

Bron Y Graig Reading Retreats



Unique Reading Retreats
In the Stunning Dee Valley

2025 Brochure



‘A very special experience. We felt looked after AND inspired’
- Amy K, February 2025

A Reading Retreat at *A Place to Write* is like no other. Aside from enjoying all the privacy and luxury of your own ensuite bedroom — with all the little extras you would expect in a hotel — you are also one of a select group of people who love reading who will be welcomed into the very homely, yet professional space which Nic and Wendy run.

Meals are all home cooked by Wendy to a bespoke menu which is individual to every retreat: taking account of all your dietary requirements, with separate dishes produced when necessary, every meal is designed just for you. And this individual attention doesn't stop there!

With groups of no more than twelve at a time, each guest has the space to read in peace and tranquility while also having the opportunity to make new friends from the reading community and share their passion for literature.

‘Beautiful Wales, good food, great company’
- Phil , October 2025

Do it *your* way:

At our welcome meeting on the first day we emphasise that this is *your* retreat: you choose what you do, when you do it, how you do it and whether you do it at all! We are just here to help: whether you want to read from dawn to dusk in one place you can call your own, or share different reading spaces over the course of your stay; whether you want to remain onsite, reading in comfort, or take time out to explore the literary connections in the local landscape; whether you want to read the same book as others, with discussions attached, or bring your own book and escape into your own imagination. On every retreat we work with you to ensure that you get the unique experience you seek. It's what makes the atmosphere on our retreats so special.

What we offer:

- A unique home from home retreat
- Your own spacious ensuite room
- Cosy, peaceful and comfortable spaces in which to read
- An inspiring location
- A wonderful atmosphere
- Delicious home cooked food
- Abundant refreshments
- Stunning walks and views
- Excursions to explore the literary connections in the local landscape*

** Participation in these tours is entirely optional*

Three options to choose from:

- Come on your own and read your own chosen books, following your own schedule
- Come on your own but read a book selected by us for its local literary connections, and join the scheduled discussions and tours
- Bring your reading group, book out all the available rooms (up to 12 participants) and schedule the retreat exactly the way you want it

Simon McCleave

Simon McCleave is a writer from near-by Wrexham and his series *The Snowdonia Killings* is set in real and fictional locations across the local area. Corwen Church, a five minute walk from Bron Y Graig features significantly in the first book in the series.

The Mabinogion

This collection of stories, originally from the Welsh oral tradition, were first written down in the 11th and 12th centuries. Today the stories are available in translation and have inspired writers across the globe, including J.R.R. Tolkien whose book *The Silmarillion* was inspired by the Mabinogion's tale of *Culhwch and Olwen*.

Gerard Manley Hopkins

Hopkins studied theology at St Beuno's College near St. Asaph and, while there, visited St. Winifred's Well in Holywell—walking the seven miles to it with another novitiate from the college. The unfinished play that was inspired by the pilgrimage exists today in only fragments. However, it seems that this work of drama, written in verse using Hopkins' signature sprung rhythm, was arguably his own favourite amongst his works.



Itinerary

On arrival you will check into your room and have time to settle in, learn about the history of Bron Y Graig, read and relax. At an agreed time we will all convene in one of our lounges for a housekeeping meeting and tour of the grounds, before sitting down together at our group dining table to enjoy a hearty welcome meal and learn a little about each other.

Each day, from breakfast till dinner, there is abundant reading time with various spaces and places set-up for you to relax and immerse yourself in your book. Each day is punctuated with optional refreshment breaks and a buffet lunch designed to allow you to take your lunch with you as you carry on reading!

If you have selected the option to visit local places with literary connections, we will provide transport and a guide to lead you on two separate excursions:

- St Winifred's Well—inspiration over the centuries for a wide range of literature from *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, to Gerard Manley Hopkins' play 'St. Winefride's Well'. Follow in the footsteps of pilgrims, Kings, Daniel Defoe, and even a number of the gunpowder plotters!
- Snowdonia and beyond—the inspiration for everything from the medieval *Mabinogion* to the 21st century *Snowdonia Killings* (Simon McCleave), and Jan Ruth's *Midnight Sky*, *Wild Water* and *White Horizon*.

Oh yes, and every retreat offers the chance to join a guided walk past the one-time home of John Cowper Powys up to the iron-age hill fort on the top of Caer Drewyn—just across the Valley from Bron Y Graig—which is the fictional home of Porius in Cowper Powys' *Porius: A Romance of the Dark Ages*.



'Nic and Wendy have created a wonderful place to relax and be creative. A very special experience and I am already thinking about when I can go back.'
- Elspeth H, September 2024

Superior Rooms

These are spacious ensuite rooms with a view across the Dee Valley. They all come with a large writing desk and a full range of toiletries, bathrobes, towels, tea and coffee making facilities, widescreen TV, hairdryer and other little extras.

Standard Rooms (pictured)

These are slightly smaller than the Superior Rooms, but still fairly spacious and fully ensuite. They all come with a writing desk and a full range of toiletries, bathrobes, towels, tea and coffee making facilities, widescreen TV, hairdryer and other little extras. They have windows but not quite such a stunning view.

Attic Rooms

These are genuinely attic rooms with sloped ceilings, low beams and less space than our standard rooms but, again, they are fully ensuite. They have a small writing desk and a full range of toiletries, bathrobes, towels, tea and coffee making facilities, widescreen TV, hairdryer and other little extras.



Prices

4-NIGHT READING RETREATS:

SUPERIOR ROOM	£595 incl VAT	[Second person supplement £345]
STANDARD ROOM	£545 incl VAT	[Second person supplement £345]
ATTIC ROOM	£495 incl VAT	

Add-On Excursions (per person)

St Winifred's Well	£45 incl VAT
Snowdonia and Beyond	£45 incl VAT
Both the above	£65 incl VAT

CONCESSION RATES FOR STUDENTS, OAPs AND ANYONE IN RECEIPT OF A STATE BENEFIT:

DISCOUNT OF £100 (incl VAT) on the above prices*, subject to proof of entitlement

[* There is only one attic room and one standard room available at concession prices on each retreat. These may be withdrawn from sale for any retreat at our sole discretion, at any time]

'It was a brilliant, stimulating holiday and I will definitely return'

- Jeni G, December 2024

Your Hosts

Nic and Wendy bought the venue for *our retreats*, Bron Y Graig, in June 2022, with a view to developing a world-class retreat centre. Nic is currently completing a PhD at the Shakespeare Institute at the University of Birmingham and Wendy works full time at Bron Y Graig.

Before moving to Corwen, Nic was head of English in a large state secondary school in the south-east, and had also taught and managed at schools across the south of England including the Leys School, Cambridge, Wellington College, Berkshire, and Verulam School in St Albans. Prior to that he ran a theatre company that performed all over the UK, directed a production of *Macbeth* in Manchester Cathedral, and ran specialist masterclasses on Stanislavski and Brecht for secondary schools across England. His journey began in the dark ages when he met Wendy while training to be an actor at Mountview Theatre School in London.

Wendy's career, post-drama school, was much more sensible: having already trained as an intensive care nurse, Wendy moved effortlessly into stage managing West End shows before marrying Nic and starting a family. In more recent years she was a senior manager in the NHS and ran several large care homes across Hertfordshire.

Nic and Wendy look forward to welcoming you to *a Unique Retreat!*



'A wonderful week of Shakespeare: inspiring, informative, thought-provoking and most enjoyable from start to finish'
- June, October 2024

February 2025

A Place to Write

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