

Yoga Retreat Reflections



Sometimes experiences need a little time to settle before the words arrive. It has taken me a few days to gather my thoughts after a weekend spent in rural Mid Wales at a yoga retreat hosted by **Gina Lucy Wellness**, where I was invited to offer Shiatsu treatments during the quieter spaces of the weekend for anyone who felt drawn to try it.

The retreat was held at Garth Barns near Llanidloes — a beautiful, peaceful Welsh setting where the sunshine seemed to follow us throughout the weekend. Despite the intensity of the summer heat, there was a gentleness to the days. A warm breeze moved through the space creating a sense of movement and ease. The pace of the weekend naturally slowed. Moving quickly in that heat didn't feel right: the sunshine encouraged us to pause, to rest, to find shade, to sit a little longer and simply be. I found myself noticing how much the environment itself supported what we were all there for — creating space to breathe, to reconnect, to quieten the mind and to come back to ourselves.





On the first evening, before the weekend had really begun, we all wandered down to the lake. After seeing the lake I decided to swim straight away, partly because I didn't want to get to the end of the weekend and realise I'd missed the opportunity. It was beautiful... sunshine, still water, and the most incredible landscape. There was also rather more pondweed than I would usually choose to swim amongst! If I'm honest, the thought of weeds around my legs would normally have been enough to put me off! The idea of brushing against something underwater that I couldn't see has always brought a tiny bit of panic (even though I'm a strong swimmer!) but I decided to lean in and have a go. I climbed carefully down the steps and leaned backwards into the water, floating away from the edge before I started swimming. It was my own little way of finding a route in that felt manageable. It was wonderful! The water was warm, the evening was peaceful, and the pondweed and I managed to happily coexist and that little moment stayed with me over the weekend.

It also struck me that every single person I worked with was experiencing Shiatsu for the first time - twelve completely different people and twelve completely different sessions.

What a privilege it was to be the person who introduced them to something that has become such an important part of my own life. There is something very special about offering Shiatsu. To spend time with someone you have only just met, to create a little pocket of space away from the busyness of everyday life, and to see what unfolds when they are able to slow down and receive. Some people experienced deep relaxation, some noticed emotions coming to the surface, some spoke afterwards about feeling lighter, clearer, calmer, or simply more connected to themselves. There were tears, smiles, quiet moments and conversations. I never know exactly what someone's experience of Shiatsu will be — and I think that is part of what I love about it. **My role is to listen, to respond, and to trust that each person's body has its own way of finding what it needs.** This weekend reminded me again why I love this work. When I qualified three years ago, I hoped Shiatsu would become more than just something I practised. I hoped it would become something I could share.



I love introducing people to this beautiful modality — not because everyone has to become my client, but because **I believe more people deserve the opportunity to experience this kind of thoughtful, attentive touch.** If someone's first experience with me encourages them to explore Shiatsu further, perhaps finding a practitioner closer to home, then that feels like part of the bigger picture. As for me, it is easy, when we spend much of our time supporting others, to forget that we also need moments where we are restored. Making space for ourselves is part of how we continue to offer what we do with energy, presence and care.

I came home feeling grateful, grounded and reminded of why this path matters so much to me. I feel incredibly lucky to have been part of such a special weekend, in such a beautiful Welsh landscape, sharing Shiatsu with people who were open to trying something completely new.

Thank you to Gina for creating such a beautiful space at Garth Barn and thank you to everyone who trusted me with their first experience of Shiatsu.

