



WALKERS ARE WELCOME

Conference attracts fifty

The 2008 conference in Prestatyn last Autumn attracted over fifty delegates, from more than 20 towns. Arrangements are already in hand for the 2009 event, to be held in beautiful Church Stretton on Oct 18th

Kate is our patron

We're delighted that Kate Ashbrook, Chairman of the Ramblers' Association and of the Campaign for National Parks has agreed to become our Patron. "This pioneering initiative has got off to a great start; I am delighted to be an ambassador for this great initiative and look forward to visiting both the established towns and those which are considering joining the scheme," she says,

WaW in spotlight

There was welcome publicity for Walkers are Welcome towns in the Autumn issue of *walk* magazine, which ran a seven page feature on the scheme. Individual towns have also attracted considerable media attention from TV, radio and the press.

Help for new towns

The WaW towns network committee has introduced an informal mentoring arrangement for towns and villages hoping to get WaW status.

Now we are 15!

Three more towns join the network

The Walkers are Welcome network is growing again. At the end of January 2009, the towns of Tadcaster (N Yorks) and Rhuddlan (Denbighs) and the village of Martley (Worcs) were given Walkers are Welcome status.

"This means that we now have fifteen communities in England, Scotland and Wales which have chosen to become special places for walkers. What's encouraging is that we know of at least another fifteen which are already in the process of meeting the Walkers are Welcome criteria," says Malcolm Wilkinson, Chair of the WaW Towns Network.

What began in 2006 as an idea in the small Pennine town of Hebden Bridge has grown rapidly. "Towns are finding out for themselves the benefits which Walkers are Welcome status brings, particularly for helping regenerate local economies and attract more tourism," Malcolm adds.

Tadcaster, an historic town on the river Wharfe, is surrounded by attractive countryside. Local councillor Greg Lodge who has coordinated the WaW bid says that his town is well served with facilities for walkers. Rhuddlan joins neighbouring Prestatyn as the second north Wales Walkers are Welcome town. It has a good network of local paths and is on the North Wales Path. Martley's bid for Walkers are Welcome status was overseen by a strong local walkers' organisation which has been looking after the area's footpaths for more than eighteen years.

New website gets the attention

There's a brand new look to the Walkers are Welcome website (www.walkersarewelcome.org.uk), which has been given a complete overhaul. "This is our shop window to the world, so we want our web site to be as effective as possible," says WaW Secretary Andrew Bibby, who is also acting as webmaster. "There's opportunity for Walkers are Welcome towns to have their own space on the website, or to link to their own home pages."

Organising an event? Book the banner!

The bright new Walkers are Welcome banner (3 m x 1 m), available for WaW launch events and other special occasions, has already done some travelling, having been to Otley, Market Weighton and Prestatyn. Kilsyth have already booked it for their WaW launch in the Summer. Let us know if you'd like to make a booking for your town; there is no hire fee, though we ask you to pay carriage.

Hebden Bridge – Moffat – Prestatyn – Myholmroyd – Church Stretton – Bishop's Castle – Richmond – Market Weighton - Kilsyth - Cilgerran – Pentrefoelas – Otley - Rhuddlan – Tadcaster – Martley – *you next?*