

HF Book Club in the Western Yorkshire Dales: Historical Fiction

Destinations: Yorkshire Dales, United Kingdom & England
Trip code: SDABC



HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

Whether you're continually diving into a page-turner or simply want to rediscover your passion for reading, our book club breaks are a great way to meet like-minded people. Staying at our characterful country house in Sedbergh, you'll be invited to explore texts, discuss story ideas, and discover Western Yorkshire Dale's literary connections. and perhaps even find inspiration to pen your own novel. To complement the texts, you'll enjoy guided sightseeing visits to places relevant to that genre. These holidays are perfect for solo travellers looking for friendship-forming experiences as well as book clubs seeking an enriching group getaway.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Free-flowing literary discussions throughout your holiday
- Transport to and from venues on your excursion day
- 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 range of literary works
- Enjoying guided sightseeing visits
- Exploring the surrounding landscape on foot
- Guidance from our expert leaders

ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrival Day

You're welcome to check in from 4pm onwards. Enjoy a complimentary cream tea on arrival.

Day 2: Sizergh Castle & Blackwell

We begin our holiday with visits to nearby historic houses, Sizergh Castle and Blackwell, each special in their own way. The Elizabethan grandeur of Sizergh brings the 16th-century setting of *Hamnet* to life. Then there's Blackwell, a fabulous example of Arts & Crafts architecture which has long inspired creatives and has links to WWII. Please note: Sizergh Castle is a National Trust property so, if you are a member, please remember to bring your membership card to gain free entry.

Day 3: Your Book Club

Today we'll focus on delving into the works of historical fiction on our reading list. Your group leader will facilitate discussions about the themes and topics featured in their chosen titles and there'll be an open forum to discuss opinions. The reading list for this holiday is shown below:

Hamnet By Maggie O'Farrell

Maggie O'Farrell's *Hamnet* reimagines the life and death of Shakespeare's only son who tragically died in 1596 at only eleven years old. Set in 16th-century England, O'Farrell confronts themes of grief, love, and loss. The book has won several awards and was listed for the Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Fiction.

Alias Grace By Margaret Atwood

Inspired by the true story of convicted murderer Grace Marks, Margaret Atwood (author of *The Handmaid's Tale*) explores the blurred lines between guilt and innocence, as well as ideas on identity, femininity and societal expectations across Canada and the USA in the 19th century. Since publication, *Alias Grace* has been adapted by Netflix into a six-episode miniseries.

The Nightingale By Kristin Hannah

This *New York Times* bestselling novel charts the experiences of two fictional sisters, Vianne and Isabelle during the German occupation of France in WWII. The story follows both sisters in their struggles to survive, and Kristin Hannah deftly portrays the brutality of war and the remarkable resilience of human spirit in an incredibly moving tale.

Day 4: Departure Day

Enjoy a leisurely breakfast before making your way home.

ACCOMMODATION

Thorns Hall

Delivering on all fronts for countryside lovers, this cosy Grade II-listed manor house is just a skip away from Sedburgh – the Cumbrian market town treasured for its cobbled streets, public school, artisan shops, and bookshops (it's known as England's official book town for good reason). You'll also have the Yorkshire Dales National Park on your doorstep as well as the Howgill Fells - the small group of hills adored by legendary fellwalker, illustrator, and guidebook author Alfred Wainwright. The walking opportunities here are outstanding, but if you fancy travelling further afield there's Kendal (home of the mint cake), Hawes, Wensleydale, Appleby-in-Westmorland, and Lake Windemere all within easy driving distance.

Country House Accommodation

Rooms

Designed with your comfort in mind, Thorns Hall has 25 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, and comfortable mattresses.

Superior Rooms are even more spacious en-suite guest rooms offering upgraded views of the surrounds. 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, and comfortable mattresses.

We love: The spacious Room 25 for its ground floor setting, brick fireplace, comfy seating, large bed, and gorgeous views of the gardens. Room 4 is large and airy while the cosier Room 13 has an exposed wood ceiling and courtyard view.

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.

Check in & check out

You are welcome to check in from **4:00pm at the earliest**. 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.

On the day of departure, we kindly ask all guests to check out by **10:00am**. You'll be asked to settle your bill prior to leaving. You may, of course, make a charitable donation to our HF Holidays Pathways Fund if you wish. Please note that we only accept card payments.

Room supplements

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

£20 pppn

£20 pppn

£30 per room

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

The walking day

Prior to setting off on 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

Led by experienced chefs, we serve a wide range of dishes made with fresh and seasonal ingredients. We always aim to source the best produce available and use home-grown herbs and vegetables from our own gardens whenever possible. Additionally, we have a licensed bar with beers, soft drinks, and a superb selection of spirits. Full-board comes as standard and includes a cream tea on arrival and a hearty breakfast on departure day.

HF Holidays understands the importance of managing allergens effectively to ensure food is safe for guests with food allergies. Whilst we are always able to confidently inform guests which allergens are present in our ingredients and dishes, we are unable to guarantee absolute freedom from the 14 main allergens in our kitchens. Vegetarian and vegan menu choices are available. If you have allergies, food intolerances, or any special dietary requirements, please inform our reservation team at the time of booking.

Accessibility

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

TRAVEL DETAILS

Address

Thorns Hall
Cautley Road
Sedbergh
Cumbria LA10 5LE

Tel: [+44 \(0\)1539 620973](tel:+44(0)1539620973)

By Train

The nearest station is Oxenholme, Lake District, on the main line between London and Glasgow.

Check National Rail for routes and journey times.

By Shared Transfer

If you're travelling to or from Thorns Hall on Mondays or Fridays from 1 March to 18 November 2024, or on Mondays and Fridays over the festive period, you can join our group transfer from Oxenholme Railway Station.

2024 prices are £40 per person for a return transfer or £20 per person for a single transfer.

Outward journey: Depart Oxenholme Railway Station at 16:30; arrive at Thorns Hall at 17:10.

Return journey: Depart Thorns Hall at 09:30; arrive at Oxenholme Railway Station at 10:10.

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: reservations@hfholidays.co.uk

By Taxi

The journey from Oxenholme station to Thorns Hall is 10 miles and will take about 20 minutes.

For pricing, please contact Woofs of Sedbergh directly.

Woofs of Sedbergh

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

Tel: [+44 \(0\)1539 620414](tel:+44(0)1539620414)

Email: woofs.sedbergh@outlook.com

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

*Woofs of Sedbergh is not owned or managed by HF Holidays.

By Car

There's a car park available at Thorns Hall if you decide to drive.

Leave the M6 at junction 37 and follow the A684 eastbound for five miles to Sedbergh. At Sedbergh follow the road into Finkle Street (avoiding the main street), then almost immediately turn left at a small roundabout into Back Lane. At the next mini roundabout turn onto the A683 following signs to Kirkby Stephen. Thorns Hall is 100 yards on the left.

By Air

The nearest airport is Manchester International Airport.

There are direct trains every hour to Oxenholme with the journey taking around 90 minutes. From Oxenholme station you can complete the journey to Sedbergh by taxi.

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

Flying to London Heathrow airport is another option, but it'll take you at least four hours to reach Oxenholme. Catch 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 Thorns Hall.

Sedbergh

A few minutes' walk away, this Cumbrian market town is treasured for its cobbled streets, public school, and bookshops (it became England's Book Town in 2003). Just down the road is the Farfield Mill Arts, a crafts and heritage centre housed in a Victorian woollen mill.

Kendal

Home of Romney's Kendal Mint Cake which was made famous on 29 May 1953 when it was carried on the first successful summit of Mount Everest by Sir Edmund Hillary and Sirdar Tenzing, this market town is a 20-minute drive away.

Sizergh Castle

A 25-minute drive away, this 1,600-acre estate delights with ancient woodland, an award-winning limestone rock garden, and a boating lake. Built by the Strickland family in 1350, the house has turrets, battlements, a collection of family paintings, and oak-panelled interiors.

Levens Hall & Garden

A 30-minute drive away, this privately-owned Elizabethan mansion is most 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.

Settle To Carlisle Railway

This 73-mile-long railway route crosses regions of the Yorkshire Dales and the North Pennines. Head south for the Ribbleshead Viaduct as well as Settle, Skipton and Saltaire – or head north for Appleby. The nearest station is Garsdale, a 20-minute drive away.

Hawes & Wensleydale

A 30-minute drive through the Yorkshire Dales takes you to the Hawes, the market town of Upper Wensleydale. From here you can continue through to Wensleydale, the wide open valley famous for its historic villages, traditional markets and crafts, and plentiful cheeses.

Lake District

A 40-minute drive away, the Lake District in the heart of Cumbria has been adored by poets, painters, and literary giants for centuries. It spoils first-timers and returning visitors with charming villages, tumbling waterfalls, impressive peaks, and shimmering bodies of water.

Lake Windemere

An hour's drive away, this watery wonder measures 10.5 miles long, one mile wide, and 220 feet deep.

Whether you start your journey in Bowness, Ambleside, or Lakeside, there are plenty of cruise operators offering old-fashioned steamers or modern sightseeing vessels.

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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