



# WALKERS ARE WELCOME TOWNS NETWORK

Towns and villages with something special to offer walkers



Newsletter September 2014

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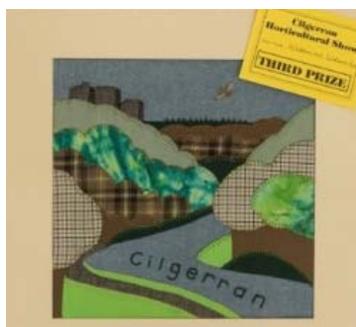
## Chepstow Get-Together

With the cooling weather of late August, we all thought summer was over but here we are experiencing a delightful "Indian Summer" to ease us into the pleasures of autumn colour for our walks and reflected in local programmes.

Many of us are looking forward to the Chepstow Get-Together, a chance to renew friendships and refresh our ideas and ambitions for the year ahead. We have a great opportunity to learn so much from each other whilst enjoying a short break.

If you haven't booked yet please do so very quickly so that Chepstow can get organised for our arrival.

Full details are on the [website page](#) along with the programme, **only £50** including dinner at St Pierre, what great value. Even N.A.T.O. found the area irresistible.



Chepstow have asked that you send a synopsis about your square with a photo to include details of who created the square and their inspiration behind the design.

The Walkers are Welcome quilt squares must be in Chepstow by **18<sup>th</sup> September** to give them time to sew it all together.

Pictured left is the Cigerran's square which was designed by talented group member Susan Martin. Cigerran Walkers are Welcome were delighted to win a prize for their patchwork square in the village show in August. The square depicts a view of the River Teifi with Cigerran castle on the bank above. Cigerran wish to thank the group in Chepstow for coming up with the idea and look forward to seeing the finished article. Inspiration to us all.

## White Cliff's Festival

*Our patron, Kate Ashbrook, helped to launch the White Cliffs Walking Festival on the Dover seafront on 21 August.*

The week-long festival (21-27 August) was inspired and organised by the Ramblers' energetic White Cliffs Group and they put on a great programme. About a hundred people gathered for the opening, including the Dover MP Charlie Elphicke and the mayors of Deal (the first Walkers are Welcome town in Kent) and Dover.



*Photo by Nigel Cussans*

Charlie Elphicke spoke in support of coastal access. The first stretch in Kent between Folkestone and Ramsgate will soon come into being, and the next section, from Whitstable to Ramsgate, is in the offing. I was there in my role as Ramblers' president but naturally took the opportunity to promote Walkers are Welcome and I urged Dover to follow Deal in becoming accredited.

I joined the first walk of the festival, led by Les Preston. We took a bus to Capel le Ferne, just east of Folkestone, and walked back along the cliffs of Dover. Les was good at showing off the Ramblers' achievements. When we walked past Capel Battery, he explained that this area of access land had been blocked off by the owner. Pressed by the Ramblers, Kent County Council (the highway authority) took the owner to court and eventually got the land reopened. The coastal path coincides with the North Downs Way national trail. We walked a section of the cliff path which Kent County Council had wanted to close some years ago, claiming it was no longer used. Dover magistrates agreed to the closure but the Ramblers appealed to Canterbury Crown Court which in 2002 ruled that the path should be opened. The council then installed a handrail. Had the Ramblers lost, the path would probably have gone along the inferior cycle track which only briefly touches the cliff path.

It was an interesting walk, also taking in the Battle of Britain Memorial and the dramatic Shakespeare Cliff which looms above Dover.

The festival had a fine range of activity including history walks and a final barbeque on the seafront at Deal.

*NB Ramsgate are Provisional (Associate) Members and are well on their way to accreditation. Campaigners at Snettisham in Norfolk have won their battle to regain access to a footpath running along the beach.*

## Don't Lose Your Way

We have mentioned in past newsletters about the Deregulation Bill, our 'Re-opening and Claiming Paths' fact sheet and the definitive map that will be cut off for historic ways in 2026. The Ramblers Association have an aptly named campaign '[Don't Lose your Way](#)'.

## Cattle

Unfortunately, every summer we hear of cattle attacks, thankfully there are very few deaths but some serious injuries and many very frightened walkers. All responsible farmers are growing increasingly concerned about this problem. The changes in farming methods with animals receiving less handling and different breeds plus of course many more walkers has exasperated the situation.

Bill Wiggin MP tabled a Ten-Minute Bill calling for better recording by the HSE (Health and Safety Executive) of these cases. Although this does not actually result in a change in the law, the mere fact that this was debated is likely to lead to a change in HSE reporting and result in proper evidence.

In the meantime, The Ramblers Association and representatives from the NFU (National Farmers Union) have recently met with Defra (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) civil servants to discuss the issues and any possible sensible solutions.

If you know of any cattle attacks, please ensure that they are reported to the Health and Safety Executive. Reporting to the farmer in question, Countryside Access Department and the police are all useful steps to raise awareness. Please keep us informed so that we can pass on information and build a nationwide picture. The current advice is available on The Ramblers Association webpage entitled [Walking near Livestock](#).

Look out for new advice. Learning the environment in your area where cattle are likely to be will make guiding walks much easier, make cattle part of your risk assessment and keep your walkers safe.

## Analytics

Many groups that run their own websites will be familiar with Google Analytics which measures the performance of websites. Our Webmaster, Rob Talbot regularly supplies data for the national executive committee to examine.

After a massive jump in users when we launched the new website, users and unique users are continuing to grow by nearly 4% p.a. 2013-14 saw 57,966 pages viewed. After the [WaW Towns page](#) the next most popular section is the news. We would therefore call on all towns to send in your good news stories for publication. Written articles and a photo that can just be uploaded are preferred see the [news section](#) for some inspiration.

Adding news, events and other updates to your website helps to increase the usage and climb the search engine lists. Driving traffic to the website from Twitter, other websites and linking where possible, increases the numbers of viewers. Give the national website a mention now and again which will in turn benefit us all.

**Don't forget your Chepstow booking**

**WALKERS ARE WELCOME TOWNS NETWORK**

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