

Project: Tintern Abbey

Audio	Visual
Tintern Abbey, Cadw's most ambitious conservation project in decades. Why have we closed off parts of Tintern Abbey?	Information cards
Will Davies Inspector of Ancient Monuments	Will stands within the abbey church facing camera
all of the masonry you see behind you. All of Roger Bigod's great Abbey church has been here since at least the end of the 1260s,	
since the dissolution, it's been unroofed and gradually exposed to decay and erosion.	Top-down aerial shot of the abbey church, rising upwards to show the shape of the church
So Tintern has hit a particular point: it's heavily, heavily, stabilized, conserved in the early 20th century. But it's got a history of repairs going back to probably the 18th century under the Dukes of Beaufort.	Will stands within the abbey church facing camera
The biggest early interventions - by the early offices of state, the Office of Woods, Office of Works, Ministry of Works	Graphic: 1914 Archive photograph of scaffolding in the abbey church shoring up the south aisle wall.
prior to Cadw during the first half of the 20th century, which saw some really ambitious, things being done.	Graphic: 1925 Archive photograph of brick scaffolding arcade to support stabilisation works in the south aisle
The problem we're facing at Tintern now, is that we have mortar is harder than the very soft local sandstone that the walls are built of.	Will stands within the abbey church facing camera
So when the wall heads become unstable, the water works its way down to the walls.	Aerial close up shot of a wall of the abbey church, showing deteriorated stone
It needs to get out somewhere, but because it can't get out through the joints in the masonry, the cracks between the stones, it's coming out through the faces of the stones.	Continued aerial close up
So you get this lamination effect, like onion skin.	Continued aerial close up.
Over the last decade or so, we've noticed an acceleration in it and this is the reason that this end of the church is now shut off to the public temporarily for public safety - you can see barrier fencing here.	Will stands within the abbey church facing the camera. Turns to show safety fencing behind him.
What we don't want, whether it's the size of your fingernail or the size of my fist, if a loose stone lands on your head from height, you're in a mess.	Will stands within the abbey church facing the camera.

These are 30, 35 metre high walls - higher at the gables,
and it'll make a bit of a mess of whatever it lands on.

Wide aerial shot of the abbey
church.