

7-Night Creative Writing & Walking in the Northern Lake District

Trip style: Small group holidays

Destination: ☺ Lake District

Trip code: DBK07-PCR05

Trip Walking Grade: ul 1 & 2



Holiday Overview

Combine a creative writing workshop with a walking holiday. Designed to help you become the writer you want to be, these breaks are perfect for both absolute beginners and budding authors looking to build their skills, style, and confidence in the stunning surrounds of the Peak District. You'll enjoy a mix of group writing workshops and one-to-one sessions with an experienced writer and tutor followed by guided afternoon walks in the great outdoors.

WHAT YOU'LL LOVE

- Group writing workshops
- One-to-one session with your writing tutor*
- Half-day guided walks with our HF Holidays Leaders
- Free time to relax, write, and explore
- Sharing ideas with like-minded people
- A more personalised experience thanks to small group sizes (maximum 15 people)

* To receive feedback from your tutor during the one-to-one session, please submit a piece of writing at least 14 days in advance of your holiday. More details can be found on the itinerary tab.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Daily writing workshops
- A 15-minute one-to-one session with your writing tutor*
- Optional afternoon guided walks with our HF Holidays Leaders
- Free time to relax, write, and explore
- Sharing ideas with like-minded people

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Day 1 Arrival Day

Check-in at the hotel is available from 16:00. If you are a member you can arrive at the house from 14:00. Enjoy a complimentary cream tea at 16:30 and meet other guests.

Day 2 Ideas & Inspiration

Our first workshop will focus on developing ideas and finding inspiration for your written work(s). After lunch, there's the opportunity to have a one-to-one session with your tutor or enjoy some free time before venturing out on your first guided walk. After dinner, you can join your writing tutor and listen to readings from their own work.

To receive feedback from your tutor during the one-to-one session, please submit a piece of writing at least 14 days in advance of your holiday. This should be sent to This email address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it. including the date and location of your holiday in the body of the email. All submissions should be up to 1000 words and sent in Word or PDF format.

Ilam

Distance: 4 miles (6.5km)

Ascent: 400ft (120m)

We'll walk from the house around the iconic Thorpe Cloud, then cross the bridge over the River Dove towards the village of Ilam. We'll return by the river on Manifold Way and climb back to Thorpe on an old coaching track now known as the Limestone Way.

What your kids will love: Roaming the grounds of Ilam Hall and discovering the picturesque village of Ilam with its alpine-style cottages.

Day 3 Character Building

The second workshop of the week focuses on building characters. Again, there'll be time for one-to-one sessions, but the afternoon and evening are yours to use as you choose. Write, explore, chat with your fellow guests, or simply relax.

Day 4 Free Day

The day has been left free for you to relax or explore the local area.

Day 5 Crafting a Story

This morning's workshop is dedicated to carefully crafting the plot and structure. The afternoon offers another opportunity to enjoy a guided walk in the inspirational landscapes of the Cotswolds. In the evening, join your writing tutor for another reading from their works.

Tissington Circular

Distance: 4½ miles (7km)

Ascent: 400 feet (120m)

In summary: We walk to Tissington on grassland, through the gates and along the tree lined Avenue. After time to look round the village the walk returns on the Tissington Trail (former London and North Western railway) to the site of Thorpe station

Highlight: The charming estate village of Tissington, home of the FitzHerbert family for over 500 years.

Day 6 Setting

Today we turn our attention to the settings that your characters call home and the world your readers temporarily occupy. Free time is provided in the afternoon so you can further develop your writing or explore the local area independently using the easy-to-follow maps, routes, and information available in our Discovery Point. After dinner, the evening is relaxed and open for you to partake in any house activities or take a well-earned break from the creative process over a drink.

Day 7 Dialogue

Our final workshop focuses on the dialogue and interactions present in your writing and builds on everything we have discussed so far. In the afternoon, you'll have the option of a short, guided walk from the house with your HF Holidays Leader. On our final evening together, there's the opportunity for you to share a short snippet from your own writing with the group. Guests are asked to keep their readings to approximately 500 words to ensure everyone gets an opportunity.

Dovedale and Lover's Leap

Distance: 3 miles (5km)

Ascent: 450 feet (140m)

Enjoy views of Thorpe Cloud as we walk down Lindale to the famous Dovedale stepping stones. We'll follow the beautiful River Dove to fossil-covered steps that lead up to Lover's Leap before returning by reversing the route.

Day 8 Departure Day

Enjoy a leisurely breakfast before making your way home.

Daily Walk Options



Easier Walks

Walk at a relaxed pace, often spending time at places of interest en-route. Walking experience isn't necessary as distances are quite short and gradients generally easy.

Accommodation

Derwent Bank, Keswick

Adored by poets, painters, and literary giants for centuries, the Lake District has always had an irresistible pull. It's no surprise, then, that this country house near the market town of Keswick holds such appeal, not least for its setting in lovely grounds that slope down to the shores of Derwentwater. The location couldn't be more perfect; to the west is Cat Bells, to the east is Keswick, Walla Crag, and Latrigg, and to the south is the entrance to the Borrowdale valley. There's a wealth of big-name attractions within easy travelling distance, including Blencathra, Helvellyn, and Ullswater. Also visit-worthy for walkers is Scafell Pike for its well-trodden routes and trails and the 73-mile-long Cumbria Way for its mist-shrouded peaks, glacial valleys, and many excuses for pit-stops and picnics.

Check-In & Check-Out

You are welcome to check in from 4pm at the earliest. HF Members can check in earlier, from 2pm. On arrival, you'll enjoy a complimentary cream tea and get to meet your fellow guests, our HF Holidays Leaders, and the rest of the friendly team. Check out 10am.

About

• 40 well-appointed guest rooms • Exclusive occupancy: 54 guests minimum • Check in from 4:00pm • For members check in from 2:00pm • Free Wi-Fi • Full-board (including cream tea on arrival) • Free on-site parking • Boot room and drying room • 2 travel cots & high chair • Discovery Point offering a wide range of local area maps, route guides, and information for self-guided walks • Books and games to borrow • Licensed bar • Lounge • Garden • Electric vehicle charging point – Please note, you will need to bring your own cables to use this EV charging point



Food & drink

Seasonal dining, tailored for you

Our team of skilled chefs design our dinner menus to showcase the best of each season, from warming winter comfort food to vibrant summer dishes, including vegetarian, vegan and high-protein options. We also source fruit and vegetables within a 40-mile radius of each house, open every break with a Chef's Special menu inspired by dishes and flavours of the local area, and are able to adapt dishes to suit special dietary requirements.

Welcome Cream Tea

What better way to start your stay than with a cream tea, served fresh on arrival to make you feel instantly at home. A quintessentially English tradition, our scones are baked in-house and served with preserves and clotted cream, providing the perfect opportunity to meet fellow walkers.

A hearty breakfast to start the day

Start the day with a freshly-prepared cooked breakfast and a wide choice from our continental buffet, including hot drinks, juices and fresh fruit. Our team offer a quick and friendly service, leaving you fuelled and ready for your day's adventures.

Our famous picnic lunch

Our personalised picnic lunches are perfect for a day out walking, ready to enjoy when hunger strikes. Choose from a large selection of fresh sandwiches and salads, freshly baked cakes and snacks, including the ever-popular Freddos chocolate bar! Everything is designed to fit neatly into your rucksack, and all of the packaging we provide is recyclable or compostable.

3-course evening meals

Our à la carte evening menus feature a wide choice of starters, mains, and desserts, made with seasonal ingredients and, wherever possible, herbs and vegetables from our own gardens. Shared around sociable tables, dinners are relaxed occasions, with drinks available to order at the table or from the bar, and a traditional Sunday roast to round off the week.

Rooms

Designed with your comfort in mind, Derwent Bank has 40 well-appointed guest rooms available in three categories: Classic, Premium, and Superior.

Classic Rooms are comfortable en-suite guest rooms, ideal for a peaceful night's sleep. Amenities include free Wi-Fi, tea and coffee-making facilities, toiletries (hand wash, shampoo, and shower gel), and a TV.

Premium Rooms are more spacious en-suite guest rooms*. Amenities include free Wi-Fi, tea and coffee-making facilities, toiletries (hand wash, shampoo, body lotion, shower gel), and a 32-inch TV. Extras include bathrobes, slippers.

Superior Rooms are even more spacious en-suite guest rooms offering upgraded views of the surroundings*. Amenities include free Wi-Fi, tea and coffee-making facilities, toiletries (hand wash, shampoo, body lotion, shower gel), and a 32-inch TV. Extras include bathrobes, slippers.

We love: Room 12 for its extra space and lovely views across the gardens and Derwentwater. Rooms 46, 47, 48, and 49 are first-floor garden rooms, each with their own balcony.

The **Choose Your Room** service is available at our UK country houses, allowing you the option of choosing and confirming a specific room for an extra charge of £30 per room. This is subject to availability. Upgrade supplements apply.

Room supplements

Superior	Premium single	Premium double/twin	Choose your room
£25 pppn	£20 pppn	£20 pppn	£30 per room

*Views and layout reflect each properties unique character and location

Accessibility

For accessibility and assistance information, please contact our expert team on [020 3974 8865](tel:02039748865) or view the accessibility information online for [Derwent Bank](#)

About your stay

A warm welcome

We want you to feel comfortable from the moment you arrive. You'll find a welcome pack in your room with guest registration forms, menus, order forms for dinners and picnic lunches, the Wi-Fi password, and the front door code. Our houses are locked at night, so we recommend noting the Duty Manager's number on arrival in case of an emergency (or getting locked out).

Evening entertainment

While evening entertainment varies from house to house, HF Holidays Inter-House Quiz night held after dinner on Wednesdays is a weekly staple. Your HF Holidays leader may be around for tips on guided and self-guided walking routes as well as visit-worthy local attractions.

Walks talks

Our HF Holidays walk leaders host guided walking information briefings before dinner on guided walking holiday arrival days. This is followed by a group Walks Talk for information on the following day's guided walks (held before dinner every evening). Self-guided walking guests are, of course, welcome.

The walking day

Prior to setting off on guided walks, your HF Holidays Leader will run you through a short safety briefing. There's also an up-to-date weather forecast on display at the house to ensure you have appropriate clothing and footwear. If you choose to do your own walks or are on a self-guided walking holiday, we ask that you please complete an Independent Walker Card each day. These can be found near the Discovery Point in the house.

Accessibility

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Travel Details

Address

Derwent Bank
Portinscale
Nr Keswick
Cumbria CA12 5TY

Tel: [+44 \(0\)1768 773667](tel:+44(0)1768773667)

By train

The nearest station is Penrith, on the main line between London and Glasgow.

Check National Rail for train times and routes.

By shared transfer

If you're travelling to or from Derwent Bank on Mondays or Fridays or over the festive period, you can join our group transfer from Penrith Railway Station.

2026 prices are £64 per person for a return transfer or £32 per person for a single transfer.

Outward journey: Depart Penrith Railway Station at 16:50; arrive at Derwent Bank at 17:30.

Return journey: Depart Derwent Bank at 09:15; arrive at Penrith Railway Station at 10:00.

Places are limited so booking is essential. We recommend booking at least 14 days in advance by contacting:

HF Holidays Sales and Support Team

Tel: [+44 \(0\)203 974 8865](tel:+44(0)2039748865)

Email: This email address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it.

By taxi

The 20-mile journey from Penrith railway station to Derwent Bank takes about 40 minutes by taxi in normal traffic conditions.

For pricing, please contact A Cab Taxis directly.

A Cabs Penrith

You can pre-book a taxi from our recommended company, A Cabs Penrith*. We recommend booking your taxi at least seven days in advance by contacting:

Tel: [+44 \(0\)7482 289021](tel:+44(0)7482289021)

Email: This email address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it.

A return journey can be arranged on your behalf by the HF Holidays House Manager at Derwent Bank.

By bus

The X5 bus runs approximately every hour from Penrith station and the journey takes around 50 minutes. The nearest bus stop is on the A66, about a three-quarter mile walk from the house.

As you alight the bus at the Portinscale bus stop, turn to your right and go down the road signposted to Portinscale, Grange, and the Newlands Valley. Follow this road through Portinscale village - Derwent Bank is on your left-hand side after the Derwentwater Marina.

Alternatively, catch the X4 or X5 bus to Keswick bus station and take a 10-minute taxi ride to Derwent Bank. We recommend booking a taxi in advance.

By car

There is a large car park at Derwent Bank if you decide to drive.

From Penrith, you'll need to leave the M6 motorway at junction 40, taking the A66 towards Keswick. After 17 miles you'll reach a roundabout - continue ahead following signs to Cockermouth and Workington. Turn left off the A66 towards Portinscale, Grange, and the Newlands Valley. Derwent Bank is about three quarters of a mile further on the left.

By air

The nearest airport is Manchester International Airport.

There are direct trains every hour from Manchester Airport to Penrith and the journey time is about two hours.

Flying to London Heathrow airport is another option but you'll have a longer onward train journey - it could take at least 4.5 hours to reach Penrith. From Heathrow, take the train to London Paddington, then the London Underground to London Euston connecting to the main line train to Penrith, which takes three hours.

Local Area

Whether you're enjoying a guided or self-guided walking holiday, there's always the opportunity to linger for longer. Here's our pick of the very best things to see and do within easy travelling distance of Derwent Bank.

Keswick

Approximately two miles away, this market town is the most northerly of the Lake District's towns. Don't miss the community-run Keswick Museum & Art Gallery for a huge amount of objects and exhibits that reflect life in the local area.

Derwentwater Launch Company

Departing every 30-minutes during the summer and regularly throughout the rest of the year, this 50-minute boat trip round Derwentwater is a must. There are various landing stages to disembark. The nearest stop to Derwent Bank is Hawse End.

Theatre by the Lake

Home to Cumbria's leading professional theatre company, this lottery-funded performance space is located between Hope Park and Derwentwater. The Main House seats 400 while the Studio Theatre is set up for an audience of up to 100. Bookings are recommended.

Honister Slate Mine

A 30-minute drive away, England's last working slate mine is located at the top of the Honister Pass in Borrowdale. You can watch slate being riven (meaning split or torn apart) using 300-year-old processes and learn about the history of underground mining.

Whinlatter Forest

England's only true mountain forest offers nine walking trails, three cycling trails, and unrivalled views across Bassenthwaite Lake, Derwentwater, and Keswick. It's also home to a Go Ape centre with a high ropes course and an all-terrain segway trail.

Derwent Water Marina

Just a five-minute walk away, this is a great spot for hiring canoes, kayaks, stand up paddle boards, rowing boats, and windsurfing equipment. Tuition is also available for individuals and groups.

Grasmere

Best known for its William Wordsworth connections, this impossibly pretty village is a 30-minute drive away. Highlights include Grasmere Lake, Allan Bank, and the 17th century Dove Cottage - home to the Wordsworth Museum.

Ullswater

A 30-minute drive away, this watery wonder is the second-largest in the Lake District. Highlights include exploring the lake on foot or by steamer, marvelling at the Aira Force waterfall, and visiting Dalesmain Mansion and its beautiful gardens.

Lake District Wildlife Park

Just a 10-minute drive from Keswick, this 24-acre park is home to over 100 species of animal including anaconda, zebra, mandrills, meerkats, otters, gibbons, monkeys, and more. There's also bird of prey flying displays, reptile encounters, and keeper talks.

Carlisle

Of all the historic attractions in Cumbria's county city, the 900-year-old castle where Mary Queen of Scots was held prisoner is the most famous. Further must-see spots include Carlisle Cathedral, Tullie House Museum, and Cumbria's Museum of Military Life.

Useful Holiday Information

For writing

- Paper, pens and/or laptop (and charger) for writing
- Any source or reference material you may require

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For walking

The UK has a famously unpredictable climate so it's best to be prepared for weather that's sunny one minute and raining the next. To make it easier, here's a list of items you should consider packing.

Essentials

- Suitable footwear such as waterproof walking boots that provide ankle support and good grip
- Waterproof and windproof jacket, preferably insulated
- Comfortable clothing (jeans & waterproof capes are not suitable)
- Waterproof overtrousers
- Gloves and a warm hat (or sunhat)
- Rucksack
- Water bottle (at least 1 litre capacity)
- A small torch
- Sunscreen
- Mobile phone and portable charger
- Watch
- UV sunglasses

Recommended

- Several base layers (long-sleeve or short-sleeve)
- Cushioned walking socks to avoid blisters
- First aid kit, including plasters and insect repellent
- Sit mat
- Spare pair of socks
- Energy snacks
- Waterproof pouch for valuables
- Rubbish bag (remember to always leave no trace)
- Wallet/purse

Optional extras

- Walking poles, useful for descents
- Flask for hot drinks
- Durable lunch box
- Gaiters
- Blister kit
- Waterproof rucksack liner
- Head torch
- GPS device

Tripnote validity

TRIP NOTE VALIDITY These Trip Notes are valid based on the date printed at the bottom of the page. They will occasionally be updated post booking and pre-departure. We will send you the latest trip notes prior to departure through a link in your pre departure documents or we can send you a copy in the post if preferred. In booking this trip you should be confident in your ability to participate in all activities described in these Trip Notes. If you have any doubt about your suitability you should call HF Holidays and ask to speak to one of the team about this itinerary. The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith. Where differences exist between the Trip Notes and our current brochure, the Trip Notes supersede the brochure. All holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; so please be prepared to be flexible where necessary. At times, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned due to weather conditions, political, physical or other factors. In these circumstances we will make the best possible alternative arrangements to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

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