - a fifth limekiln site at Scutterdine, near Mordiford, had a ceramic plaque but not benefit from conservation works as it was felt that removal of the entwined ivy growth might precipitate collapse of the structure.
- 'The Angidy Trail' route includes the Tintern limekilns and the 'Head for the Hillforts' trail includes both the Symonds Yat limekilns and the Little Doward limekilns.

Coppett Hill Limekiln before and after works



'The Overlooking the Wye was a godsend to us because we actually fitted in with it. This isn't a tremendously strategic lime kiln, it's just a local one but on the other hand what we've been able to do is when we restored it, we can actually tie the lime kiln, being a local nature reserve, to the actual geology and the flora in the area so it's very orchid-rich for example in this lime area around the lime kiln.'

Lawrie Lowe, Coppett Hill Common Trust

Little Doward Limekiln before and after works



Symonds Yat West Limekiln before and after works (May 2009)



Tintern Limekiln before and after works (May 2009)



6.5. Lower Wireworks:

Hidden Industry

Lower Wireworks is a Scheduled Monument owned and managed by Monmouthshire County Council as a community car park. Wireworks were established on this site during the 16th Century and metal working continued until 1895. It was part of the sequence of sites that stretched from the head of the Angidy Valley to the tidal dock at Abbey Mill, making it the largest industrial complex in Wales in the 1600s. There was a large building here with 4 waterwheels used to power machinery. Whilst this site is significant on a national scale and is important historically within the sequence of ironworking sites within the Angidy Valley, there is little visible evidence of this heritage.

In one corner of the site there is an underground chamber housing a brass turbine from a later industrial phase. This has been fenced off for safety reasons. Access to the car park has been improved so that visitors to Tintern can park here whilst taking advantage of the new Angidy Trail to discover the historic sites in the area.

The main contractor for highways and access works was Alun Griffiths Ltd, under the supervision of Opus International Consultants Ltd and with Cadw providing Scheduled Monument consent. In addition the site has a high retaining wall running lengthways along the site which carries the road up the Angidy. This wall incorporates a number of the remaining historical feature relating to the historic industrial use of the site. This has now benefitted from further structural repairs and re-pointing with lime mortar as additional works, and attracting additional funding from Monmouthshire Highways department. Repointing of the retaining wall was undertaken as a separate contract by Ascend (Cymru) Ltd.

Ceramics artist Ned Hayward created a major piece of interpretative artwork portraying the history of the wireworking industry in the valley. This is installed along the retaining wall establishing a key feature and focus for the car park.

Works completed:

- Species survey to check site for bats, dormice and otters.
- Archaeological excavation to check site for industrial remains before works started, and recoding of features in the retaining wall.
- Flood Consequences Assessment to confirm that the planned works would not adversely affect the site in any future periods of flooding.
- Improved car parking area with better access from the road to encourage exploration of the Tintern/Angidy area.
- Traffic calming measures along the road from Tintern up to Lower Wireworks to reduce traffic speed.
- Clearance of vegetation and structural repairs of the retaining wall running the length of the site, including extensive re-pointing with lime mortar.
- Access point for 'The Angidy Trail' (linking Lower Wireworks with Abbey Tintern Furnace along the path of the historic leats).
- Information panel and ceramic artwork to explain the history of this site within the context of the ironworking industry of the Angidy Valley.
- Short section of 'pavement' marked out around the forecourt of The Royal George Hotel to encourage pedestrians to follow the marked pathway.

Lower Wireworks before and after works



'At Lower Wireworks Car Park – there again the Scheme has been absolutely fundamental in making it usable as a car park. We had a site that was a car park but we couldn't tell anyone that it was a car park because it didn't have Highway access that met Highway standards – it was a pretty useless commodity, like a swimming pool that you weren't allowed to swim in!'

Matthew Lewis, Countryside Manager, Monmouthshire County Council

The Lower Wireworks wall has a ceramic artwork display created by Ned Heywood which describes the history of the ironworking industry within the Angidy Valley.

Ceramic discs explaining wire-making heritage



Central feature of the ceramic display portraying waterwheel, furnace and wire-drawing



6.6. Lydbrook:

Hidden Industry

This is a former 17th Century industrial village in a valley leading down to the River Wye. The valley has a long history of metal working similar to the Angidy Valley but this is not represented by such easily accessible or clearly preserved structural remains. There were early ironworks near the village and it was one the main access point to the river for exports of coal and minerals with early tram and rail links into the Forest of Dean. An impressive viaduct once spanned the valley carrying the Severn and Wye Railway but this was dismantled in 1965.

Works completed:

- Interpretation panel to explain Lydbrook's industrial heritage, located at Lydbrook Tump riverside car park.

6.7. New Weir Forge:

Hidden Industry & River Connections

New Weir Forge is one of the key industrial sites dating from the 17th Century within the Wye Valley. The site has a good historical record and is valued as part of a wider group of iron production sites within the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean. It is likely that the site was rebuilt on a number of occasions, giving rise to a complex sequence of phasing in the visible remains of stonework.

The ironworks, owned by the Forestry Commission (Dean), is right beside the river and floods frequently. Over a period of time it had become overgrown with trees and other vegetation. In order to protect the structures and features hidden beneath the greenery, heavy horses were used to extract selected trees. This was filmed for BBC CountryFile and broadcast in May 2009. Two phases of archaeological excavation were completed over two years when volunteers worked under the supervision of the Herefordshire Archaeology Service. This work has now been summarised in a report accessible on the Herefordshire Council Archaeology Service website, 'Herefordshire Through Time' www.herefordshire.gov.uk/htt/. Masonry conservation work was undertaken by Ascend (Cymru) Ltd.

The purpose of the archaeological investigations was to enhance understanding of the site, to prioritise conservation works and to enable better interpretation of the site once works were complete. There is growing evidence that the earlier remains on the site may include a furnace that predates the visible structures. This is supported by archaeological evidence from the excavations undertaken by the volunteers as part of the Scheme. The structures can be related to a number different activities shown on a map of the site which dates to the 18th century. However there is evidence to suggest that this site was well established by this time. There are also several contemporary 'picturesque' paintings and sketches of views of the works. The site should be considered for Scheduled Monument status.

Works completed:

- Felling and removal of selected trees from the site by heavy horses.
- Completion of two phases of archaeological excavation, undertaken by supervised volunteers, to improve understanding of the site.
- Conservation works to selected remains of the forge structure.
- Interpretation panel on the site linking the iron working industry in the Wye Valley and the Forest of Dean.
- Inclusion in the 'Head for the Hillforts' leaflet linking Symonds Yat Rock to Little Doward Hillfort (via Symonds Yat limekiln, New Weir Forge, The Biblins and King Arthur's Cave)

'Basically, you have a furnace which takes the iron ore, heats it to a high temperature, gets rid of the impurities, and then the molten iron that comes out is poured out into a sand bed into runnels that have a set where they've put a mould in to pour the iron into.'

A furnace needed a good water supply, but more importantly it needed a huge amount of timber to produce the charcoal production. The iron industry in this area is a charcoal-fired furnace industry, and in the 16th and 17th centuries there was a huge demand for timber in the area in order to supply and drive the furnaces.'

Dr Neil Rimmington, Countryside Adviser, Herefordshire Archaeology

Heavy horses working at New Weir Forge Volunteers working at the archaeological excavation



Part of a supporting wall on the site before and after conservation work



'With a place like New Weir ironworks, what's been very noticeable through the project is that people who have walked their dogs along the riverbank for years and years while we were working there, they were saying 'Oh, I never noticed those before. So by doing the project, what we've done is increased the awareness of them, not necessarily increasing the number of people going to them, but increasing the awareness that they're there.'

Dr Neil Rimmington, Countryside Adviser, Herefordshire Archaeology

6.8. Old Station:

Hidden Industry

Old Station Tintern, on the former Wye Valley Railway, is a Monmouthshire County Council owned site. This restored Victorian railway station is managed as a country park, hosting a shop, café, family amenity facilities and a variety of interpretation. There were two railway carriages housing the shop and some interpretation which had become in a poor state of repair. The Scheme enabled the replacement of the railway carriages. The old ones were removed and given to West Somerset Railway for restoration. Two 'newer' carriages were purchased, refurbished and installed so that the site now houses the 'Destination Wye Valley' exhibition, an updated shop area and a new multi-purpose meeting room facility. The site also includes new interpretation and has recently won two 'Green Flag' awards.

The purchase and re-location of the railway carriages was supervised by Rubirail, whilst the engineering works and external refurbishment were completed by West Coast Railways Ltd and internal refurbishment and interpretation works were designed and completed under the supervision of Imagemakers. Some snagging of the external works needed to be undertaken within the retention period of works.

Works completed:

- 'Old' carriages removed from site and 'new' carriages transported into place.
- Access ramp created to provide all ability access into the carriages.
- 'New' carriages refurbished and painted in Great Western livery, housing Destination Wye Valley Exhibition with interactive displays, shop and meeting space.
- Interpretation panel explaining history of site and directing visitors to other sites of interest in the Wye Valley AONB.

Old Station carriages before and after works



Game-board in carriage



Interpretation panel



'Comments such as "oh this is nice" and "oh I didn't think this was in here" –being a railway carriage it is now a shop and a meeting area and exhibition – they are generally surprised when they come in. From the outside, it is what it is, it's a railway carriage but inside, it's a bit like a tardis, something different inside.'

John Sterry, Manger, Old Station Tintern

'This was a tremendous opportunity to upgrade Old Station, we wouldn't have been able to do this in any shape or form otherwise but we needed to do it in a fairly tight window, we wanted to do it so we could carry on trading so we didn't have a winter closure so we started on the last day of October and finished truthfully about 2 hours before the shop opened on the first day of trading before Easter – that was a tight corner, it looked like a scene from a DIY SOS about 2 hours before we were due to open.'

Matthew Lewis, Countryside Manager, Monmouthshire County Council

6.9. Prisk Wood:

Hidden Industry

This Gwent Wildlife Trust nature reserve hides a redundant quarry where millstones were cut from the quartz conglomerate. The millstones were used locally and regionally for grinding corn and crushing apples for cider. They were exported by being rolled down the valley side to the river for shipment by boat.

Works completed:

- Interpretation panel at The Boat Inn, Penallt
- Prisk Wood Leaflet for walkers detailing the route up from The Boat Inn, to Prisk Wood, then on to Gwent Wildlife Trust site at Pentwyn Farm, returning to the Boat Inn.

Guided walk in Prisk Wood



6.10. Redbrook:

Hidden Industry

Redbrook was once a highly industrialised valley with early Furnaces and Forges, becoming famous for the production of copper by the 17th Century. Its more recent industry was the tinplate works which were still working in the 1960s. Photographic evidence and oral history of the village and its industry collected through Overlooking the Wye has contributed to the of interpretation panels installed on the Millenium Green.



Works completed:

- Interpretation panels on The Millennium Green in the centre of the village describing its industrial history.
- Oral history contributions

'Just to say "Thank You" for the new signs that have been erected on the Millenium Green in Redbrook. They are extremely informative and interesting.'

Mrs E. Spence

6.11. Whitecliff Furnace:

Hidden Industry

This furnace, a Scheduled Monument 'at Risk', is a late 18th century coke fired blast furnace within an ironworking complex. The site represents the late change from charcoal to coke fuel in the Forest of Dean and Wye Valley. Unfortunately it was never very profitable due to the rich mix of the Forest of Dean Iron ore and coke. The metallurgist David Mushet was

persuaded to become a partner as the site was partly experimental, but the furnace closed after a relatively short period of operation. It is of local and national industrial heritage significance and is on the English Heritage Buildings at Risk register.

The site was originally only in the Scheme as a reserve project for interpretation panels. But after identifying savings within the Scheme budget additional funding was sought from English Heritage and the Forest of Dean Local Action Group to enable a scheme of works to stabilise the internal flue of the Furnace and make the exterior water tight. In total an extra £82,228 was invested into the site additional to the £90,547 spent as part of Overlooking the Wye. The works were much needed and have prevented significant failure of the furnace structure. However the wider site is still at risk and needs its own programme of work to continue the good work started by the Overlooking the Wye Scheme.

The site was owned by the Dean Heritage Museum Trust but has been transferred to the recently established Forest of Dean Buildings Preservation Trust (BPT). The formation of the BPT as a registered charity is a direct outcome of the Scheme. This has resulted in the BPT, working with the Wye Valley AONB Unit, preparing a new programme of works for a second phase with further grant applications to the Heritage Lottery Fund, English Heritage and the Gloucestershire Environmental Trust.

The works on site were completed by Ascend (UK) Ltd, under the supervision of Opus International Consultants Ltd, with English Heritage Scheduled Monument consent.

An innovative approach to bat impact assessments were undertaken by Baker, Shepherd & Gillespie. Careful consideration was given to the potential of causing an offence under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010) in this particular case. With close liaison between all disciplines, a careful stepwise method of working was established. This identified those elements of the work that genuinely needed to be undertaken immediately. It also defined safe working methods and locations within the monument, specified periodic checks and rechecks for signs of bat-use in particular locations, and established a protocol of continual reassessment of the risk of committing an offence.

Works completed:

- Bat survey to ensure that no bat habitats were jeopardised during works
- Structural survey by roped access to prioritise conservation works
- Conservation works to the main furnace structure, with pining of the internal flue and extensive re-pointing of the exterior with lime mortar
- Gates to prevent access underneath the main furnace flue
- Interpretation panels to explain this site's operation and connection to the ironworking industry within the wider region of the Wye Valley and the Forest of Dean.
- Formation of the Forest of Dean Buildings Preservation Trust
- Transfer of title to new proactive owners
- Commendation from English Heritage 'Angels' Award for the Project Officer, Engineer and Contractors

Overlooking the Wye (OLW) was able to prime the pump with its own money and get the planning, investigations and surveys completed while obtaining further financial support from EH and RDPE. The careful preparation of their case for funding and thorough groundwork for all the meetings eased the path for the funders who acted in response as efficiently as OLW. The procurement process for the engineers and contractors was effected speedily and the work was completed on time and on budget. The result has been, with the benefit of hindsight, a rescue in the nick of time.

Throughout the process OLW acted on behalf of the Museum and kept the museum fully informed and as involved as their other commitments would permit. This was a textbook operation in all respects. My only sadness is that because of the nature of the funding of OLW this is the last project it can undertake before closing down. It is a matter of regret for the heritage of this area that the excellent team assembled under the banner of OLW cannot be kept together.

Letter, Tony Evans, Ex Chairman Dean Heritage Museum Trust

'The main difficulty, workwise, was getting the materials to the height that they are required. Because Whitecliff Furnace is virtually fully intact, (it) needs a lot of repair which is what we're doing but because it's 12metres high we have to get the mortar and the stone up to that height. So we have to employ hoists etc., prepare on the ground and then hoist into position.'

Nick Lane, Ascend

Main furnace structure before and after works



Structural survey by roped access



Interior pining of main furnace flue



'I think my favourite part is the one we are currently working on, which is Whitecliff Furnace. We've got a flue line in the furnace, which is cone-shaped, but unsupported at the bottom, so at any point during the works this cone of masonry could, theoretically, have just collapsed. So we had to work from the top down for the safety of the people who were actually working on the project, in case it did collapse. And we cored two-metre long holes and put steel bars in those holes to try and pin the flue-lining back to the main structure. That was successful, but we all lost a little bit of sleep over it. I think that was the most enjoyable bit.'

Andy Cox, Director, Ascend

'There's a high degree of technical know-how needed to actually deal with some structural engineering problems like that as well as the confidence to actually tackle and attempt them. I think I've learnt a huge amount from this project and in particular, (a) the complexity of dealing with these monuments and (b) the knack of getting everything that needs to be attended to phased in at the right moment and that in itself is an enormous skill and I doubt there's that many managers around that can do it.'

Ian Standing, Local Historian & Forest of Dean Buildings Preservation Trust trustee



7. River Connections

Objective: To enable greater awareness and understanding of the historic use of the river for transport, trade and communication by consolidating river features such as quaysides.

Conservation and enhancement works totalling over £211,230 have been completed emphasising the historic connectivity of the River Wye to the transport, trade and communications of the area. The masonry on Brockweir and Monmouth Quays was repaired and access improved at Llandogo riverside and quay. Associated interpretation has been installed at several riverside sites from Ross-on-Wye all the way to Chepstow. All five of the walks leaflets produced through the Scheme have strong linking elements with the River Connections theme.

The Destination Wye Valley exhibition at Old Station Tintern contains information on the River Connections theme and the overall Scheme. Chepstow Museum provides a focal point for interpretation about the river that includes a restored stopnet fishing boat, multi-media interpretation of 'Chepstow at Work' and a virtual experience of the Wye Tour. Meanwhile a 6m steel sculpture of the SS Rovigo, a ship built at Chepstow in 1883, will be a central feature of the new Severn Quay development of offices and townhouses situated on the historic shipbuilding site. A significant in kind contribution was provided by Mabey Bridge in the technical expertise, labour and materials required to create the SS Rovigo sculpture which was designed by renowned sculptor Ray Smith.

A canoeists' guide entitled 'Perfect Paddling' was part funded by the Scheme, highlighting the heritage features and picturesque viewpoints that canoeists will encounter down the river on the modern-day equivalent of the Wye Tour.

About 3,250 members of the public attended a range of activities relating to the River Connections theme (including the 'Way to the Wye' event at Ross-on-Wye). The other events included workshops on historic wharves, guided walks at Ross-on-Wye and Brockweir, a talk about boats and river trade and a day school seminar. In addition Chepstow Museum hosted a major exhibition on The Wye Tour and its Artists.

Volunteers will continue to be involved in the regular cleaning of the conserved stonework at Brockweir Quay in order to keep it free from vegetation.

7.1. Brockweir Quay

River Connections

Brockweir Quay is the last tidal quay on the River Wye. Large seagoing ships could travel up on a high tide and unload their cargos on to smaller trows or barges which were pulled upstream, over the shallower stretches, by teams of men called bow hauliers. In its heyday

this stone quay would have been part of the wharves largely constructed of timber that stretched along the riverside. It is thought to date from the middle of the eighteenth century and is constructed of large quartz conglomerate blocks with a cobbled surface and steps through the middle. The higher tides frequently flood the quay depositing silt in which vegetation then grows. Removal of vegetation, knotweed and silt build up revealed the remains of the cobbled surface. Reconstructive work took place based on the evidence of remaining masonry. A large area of cement was removed, new cobbles sourced and the whole structure re-pointed with lime mortar, between the tides, by Strachey and Strachey Conservation under Environment Agency Flood Defence Consent.

Since Stage 1, the AONB Partnership have made repeated and concerted attempts to determine ownership of the quay. But no owners have been identified and the Parish Council, despite initially expressing an interest in adopting the site, have refused to take it on. However a volunteer group have been established and equipped to continue to clear mud off the quayside after high tides in order to prevent vegetation re-growth.

Works completed:

- Conservation works on quayside to remove vegetation, replace cobbles and selected stones and re-point using lime mortar.
- Ceramic plaque explaining the historic importance of the quay.
- Volunteer group will continue to clear mud off the quayside after high tides in order to prevent vegetation re-growth.

Brockweir Quay before and during works



Official re-opening of the Quay(2009)



Volunteers clearing silt with the power-hose (2011)



'I am really pleased with it and can you please let Strachey and Strachey know that they have done a good job of restoring it. My personal thanks to all the team for the hard work you have put in on the whole project.'

Lorraine Endersby, Brockweir (volunteer co-ordinator)

7.2. Chepstow Docks

River Connections

Chepstow was the main port for the River Wye; it was close to the mouth of the river, with good access to international markets through Bristol, and was a major shipbuilding centre. The shipyards here built sea going vessels and Mabey Bridge still produces some of the largest bridge components for use worldwide. However, little evidence of the rich shipbuilding industry remains visible. So local artist Ned Heywood suggested that the Overlooking the Wye Scheme create an art installation that would link the Scheme themes with the town's shipbuilding history.

A competition was organised inviting proposals to find an artist who could create a sculpture to meet this aspiration. Thirty-five potential artists expressed an interest in the project and a shortlist of five were invited to submit proposals. The winning artist was Ray Smith who then worked with apprentice engineers at Mabey Bridge and Wynndel Property Ltd and their Severn Quay development team in order to finalise the design for the sculpture. Three Mabey Bridge apprentices completed all the fabrication, welding and finishing on the 6m long sculpture depicting 16 shipyard workers holding aloft a silhouette of the SS Rovigo which launched from the site of the current Mabey Bridge factory in Chepstow in 1883. The sculpture is being stored at Mabey Bridge until it can be painted and installed on site in 2014 when the Severn Quay development.

Works completed:

- Creation of a metal sculpture depicting the SS Rovigo

Sculpture (not painted) with sculptor Ray Smith and apprentices



7.3. Chepstow Museum

River Connections

The rich and varied past of this ancient port is interpreted in Chepstow Museum. Displays and multi-media interpretation portray Chepstow's development from pre-Roman times, medieval wine trade, ship building and salmon fishing industries, the Wye Tour and Piercefield.

The restored stopnet fishing boat, built around one hundred years ago, is believed to be the oldest remaining of these craft and only ceased to operate in 1985. It is housed in a refurbished boat house outside the museum, creating an added attraction to the museum

The Wye Tour, said to have started British Tourism in the 1750s with the development a two day boat excursion down the River Wye from Ross to Chepstow, is 're-created' as a virtual Wye Tour within the museum. This is augmented by an exhibition on 'the Picturesque' and

the Piercefield estate with its mansion, parklands and spectacular landscaped viewpoints (many conserved under the 'Viewpoints' theme).

Additionally from May to December 2010 the Museum hosted a major exhibition attended by 13,632 people entitled THE WYE TOUR AND ITS ARTISTS with guest curator, author Julian Mitchell. Over 70 Eighteenth and Nineteenth century watercolours were loaned from national collections and museums around the UK, including works by the masters from that great age of British watercolours, such as Turner, Paul Sandby, Michael 'Angelo' Rooker, Thomas Hearne, Edward Dayes, John & Cornelius Varley, Samuel Palmer, David Cox and Joshua Cristall. An accompanying book of the exhibition was also produced. This exhibition was made possible through the Cyfoeth Cymru Gyfan – Sharing Treasures scheme funded by the Welsh Government and administered by CyMAL: Museums Archives and Libraries Wales. The scheme enables local Welsh museums to build partnerships with Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales and with their expertise, advice and support to upgrade facilities so that the museum can borrow and display objects from the British national collections, giving the museum and its community access to the nation's great treasures.

The Museum has an on-going programme, through a £200,000 Collecting Cultures grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Sharing Treasures scheme, of purchasing and exhibiting 18th and 19th century paintings and manuscripts relating to the Picturesque movement and the Wye Tour. These illustrate the everlasting appeal of Chepstow and the Wye Valley to artists and tourists alike.

Works completed:

- Creation of a 'Wye Tour' room where visitors can experience a 'virtual' tour down the River Wye, including interactive displays which help to tell the story of the Wye Tour, its people and their working lives within the Wye Valley.
- Piercefield display: highlighting the family, the house and the walks and the importance of the Piercefield viewpoints as a stopping off point en route to Chepstow.
- Restoration of a stopnet fishing boat and boat house, with interactive display using first hand oral & video recordings about the stop net fishery on the River Wye at Chepstow.
- Interactive displays about the ship building, trade and communications that flourished around the port of Chepstow.
- The Wye Tour and its Artists exhibition, attended by 13,632 people.

The 'Wye Tour' virtual journey boat under construction (2009) and restored stopnet boat



Restored stopnet boat house and touch screen interactives



7.4. Llandogo Riverside

River Connections & Viewpoints

Llandogo was once a quayside and shipbuilding village, at the tidal limit of the River Wye, with trading links to Bristol. On the valleyside the Bread and Cheese Stone viewpoint was, in years gone by, the vantage point used by villagers to spot approaching ships heading upstream from Chepstow and Bristol so that they could run down the hill in order to be on hand to unload cargo. It is believed to be where Wordsworth wrote his famous poem, 'Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey'.

Works completed:

- Creation of 'Wordsworth Walk' leaflet detailing a circular route, down to the riverside, up to the Bread and Cheese Stone viewpoint, past Cleddon Falls and back down the 'zigzag' Jubilee Walk to the centre of the village.
- Improved access on footpath (replacement of stiles with kissing gates) and repaired footbridges.
- Drainage improved and boardwalk built to create drier access on sections of Jubilee Walk in woodland.
- Interpretation panel in village store (Brown's) car park.

Footbridge by river before works (2009). Footbridge after improvement works completed (2010).



Llandogo Jubilee Walk after creation of boardwalks (2009).

New footbridges installed on Jubilee Walk 2009).



*'Just to say that I have seen the (interpretation) material and am completely blown away by the excellence of it all. It is visually splendid and full of interesting and relevant information and images. I can't wait to do the circular walk with information in hand! A huge **well done** to you and your team.'*

Elizabeth Karney, Llandogo

Llandogo panel



'The most important feedback we've had is from the leaflet. It was displayed in the shop and the interpretation board was also displayed in the shop with the history about the trows on the river, but the leaflet itself was put on before it was published and lots of people put their ideas into it which were taken on board by Ruth and Sue and it was adapted. We produced one in about 1990 but this one is a great improvement on that because people can live in the village and yet not see or understand a lot of the village. So the leaflet and the interpretation board will help even the local people as well as people coming into the village. They've made a wonderful job of it.'

Roger Brown, Browns Stores, Llandogo

7.5. Monmouth Quay

River Connections

Monmouth was once a Roman Fortress (Blestium) on the confluence of the rivers Monnow and Wye which provided a strategic advantage for trade and communication. There is evidence of Roman ironworking having taken place by the river, where the later quays were built over the slag deposits.

Monmouth Quay is all that remains of this once very important port on the River Wye. Its substantial stone built structure is believed to date from 18th century, constructed of large hard sandstone blocks with steps through the middle. Removal of laurel and vegetation revealed the displacement of the capstones along the edge. Most of these were removed and placed back into line following the removal of the laurel root plates. The whole structure

was re-pointed with lime mortar. Stone benches were built on the top, with interpretation plaques, to encourage viewing of the river.

The conservation works were completed by Strachey and Strachey Conservation.

Works completed:

- Clearance of vegetation from the top of the quayside
- Conservation works on the stonework of the quay
- Creation of stone benches to sit and view the river Wye
- Ceramic plaques on the benches to explain the historic use of the quay.
- Creation of 14 'mosaic' style paintings in the subway approaching the quay, made by 14 local community groups (see Outreach and Interpretation).

Monmouth Quay before and after works (2012)



7.6. Ross Riverside:

River Connections

Ross-on-Wye was the starting point of the Wye Tour from the 1750s. First instigated by Rev'd John Egerton in 1745, the tour was popularised when the Rev'd William Gilpin published his 'Observations on the River Wye' in 1783. By this time it was fashionable to take a boat tour down the Wye Valley, to view its romantic sights and picturesque landscape. The area in front of the Hope and Anchor Inn was the town quay and it was here that the tourists hired boats. Canoeists still moor here today, embarking on the modern-day equivalent of the Wye Tour.

There is a public canoe launch point 100m downstream. This was refurbished and made wheelchair accessible (along with Kerne Bridge further downstream) with separate funding totalling £67,000 from the Wye Valley AONB Sustainable Development Fund, Environment Agency and the Natural Assets programme through Advantage West Midlands and Natural England. As part of that programme a canoeists' guide book entitled 'Perfect Paddling' was published which identified the heritage features and picturesque viewpoints which canoeists encounter on their trip down the river. Perfect Paddling was part funded by the Overlooking the Wye Scheme.

Works completed:

- Interpretation panel describing Ross Riverside as the historic start of the Wye Tour and a busy trading centre for transit of goods up and downstream.
- Publication of the Perfect Paddling booklet, as part of the programme making the Ross public canoe launch wheelchair accessible.

Ross quay (2009)

Canoe launch site (2011)



7.7. Wilton Riverside:

River Connections

At one time Wilton had wharves both upstream and downstream of the bridge on the western bank of the river. Being downstream of Wilton Bridge, this is where much cargo from larger vessels could be loaded and unloaded for Ross-on-Wye. Large warehouses were once associated with these wharves, but little remains of this past activity.

Works completed:

- Interpretation panel about the historic use of Wilton Quayside and its links to other sites of interest in the region.

Wilton by W. Radclyffe (co Mrs S Preece)



Interpretation at Wilton





8. Viewpoints

Objective: To increase opportunities to visit and view the landscape by conserving, enhancing and restoring the picturesque and romantic viewpoints overlooking the Wye and improving access to places associated with the Wye Tour.

Conservation and enhancement works totalling over £570,380, including £19,205 of in-kind contributions, have been completed at thirteen sites; Bread and Cheese Stones, Capler, Devil's Pulpit, John Kyrle Walk, The Kymin, Lancut, Symonds Yat Rock, Piercefield – The Alcove, The Platform, The Grotto, Giant's Cave, Lover's Leap, Eagle's Nest.

Three viewpoints have also benefited from improved access. The longest section is the footpath from the Tidenham Chase car park to Devil's Pulpit. At The Kymin 314m of the driveway and 44m of the pedestrian path has been resurfaced. The kissing gates along the John Kyrle Walk in Ross have been pinned back along a length of 1500m to improve access along this pathway.

Each of the 13 viewpoints have an interpretation panel or a ceramic plaque on site and the sequence of historic viewpoints at Piercefield are linked by the 'Picturesque Piercefield' trail leaflet. The Destination Wye Valley exhibition at Old Station Tintern contains information on the Viewpoints theme and the overall Scheme.

About 2,200 members of the public attended a range of activities relating to the Viewpoints theme, including the 'Medieval Mayhem' event at Chepstow Castle. Other events included guided walks at Piercefield, Devil's Pulpit and The Kymin, the 'Art of the Picnic' exhibition and a talk about Turner's artworks in the Wye Valley.

Volunteers have assisted with conservation works at the various Piercefield viewpoints by clearing and repairing paths, moving rocks and clearing vegetation. They also contributed to significant stretches of path improvement on the Wye Valley Walk at Piercefield.

8.1. Bread and Cheese Stones

Viewpoints & River Connections

The Bread and Cheese stones are situated high on the steep hillside above Llandogo. With a clear view of the river below it was used by villagers as a look-out for arriving ships and is believed to be where Wordsworth wrote his famous poem, 'Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey'. Although the view to the river was clearly visible in the 1950s, subsequent tree growth has obscured the view. As the hillside is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), removal of the trees was restricted to creating a 'window' through the foliage to capture a glimpse of the river below.

Works completed:

- Selected tree felling in order to recreate the view.
- Creation of the 'Wordsworth Walk' leaflet which describes a circular route around and up through the village of Llandogo, linking the river industry with the viewpoint.

Bread and Cheese stones viewpoint before (2008) and after works (2011).



8.2. Capler Viewpoint

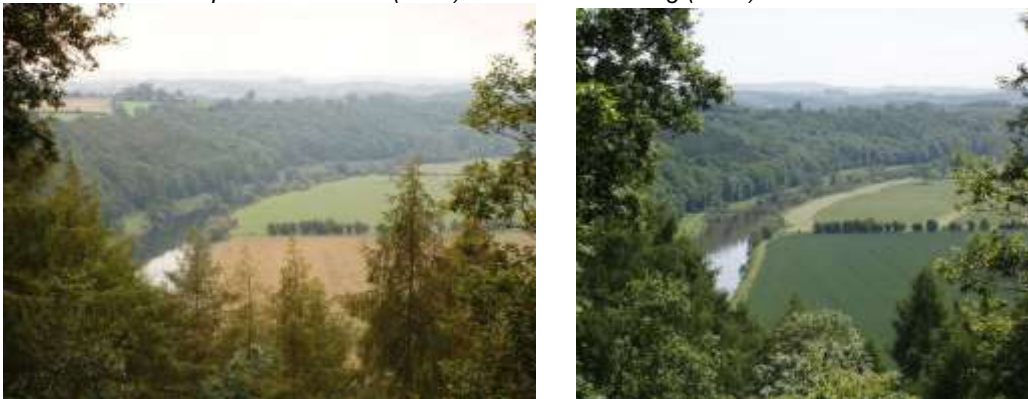
Viewpoints & Hillforts

This viewpoint, on the side of the Iron Age Hillfort of Capler Camp, looks westward over the River Wye and the rolling Herefordshire countryside. On the riverside below there are the remains of a small quarry, called the Chapterhouse Quarry, where stone was extracted and taken by barge upstream to Hereford for the construction of the Cathedral.

Works completed:

- Selected tree felling in order to maintain the view.

Capler View before (2007) and after tree felling (2010)



8.3. Devil's Pulpit

Viewpoints

This spectacular and remote viewpoint on the Offa's Dyke Path National Trail overlooks Tintern Abbey and is owned by Forestry Commission (England). The viewpoint and National Trail are on the iconic 8th century Offa's Dyke earthwork which is a Scheduled

Monument and within the Wye Valley Woodlands Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The popular use of the Offa's Dyke Path National Trail over forty years had caused damaging erosion to the Offa's Dyke Scheduled Monument particularly around the Devil's Pulpit viewpoint.

In order to protect the monument and maintain the viewpoint a solution was sought by the interested parties. A trial section of surfacing over the top of the monument had been installed in 1998 and this had proved effective and weathered in well. As part of the Scheme the Forestry Commission proposed a design for a platform structure at the viewpoint but this was rejected by the local planning authority. Following further public consultation it was agreed to change and simplify the design. The viewpoint was redesign by Opus International Consultants Ltd and approved by English Heritage and Gloucestershire County Council archaeologists. This was then granted planning consent and well received. The approved design included augmenting the sides of the monument with geotextile and soil to re-create the profile of Offa's Dyke where the erosion was worst at the viewpoint. Mike Etheridge Construction Ltd completed the works on the ground. Gloucestershire County Council Rights of Way department improved the access routes to Devil's Pulpit, both from the Tidenham Chase car park on and up from Tintern. A further three sections of erosion on Offa's Dyke were also resolved a little further along the National Trail and the route up from Tintern.

Additionally Gloucestershire County Council Rights of Way department have further reduced erosion of Offa's Dyke, just to the south of the new surfacing, by moving the National Trail on to a new 600m surfaced path beside the monument. This was achieved with separate funding totalling £20,737 including from the Wye Valley AONB Sustainable Development Fund.

Works completed:

- Archaeological recording of this section of Offa's Dyke prior to any works starting.
- Footpaths to the viewpoint were improved, replacing stiles with kissing gates and adding more waymarkers, both from Tidenham Chase car park (a distance of 1612m) and up the steep path from Tintern (1048m).
- Creation of a crushed limestone surface over a 290m section of Offa's Dyke Path National Trail around the Devil's Pulpit viewpoint.
- Repair of erosion at 3 other sites close by Devil's Pulpit, further along Offa's Dyke Path National Trail.
- Additionally, 600m of surfaced path removed National Trail erosion off Offa's Dyke.

View from Devil's Pulpit.



Erosion of National Trail on Offa's Dyke (2007)



'The viewpoint was closing in and the Scheduled Ancient Monument was wearing down. The amount of meetings we had worn it down another couple of centimetres!'

Phil Morton, Forestry Commission, England

Works in progress and pathway completed (2011)



'There's a rather dramatic piece of rock which has the history that the devil used to try and draw the monks away from Tintern, but regardless of that story, it's a good viewpoint with a dramatic foreground of this rock. Anyway, to cut a long story short they got another consultant in who had worked on other parts of Offa's Dyke and said 'no problem, what we can do is stabilise the path here, broaden it so there's space for people to stand and we'll build it out of rocks and gravel and a membrane to hold it in place, and it'll disappear back into the landscape', as indeed it is doing at the moment.'

Cllr David Thompson, Forest of Dean District Council

8.4. John Kyrle Walk:

Viewpoints

The view from The Prospect, Ross-on-Wye



John Kyrle was a 17th century philanthropist in Ross-on-Wye known as the 'Man of Ross'. Around 1700 he laid out the Prospect Gardens (the view above) and a promenade, now known as The John Kyrle Walk, along the cliffs and back to the town alongside the river. What is highly significant is that the Prospect and cliff walks were created half a century before the Picturesque movement discovered the River Wye. As part of the Scheme enhancements were made to the established John Kyrle Walk making it more accessible for people with mobility problems.

Works completed:

- Improved access on John Kyrle Walk, opening up historic kissing gates and replacing steps with a ramp thereby enabling an all access 'Buggy Route' around Ross-on-Wye.

New sloping path on John Kyrle walk (2009)



8.5. Lancaut:

Viewpoints & Hidden Industry

The secluded St James' Church dates from the 12th century. This Scheduled Monument includes the Church and the 19th century precinct wall in the context of the wider deserted medieval village. The site is located within a SSSI, and the surrounding land is managed by the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust.

Works completed:

- The precinct wall was conserved and rebuilt using reclaimed limestone and finished with a turf top
- Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust have installed new steps down the steep access to the church and are in discussion with English Heritage over the management of the surrounding landscape with grazing to reduce brambles and bracken that result in damage to the underlying archaeology.
- Ceramic interpretative plaque installed on wall.

Lancaut church and wall before works (2009).



Re-built churchyard wall with turf top and plaques (2012)



8.6. Piercefield

Viewpoints

The view from The Alcove to Chepstow



Piercefield Walks comprise a group of Scheduled Monuments within a Grade I Registered Historic Park and Garden. First constructed in the mid 18th century, the viewpoints were designed to give visitors to the parkland surrounding Piercefield House a sublime experience of the 'Picturesque'. The winding walks along the edge of the Wye Valley opened onto magnificent vistas of the meandering river below at a series of viewpoints with evocative names such as The Alcove, The Grotto, Giant's Cave and Lover's Leap. Four of these viewpoints are now Scheduled Monuments (The Alcove, The Platform, The Grotto and Giant's Cave). The area is also within woodland designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest and Special Area of Conservation, as well as a key habitat for Greater and Lesser Horseshoe bats, a European Protected Species. Therefore the place is nationally important, and possibly even more significant, as a designed landscape as well as having the highest value in terms of European environmental conservation.

The Piercefield walks and woodland are in private ownership. However the owners have granted permissive rights for the public along the walks and viewpoints, which now form part of the Wye Valley Walk. As part of the Scheme an Agreement was negotiated between Herefordshire Council, as the accountable body for the works, Monmouthshire County Council, over the permissive access, and the landowner.

The condition of six of the viewpoints (The Alcove, The Platform, The Grotto, Giant's Cave, Lover's Leap and Eagles' Nest) had deteriorated significantly over the years and some of the scheduled monument structures were in danger of collapsing into the Wye below. Due to the inaccessible nature of the sites clinging to the cliffs above the river, specialist rope access contractors, Ascend (Cymru) Ltd, were needed to complete conservation works, whilst hanging on the end of a rope.

Additional tree felling and Cherry Laurel control around the scheduled monuments is taking place under a Better Woodlands for Wales tree management plan with the landowners. Conservation work is also planned at the Cold Bath, another scheduled monument feature of the designed walkways and parkland, with CCW and Cadw. Other additional works include the installation of interpretation panels by the Forestry Commission (Wales) at Upper Wyndcliff and Lower Wyndcliff, the two the car parks closest to Eagle's Nest and the 365 steps, and at Eagles Nest. These were completed prior to the start of the Overlooking the Wye Scheme in 2008, due to budgetary timetables.

Works completed:

- Tree survey safety inspections along the permissive Wye Valley Walk, and subsequent selective felling of necessary trees.
- Surveys identified bats roosting in a cavity below The Alcove so provision was made, as mitigation, to protect the bat habitat at Eagle's Nest viewpoint nearby.

- Conservation works to masonry completed at the series of viewpoints along the Piercefield Walk: The Alcove, The Platform, The Grotto, Giant's Cave, Lover's Leap and Eagle's Nest.
- Selected tree felling and coppicing completed to restore views at viewpoints.
- Extensive cutting of cherry laurel around The Grotto to restore the viewpoint and control this invasive species.
- Ceramic plaques portray historic images of each viewpoint.
- Forestry Commission (Wales) interpretation at Upper Wyndcliff and Lower Wyndcliff, car parks and at Eagle's Nest.
- 'Picturesque Piercefield' trail leaflet detailing the walk connecting the viewpoints.

'Thought I would email you to say what a lovely job has been done to the Valentine Morris walk through Piercefield estate. My friends and I have been walking this route over many years. We were so excited when we first "found" all the old features along the way and followed the route on our map. We read the book about Valentine Morris and fell in love with the area and his walks. A friend and I recently walked from Chepstow to Llandogo checking the route for the October Walking Festival. It was with great delight that I saw the repairs, minimal enough to secure stonework without adding new. Just right, if I did not know the features well I would not really have noticed the work had been done. The lookout is a distinct improvement and what a view! Say thanks to all the team.'

Diana Standing

Preliminary clearance of vegetation at The Alcove (2009)



Repair of buttresses using roped access (2009)



The Alcove conservation works complete (2009)



'Some sites were very remote, particularly on the Piercefield Walk near Chepstow, where you would literally have to walk for a mile to be able to get to the location you are working in, and you can imagine what the difficulties there with taking lime and stone, mixing materials. So, we used to do it with track barrows. Donkeys would have been useful!'

Andy Cox, Director, Ascend

Re-construction of historic railings at The Platform (2009).

The Platform completed but view obscured by yew



trees (2009).



The Grotto before works (2008) and when conservation works completed (2009)



Giant's Cave before works started (2008) and when works completed (2009).



Volunteers working to improve the footpath to Giant's Cave (2010)



Lover's Leap viewpoint before works (2008) and with new railings (2009).



Eagle's Nest before works and after works



Ascend rope access team in action at Eagle's Nest

BBC Countryfile filming Matt Baker at Eagle's Nest



8.7. Symonds Yat Rock

Viewpoints & Hillforts

Symonds Yat Rock is both a hillfort and a viewpoint, this sites has been reported under the Hillfort section.

8.8. The Kymin:

Viewpoints

View over Monmouth from The Kymin



This is a National Trust property includes a Banqueting House, Naval Temple and landscaped grounds and outstanding views. In the late 18th century the 'Monmouth Picnic Club' erected the Round House for dining and also stone picnic tables in Beaulieu Grove which were laid out as a promenade. The Naval Temple was dedicated on the second anniversary of Nelson's victory over the French fleet at the Battle of Abu Kir Bay (Battle of the Nile). Nelson himself visited and dined at the site in 1802.

Works completed:

- Access improvements to the driveway (for a distance of 314m) and footpaths up to the Round House (44m).
- Creation of new safety iron railings at viewpoint
- Felling of selected trees to maintain view.
- Creation of relief engraved plaque about the view

New surfacing on driveway up to The Kymin (April 2009) and interpretation plaque (2011)



The Kymin viewpoint before (2008) and after new railings installed (2010).



8.9. Whitestone:

Viewpoints

This is a well-used Forestry Commission (Wales) facility with car park, playground, toilets (restricted opening times) in the wooded hillside above Llandogo. The Wye Valley Walk passes through the site along which there are three viewpoints overlooking the Wye accessible along a surfaced forestry track on a short walk from the car park.

This is one of four site where the Forestry Commission (Wales), due to budgetary timetables, completed the installation of interpretation panels prior to the start of the Overlooking the Wye Scheme in 2008. Another site was Duchess Ride, a spectacular viewpoint favoured by the Duchess of Beaufort, approximately 1500m further along the Wye Valley Walk.

Works completed:

- Interpretation panel in the car park.

A couple of the viewpoints at Whitestone



9. Outreach & Interpretation

Objective: *To provide fresh opportunities for people to take part in, appreciate and enjoy the rich heritage of the Wye Valley*

9.1. Interpretation Summary

During the Development Stage the partners decided that while the Scheme would always be called 'Overlooking the Wye', they did not want a new 'project/brand/logo' conflicting with the existing strong Wye Valley brand or partner profiles on new interpretation. Therefore the main interpretive elements employed in the Scheme (panels, plaques, leaflets and book) explicitly emphasise the Wye Valley rather than Overlooking the Wye.

The main interpretation focused on using the media of panels, plaques, leaflets, interactives, book and website. These have been mentioned at each relevant site above and therefore are not detailed here. However, each item of interpretation was a team effort that contributes to the legacy of Overlooking the Wye. The key participators in these joint efforts have been:-

- Iagemakers – Interpretive design consultants, devising Overlooking the Wye brand identity and the interior for Old Station Tintern railway carriages
- Ruth Waycott (Wye Knot Tourism) – interpretation consultant, undertaking research, text and image generation for interpretation panels, leaflets and book
- Maria Dispirito (Dispirito Design) – designing panels, leaflets, book
- Ned Heywood (Workshop Gallery) – ceramics artist creating plaques and artwork
- Jim Hardcastle (Viper Marketing) – Overlooking the Wye Website
- Paul Hopgood (Phoenix Mapping) – creating maps for panels and leaflets
- Phil Kenning (Kenning Illustration) – reconstruction illustrations for Abbey Tintern Furnace and Angidy Valley
- Alan Duncan (Design/Illustration) – reconstruction illustration for Devil's Pulpit and Angidy Valley

9.2. Outreach Activities Summary

A total of 27,509 people have taken part in the range of outreach activities delivered over the course of the Scheme. These were reported in 152 articles in the local press. The wide variety of activities, both theme specific and cross-cutting, are summarised below and described in more detail in the following sections, along with the responses to feedback forms and surveys.

- 4 students from local schools did their 'work experience' week with the Overlooking the Wye team
- 15 mature students attended two modules over two terms covering 'Exploring Heritage in the Field' and 'Heritage Story Telling'
- 181 volunteers took part in a range of activities, both working on sites and assisting at celebratory events
- 212 people benefited from 22 training courses
- 255 people were taken on 18 minibus tours of sites
- 385 people attended 20 walks and talks
- 389 people attended 3 Day school events
- 1,169 people came to a range of 16 other events
- 1,164 school students and staff explored the area on summer learning days or Museum on the Move events
- 1,500 people attended the launch event at the beginning of the Scheme at Goodrich Castle
- 13,632 people attended The Wye Tour and its Artists exhibition at Chepstow Museum in 2010
- 8,500 people visited the 4 main celebratory events in 2011
- 103 people attended the final Overlooking the Wye Seminar

9.3. Guided Walks and Talks

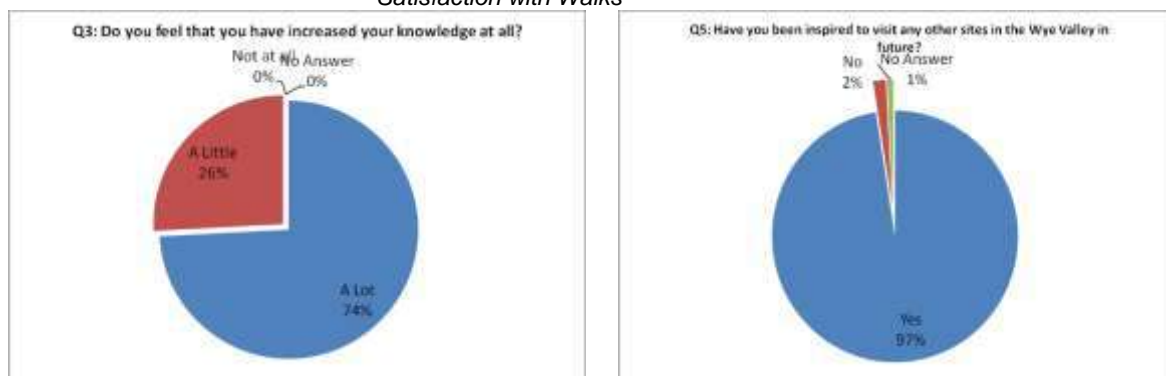
A varied programme of guided walks and talks was organised throughout the Scheme. These were primarily promoted and advertised through the Wye Valley AONB 'Wye So Special' events and activities guide, with 6,500 published and distributed twice a year, also through the AONB website. Close to each event a press release was put in local papers. 257 people attended 17 guided walks which included walks at Brockweir, Piercefield (4), The Kymin, Ross-on-Wye, Little Doward (4), Llandogo, New Weir Forge (2), Lancaut, The Angidy Valley (2), Devil's Pulpit (2), St Briavels and Tintern Abbey. Various partner organisations have led these walks but, in particular, many have been delivered by the Archaeology Services of Herefordshire Council and Gloucestershire County Council. The following charts are based on the 120 respondents who completed feedback forms for these walks.

Neil Rimmington & Tim Hoverd leading walkers at New Weir Forge



Just over three quarters (80%) of respondents were 'very satisfied' with their walk. A similar proportion (74%) felt that they have learnt a lot and almost all (97%) felt inspired to visit other sites in the Wye Valley.

Satisfaction with Walks



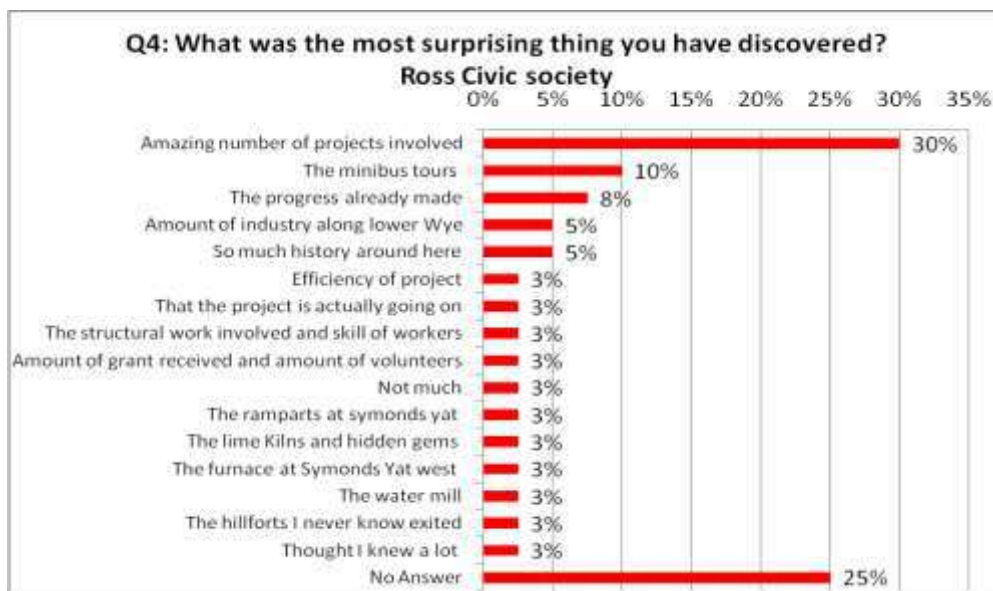
Base: 120 respondents

128 people attended 3 planned talks (one about Boats and Trade on the River Wye and two about the works of the Overlooking the Wye Scheme in general) and 80 respondents completed feedback forms. The largest single event was a talk about 'Overlooking the Wye' to Ross Civic Society, so detailed responses for this are provided below. Just over two thirds (69%) of respondents were 'very satisfied' with their talk. Of the 40 respondents replying about the Overlooking the Wye talk, almost half (48%) were satisfied because 'the speaker knew the subject and was willing to answer questions'. The aspect that they enjoyed most was the 'before and after pictures' and the most surprising thing was 'the amazing number of projects involved'. Overall 49% of those attending these talks felt that they had learnt 'a lot' and 89% felt inspired to visit other sites in the Wye Valley.

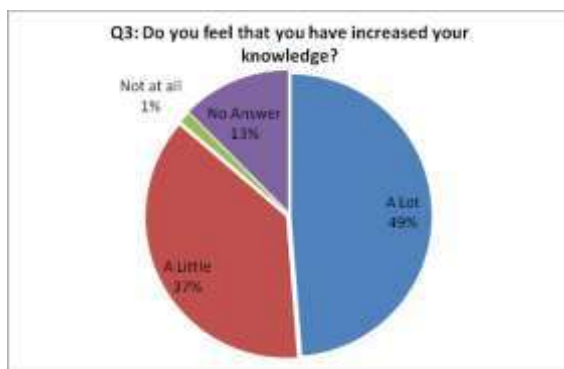
In addition the Scheme Manager, Project Officer and the AONB Officer gave 45 evening lectures on elements of the Scheme to a range of special interest groups such as the National Trust or the Forest of Dean Local History Society. Total attendance to these talks was in the region of 645 individuals.



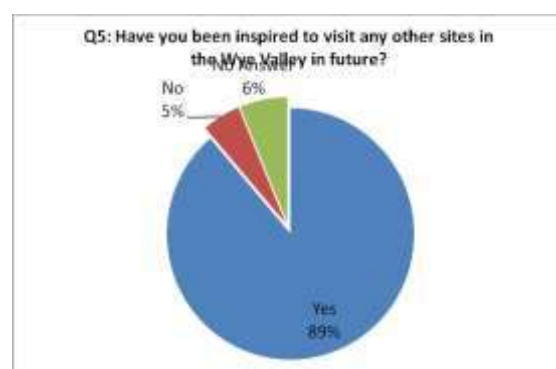
Base: 40 respondents



Base: 40 respondents



Base: 80 respondents (3 talks)



Base: 80 respondents (3 talks)

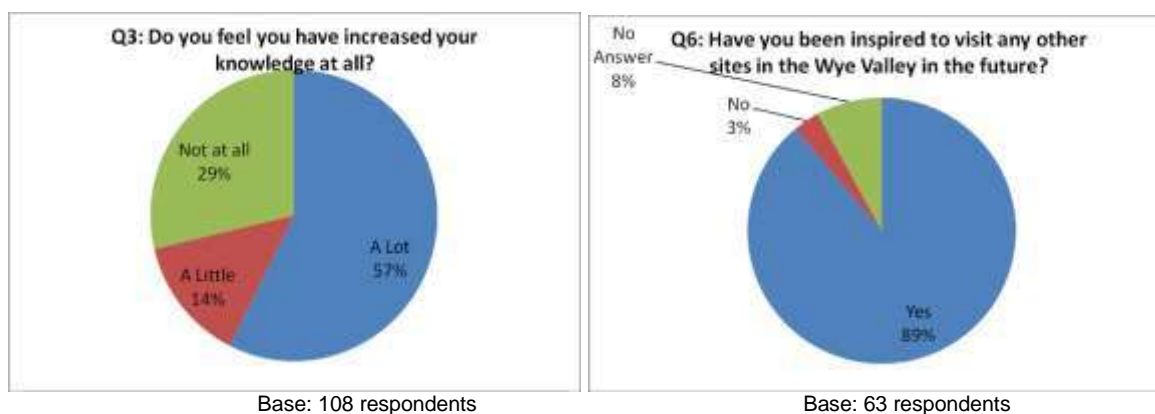
9.4. Training Courses

Over the course of the Scheme a large amount of training was provided to a broad range of trainees. Whilst most of these courses were provided for the benefit of the public, training was also given to the Overlooking the Wye team, contractors, partners and local school students. All the training elements identified in the Stage 2 bid were delivered.

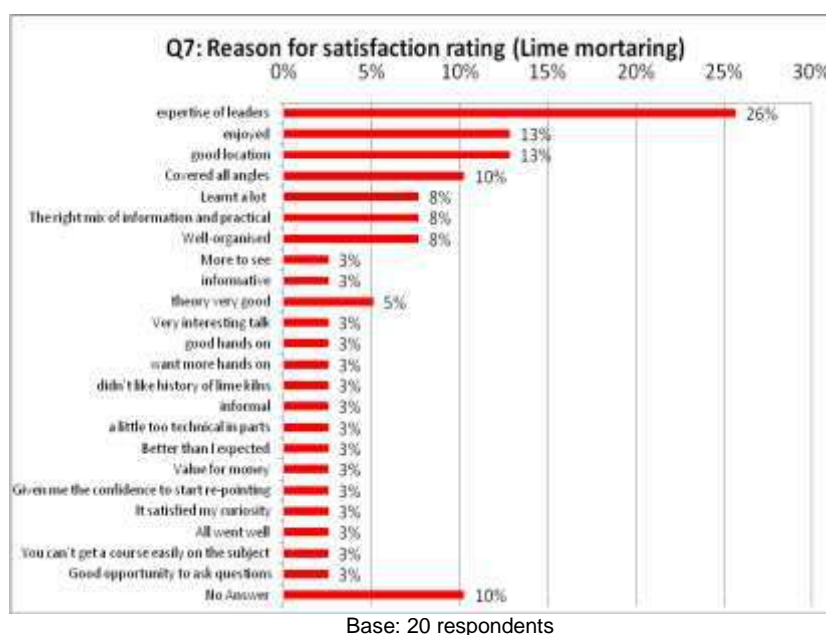
9.4.1. Training Courses for the public

In total, 212 people attended 22 training courses and 165 people provided feedback forms. Many of the training courses for the public were provided by the Gwent Wildlife Trust which covered such topics as coppicing, charcoal making, willow making, millstone extraction, dry stone walling and hedge-laying. Other specialist courses for the public included lime mortaring by Ty Mawr, which was run three times due to popular demand, researching historic wharves, an evening of bat monitoring, paper making sessions, day schools with expert speakers and archaeological excavations.

Overall, more than three quarters of respondents (81%) were 'very satisfied' with their training course, the majority (57%) felt that they had increased their knowledge 'a lot' and almost all (89%) felt inspired to visit other sites in the Wye Valley in the future.

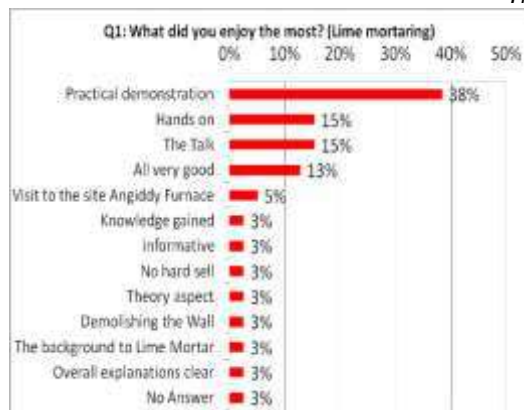


A selection of the more detailed responses on some of the courses is provided below. One of the most consistent responses from 'satisfied' trainees was the 'expertise of leaders/good tutors' which spanned the variety of organisations delivering the courses.



When asked what they liked most, responses tended to focus on the primary purpose of the course, so this was ‘the archaeologists’ for the fieldwalking course, the practical demonstration for lime mortaring, making paper on papermaking and the site visits on the heritage course.

Trainees on a lime mortaring course at Abbey Tintern Furnace

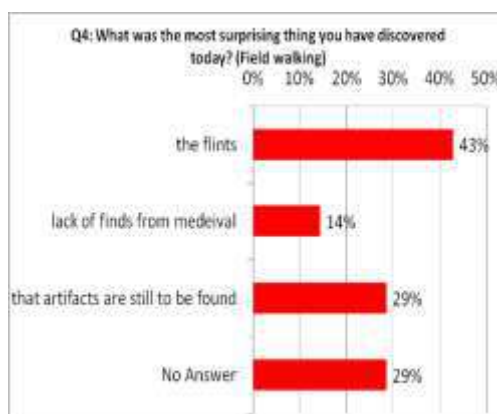


Base: 39 respondents





Although all respondents were asked what, if anything, they liked least about the courses, the most frequent response here was ‘nothing’, so these are not detailed here individually. Similarly, all course participants were asked, what, if anything, could be improved about the course. Responses to this question generally related to administrative details (e.g. timing of breaks, air conditioning, microphone system) so these were taken on board for future planning of courses at the time and are not reported here.

Trainees were also asked to identify the most surprising thing that they had learned during the courses. There were a large variety of responses to this question on the lime mortaring course, whereas for the fieldwalking course the surprise revolved around finding ‘the flints’. On the heritage course participants were surprised by the amount of industrial heritage that was to be found ‘on the doorstep’. This opinion was expanded by one particular respondent on the heritage course (below), who also reported that she would feel better informed about conservation issues in future.



Individual feedback comments commended the tutors and reported that the courses were interesting and useful. Verbatim comments are provided below for the courses delivered by the Gwent Wildlife Trust:

	<h3>Drystone Walling</h3> <p><i>Are there volunteer opportunities to put this into practice?</i> <i>Excellent tuition</i> <i>Very friendly and informative staff & tutor.</i> <i>Excellent course</i> <i>Very good course, worthwhile, good skills learnt</i> <i>An extremely worthwhile and informative introductory course</i></p>
	<h3>Hedgelaying</h3> <p><i>Enjoyed course very much.</i> <i>Very friendly people. Great fun</i> <i>Another excellent course</i> <i>A brilliant day and very satisfying</i> <i>I would love a chain saw course</i> <i>Another excellent GWT practical training course. Tutors very good. Extremely good vfm</i> <i>Very enjoyable more please</i> <i>Very helpful & informative</i></p>
	<h3>Millstone Extraction</h3> <p><i>We are new to the area & today has been a great introduction to what there is in this area</i> <i>Would be interesting to see any tools if still exist</i></p> <p><i>Well organised (x2)</i> <i>Good addition to range of courses</i></p>
	<h3>Charcoal Making</h3> <p><i>Really enjoyed the day - great treat at end seeing a little dormouse!</i> <i>Was very interesting and informative, thank you</i> <i>Learnt a lot, beautiful venue, good fun</i> <i>Thoroughly enjoyable! And I saw a dormouse</i> <i>Dormouse shown a bonus to an interesting day</i></p>

	<p>Coppicing</p> <p><i>Very informative & helpful tutor Excellent teaching - feel I have learned a great deal in a short time</i></p>
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9.4.2. Heritage Courses

During the final year of the Scheme the Overlooking the Wye team was approached by the Centre for Community and Life Long Learning at the University of South Wales, Newport, to assist in the development of two pilot courses on the heritage of the area. This opportunity was keenly taken up. The course topic material was largely developed and delivered by the Overlooking the Wye Project Officer and the Interpretation Consultant working in partnership with staff members from the university. The courses were held in the Shire Hall at Monmouth (which had recently been restored with an HLF grant) and using the sites and themes conserved and enhanced through Overlooking the Wye .

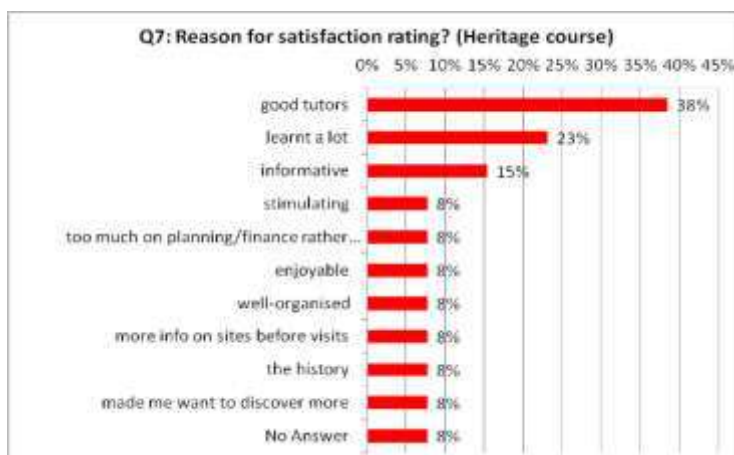
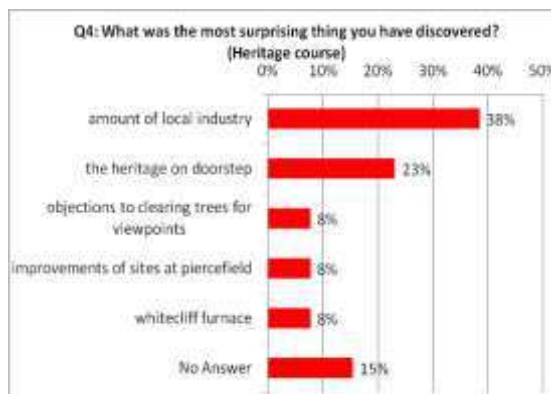
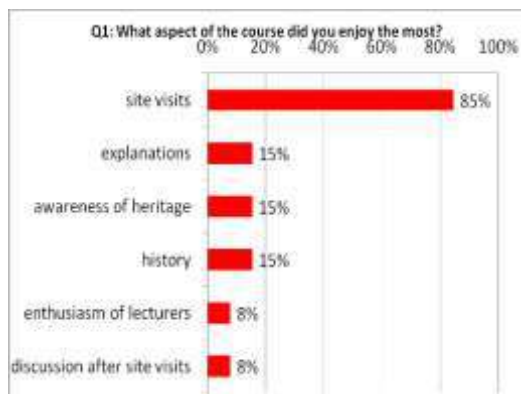
The first module entitled 'Heritage in the Field' looked at the legislation, types, protection and management of Heritage Assets. The second course 'Heritage Story Telling' focused on the interpretation of historic sites and how you tell heritage stories. Each module consisted of 12 x 2 hour sessions, and was assessed and worth 10 credits. Regular visits were made to the Overlooking the Wye sites in the Wye Valley conserved through Scheme.

The courses were very well attended with people enjoying the topics covered immensely. It has resulted in about 20 'heritage champions' who have a greater in depth understanding of the area in which they live, some of whom are members of voluntary groups or parish, town or community councils.

The course methods are available to be adapted for use at other locations including. Unfortunately an attempt to repeat the courses in Chepstow was not successful due to Newport University targeting the wrong audience. However the courses may also be extended to Usk and Blaenavon, with the 'Forgotten Landscapes' Landscape Partnership Scheme.

'I think for myself personally, it's given me more of an insight to an area although I haven't lived here all my life, I have known it all my life and I have known parts of it but missed out on other parts so it has deepened my knowledge and awareness so that when I go and look at things and places hopefully I will challenge myself a little bit more. Also as a parish councillor – the work we talked about in conservation and funding and projects although I don't think that we have got anything in the parish where I live at the moment but if in the future there might need to be projects and I think it gives you an awareness of conservation and how to go about things that might come in useful on the parish council.'

Sally Northcott, Heritage Course



9.4.3. Training Courses for the Overlooking the Wye Team

The Overlooking the Wye team all learnt a considerable amount during the process of working on the Scheme and they have all gained increased confidence to develop larger projects. All members of the team benefited from professional development in areas including interpretive design, conservation plans, construction design and management issues, abseiling, specification of works, project management, accountancy and the use of design software. Training has included both formal courses and continuing professional development.

The Scheme Manager and Finance Officer both completed Prince II, whilst the Project Officer attended English Heritage accredited courses in Conservation Management Planning, Writing Specifications for Conservation works and a CPD day with Opus International on Construction Design and Management. Both the Scheme Manager and the Project Officer attended a course on Interpretation Planning.

Through the Scheme the advice of the team was called upon on a number of occasions from other LPS Schemes

The Project Officer in the safe hands of Ascend (Mar 2009)



'One of the things that we've all learnt within the Scheme is the need for flexibility and the need for change because you can have an idea how you want something to go but you might have to turn that idea completely on its head in order to achieve what is effectively the same objective. Sometimes you say one thing as you start something, but then you might have to say something completely different later on. In project planning terms, there's been a learning curve and understanding the need for change within a Scheme of Works or within your ideas.'

Kate Biggs, Overlooking the Wye Project Officer

9.4.4. Training for Contractors

9.4.4.1. Ascend Rope Access (Cymru) Ltd

The Ascend Rope Access team were already specialists in completing conservation works in dangerous, inaccessible locations and therefore have an unusually diverse skillset. During their works on the viewpoint sites at Piercefield, they took on a specialist stone mason. This resulted in beneficial cross-training within the team as his masonry skills were passed on to others, and he developed rope access skills to ultimately qualify as a Level 3 IRATA technician. In addition Nick Jones was a local Job Centre recruit, employed to work on Whitecliff Furnace on a temporary basis. He has recently completed his level 1 IRATA rope access training and is now working on other Ascend projects. In total Ascend employed and trained 3 new staff specifically to work on contracts with Overlooking the Wye, one employee is a permanent post, whilst two others were temporary contracts, however Nick Jones (temp) is still working for the company at present.

The Ascend rope access team working with trainee staff



'We're now trying to market ourselves as conservation contractors as well as just rope access contractors. As a rope access specialist, you pretty much do anything on the end of a rope, including window cleaning and inspections. Whatever! But I think our forte now is conservation work. We've got so much experience of it, and it would be good to keep the people on who are currently working with us as well, and we try to do that by marketing our services as conservation experts. It's a difficult time, obviously, but hopefully we can continue to do a lot more of it. It's a shame Overlooking the Wye aren't continuing.'

9.4.4.2. Penybryn Engineering

Penybryn Engineering completed the works to restore Abbey Mill waterwheel to working order. One of their staff was taking courses through the Open University to gain a Bachelor of Engineering degree. She already has a BSc Mechanical Engineering with Management degree and plans to progress further to a Masters degree and attain chartered status in due course. The opportunity to work as a trainee project manager on the Abbey Mill waterwheel project contributed to her studies and the creation of a professional review record. Her longer term objective is to bring old and new engineering methods together, a benefit for her family business and the future training of apprentices in restoration methods

Sian Brake (Penybryn Engineering) in the middle bottom row at Abbey Mill (Nov 2008)



The waterwheel being refurbished at Penybryn Engineering (2009)



9.4.5. Training for Partners

9.4.5.1. Training for Herefordshire Archaeology Service – Archaeological Surveying Techniques (Mar 2009)

English Heritage conducted a detailed survey of the Little Doward site after the conifers had been removed in order to identify and record features of archaeological interest. As they were using new equipment in order to complete this, two members of staff from Herefordshire Archaeology Service took the opportunity to learn about these evolving archaeological surveying techniques with the survey team from English Heritage.

'It's (the Scheme) been great for me from a personal development point of view, increasing my knowledge and the ability for me to be able to advise on projects, both on a local scale in Herefordshire, but also more nationally through my network of counterparts in other counties when they've got an issue. What we do is we liaise a lot to ask if anyone has done this before, 'what did you do? What went wrong?' that kind of thing and it just helps make sure the projects work better.'

Dr Neil Rimmington, Countryside Adviser, Herefordshire Council Archaeology

9.4.6. Professional development

9.4.6.1. Historic Built Environment and European Protected Species Licensing Seminar

This seminar was developed by the Overlooking the Wye Project Officer as a result of the complications and constraints encountered working on the Piercefield viewpoints. The objectives of the day were:

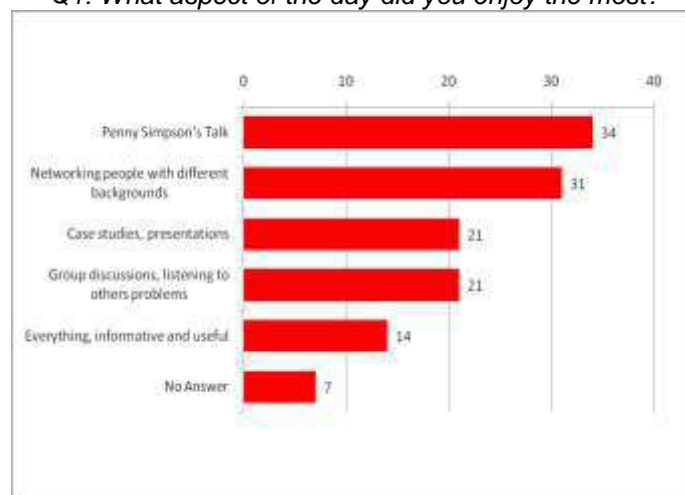
- To identify perceived problems with licensing issues for protected species at designated monuments and listed buildings
- To facilitate discussion of these issues from all perspectives including:
 - Officers from statutory agencies (Cadw, CCW, English Heritage, Natural England)

- Officers from local authorities (planning, building and nature conservation departments)
- Private sector (ecology consultants, architects, contractors, landowners)
- To suggest a way forward for future co-operative working in order to improve the current system

Forty-four people attended the seminar in March 2011, providing a good spread across the three categories detailed above. The overall consensus was that the event had been extremely useful in broadening the appreciation and understanding between the different disciplines. The responses of the 29 participants who completed feedback forms are summarised below. All (100%) of respondents were satisfied with the event, with 48% of these being 'very satisfied'. When asked for their reasons in support of that satisfaction rating, almost a third (31%) of respondents commented on the 'very constructive, informative, good progress'. Other positive comments involved 'very well organised', 'increased knowledge', 'good mix of participants and organisations' (each given by 14% of respondents).

The element of the day that participants enjoyed most was the presentation about European Protected Species Licensing Issues by Penny Simpson, given by 34% of respondents. However, many other aspects of the day were enjoyed, described as 'networking people with different backgrounds', 'case studies/presentations', 'group discussions/others problems' (given by 31%, 21% and 21% of respondents respectively). This was a very positive outcome for the seminar as the primary aim had been to improve knowledge and communication between the ecological and built environment sectors.

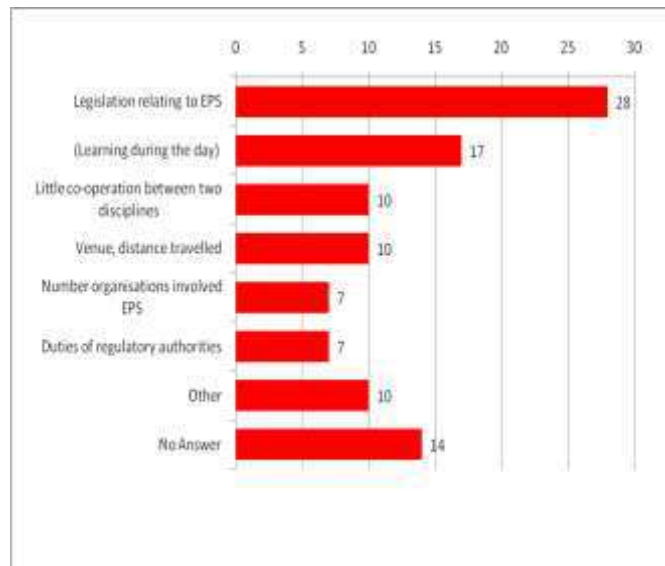
Q1: What aspect of the day did you enjoy the most?



Base: All Respondents (29)

When asked what was 'surprising', 28% of respondents reported 'legislation relating to EPS' and 17% reported comments that related to 'learning during the day' (Fig.43).

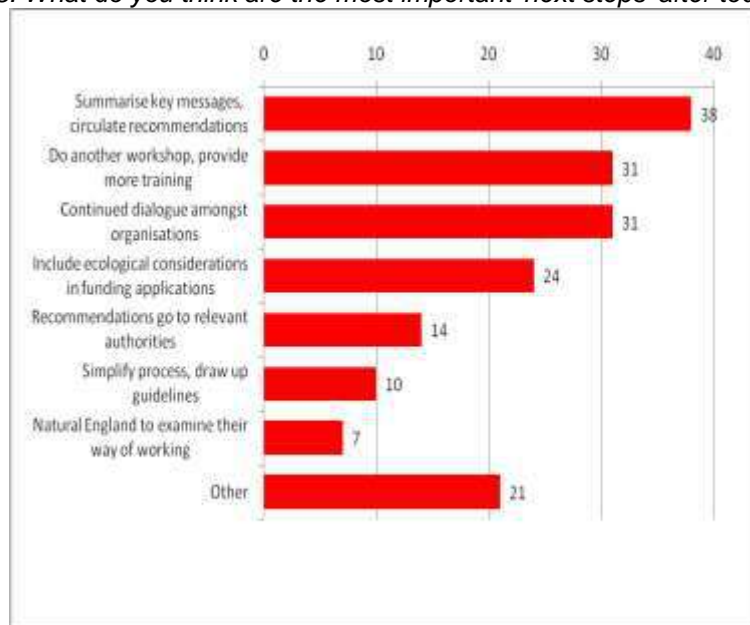
Q4: What was the most surprising thing you have discovered today?



Base: All Respondents (29)

When asked about the most important 'next steps' after the seminar day, there were many comments relating to dissemination of information. These were 'summarise key messages, circulate recommendations', 'do another workshop', 'continue dialogue amongst organisations' and 'include ecological considerations in funding applications' (given by 38%, 31%, 31% and 24% of respondents respectively).

Q8: What do you think are the most important 'next steps' after today?



Base: All Respondents (29)

The day provided an excellent opportunity for cross border networking between England and Wales with the four Government agencies, Local Government Officers, Consultants and private practitioners. A key issue for the Wye Valley AONB is the artificial administrative boundaries when dealing with habitats and species at a landscape scale. The AONB Partnership has built up a strong reputation for working across borders and Overlooking the Wye has been able to address this issues through more communication. The day also demonstrated that there is a great appetite for understanding the issues of heritage conservation and ecology by those in the other sector, but there is little opportunity for this type of combined CPD. One comment after the seminar is included here, illustrating that the Countryside Council for Wales are keen to supply information to the Heritage Lottery Fund to send out to future Landscape Partnership Schemes. The day was informative and

constructive and demonstrated that both ecologists and built heritage professionals need to understand more about each other's discipline's, and the protective legislation.

'Thanks so much for organising such a constructive seminar. There were a lot of good suggestions made and possibly the most useful, I thought, was the idea of HLF sending out a package of information to successful applicants. If someone can take this forward, CCW has several useful publications which could go into the package as they are, and we could also give you links to other sources of information, contact details for our offices etc.'

Mary Chadwick, Countryside Council for Wales

9.4.7. Work Experience

Four students at local schools joined the Overlooking the Wye team at various times for a week of work experience. These were:

- James Fawcett - Lakers School, Coleford
- Kayley Kennedy - Chepstow School
- Marianne Hohendorf - Haberdashers Monmouth School for Girls
- Katie Rawle - St Teilos High School, Cardiff

For each student a varied programme of work for the week was devised so that this included some site visits as well as office work, with the set task being to analyse some feedback forms and complete a report by the end of the week. Each of the students performed their work very well and reported that they had learnt a lot about the work of Overlooking the Wye and promised to spread the word about the Scheme to family and friends, taking them out to the sites visited.

9.4.8. Minibus Tours

The initial intention was to purchase a minibus to run tours and site visits, both as training and familiarisation for the tourist businesses and commercially for the public. However it was agreed that hiring vehicles was a more efficient use of resources, releasing funds for other projects. In the first two years the minibus tours were targeted at tourism officers and businesses, taking them out to the sites included within the Scheme, so that they could see the works in progress and understand the historic significance of the Wye Valley. The expectation was that these individuals would cascade that knowledge to the members of the public that they encountered in their work. During the second and third years of the Scheme the tours were also promoted to the public with a £15 charge, including lunch. These proved popular but were heavily subsidised. A total of 255 people attended 18 tours, providing 187 completed feedback forms.

Minibus tour



These tours were designed to take in as many of the Scheme sites as possible, separating the Wye Valley AONB into 'Upper Wye Valley' and 'Lower Wye Valley' routes, as detailed below:

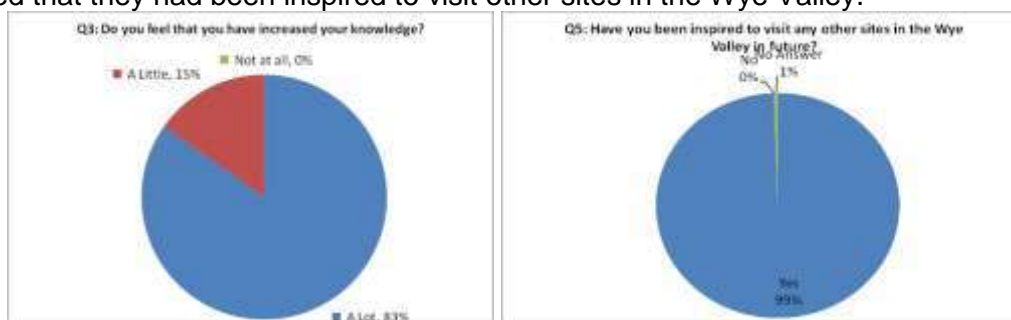
- Upper Wye Valley: Symonds Yat Rock, The Kymin, Monmouth Quay, Little Doward Hillfort, New Weir Forge, Symonds Yat Limekiln, Goodrich Castle, Wilton Riverside, Ross Riverside

- Lower Wye Valley: The Alcove Piercefield, Eagle's Nest, Abbey Mill, Lower Wireworks, Abbey Tintern Furnace, Old Station, Whitestone, Brockweir Quay, Tintern Limekiln

'Minibus tours, which has happened right the way through and has made us realise, certainly not just in the Wye Valley but elsewhere in Monmouthshire, that's actually something that we need to try and find a way of resourcing more generally because you're missing a major market segment by not telling people, showing people what improvements you've done.'

Matthew Lewis, Countryside Manager, Monmouthshire County Council

All of the respondents were satisfied with their tour (88% 'very satisfied'). Over three quarters (83%) felt that they had increased their knowledge 'a lot' and almost all (99%) reported that they had been inspired to visit other sites in the Wye Valley.



Base: 187 respondents

'There are certain elements that I have never seen before and I've been living in the County for over 30 years, so it's a bit of an eye opener! I didn't know anything about the ironworks in the Angidy Valley and it's been great, very helpful – they have been the instrument in showing us these new elements within the Wye Valley that I knew nothing about.'

I can share that with tourists that come to visit the area and want to see something interesting – there are quite a few historical things – the ironworks, the smelting, the lime kilns and other things that they've discovered and are actually actively excavating one at Symonds' Yat, one at Redbrook – it's been an eye opener and very interesting at the same time.'

Robert Hughes, Shire Hall, Monmouth

'I've learnt a lot about places like Eagle's Nest and Symonds Yat and I've gone back and told my friends in the pub.'

John Witts, Belfitts bus driver

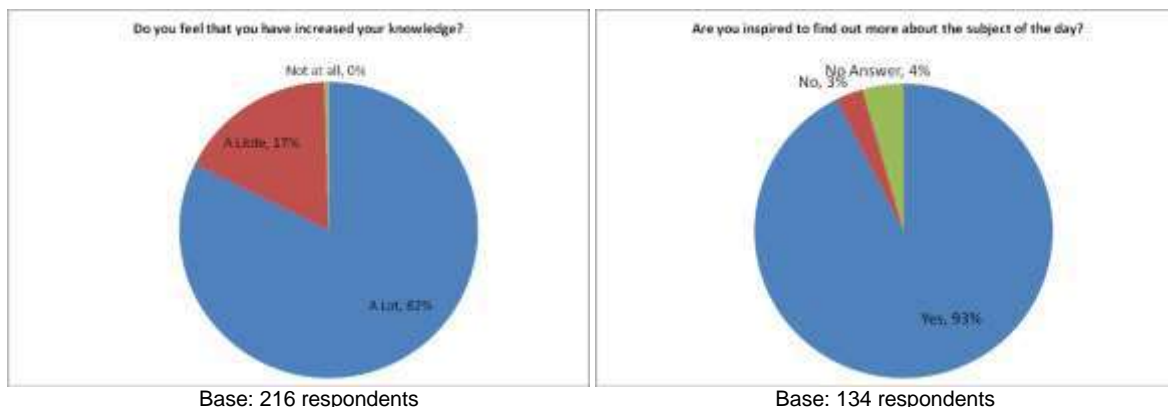
9.4.9. Day schools

The day schools were designed to bringing academic speakers into an accessible forum for a large audience who have a strong interest in local history. There were 3 of these over the course of the Scheme, each taking a different theme (see below), providing a packed day of presentations by acknowledged experts in their field.

- Hillforts
- The Wye Tour (River Connections and Viewpoints)
- Hidden Industry

The day schools were organised and managed by Annie Rainsbury of Chepstow Museum. ,

There was lively discussion and debate on the various topics. A total of 389 people attended the day schools and 134 completed feedback forms. Of these, 98% were satisfied with the event, of which 72% were 'very satisfied'. Just over three quarters of respondents (82%) felt that they increased their knowledge after the dayschools and the vast majority (93%) had been inspired to find out more about the subject.



'(Hillforts) Opened a whole new door on learning and there will be many books I will be reading on the subject in the future.

Day school attendee

9.5. Main Celebratory Events

9.5.1. Overlooking the Wye Launch at Goodrich Castle (Sept 2008)

The first public launch event for the Scheme was on the National Heritage weekend in September 2008. English Heritage allowed Goodrich Castle to be used to welcome 1500 visitors to a wide range of activities provided by partners within the Scheme (listed below). These organisations were assisted in their various endeavours by 29 volunteers, some of whom worked on both days. The entertainments included craft activities, quizzes, historical walks and talks and the opportunity to sample medieval foods whilst being entertained by demonstrations of sword fighting and fire-eating. Of the 214 people who completed feedback forms, 75% rated the overall event 'excellent'.

Rock and fossil road show



Chepstow Museum exhibit on historic views



Partners with stands and exhibitions included the Forestry Commission, Gloucestershire Archaeology Service, Herefordshire Archaeology Service, Coppett Hill Common Trust & the Friends of Coppett Hill, Woodland Trust, Monmouthshire Countryside Service, Forest of Dean Local History Society, Herefordshire & Worcestershire Earth Heritage Trust, English Heritage, RSPB, The Woolhope Club, Old Station, Gwent Wildlife Trust, Chepstow Museum, Ned Heywood and Coracle Tales.

9.5.2. Overlooking the Wye Introductory Seminar (Mar 2009)

In order to publicise the works planned over the three years of the Scheme, a seminar was held in March 2009 at Wyastone Leys. The concert hall filled with 105 people who listened to speakers from a number of partners which included works completed (Little Doward clearance of conifers), works in progress (at Abbey Mill waterwheel and the Piercefield viewpoints) and works in the future (Devil's Pulpit). The stands displayed at the rear of the

hall provided an opportunity for more informal discussions with partner organisations at the end of the presentations.

The Overlooking the Wye introductory seminar in progress (March 2009)



9.5.3. Overlooking the Wye Themed Events

The final full year of the Overlooking the Wye Scheme coincided with the fortieth anniversary of the designation of the Wye Valley as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1971. So the two opportunities were combined into a single year of celebration. Four big events were planned with the objective of raising the profile of the historic significance of the Wye Valley and appealing to a large age range. The events were geographically spread throughout the AONB and each focused on a particular historic period related to the Overlooking the Wye themes. Each event engaged re-enactors of the appropriate period (e.g. the English Civil War Society) which provided an 'authentic' feel to each day, supplemented by a large range of other performers, businesses and partner organisations with display material.

The events were as follows:

Event	Theme	Numbers Attending	Location	Date
Hands On History	Hidden Industry	About 2,000	Old Station, Tintern	17/04/2011
Iron Age Rampage	Hillforts	About 2,000	Symonds Yat Rock	22/05/2011
On the Way to the Wye	River Connections	About 2,000	Ross-on-Wye	18/06/2011
Medieval Mayhem	Viewpoints/River Connections	About 2,500	Chepstow Castle	18/09/2011

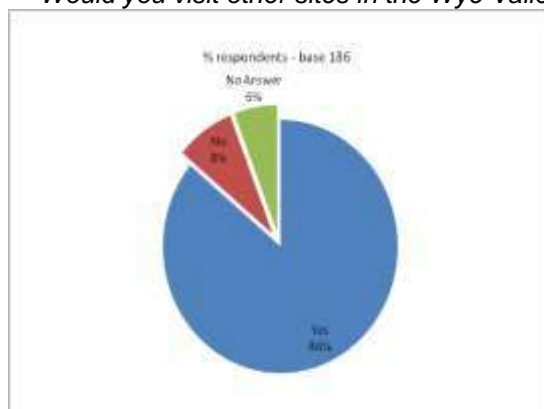
Promotional flyers and leaflets were widely circulated:



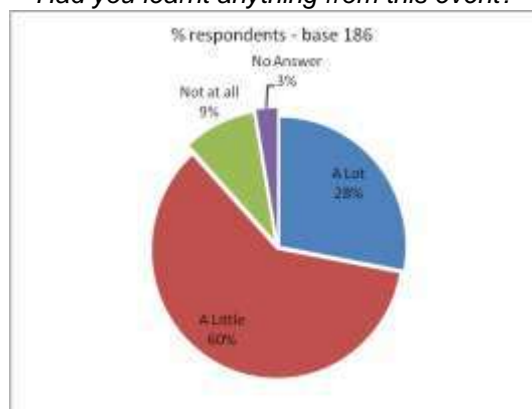
The number of people attending each event ran into thousands. The Wye Valley AONB Volunteers, along with a student researcher, helped with management and monitoring on each day. The number of respondents completing feedback forms was relatively low and varied by event. The total figure of 186 respondents related to all four events, comprising 53 at Hands on History, 44 at Iron Age Rampage, 17 at On the Way to the Wye and 72 at Medieval Mayhem.

Almost all (97%) of respondents were satisfied with the event, (and 69% were 'very satisfied'). Just over half (60%) of respondents had learnt 'a little' at these events (28% learnt 'a lot') whilst 86% felt inspired to visit other sites in the Wye Valley.

Would you visit other sites in the Wye Valley?

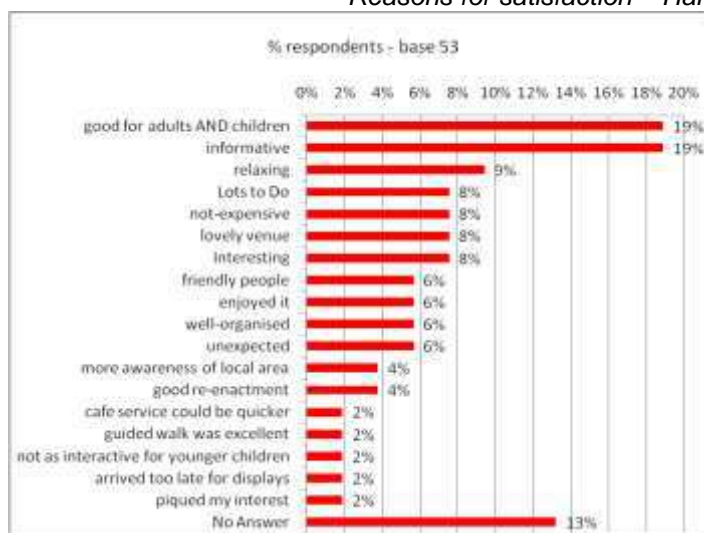


Had you learnt anything from this event?

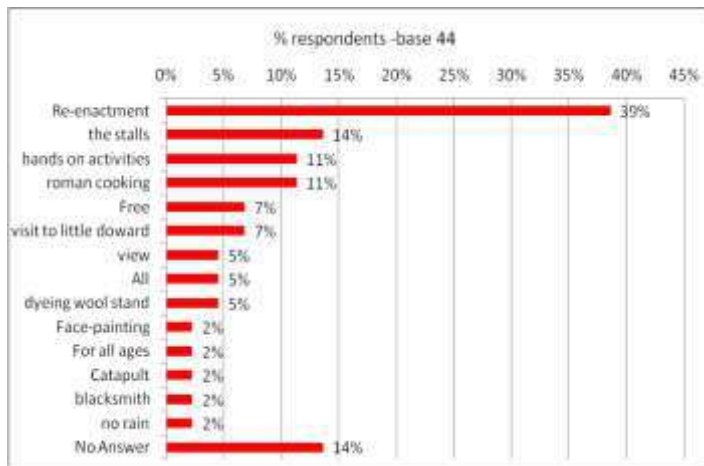


The Comments most frequently given by 'satisfied' respondents were that the events appealed to all ages and that they were good, informative events providing variety and great fun. Respondents reported that they liked the re-enactors most at each event, although at the Hands On History event this was exceeded slightly by 'the cannon'!

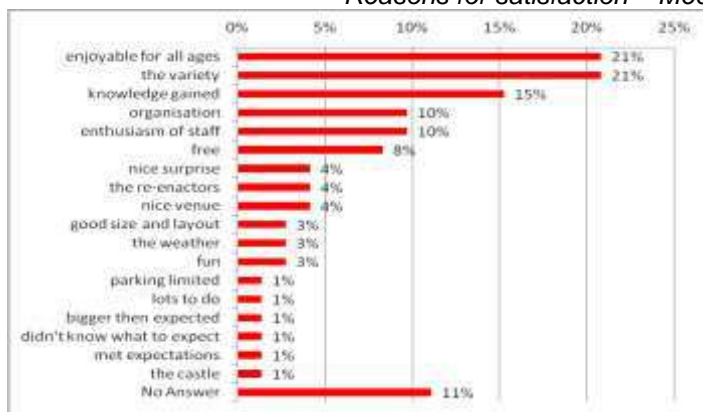
Reasons for satisfaction – Hands On History



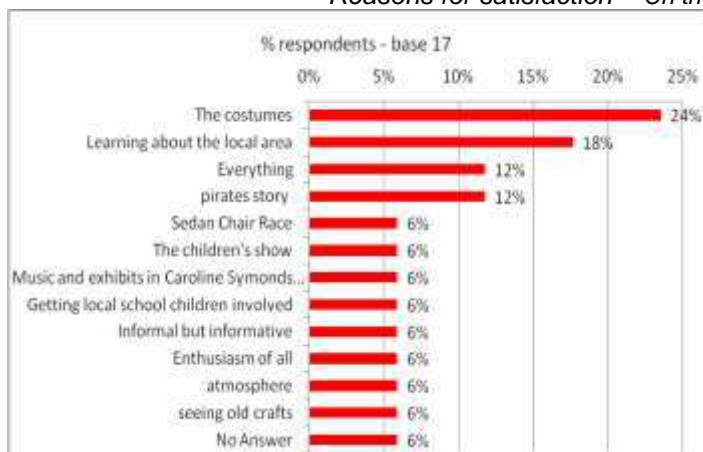
Reasons for satisfaction – Iron Age Rampage



Reasons for satisfaction – Medieval Mayhem



Reasons for satisfaction – On the Way to the Wye



'I really enjoyed spending the day with my family, and there were lots of things for me to see.'

9.5.4. Final Overlooking the Wye Seminar

The final Overlooking the Wye seminar entitled 'The Past, The Present and the Future' was attended by 103 people at The Chase Hotel, Ross. The seminar covered the five themes, describing the historic significance of the sites, detailing some of the conservation works completed and considering the legacy of the Scheme and its particular benefits for tourism in the area.

A packed hall for the seminar



Display boards of 'Before and After' photos of sites



9.6. Public Relations and the media

Regular press releases were issued throughout the duration of the Scheme, attracting local and national media attention. These resulted in 152 articles in the local press. The Scheme also held a regular 4 page feature in the Wye Valley AONB newsletter 'Picturesque', with 6,500 published and distributed twice per annum.

National press and regional magazines also occasionally covered aspects of the Scheme, for example The Times Travel section, Saturday 21st July 2012, covered the Overlooking the Wye leaflets in 'The great British weekend'.

The themes of the Scheme proved popular with television programmes. This started with the BBC's Great British Journeys first shown in 2007 with Nicholas Crane following William Gilpin's Observations on the River Wye, and Richard Wilson visiting the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean in the BBC's Britain's Best Drives, first broadcast in 2009. Griff Rees Jones (Rivers, 2009), Ray Mears (Wild Britain, 2010) and Iolo Williams (Jewels of Wales, 2011) have also all filmed programmes including canoeing down the Wye, the latter accompanied by Kate Biggs, Overlooking the Wye Project Officer. BBC Country File featured projects and themes from the Scheme four times, filming at Piercefield twice, New Weir and from a canoe on the River Wye. Many of the BBC programmes are still available on BBC iPlayer.

Various local radio interviews were also conducted on the Scheme. BBC Radio 4 also interviewed the Project Officer in 2009 and in October 2012 'Saturday Live' broadcast 'John McCarthy in the Wye Valley' doing the two sections of the Wye Tour (Ross to Monmouth, Monmouth to Chepstow).

Local press cuttings



9.7. Educational Outreach

A range of educational outreach activities were identified in the Stage 2 application. Unfortunately these were delayed in development because of the Interpretation & Outreach Officer leaving after maternity leave and then the Educational consultant contracted to deliver this element also went on long term sick leave. Consequently the rest of the Overlooking the Wye team had to pick up much of this area of work.

9.7.1. Education Resources Pack

Education packs were developed and are available on the Educational Resources page of the Overlooking the Wye section of www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk. To support both teachers and students, cross-curricula packs are available for Key Stage 2 at the following sites:

- Little Doward (near Monmouth) - Hillfort
- Llandogo (between Monmouth and Chepstow) – River Connections
- Angidy Valley, Tintern - Hidden Industry
- Devil's Pulpit above Tintern - Viewpoint
- Picturesque Piercefield near Chepstow - Viewpoints

Each of these packs has introductory details about the themes within the Overlooking the Wye Scheme, specific tasks (pre-visit, on visit and post-visit), interpretation material and a walking route complete with route card and risk assessment.

Monmouth Comprehensive School were involved in the trialling and development of the Key Stage 2 packs. They used drafts of the packs and the walking routes in their 'Summer Learning' weeks for Year 7 (see below).

More specialised Geography/Geology packs are available for Key Stage 3 and GCSE at the following sites:

- Symonds Yat Rock
- King Arthur's Cave, near Monmouth
- Eagle's Nest, near Chepstow

These particular Geography/Geology packs were developed in liaison with Moira Jenkins of the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Earth Heritage Trust and Nic Howes (ex John Kyrle High School).

9.7.2. Monmouth Comprehensive Summer Learning Weeks

Monmouth Comprehensive School were involved in the trialling and development of the education resource packs over three years. They incorporated use of the packs and the walking routes into the 'Summer Learning' week for all of Year 7. This was a large scale logistical exercise co-ordinating 250-300 pupils over 2 days and 5 sites so that about 25-30 pupils were on each walk, with appropriate numbers of staff and teaching assistants. The cross-curricular approach to project work in Year 7 enabled the teachers to make the most of the visits and both staff and students learnt about the historic sites 'on their doorstep'.

*Monmouth Comprehensive students at
Devil's Pulpit and Little Doward*



'The day itself was fantastic – as a teacher to see students getting so involved with the environment and as a biology teacher from that aspect, I saw students really getting a buzz from asking questions and doing a bit of digging around out in the wild, learning in a different way – that was largely it, seeing the students learning in such an interesting way was fantastic, I wish we could do a lot more of it.'

Mike Powell, Monmouth Comprehensive

9.7.3. Museum on the Move – Folklore and Fairytales

The 'Museum on the Move' minibus (staffed by Hereford Museum Resource and Learning Centre) provided a travelling display of 'hands-on' exhibition material to five primary schools within the Overlooking the Wye Scheme area (plus one visit to Symonds Yat Rock on a 'Fun Day'). The theme was 'Folklore and Fairytales' and this drew on any possible links with the Overlooking the Wye sites in order to engage the children. A total of 364 pupils and 37 adults visited this 'Museum on the Move'.



Date	School	Under 5s	5-16yrs	Adults	Total
20.4.10	St Mary's Fownhope Primary	4	97	7	108
6.5.10	Bridstow Primary	2	83	8	93
7.5.10	Holme Lacy Primary	2	51	5	58
13.5.10	St Joseph's Primary	0	95	13	108
26.5.10	Kings Cagle Primary	0	30	4	34

Total:	8	356	37	401
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9.7.4. Wye Valley AONB Youth Rangers

In 2011 the Wye Valley AONB Unit launched a 'Youth Rangers' programme with £22,000 of Your Heritage Lottery funding. This provides a group of 14-16 year olds with the opportunity to work on a number of conservation projects within the AONB. Much of the programme complements the Overlooking the Wye Scheme and the Youth Rangers have been discovering about the hillforts, hidden industry, river connections and the Wye Tour and Picturesque movement, along with canoeing, hedgelaying, drystone walling and bushcraft activities.

9.8. Oral History

9.8.1. Local Memories

An oral history project was included within the Overlooking the Wye Scheme so that first-hand accounts of historic events, working processes or experiences were recorded. This information was then used to supplement interpretive material to enhance the understanding of the historic context of the area and the way in which it had changed over time.

A total of 17 individuals took part in the project and these were recruited by the Overlooking the Wye team, from their working knowledge of the individuals. Each person was asked about their particular area of expertise, interest or experience of the Wye Valley whether this was from their childhood, family or work. The key themes for the interviews were:

- How the Wye Valley has changed over time, in their lifetime and that of their parents/grandparents
- Relating these changes to the industries in the area, the river and the viewpoints
- Relating these changes to the specific Overlooking the Wye sites where possible (e.g. Monmouth quay, Little Doward limekilns)
- Drawing out their own individual experiences to bring the industries to life (e.g. father's hands burnt by the lime working at Little Doward limekilns)

Each interview was recorded on both sound and video by Young Blood (the University of Gloucestershire's graduate incubation unit for those who had completed a Radio Production degree) in partnership with Tone Radio (the Student Union radio station). The project was overseen by Jason Griffiths, the course leader, Tone Radio manager Robbie Pert, and audio-technician/outreach coordinator Andrew Lansley.

9.8.2. Partnership Evaluation

Towards the end of the Scheme a series of evaluation interviews were undertaken with a range of participants in the Scheme (representing partner organisations, a contractor, volunteers, staff, teachers, landowners and funders). Some of the comments from these interviews are included in this report whilst the more detailed verbatim extracts are available in a separate report and the full interviews are available on disc.

9.9. Volunteers

Volunteers were involved in works at a variety of sites and activities during the Scheme, contributing time equivalent to the value of £21,980 to the Scheme. Some of their

involvement has been described in the individual site details above, but the largest single volunteer project is detailed below.

9.9.1. Painting the Large Scale Mosaics for Monmouth Subways

Fifteen local community groups were involved in the painting of fourteen mosaic-style panels for the subway leading to Monmouth riverside and Quay. This was a joint project between Overlooking the Wye and the Monmouthshire County Council Community Safety Partnership because it combined the creation of the paintings with the desire to improve the environment on the route to the quayside. The paintings were chosen as they depicted a range of images of the Wye Valley across the Scheme's themes. Each group chose their own image which was then 'pixelated and greyscaled' into a grid. The volunteers then spent many hours painting the 13,824 small squares of colour on their chosen picture and they learnt something about their subject in the process. Once the pictures were completed, the probationary service and the youth offending team constructed the framework behind the boards and erected them in the subway.

*Redbrook Primary School with
their picture of Redbrook Bridge*



The mounted paintings in the subway



The task involved many children from the local primary and secondary schools and college: Monmouth School, Redbrook Primary, Caldicot Comprehensive School, Llandogo Primary, Osbaston Church in Wales School, Overmonnow Primary School, Kymin View Primary, Monmouth Comprehensive, the Royal Forest of Dean College, along with 21 adult volunteers from Monmouth Civic Society, St Mary's Priory Church, Overmonnow Family Learning Centre, Off Centre Theatre, The Attick Youth Centre and Monmouth Alternative Group, Monmouthshire and Torfaen Youth Offending Team.

*The Scheme Manager and Finance Officer with artwork
materials for collection by groups (Dec 2008)*



10. Extra Elements Achieved

10.1. Additional delivery by the Scheme

The Overlooking the Wye Partnership, through careful project and budgetary management, were also to deliver additional projects and activities within the Scheme. Whitecliff Furnace was the largest 'reserve' element to have been completed under the Scheme (supplemented with significant matched funding outside the Scheme from English Heritage and the RDPE Local Action Group). However there were a large number of additional items achieved, outlined as follows:-

- Preliminary surveys and subsequent conservation works on the main furnace structure at Whitecliff Ironworks.
- Additional tree felling at viewpoints on the Piercefield Walks, and laurel clearance around the Grotto.
- Stabilisation of the riverbank to protect Abbey Tintern Furnace and reduce water ingress.
- 2 Archaeological excavations at Little Doward hillfort, rebuild of the Hermitage back wall and clearance/stabilisation of the limestone cliff above a historic path to provide better access around the Monument.
- Archaeological recording of Lord's Wood, Merlin's cave and specialist analysis of recently discovered human remains.
- Landscaping, further access improvements and more interpretation at Symonds Yat Rock hillfort
- Extensive re-pointing with lime mortar of the retaining wall at Lower Wireworks, which proved to be in an unstable condition.
- Repair of drainage erosion sites on Offa's Dyke Scheduled Monument along Offa's Dyke Path National Trail.
- Repair of the handrails on the 365 steps up to Eagle's Nest.
- Stone benches at Monmouth Quay and Symonds Yat Ferry, with interpretive plaques
- Interpretive plaques at Scutterdine Limekiln and Lancaut
- Additional air conditioning units in the refurbished carriages at Old Station Tintern.
- Extension of boardwalk at Llandogo Jubilee Walk, over a muddy section of the Wordsworth Walk.
- Development and delivery of the Heritage Course run jointly by the Overlooking the Wye Project Officer, the interpretation consultant and lecturers from the University of Newport.
- The Historic Built Environment and European Protected Species Licensing Seminar.
- The four main themed celebratory events, jointly with the Wye Valley AONB's 40th anniversary.
- Joint funding of the Sustainable Tourism Strategy with the Wye Valley AONB unit.
- Evaluation Interviews for a selection of participants on the Scheme.
- Salaries to cover the extension of the Overlooking the Wye team contracts to March 2012 and Project Officer until September 2012.
- Final Overlooking the Wye Seminar

10.2. Complementary delivery by partners outside the Scheme

In addition to these extra elements achieved within the Scheme, there were other items completed by partner organisations that were complementary to the Scheme. These totalled over £431,000 and included:

- Access improvements on the John Kyrle Walk as part of the Ross Buggy Route and at Chase Woods Hillfort (Herefordshire Council)
- Improved drainage on the road above the Llandogo Jubilee Walk (Monmouthshire County Council)
- Steps through nature reserve to Lancaut Church (Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust)

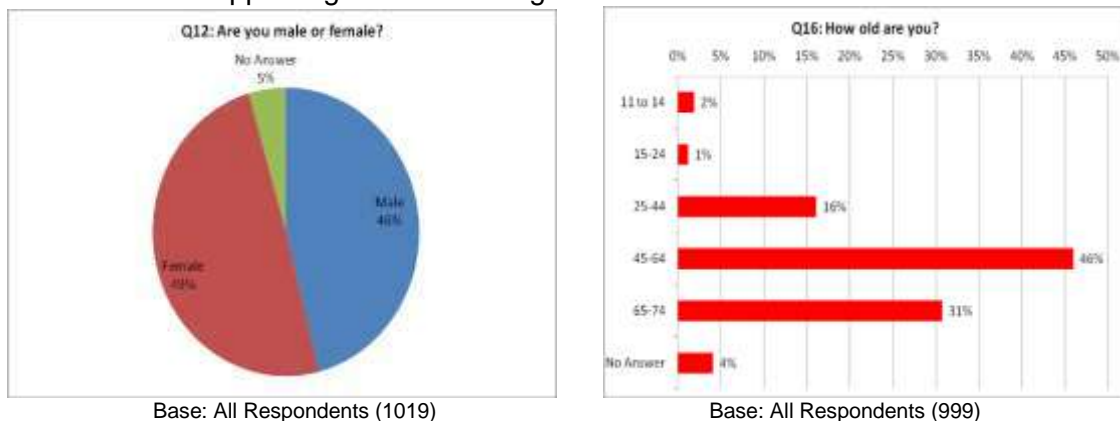
- Chepstow Museum securing Axis 3 funding for interactives, HLF Collecting Cultures for the Wye Tour and its Artists exhibition (Monmouthshire County Council)
- Further enhancement works at Symonds Yat Rock (Forestry Commission England)
- Canoe launch sites at Ross-on-Wye and Kerne Bridge made accessible for wheelchairs, to compliment the Perfect Paddling booklet (Environment Agency, Herefordshire Council & Wye Valley AONB Partnership)
- Further enhanced surfacing and erosion control to the Offa's Dyke Path National Trail and moving it off Offa's Dyke Scheduled Monument.
- New riverside interpretation at Monmouth Quay to match general style for panels developed through Overlooking the Wye (Monmouth Town Council)
- New interpretation at Wintours Leap viewpoint to incorporate design features from panels developed through Overlooking the Wye (Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust)
- New interpretation at Bigsweir Tollhouse to match panels developed through Overlooking the Wye (Wye Valley AONB Partnership)

11. Monitoring and Evaluation

11.1. Overall Evaluation

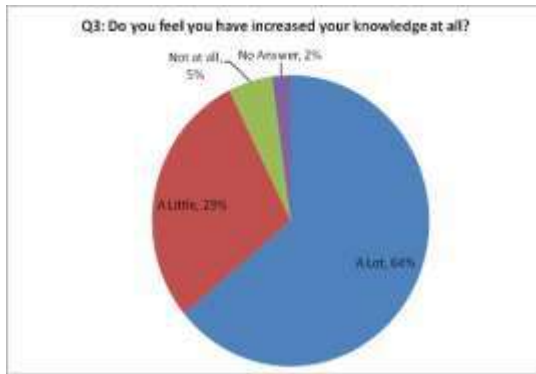
The Scheme made good progress on engaging with most of the target audiences identified in the Audience Development Plan. The two groups who remained most elusive were 'Ethnic minority groups' and 'People on low incomes or unemployed'. They are traditionally the hardest to reach in any event and the fact that there was no Interpretation and Outreach Officer in post for much of the Scheme exacerbated the ability to engage with them.

A total of all 1008 feedback forms were collected and analysed throughout the duration of the Scheme, combined across all events and activities. Respondents were evenly split between men (46%) and women (49%) but the age profile was biased towards 45+ (46% aged 45-64 and 32% 65-74). Thus from the feedback figures collected the Scheme was most successful in appealing to the 45-74 age bracket.

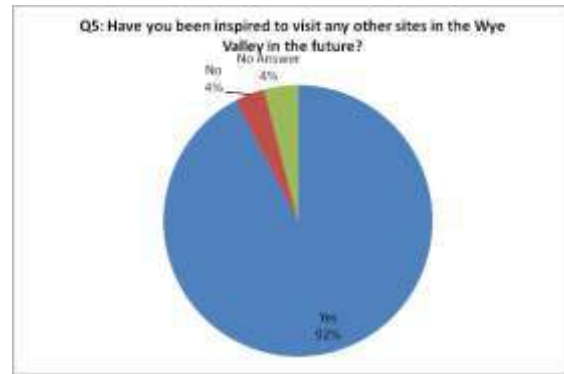


The low counts in the younger age groups may be in part related to the fact that at the events it is not the young people who tend to offer to fill out feedback forms and there may also have been a bias in the volunteers (also mostly in the 45-64/65-74 age bracket) being selective in who they approached. Also the school groups did not complete individual feedback forms. As for there was no Interpretation and Outreach Officer for much of the Scheme liaison with local schools and youth groups was not the primary focus of the other three members of the team (further discussion in 5.2 Lessons Learnt).

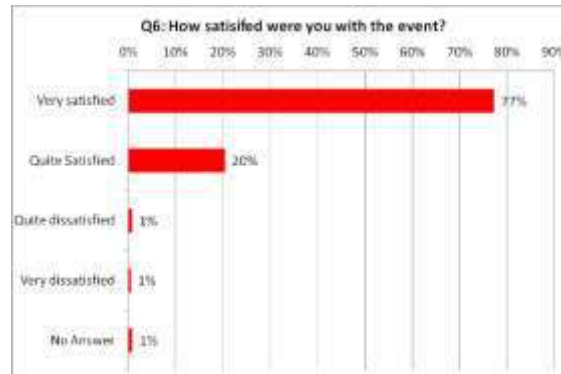
From the massed data 64% felt that their knowledge had increased 'a lot' and 92% felt inspired to visit other sites in the Wye Valley. 77% of respondents were 'very satisfied' with their event.



Base: All Respondents (971)

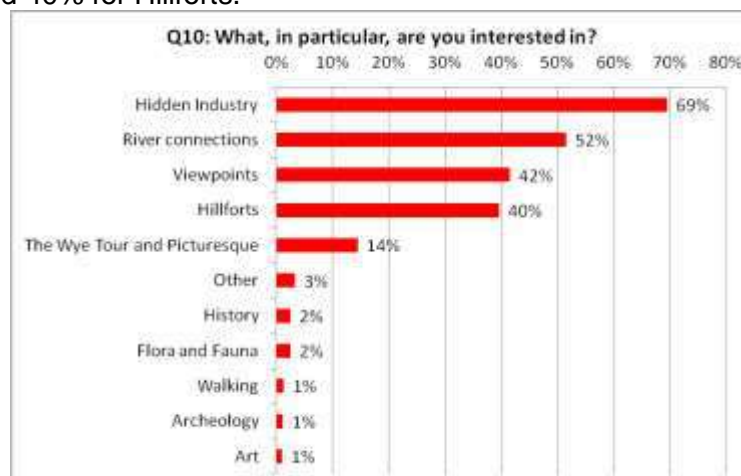


Base: All Respondents (833)



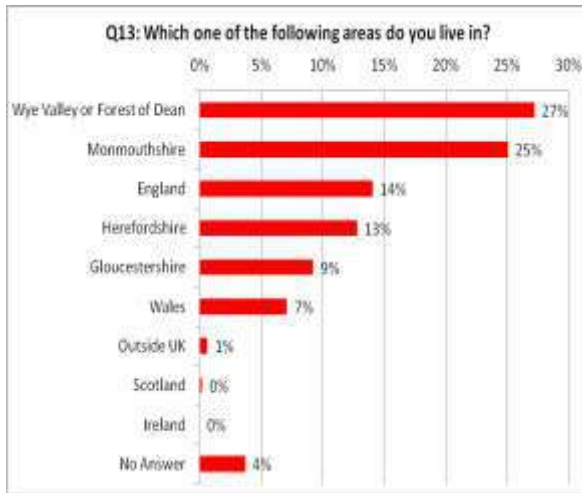
Base: All Respondents (1008)

Overall, Hidden Industry proved the most popular of the four themes, with 69% of respondents being interested in it, compared to 52% for River Connections, 42% for Viewpoints and 40% for Hillforts.

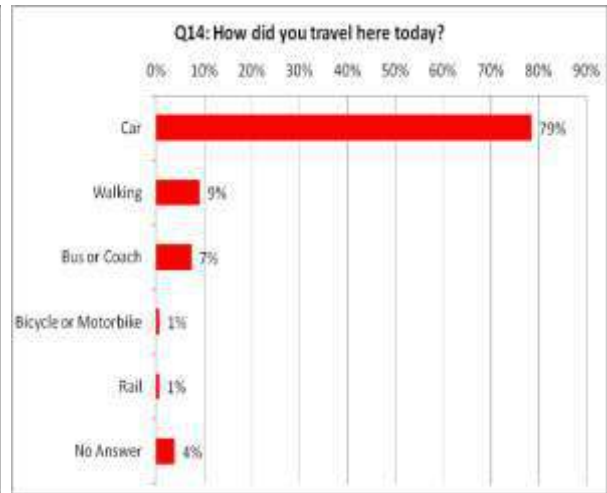


Base: All Respondents (652)

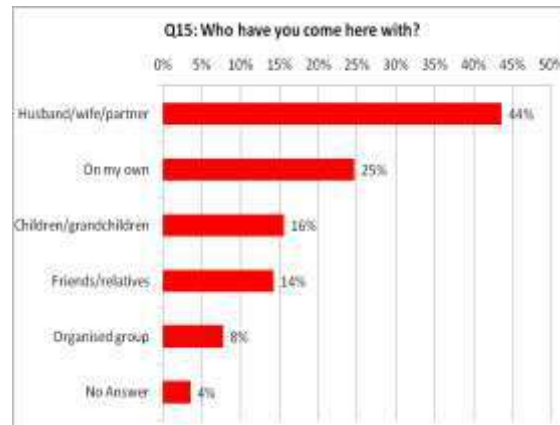
The majority of respondents for all the events lived in the local area and had arrived by car (79%). They most frequently came with a spouse/partner (44% of respondents) but a further 25% came on their own.



Base: All Respondents (945)



Base: All Respondents (945)



Base: All Respondents (925)

11.2. Partner Interviews

See Partnership Evaluation above.

Part 3: Legacy

12. Lessons Learnt & Recommendations

The Overlooking the Wye Scheme has had a significant beneficial impact on the Wye Valley and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The Scheme has been extremely successful in raising the profile, appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of the historic landscape of the lower Wye Valley. All the partners involved in the Scheme have been empowered by their experience and the outcomes.

Over the course of the Scheme, the Overlooking the Wye team, Wye Valley AONB Partnership and contributing partners have learnt a number of lessons relating to the implementation of the projects and these are detailed below.

12.1. Staff recruitment and Scheme start

Although the Overlooking the Wye Scheme Permission to Start was granted in May 2008, the team were not recruited until August, due to a re-evaluation of the job descriptions by Herefordshire Council, the employer and lead partner in the Scheme. This resulted in downgrading of the salaries for the positions in the team. The Scheme Manager started in mid-Sept 2008 and the Project Officer and the Finance and Admin Officer joined in Oct 2008. The gap in making appointments to the team meant that their operations in the first year were confined to eight months rather than twelve

The downgrading of the salaries had a particular impact on the recruitment of the Outreach and Interpretation Officer. The demands of the role were not commensurate with the reduced salary and the post was not filled first time round. After negotiating a Market Forces Supplement for the post the job was re-advertised and the last member of the team joined in March 2009. However, after 12 months the Interpretation Officer took maternity leave and decided not to return to work. The hiatus in both the recruitment and retention of this post created a backlog for the projects in this role. The three staff who were in post covered some of the work of the role, the Finance and Admin Officer increased part time hours to assist with outreach activities and an interpretation consultant was appointed to cover this aspect of the work. Consequently the lost time on the interpretation tasks was more or less caught up by the end of the Scheme. But this affected the liaison and impact that the Scheme had on the lower age groups involved and in particular the development of the educational resources and the website.

The financial impact of the re-grading of the Overlooking the Wye team positions meant that the staff budget at the end of the Scheme was substantially underspent, even when the costs of the external interpretation consultant were incorporated as the 'replacement' staff member.

Recommendation: A definition of the roles and responsibilities and a grading on expected salaries would be welcomed as part of the guidance from HLF so that Landscape Partnership Schemes around the country have comparatively graded salaries that fully reflect the requirements and levels of experience required. Thus posts would not get undervalued and as a result fail to attract a selection of candidates. Much of this guidance is available from professional organisations such as the Institute for Field Archaeologists, or the Institute of Historic Building Conservation, but this is not always readily available to applicants.

12.2. Project Management

The organisational structure for the Overlooking the Wye Scheme worked well, facilitating the Scheme's effective management. Reports were generated on a regular basis to feed into the meetings of the Consultative Group, Technical Officers Group, Partnership Board and AONB Joint Advisory Committee.

The meetings reviewed reports on progress, the work programme with milestone dates, risk management and financial information so that decisions could be taken about future actions. Full use was made of 'Before' and 'After' photos to prove the improvements achieved.

This process worked well, accommodating adjustments that needed to be made to the work programme on account of circumstances beyond the control of Scheme staff, such as:-

- The unpredictability of the weather; eg. the early winter of 2010/11 with -14°C for 3 weeks caused frost damage to lime mortaring completed at Abbey Tintern Furnace during the preceding summer/autumn.
- Monuments with difficult access for contractors cost more to conserve.
- Changes in specifications for works, as a result of unanticipated factors
- Delays caused by other partner projects that impact on the LPS
- Delays in securing high quality interpretation and time to allow for researching sources for text and images, obtaining permission to use images, specialist skills for illustrations, accurate mapping and design, local community consultation and obtaining necessary permission (including planning permission in some places)

Recommendation: Ensure that new projects are given good advice on scheduling conservation works and the tolerance that needs to be included with planning these works for inclement weather and unknown factors. Also emphasising the necessity for a clear commitment from partners to achieve the deadlines imposed by the scheme.

12.3. Partnership Working

One of the keys to the success of the whole Scheme has been the effectiveness of the partner organisations working together, which has been described as 'excellent' below. It was beneficial to the Scheme to have an existing partnership operating within the Wye Valley AONB and Overlooking the Wye Scheme built on these existing relationships. This has worked very well and it has only been possible to achieve so much in a relatively short space of time because of the efforts, commitment and goodwill of the partners. The Scheme has significantly contributed to strengthen the already good partnerships in the Wye Valley.

'I've been a councillor quite a long time, involved with Herefordshire Council mostly, but to be able to get all the partners to work together, it's been excellent, one of the best Schemes that I've ever been on for partnership co-operation. You've got Monmouthshire, Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean, Herefordshire and of course, all the Parish Councils and all the other people who have been involved.'

Cllr Phil Cutter, Chairman of Overlooking the Wye Partnership Board

'It's been excellent, in a way in terms of the partnership side of it, we set quite high standards and expected to be OK because we have set partners which are principal partners who are very used to working with each other, so it wasn't like starting up a partnership and a Scheme from scratch. This is a natural flow out of partnership working that's been going on in the Wye Valley for 40+ years. Obviously this has ramped up that partnership to another level in a sense of a range of partners but really that's been quite smooth and has built on existing relationships but added new relationships as well. At a more micro level, the staff team just performed miracles in terms of just delivery and continually driving us forward.'

Matthew Lewis, Countryside Manager, Monmouthshire County Council

12.4. Branding and logos

During the Development Stage the partners decided that although the Scheme would always be called 'Overlooking the Wye', they did not want a new 'project/brand/logo' conflicting with the existing strong Wye Valley brand or partner profiles on new interpretation. Therefore the

main interpretive elements employed in the Scheme (panels, plaques, leaflets and book) explicitly emphasise the Wye Valley rather than Overlooking the Wye brand. This has been recognised locally and by other Landscape Partnership Schemes as being a beneficial outcome that strengthens pre-existing partnerships and destination brand identities, rather than confusing and diluting the visitor experience with a multitude of project identities that are time limited.

Recommendation: Ensure that new time limited projects do not superimpose conflicting brand identities on existing partnerships and destinations that will outlive the project. Work to strengthen local delivery partnerships, while appropriately respecting the need for recognition of funding partners.

12.5. Planning Permission for Symonds Yat Rock and Devil's Pulpit

Multiple lessons were learned over securing planning permission at two sites which were initially refused. The protracted planning process caused some delay to the implementation of the works. But the optimum outcomes were achieved in the end.

At Symonds Yat Rock the plans for the elevated walkway were supported by the planning officers of the Forest of Dean District Council and partner organisations, but opposed by the parish council and a group of local residents that managed to influence an initial refusal of planning consent. The Forestry Commission as landowner/applicant decided to appeal and the consent was granted. This caused some delays to the implementation of the works, but the works were subsequently completed to a high standard. The finished result drew positive comments from those visitors who could not previously access this most famous viewpoint. Some of the District Councillors who opposed the works initially subsequently commended the works, and the site won a CPRE Gloucestershire Award.

'One thing I've learnt from it is trying to sell it, and get the whole vision described and put it together properly.'
Phil Morton, Forestry Commission

'I was a little bit sceptical of things actually happening, becoming a theme park rather than enhancing the natural product – the actual nature as it was intended to be, to look.... When I went to have a look at it on the opening, I went on the opening as well, I was totally gobsmacked. It was lovely- it sat in lovely and it was for the disabled anyway. Fantastic.'

Cllr Terry Hale, Forest of Dean District Councillor

A similar problem occurred at Devil's Pulpit. After several years of consideration by interested parties the landowner (Forestry Commission England) proposed a design for a platform structure that was reluctantly supported by partner organisations. However this met with local opposition as being intrusive to the setting and planning permission was refused. Consequently the Overlooking the Wye team asked Opus International Consultants Ltd to propose an alternative solution which was more sympathetic to the local environment. This involved protecting Offa's Dyke Scheduled Monument under a geo-engineered soil and stone surface laid over the top. This met with universal approval as it protected the scheduled monument, provided access for walkers and was not detrimental to the setting.

'There's a rather dramatic piece of rock which has the history that the devil used to try and draw the monks away from Tintern, but regardless of that story, it's a good viewpoint with a dramatic foreground of this rock. Anyway, to cut a long story short they got another consultant in who had worked on other parts of Offa's Dyke and said 'no problem, what we can do is stabilise the path here, broaden it so there's space for people to stand and we'll build it out of rocks and gravel and a membrane to hold it in place, and it'll disappear back into the landscape', as indeed it is doing at the moment.'

Cllr David Thompson, Forest of Dean District Councillor

The lesson learnt here is to ensure that there is sufficient local consultation and a thorough examination of alternatives. It should be noted that public meetings that are advertised for the precise purpose of consultation are not generally well attended and it is only when the plans have proceeded to a detailed stage that those people who object strongly 'come out of

the woodwork'. Whilst it is possible to try to identify local groups by their historical, ecological or environmental interest, it is not always possible to locate particular individuals who may feel strongly about a particular site, until such time as they identify themselves. It was specific individuals who championed and built the strong local objection at each location.

In both cases the designs were perceived as being intrusive to the natural landscape. However the planning system worked because what evolved from the Devil's Pulpit process was a much better solution than that that had been originally proposed, and at Symonds Yat Rock what was proposed was granted, to eventual high acclaim.

Recommendation: Just because a solution has been proposed and accepted by a number of partners, advisors or consultants, it does not mean that it is the 'right' solution. Be prepared to evaluate and change the approach. Don't be afraid to get second opinions or change consultants.

12.6. Whitebrook and St Briavels

The degree of local involvement and support for any particular project is naturally key to its success. There were two villages within the original proposals for Overlooking the Wye which could have been included if local support had been forthcoming. These were Whitebrook and St Briavels.

Whitebrook is an extremely important settlement within the context of the industrial heritage of the Wye Valley. It has substantial remains of wireworks and mill that later turned into a thriving complex of papermills. However, local residents raised concerns about increasing visitor numbers to this secluded valley. Despite reassurances the Scheme was unable to engage here.

In St Briavels a programme of work was proposed and an initial small piece of work was completed; conserving the stonework around St Bride's well in the village. Unfortunately a local contractor, who had been brought in specifically to do this piece work, did not achieve the standard of work required. This caused uproar in the village. It was subsequently rectified by another contractor to their satisfaction. Although there had been multiple visits by the Overlooking the Wye team to St Briavels and communication with the Parish Council, continuity of plans with changing councillors were difficult to maintain, particularly where those changes in personnel meant changes in opinion. Further works proposed by the Scheme in St Briavels did not proceed.

Recommendation: Recognise that it is not possible to do everything everywhere, if local support is absent. Problems can arise when the composition of a Parish/Town or Community Council changes and the new councillors have a different opinion or a different focus.

12.7. Long Term Planning and Consents/Permission

The Overlooking the Wye Scheme had been 9 years in gestation before it got to the Implementation stage. The amount of pre-planning in these early stages and, in particular, in the Development Stage enabled the Scheme to 'hit the ground running' and achieve a lot of works in the first year. With so many sites, it was deliberately planned that works on major sites would be scheduled in years 1 and 2, so that if problems were encountered any 'slippage' could run into year 3.

Some of the sites have multiple designations (Special Area of Conservation, Scheduled Monument, Site of Special Scientific Interest, European Protected Species), so there might be a need for Cadw/English Heritage consent, Countryside Council for Wales/Natural

England consent, species licensing, tree felling licensing, Environment Agency Flood Defence Consent and/or Planning permission. Consequently the lead in time for such licensing has to be programmed in to fit in with seasonal 'windows' for tree felling, species conservation and works to structures using lime mortar. This has been a substantial, but invaluable, piece of learning for all those involved in the Scheme and will be beneficial in the planning of any future works.

Recommendation: Ensure that when planning works to designated sites that all statutory representatives are identified and consulted, and that sufficient time is allowed and that work is programmed to fit in with windows of opportunity.

Recommendation: Recognise that funders' decision dates impact on surveys and seasonal windows a great deal, particularly with re-surveys of species' habitats. This can increase the timescale of a relatively small element by 12 months and may impact on cost and delivery.

12.8. Interpretive media

In a time where there is much emphasis on digital media there is still room for traditional methods of interpretation. The Wye Valley has patches of very poor mobile phone coverage. Therefore the emphasis for Overlooking the Wye has been to provide high quality historical research and interpretation coupled with primary source images, presented in the most accessible format or media appropriate to the location. This resulted in a rejection of Apps and site based downloads and a heavier reliance on 'traditional' fixed interpretation panels, plaques and printed leaflets. The numbers of leaflets so far distributed reflect that this method is still highly popular in getting to a large and inclusive group of people in the immediate area.

Recommendation: Don't be seduced by technology, but use media that will be effective at your particular site.

12.9. Legal Agreements

Aside from the Partnership Agreement, three legal agreements were negotiated for specific sites; Piercefield, Llandogo Jubilee Walk and Whitecliff. The time taken to reach a negotiated agreement can seem inordinately protracted to the uninitiated.

At Piercefield a Works and Permissive Access Agreement was required. The works planned on the Scheduled Monument viewpoints along the Piercefield Walks are on privately owned land with permissive access for the Wye Valley Walk. A three-party agreement was provisionally agreed at the Development Stage of the Overlooking the Wye bid process. When this was drawn up between the private landowner, Monmouthshire County Council (for their interest in maintaining the permissive access) and Herefordshire Council (for their part as lead partner in the Scheme) lengthy negotiations ensued amongst the solicitors regarding the wording of the proposed document. It took about a year before a version was finally agreed. However this did not ultimately delay contractors commencing work on site, because this process had started early enough in the whole proceedings.

Recommendation: Plan ahead sufficiently to allow for the protracted negotiation over the precise wording of legal documents.

12.10. European Protected Species (EPS) Licensing

Whilst negotiations were on-going with the Piercefield agreement above, there were parallel discussions regarding the European Protected Species licence required at The Alcove (one

of the Scheduled Monument viewpoint in Piercefield). Lesser Horseshoe Bats had been found using a cavity at the base of a supporting wall and the structural engineering advice was that the cavity had to be filled in order to ensure the stability of the monument. This meant that a mitigation strategy had to be developed to enhance habitat for the bats elsewhere.

The licence application was submitted to Countryside Council for Wales, but it took several months before the derogation licence was given. This was due in part to the work load and availability of staff but also because the Project Officer questioned the issue of over compensation by the consultants for the loss of the original space.

The relative and seemingly conflicting importance of protected species and scheduled monuments caused the Overlooking the Wye Project Officer to suggest holding a seminar to discuss the issue. This provided an opportunity for those working in historic building conservation, ecological professions and the regulatory authorities to discuss their experiences with a view to creating joint guidance and sharing good practice. This seminar was held in March 2011 and is reported in section 9.4.6.1 but a full report of the proceedings '*The Historic Built Environment and European Protected Species Licensing Seminar (April 2011)*' may be obtained from the Wye Valley AONB Office and is available to download from the Overlooking the Wye website.

Recommendation: Seminars on constraints and counteracting consents could be provided by HLF to facilitate more effective project planning, (these could be accredited and or supported by English Heritage/Cadw and or Natural England/CCW or other appropriate organisations, eg Environment Agency) and to improve applications and avoid unnecessary time delays.

12.11. Matched Funding Contributions

Almost all of the matched funding contributions that had been promised in the Development Stage subsequently arrived in the Implementation stage. Some organisations and individuals did not manage to make their contributions but other partners provided more funding than originally committed, making up any shortfall. Towards the end of the Scheme a match funding surplus was achieved. The Partnership agreed that it made more sense to retain the budget for future repairs and maintenance rather than return funds to donors. Therefore it was agreed that the Wye Valley AONB Unit would split the budget between a ring-fenced repairs and maintenance budget for Overlooking the Wye sites and a Community Fund for local communities to apply for, for small projects.

Sometimes major funding contributions had specific conditions attached that needed to be met, along with deadlines for claiming payments. With such a complex Scheme with multiple projects and multiple funding streams these conditions and claim deadlines could impact on scheduling works in order to meet requirements.

Recommendation: On very large schemes such as a LPS an understanding between key funders, such as government agencies, and a unified approach to drawdowns and claims would streamline project budgeting and cash flow and reduce workload and cost.

12.12. Financial Management

The financial management of the Scheme has been commended (below) and part of this process was the regular reviewing by the Overlooking the Wye team of 'latest estimate of spend' against the budget for each project. This facilitated the swift re-allocation of resources to where they were most needed.

The Heritage Lottery Fund policy of including a 10% contingency figure on every element within the Scheme was crucial in providing flexibility within the budgets.

For the Stage 2 application the HLF Monitor, Elinor Gwynn, recommended including a selection of Reserve Sites. This proved a shrewd move that enabled maximum use of the remaining contingency.

The judicious management of the finances enabled a whole new project to be included in the last year of the Scheme, to complete conservation works to the value of £165,000 on the main furnace structure at Whitecliff Ironworks (an 'at risk' Scheduled Monument). Additional funding was secured by the Project Officer which the Overlooking the Wye matched.

'I think the way that the project team have actually run it has been very very good. There are two levels that you look at in a project like this in particular – one of which is the financial discipline, of actually having a plan, a budget, contingency on a huge number of Schemes, none of which are going to go exactly to schedule and budget – they have controlled that very well.'

Lawrie Lowe, Coppett Hill Common Trust

Recommendation: Prepare a considered list of Reserve Sites and projects, frequently monitor expenditure and re-allocate funds as necessary.

12.13. Education Resource Packs

In the absence of the Interpretation and Outreach officer an educational consultant was initially employed by the Overlooking the Wye team in order to create educational resource packs for use by schools (both local and from further afield) in order to encourage them to visit the Overlooking the Wye sites and learn about them on the ground. When this consultant fell ill, the Finance & Admin Officer took the task on board and finished collating the amassed information. Education was not an area of professional expertise for this staff member, but she was able to complete the education packs. These now include details of four sites, risk assessments, route cards (for the walks), curriculum links and interpretive information to explain the historic importance of each location.

Under the circumstances the educational resources were completed after most of the interpretative material had been developed and was therefore able to make substantial use of this information. Had the educational consultant not fallen ill and continued with the packs there may have been some double sourcing of images and historical detail. Obviously had the Interpretation and Outreach officer remained in post and managed both the interpretative and educational resources they would have eliminated any duplication of effort.

13. Exit Strategy and Legacy for the Overlooking the Wye Scheme

The Overlooking the Wye Scheme has had a substantial and positive effect on the Wye Valley AONB, conserving and enhancing the cultural heritage assets in the landscape and empowering and strengthening the Wye Valley AONB Partnership. This momentum will be sustained by the Wye Valley AONB Partnership – the AONB Unit, the AONB Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) and the wide range of partners involved in the Scheme over the 4 years of delivery (and nearly 9 years of gestation).

All partners that were recipients of HLF grants have an obligation to repair and maintain the grant aided work for 10 years. The AONB Unit will monitor, and where possible assist with, these obligations and report regularly to the JAC on the legacy of the Overlooking the Wye Scheme. Some of the key features of that legacy are as listed below.

13.1. Structures and Maintenance

Each site that has benefitted from conservation works under the Overlooking the Wye Scheme has a 'maintenance' document. These documents provide owners with a brief of what works have been achieved and the maintenance issues that need to be undertaken in the future, particularly during the 10 year maintenance obligation period with HLF. These documents do not form a binding contract but are intended for use and are therefore concise. The Wye Valley AONB Unit and AONB Joint Advisory Committee will monitor the condition, repair and maintenance of sites in the Scheme.

The maintenance obligation falls in to five categories:

- i) The commitment of the main partners has been implicit within the Overlooking the Wye Partnership formed at the outset of the Scheme. The original Overlooking the Wye Partnership Agreement recognises the 10 year maintenance obligation of each partner as a condition of HLF grant aid.
- ii) Sites with permissive access already have an agreement between the landowner, Herefordshire Council and Monmouthshire County Council, because these were necessary to grant permissive access before works could proceed. These similarly recognise the 10 year maintenance obligation of each partner as a condition of HLF grant aid. In these cases, a maintenance document has been drawn up that details the works completed during the Scheme to complement the original agreement.
- iii) Sites in private ownership have a signed maintenance document (* below: Abbey Mill, Coppett Hill limekilns and Symonds Yat West limekilns)
- iv) Sites where the landowner has a strong self-interest or obligation to maintain the site (Wynndel Properties for Chepstow Docks and the National Trust at The Kymin)
- v) Some sites resulted in no clear landowner at the end of the Scheme, although there are interested parties with whom the AONB Unit will work with to monitor condition and any maintenance (Brockweir Quay and Lancaut Church).

The full list of sites (excluding those that only had interpretation on site) with maintenance documents is detailed below.

Site	Maintenance Document (*signed)	Partnership Agreement	Access Agreement
Abbey Mill	✓*		
Abbey Tintern Furnace	✓	✓	
Brockweir Quay	✓		
Chepstow Docks	✓		
Chepstow Museum	✓	✓	
Chase Woods	✓	✓	
Coppett Hill Limekilns	✓*		
Devil's Pulpit	✓	✓	
John Kyrle Walk	✓	✓	
Lancaut	✓		
Little Doward Hillfort	Conservation Plan	✓	
Little Doward Limekilns	✓	✓	
Llandogo Riverside	✓	✓	
Llandogo Jubilee Walk	✓		✓
Lower Wireworks	✓	✓	
Monmouth Quay	✓	✓	
New Weir Forge	✓	✓	
Old Station	✓	✓	

Piercefield & Eagle's Nest	✓		✓
Symonds Yat West Limekilns	✓*		
Symonds Yat Rock	✓	✓	
The Kymin	✓		
Tintern Limekilns	✓	✓	
Whitecliff Furnace	✓		✓

Several partners have been inspired by the outputs of the Scheme to deliver further conservation or enhancement works on their sites which complement the achievements of the Scheme.

13.2. Wye Valley AONB Volunteers

The team of Wye Valley AONB Volunteers have worked on a number of Overlooking the Wye sites over the years, under the guidance of the AONB Community Links Officer, Sarah Sawyer. They will continue to work on a range sites, commensurate with the needs of the sites and the volunteers. Throughout the Scheme the volunteers have broadened their skill base through training with the Overlooking the Wye Project Officer to understand the needs of historic structures and their on-going maintenance. A number of the volunteers have grouped together to 'walk and inspect' the sites on a regular basis. When issues or needs are identified this is reported back to the AONB Unit enabling the co-ordination of volunteer tasks to deal with any work.

13.3. Interpretation

The interpretive elements delivered in the Scheme have been devised to link historic sites with the themes and each other to encourage visitors to explore and discover other sites in the area. Partners insisted from the start that the interpretation was branded as 'Wye Valley' rather than 'Overlooking the Wye' so that there was no conflict with the recognised (inter)national brand of the Wye Valley. This means the interpretation has a longer lifespan and validity for partners as it is 'grounded' in the destination rather than in a 'past' project.

The main elements of the interpretation are:-

13.3.1. Panels & plaques:

While the responsibility for each site technically rests with the landowner, the AONB Unit will maintain an overview of the condition of installations. The panels and plaques are designed to outlast the 10 years. However the AONB Unit holds a budget reserve for the purpose of repairing and maintaining the interpretation.

Additionally several partners have adopted the high quality style and design features of the panels for their own interpretation, reinforcing the overall connectivity of sites and themes in the Wye Valley.

13.3.2. Leaflets:

The walks leaflets have proven to be very successful and demonstrate the thirst for this level of interpretation. Between February and October 2012 over 5,000 of each leaflet had been distributed. A further print run provides stock for the next two years. The AONB Unit retains a budget reserve for the purpose of reprints or refreshes of the leaflets.

Ceramic Plaque at Brockweir Quay

Four of the trail leaflets



13.3.3. Book:

The Overlooking the Wye book is being produced as a commercial publication by Black Dwarf Lightmoor Publications Ltd. The AONB Unit will receive 20% royalties which will go into the budget reserve for future repairs and maintenance work. Black Dwarf Lightmoor will manage all distribution and intend to maintain the publication for at least 10 years, with as many reprints as they see fit. However under the publication contract the AONB Unit, as 'author', will receive back the book should Black Dwarf Lightmoor decide not to reprint. The book will not be formally launched until early 2013. This will create a renewed focus on the heritage of the Wye Valley, the achievements of the Scheme and its legacy.

13.3.4. Website:

The AONB Unit will manage and maintain the Overlooking the Wye website, alongside the other websites they manage.

The Overlooking the Wye website, displaying the Abbey Tintern Furnace webpage (www.overlookingthewye.org.uk)



13.3.5. Visitor Centres & Museums

Two sites in particular, Chepstow Museum and Old Station Tintern, are key legacy sites for the Scheme. Both are popular visitor destinations in their own right that benefited from enhancements through the Scheme. At both sites visitors will continue to get an insight into the heritage of the Wye Valley and the achievements of the Scheme. Chepstow Museum have also secured additional funding to continue to purchase contemporary paintings and images of the Wye Tour which they will be able to display and further build on the interpretation of this significant aspect of the Scheme.

13.4. Sustainable Tourism Strategy

The Overlooking the Wye Scheme contributed to funding for the development of 'A Strategy and Action Plan for Sustainable Tourism in the Wye Valley AONB (2011-2016)' which was prepared by The Tourism Company and Alison Caffyn.

This strategy evolved following extensive consultations with Wye Valley AONB partner organisations, tourism associations, enterprises, services and owners/managers of countryside sites and facilities. There are six strategic objectives to guide tourism delivery in the Wye Valley AONB over the next five years with a framework for delivery through a five year Action Plan:-

- A. Promoting the Wye Valley Brand
- B. Strengthening Information Outreach
- C. Linking Conservation and Tourism
- D. Promoting Experiences of the River and Wider Countryside
- E. Celebrating Heritage
- F. Raising Quality in Key Centres and Enterprises

The delivery of the strategy is led by the AONB Tourism Co-ordination Group which forms an integral part of the legacy of Overlooking the Wye. It focuses partners and local business on the importance of the heritage as a tourism asset. The Strategy consolidates and builds on some of the outcomes of the Scheme and gives a direction for future efforts.

The works completed within the Overlooking the Wye Scheme have already contributed to these strategic objectives and will continue to do so as further benefits accrue from the various interpretive media employed.

One particular feedback comment from a local business has described the enjoyment visitors obtained from learning about the local area as follows:

'I don't know how you put this in a report, but guests are enjoying the fact they're learning something and seeing something new. There's no price you can put on that, they're not spending any money because of it. They get enjoyment from it, they get knowledge from it, and maybe they are telling other people about that. There's a marketing effect there which has a value, I'm sure it has a value, but how you put that in a report and how you put a price on it I don't know.'

Fiona Wilton, www.monmouthshirecottages.co.uk (Winners of the Visit Wales National Tourism Award Best Self Catering Place to Stay in Wales 2010.)

13.4.1. Wye Valley River Festival 2014

One significant outcome from the Sustainable Tourism Strategy Action Plan is the proposal for a major festival down the river. The experience gained by Wye Valley AONB Unit through the four main celebration events in 2011 has empowered the AONB Partnership to take up this challenging and exciting opportunity. This builds directly on the Overlooking the Wye River Connections theme. The festival is being planned for 3rd-11th May 2014 with each town or village between Hereford and Chepstow having a sequential day of festivities focused on and around the river. One of the ideas that has been put forward is to organise a Poetry or Lyric writing competition that will then be put to a piece of music specially composed and arranged for the Wye Valley River Festival and which will be performed at all the events along the river. Further details are being developed. Community meetings have already been held at Hereford, Ross-on-Wye, Lydbrook, Monmouth, Tintern and Chepstow and groups have been formed to organise specific activities that reflect the unique qualities of each town or village.

13.5. Wye Valley AONB Fund

This fund is being established from the match-funding surplus accrued during the Scheme. The Herefordshire Community Foundation has agreed to host this fund which will consist of a *Permanent 'Endowment' Community Fund*, where the capital is invested by the Herefordshire Community Foundation and the interest generated each year is used to award grants, and an *'Immediate Impact' Fund*, utilising a fixed amount available immediately to be distributed as grants. The funds generated will be used to award grants to support projects, programmes and activities that meet the fund criteria. It will operate in a similar way to the existing Sustainable Development Fund in that it will be operated by the Wye Valley AONB Partnership using the existing SDF Assessment Panel to evaluate project applications for funding. The Fund criteria are:

- **Conservation and enhancement of the landscape**
Activities could include landscape conservation grants to landowners, land managers and community groups for:
 - Conserving and enhancing the special qualities of the Wye Valley AONB (as identified in the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan)
 - Maintenance and management of natural features including coppicing, tree and hedgerow planting, pond restoration, grassland and wetland management and heathland conservation
 - Maintenance and management of historic features including viewpoints, former industrial sites, drystone walls and historic settlements or buildings
 - equipment to undertake conservation activities
- **Promote public understanding and enjoyment of the Wye Valley AONB**
Activities could include grants for:
 - Education visits and activities
 - Information and interpretation projects, eg interpretation boards, walking leaflets, websites, public transport promotion etc.
 - Outreach projects, eg targeting disadvantaged groups
- **Support the social and economic wellbeing of the Wye Valley AONB.**
Activities could include grants to landowners, business and communities for:
 - Enhancing community facilities, eg village halls
 - Start-up enterprises, eg farm shops, local food initiatives
 - Community enterprises, eg village shops, village play Schemes

It is anticipated that the Fund will augment over time as a consequence of wider fund raising and attracting legacies and donations, including a possible visitor pay-back Scheme (a proposal in the AONB Sustainable Tourism Strategy).

The criteria can be varied at any time in the future by written agreement between the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee and the Herefordshire Community Foundation e.g. to add a further area of special concern or to change a priority.

13.6. Forest of Dean Building Preservation Trust (FoDBPT)

As a direct result of the work undertaken at Whitecliff Furnace through Overlooking the Wye, a new charity has been registered to take on the ownership of the site. The charity is able to take on the ownership of property or land in order to facilitate conservation through project development and grant funding. The FoDBPT is working closely with the AONB Unit to develop a second phase of works at Whitecliff Ironworks with English Heritage grant aid and a possible Heritage Lottery Fund (South West) grant to take the development stage forward in 2013.

Ultimately the FoDBPT can take on the ownership of sites with problematic ownership or care issue for the benefit of the wider community. The charity will continue to build relationships with the AONB Unit into the future

13.7. Education and Training

The AONB Unit will continue to run an events and training programme. Several of the walks leaders that contribute to the AONB walks programme have significantly increased their knowledge about the local heritage and are keen to further develop and lead walks on these themes. Therefore part of the legacy of the Overlooking the Wye Scheme will be an on-going emphasis on heritage walks and skills training in managing the historic environment.

The Education Packs produced by the Scheme will remain available on the website for schools and visiting groups. The AONB Unit will monitor usage and, where resources allow, actively engage with schools and youth groups over educational support.

The higher education Heritage Course run jointly by the Overlooking the Wye Project Officer, the interpretation consultant and lecturers from the University of Newport, is planned to be repeated. The nature and development of the course programme means that it could be moved to another educational establishment if required.

13.8. Staff and resources

Inevitably the Overlooking the Wye Implementation team has been disbanded with the loss of much of their skills and knowledge. However, the AONB Partnership retains the AONB Officer who initially devised and developed the Overlooking the Wye Scheme. Also the AONB Partnership has been able to re-employ the Overlooking the Wye Project Officer as an AONB Heritage Projects Officer on a rolling short term contract. This is subject to external funding being available but funding for a further 9 month contract is being pursued. This means that the AONB Unit retains some of the skills and knowledge from the Scheme. Meanwhile the Project Officer is able to develop additional projects (and funding) to complement the Scheme, thus further maintaining the legacy of Overlooking the Wye.

13.9. World Heritage Site status

In 2010 the Wye Valley AONB Partnership submitted an application for the Lower Wye Valley and Forest of Dean to be included in the UK Government's Tentative List of sites for potential nomination for UNESCO World Heritage Site (WHS) status. The Department for Culture Media & Sport (DCMS) subsequently advised that the Lower Wye Valley and Forest of Dean application was not successful. However the independent Expert Panel appointed by Government to assess the applications did recognise the potential for the Wye Valley to be submitted in a revised form for inclusion on a future Tentative List.

The Wye Valley AONB Management Plan 2004-9 and 2009-14 identified the potential and opportunity of the lower Wye Valley being designated a World Heritage Site. Therefore it is intended that the Wye Valley AONB Partnership work towards a future application for the lower Wye Valley to be designated a World Heritage Site and it will remain an action for the 2014-2019 AONB Management Plan.

Appendix I: Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Map



Appendix II: Overlooking the Wye Governance

Partnership Agreement signatories

Forest of Dean District Council
Forestry Commission (Dean)
Forestry Commission Wales
Gloucestershire County Council
Herefordshire Council
Monmouthshire County Council
Woodland Trust
Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee

Partnership Board

Cllr Phil Cutter (Chair), Herefordshire Council
Cllr Patrick Molyneux/Cllr Terry Hale, Forest of Dean District Council
Cllr Ann Webb, Monmouthshire County Council
Liz Berry, Forest of Dean Local History Group
Ann Were, Monmouth Town Council
Lawrie Lowe, Coppett Hill Common Trust
Richard Gething, Herefordshire Local Access Forum
Peter Scott, English Bicknor Parish Council
Lorraine Endersby, Hewelsfield and Brockweir Parish Council
Ros Robertson, Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Tourism
Heather Hurley, Local Historian / Ross Civic Society
Jonathan Poyner, Chepstow Racecourse
John Harvey, Monmouthshire Local Access Forum

Consultative Group

Cllr Phil Cutter (Chair), Herefordshire Council
Cllr Patrick Molyneux/Cllr Terry Hale, Forest of Dean District Council
Cllr Ann Webb, Monmouthshire County Council
Liz Berry, Forest of Dean Local History Group
Ann Were, Monmouth Town Council
Lawrie Lowe, Coppett Hill Common Trust
Richard Gething, Herefordshire Local Access Forum
Peter Scott, English Bicknor
Lorraine Endersby, Hewelsfield and Brockweir Parish Council
Ros Robertson, Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Tourism
Heather Hurley, Local Historian / Ross Civic Society
Jonathan Poyner, Chepstow Racecourse
John Harvey, Monmouthshire Local Access Forum
Paula Keen/ Jeremy Evans, Woodland Trust
Lorraine Endersby, Brockweir
Hannah Freeman, Redbrook
David Cummings, Monmouth
Kevin Karney, Llandogo
Graham Symonds, Monmouth
Ros Robertson, Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Tourism
Moirra Jenkins, Hereford & Worcester Earth Heritage Trust
Wendy Amer, Goodrich Castle

Technical Officers' Group

Bill Cronin/Alastair Chapman, Forest of Dean District Council
Jan Wills, Gloucestershire County Council
Neil Rimmington, Herefordshire Council
Matthew Lewis, Monmouthshire County Council

Phil Morton, Forestry Commission (England)
Richard Gable, Forestry Commission (Wales)
Annie Rainsbury, Chepstow Museum
Edith Evans, Glamorgan & Gwent Archaeological Trust
Andrew Blake, Wye Valley AONB
Liz Whittle, Cadw
Mel Barge/David Bull/Hugh Beamish, English Heritage
Peter Cole, Capital Region Tourism

Appendix III: Original Budget v. Final Expenditure

Site	ORIGINAL BUDGET	Final Expenditure 30 Nov 2012	Spend as % of Original Budget
Abbey Mill	34,647	35,544	103%
Abbey Tintern Furnace	123,866	217,552	176%
Angidy Valley & Tintern signage	6,183	8,384	136%
Brockweir quay	51,529	58,345	113%
Capler Viewpoint Car park	4,545	1,200	26%
Chase Wood, Ross-on-Wye	6,970	2,538	36%
Chepstow Museum - Wye Tour Room	50,583	75,261	149%
Chepstow Museum - Piercefield, Fishing, Port	100,179	90,959	91%
Chepstow Docks	23,179	18,370	79%
Coppett Hill	12,562	11,380	91%
Devil's Pulpit	103,015	110,093	107%
Duchess Ride	1,025	0	0%
Eagle's Nest	22,312	28,014	126%
John Kyrle walk, Ross	12,076	6,560	54%
Lancaut	45,227	38,865	86%
Little Doward	209,978	195,147	93%
Llandogo Riverside	9,775	7,659	78%
Llandogo Bread & Cheese & Jubilee	34,226	26,189	77%
Lower Wire Works	69,267	142,257	205%
Lower Wyndcliff	0	0	~
Lydbrook	8,665	1,449	17%
Monmouth Quay	39,659	40,980	103%
New Weir Forge	91,630	68,336	75%
Old Station, Tintern	171,783	198,658	116%
Piercefield Preliminaries	10,957	12,322	112%
Piercefield - General	9,994	16,371	164%
Piercefield -The Alcove	28,686	62,967	220%
Piercefield - Giant's Cave	19,280	39,711	206%
Piercefield - The Platform	13,262	25,549	193%
Piercefield - Lover's Leap	26,195	9,837	38%
Piercefield - The Grotto	10,521	21,039	200%
Piercefield - Paths	16,029	56,702	354%
Prisk Wood	6,694	4,233	63%
Redbrook	5,536	4,913	89%
Ross Riverside	5,098	2,619	51%
St Briavels Village	12,854	315	2%
Symonds Yat Rock	133,111	149,333	112%
Symonds Yat West Lime Kiln	12,616	12,409	98%
Symonds Yat East	5,734	2,931	51%
The Kymin	23,382	22,774	97%

Tintern Abbey	6,794	2,393	35%
Tintern Lime kiln	19,054	14,796	78%
Whitebrook	2,050	0	0%
Whitestone	1,025	0	0%
Wilton Riverside	6,260	2,419	39%
Scutterdine limekiln	0	500	~
Chepstow Castle	0	1,448	~
Whitecliff Furnace* (see below)	0	90,547	~
Publications	42,482	67,159	158%
Events - general	8,854	37,099	419%
Website and branding	54,763	46,816	85%
Interpretation Events for Young People	22,084	19,790	90%
Educational Pack Development	39,679	14,166	36%
Transport for Outreach	68,750	6,418	9%
Oral History	6,375	3,561	56%
Training	36,823	68,089	185%
Regional maps	0	2,900	~
Filming & interactives - Destination Wye Valley	0	30,694	~
Outreach general - other	0	20,589	~
Office unit	481,252	443,033	92%
Miscellaneous	256		0%
Unallocated contingency	236,908		0%
Sub total with contingency	2,606,240	2,700,182	104%
Contributions in kind	159,293	114,931	72%
Sunk costs	50,905	50,905	100%
TOTAL	2,816,438	2,866,018	102%
Summary for Whitecliff furnace			
<i>Spend under new funding</i>		82,228	
<i>*Spend under OLW funding</i>		90,547	
<i>Total</i>		172,776	



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adventa, Bridstow Parish Council, Cadw, Chepstow Town Council, Coppett Hill Common Trust, Countryside Council for Wales (CCW), CPRW, Dean Local Action, English Bicknor Parish Council, English Heritage, Forest of Dean District Council, Forestry Commission (England), Forestry Commission (Wales), Friends of Coppett Hill, Gloucestershire County Council, Gloucestershire Environmental Trust, Herefordshire Council, Hewelsfield & Brockweir Parish Council, Lydbrook Parish Council, Mabey Bridge, Monmouth Town Council, Monmouthshire County Council, National Grid, National Trust, Natural England, PRISM, private landowners, Ross Civic Society, Ross Town Council, Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) (England & Wales), Tintern Community Council, Trellech United Community Council, Woodland Trust, Wye Valley AONB Partnership, Wye Valley Centre (Abbey Mill, Tintern), Wynndel Property Management.

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