

## **IVEL VALLEY WALKERS HOLIDAY TO NORMANDY MAY 2025**

### **Battles, Bottles, Bistros and Bayeux**

**Walking dates Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> May to Friday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2025 inclusive**

Based in the Calvados area of Normandy with Bayeux as the centre of walking. An area with so much to see and do so much so that some people may choose to extend the trip for themselves beyond the core holiday.

To a large extent, much of our English history started here. Duke William of Normandy had his power base here and his half-brother was Bishop of Bayeux. Before 1066 there were next to no written records of anything in England save for some work by Bede and others. Soon after though came the Domesday Books (there were two) when just about everything was documented and recorded, largely for tax and loyalty purposes.

Many of our castles and cathedrals were then built from Caen (the major city of Calvados) stone including the Tower of London, Canterbury, Durham and St Albans Cathedrals etc.

And you can barely move in England for evidence of Norman heritage.

In Calvados there's cathedrals, castles and masses more to see and enjoy including of course the Bayeux Tapestry, an incredible embroidered story of 1066. There's the 1944 Normandy Landings, known as 'debarquement' in French, much of which happened along the Calvados coast.

#### **BATTLES**

The Normandy Landings were a huge part of world history. Our proposed holiday isn't a 'Battlefield Tour' but we'd aim to give people a small flavour of what went on, what was involved and where.

#### **BOTTLES**

The French are of course very proud of their regional food and drink and this is a land of cream, apple brandy (Calvados), cheeses and butter. The local 'wine' is available in bottles.....but these are bottles of cider. (Cider farm tours are available)!

#### **BISTROS**

Brasseries and bars, there's no shortage of these be they in towns or villages and offering fine fish from sea and river, oysters from the beds on what was Juno beach in '44. There's crepes, gouffres, lovely ice cream, shellfish platters, amazing markets with lots of goodies for picnics. You won't starve but remember in France lunch is from 12 noon after which restaurants usually close until they open for dinner.

## BAYEUX



This very old large town is home to a stunningly ornate cathedral, the amazing tapestry, medieval streets, grand 'hotels' which are large mansions...and it played a part in '44. Remarkably, the town was untouched in the savage battles and it was the first major town to be liberated on 7th/8th June 1944 when it became the administrative capital of France for a period.

## WALKS

The area is relatively flat with a long coastline behind which is a very rural area (apart from Bayeux itself) composed of small villages, rivers, some forests and the famous bocage encountered by troops as they moved inland from the beaches.

Our provisional plan includes the following (we plan a further week researching and finalising walks at the end of March 2025). We plan to offer both longer and shorter walks daily and have adapted some routes suggested by Bayeux Besin Tourism.

**Bayeux** – historical walking tour of the old city (1.5-2 hrs) followed by a circular walk along the Aure River to Vaux-sur-Aure (8.5 miles)

**British Memorial at Vers-sur-Mer** – circular long (11 miles) and shorter (6 miles) walks from the new (very impressive) British memorial with good views of Gold beach and the huge oyster beds.

**Omaha Beach** – including the Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial.

**Port- en- Bressin** – a short circular walk (5 miles) from this major fishing port which played its part in the Norman Conquest and D day landings.

**Cerisy- La-Forêt** – Circular walk (7 miles) from Cerisy, where there is both a small abbey and sculpture park, via the typical bocage and national forest.

1-2 further walks inland possibly to be based around **Creully and/or Audrieu/Chouain**.



## **BOOKING**

Booking is now open and is initially limited to Ivel Valley members only. To book please e mail [carolynlightfoot41@gmail.com](mailto:carolynlightfoot41@gmail.com) providing your name(s), e mail and mobile phone contact details. The admin cost for the holiday is £25/person to be paid to

Unit Trust Bank Ivel Valley Social Account

Sort code 60-83-01 Account No 20201274 Marked Normandy

If you have any queries Mark, Carolyn and Roger are only happy to chat.