

REPORT ON
WISPS WRITING RETREAT & RESEARCH WEEKEND

JUNE 30TH – JULY 2ND 2007

SNEATON CASTLE, WHITBY, N.YORKSIRE

The second WISPS Writing Retreat and Research Weekend took place in the beautiful Sneaton Castle, set on a hill just outside Whitby with stunning views across to the famous Abbey. Within the calm and relaxing atmosphere provided by the very helpful, discrete and efficient staff, and several armchair-filled lounges, participants first took part in a session on ‘Motivation and Getting Started’, facilitated by Professor Mary Mellor of the University of Northumbria, who worked with more senior participants on strategies for overcoming the challenges in their current research. Dr Nigel Mellor facilitated the postgraduate session, in which a variety of exercises stimulated the participants into writing action.

On the Sunday morning the group worked together under the expert direction of Professor Alison Sinclair of Cambridge University, who provided many valuable suggestions on the topic of ‘Developing a Professional Profile in Hispanic Studies’. Outside of these sessions, participants worked in small groups appropriate to their writing stages, implementing the new strategies shared in the group sessions.

But it wasn’t all work and no play! Most participants were able to go on at least one walk to explore the lovely resort of Whitby. Sunday afternoon’s walk, led by Dr. Lesley Twomey in glorious weather, afforded magnificent view of the coastline, beaches and sea, and incorporated a walk through the quaint old quarter with its fantastic jewellery shops, a climb up the 199 steps to the Abbey, and a welcome ice cream.

A very successful mixture of learning, sharing and practice, writing and relaxation was experienced by all. A big thank you to Dr. Lesley Twomey for organising the Retreat at such a special location, and to Professor Mellor, Professor Sinclair and Dr. Mellor for sharing their wisdom with us. I totally recommend WISPS members who have not yet been on a Retreat to experience such a beneficial combination of work and relaxation.

Jill Ingham, 3rd July 2007.