

HF Book Club in the Southern Lake District: Lakeland Writers & Poets

Destinations: Lake District, United Kingdom & England
Trip code: CNABC



HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

The simple beauty of the Southern Lake District has stirred the imagination of visitors for centuries. Stay at our historic country house in Coniston and delve into a variety of works linked to these stunning landscapes. Look out on some of the very same scenes that inspired the likes of William Wordsworth and Beatrix Potter and take part in discussion groups guided by an expert leader. Visits to two of Wordsworth's former homes – and Dove Cottage and Rydal Mount – and the company of fellow literature lovers make for an enriching and sociable weekend ideal for solo travellers and book clubs.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Free-flowing literary discussions throughout your holiday
- Transport to and from venues on your excursion day
- Entry to Dove Cottage & Rydal Mount
- Comfortable en-suite accommodation in our country house
- Cream tea on arrival day
- Cooked or continental breakfast every morning
- Daily packed lunches

- Three-course evening meals, plus tea & coffee
- Easy-to-follow routes, maps, and information available in our Discovery Point if you want to explore independently

HOLIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Meeting like-minded book lovers
- Discussing a variety of literary works
- Enjoying a guided sightseeing visit
- Discussion groups with our expert leaders

ITINERARY

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 in 2026. Enjoy a complimentary cream tea at 16:30 and meet other guests.

Day 2: Around Grasmere & Rydal

Our excursion day takes us to Wordsworth's stomping grounds in Grasmere and Rydal: Dove Cottage and Rydal Mount. There will also be time to visit Grasmere village and the church where Wordsworth was laid to rest.

Day 3 - 4: HF Book Club

On our book club breaks, your leader team will facilitate discussions about the themes and topics featured in their chosen titles and there'll be an open forum to discuss opinions.

[A Passionate Sisterhood: The Sisters, Wives & Daughters of the Lake Poets by Kathleen Jones](#)

A Passionate Sisterhood explores the often-untold lives of the women connected to the Lake Poets: sisters, wives, and daughters. Through their letters and journals, it reveals their sacrifices, rivalries, illnesses, loves and thwarted ambitions, showing how much these women sustained, and suffered, within the Romantic circle.

[The Bay by Julia Rampen](#)

In *The Bay*, Rampen weaves the story of Arthur, a lonely widower who once worked the Morecambe Bay cockling flats, and Suling, a young undocumented migrant in debt and danger. Their unlikely friendship forms amid tides of prejudice, loss, and the harsh beauty of the shifting sands above Morecambe Bay.

[Towards Mellbreak by Marie-Elsa Bragg](#)

In *Towards Mellbreak*, Bragg tells the story of Harold Marras, a hill farmer in 1970s Cumbria, labouring to sustain his family's ancestral farm amid sweeping agricultural, bureaucratic and environmental changes. Amid the harsh landscape he clings to ritual, faith and familial bonds as roots vanish.

Day 5: Departure Day

Enjoy a leisurely breakfast before making your way home.

ACCOMMODATION

Monk Coniston

With a desirable address overlooking Coniston Water (the inspiration for Arthur Ransome's 1930 novel, Swallows and Amazons), this characterful Grade II-listed house delights with lakeside and woodland walks from the doorstep, décor that stays true to the period feel, and plenty of Beatrix Potter references. While the children's author and illustrator did not live at the Monk Coniston estate (her beloved home was Hill Top, bought in 1905 with the royalties from The Tale of Peter Rabbit), she campaigned with the National Trust to save it from development. She then purchased the entire estate in 1930 and as the new owner she immediately sold half to the organisation, bequeathing them the other half in her will.

Country House Accommodation

Rooms

Designed with your comfort in mind, Monk Coniston has 30 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: The rooms with a garden or lake view. We also love Room 9 on the first floor for its original features and beautiful views across the gardens and fields that slope down to the shores of Coniston Water.

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
£25 pppn	£20 pppn	£20 pppn

*Views and layout reflect each properties unique character and location

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.

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.

Accessibility

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

TRAVEL DETAILS

Address

Monk Coniston
Coniston
Cumbria LA21 8AQ

Tel: [+44 \(0\)1539 441566](tel:+44(0)1539441566)

By Train

The West Coast mainline runs to the east of the Lake District, connecting Oxenholme (which is near Kendal), Penrith and Carlisle with London and Glasgow. A direct train runs from Manchester to Windermere. Local trains from Oxenholme call at Kendal, Staveley and Windermere.

The nearest station to Monk Coniston is Windermere. From Windermere you can take a taxi or bus to Monk Coniston (see below).

Check National Rail for journey times and routes.

By Taxi

The journey from Windermere train station to Monk Coniston is 10 miles.

From Oxenholme, it's double that at 23 miles.

For pricing, please contact Ace Taxi directly.

Ace Taxi

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

Tel: [+44 \(0\)1539 445445](tel:+44(0)1539445445)

Email: acetaxiwindermere@gmail.com

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

*Ace Taxi is not owned or managed by HF Holidays.

By Bus

From Windermere station catch the 555 or 599 to Ambleside Kelsick Road. Change here onto the 505 to Monk Coniston. The stop is right outside our country house.

Check Stagecoach for bus times.

National Express also run coaches to Lancaster, Penrith and Carlisle where you can catch an onward bus connection into the Lake District.

By Car

Car parking is available at Monk Coniston.

Leave the M6 motorway at junction 36. Follow the A590 to Greenodd Roundabout, take the second exit and follow the A5092 before turning right onto the A5084 signposted to Torver. At the T junction turn right onto the A593 and follow into Coniston village. Turn right onto the B5286 and follow for 1.5 miles. The entrance to Monk Coniston will be on your right.

By Air

The nearest airport is Manchester International Airport.

There are direct trains every hour to Oxenholme with the journey time around 90 minutes. From here you can change to Windermere or get a taxi (we recommend pre-booking one).

National Rail have up-to-date information on times and routes.

Flying to London Heathrow airport is another option, but it'll take you at least four hours to reach Oxenholme. Take the train to London Paddington station, then the London Underground to London Euston where you can connect to the main line train to Oxenholme. The journey from here is 2.5 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 Monk Coniston.

Coniston

About a mile from the house and easily accessed from a direct path, this small village charms with a superb position at the foot of the Old Man of Coniston and by the western shore of Coniston Water. The small town of Ambleside is a 20-minute drive away.

The John Ruskin Museum

Coniston's John Ruskin Museum charts the history of the village through exhibits focused on the people who have lived and worked here throughout the ages. It's newest treasure is the restored Bluebird K7, Donald Campbell CBE's world-record breaking Jet Hydroplane. Mr Campbell broke 4 World Water Speed records on Coniston Water and tragically died attempting his 5th when Bluebird somersaulted in January 1967. The wreckage lay at the bottom of the lake for 34 years until it was raised in 2001, finally returning home to Coniston in 2024.

Steam Yacht Gondola

Manged by the National Trust, this restored steam-powered yacht on Coniston Water was built by the Furness Railway Company in 1859. It stops at the Monk Coniston jetty at the bottom of the meadow below the house and calls at Coniston and Brantwood House.

Brantwood House

A couple of miles away, this 250-acre Lakeland estate was once home to English writer, philosopher, art critic, and social revolutionary, John Ruskin. The eight beautiful gardens were created by Ruskin, his cousin Joan Severn, and head gardener Sally Beamish.

Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway

Known locally known as La'al Ratty meaning 'little railway', this is one of England's oldest and longest narrow gauge railways dating back to 1873. A trip here can easily be combined with a walk over Muncaster Fell or to the Stanley Ghyll Waterfall.

Blackwell House

Designed by esteemed architect Mackay Hugh Baillie Scott between 1898 and 1900, this Grade I-listed building is one of the UK's finest examples of Arts & Crafts architecture. Don't miss the well-preserved interiors and the formal terraced garden.

Tarn Hows

Just a short walk away, this man-made lake was created in the mid-19th century by one of Monk Coniston's former owners, James Garth Marshall. The 1.5-mile path around the lake has been well maintained by the National Trust and is suitable for wheelchair users.

Grizedale Forest

Set right in the heart of the Lake District between Windermere and Coniston, this vast woodland is perfect for walking, mountain biking, and swinging through the trees on a Go Ape course. There's also a visitor centre with a gift shop, tearoom, and playground.

Levens Hall & Garden

A 50-minute drive away, this privately-owned Elizabethan mansion is cherished for its award-winning topiary gardens – the oldest in the world. Inside, there's fine oak panelling, ornate plasterwork, leather wall coverings, and the earliest examples of English patchwork.

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.

Windermere

The largest natural lake in England, this watery wonder measures 10.5 miles long, one mile wide, and 220 feet deep. Ferries connect Ambleside in the north to Bowness and Lakeside in the south, where you can board the Lakeside and Haverthwaite Railway.

USEFUL HOLIDAY INFORMATION

Essential Information

Please bring along your own copy of the books we'll be discussing either in paper format or on a tablet/e-reader if you prefer. The full reading list will be shown on the itinerary tab as soon as it is confirmed.

We'll also be heading out sightseeing so please be sure to bring comfortable shoes that you can wear when we're out and about. And given the UK's famously unpredictable weather, you may also want to pack waterproof clothing and/or sun cream.

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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