

Teas, buns, pints and pies:

Redbourn Common: The Cricketers and The Holly Bush (Church End) Public Houses


Redbourn High Street: The Bull and The George Public Houses plus general stores, coffee shop and sandwich bars.

Redbourn Golf Club: The Clubhouse Café bar open to non-members.

How to get there:

By road: Redbourn is approx. 3 miles from Harpenden, 4 miles from St Albans and 5 miles from Hemel Hempstead. Leave Junction 9 of the M1 and take the A5183 (direction Herts Showground), turn right at the St Albans roundabout. There is public car parking at The Common.

By public transport: Redbourn is served regularly by buses from St Albans and Dunstable. For details contact Intalink Traveline on 0871 200 2233 or visit www.intalink.org.uk

 Parts of this walk can be muddy or wet underfoot.



This is one of a series of 8 circular walks on the River Ver and part of the 17 mile long linear, River Ver Trail. You can also use the OS Explorer Map 182 to find your way around the Valley. For lots more photos, memories, information and copies of the other walks go to www.riverver.co.uk

The Countryside Management Service works with communities in Hertfordshire to help them care for and enjoy the environment. For information on further opportunities to enjoy Hertfordshire countryside, including Health Walks, visit www.hertslink.org/cms

If you would like this leaflet produced in large print, please contact the Countryside Management Service on southwest. cms@hertsccl.gov.uk Tel: 01462 459395

Front cover photo: Cricket on the Common, Redbourn.
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VER VALLEY WALK 3

The Winterbourne Walk

Explore the beautiful rolling countryside of this river valley



Start and finish: Redbourn Common

Full circular walk: 8 miles (12.8 km) -
About 4 hours

Circular Common walk: 1 mile (1.6 km) -
About 30 mins



www.riverver.co.uk

REDBOURN, NORTH



Discover the River Ver

The River Ver is special; it is a **chalk stream**, one of only about 200 on the planet and its pure alkaline water supports a very particular mix of **flora** and **fauna**. For 450,000 years, since the Anglian Ice Age, it has flowed (almost) uninterrupted along its valley, south from its source at Kensworth Lynch in the Chiltern Hills, through Markyate, Flamstead, Redbourn, St Albans and Park Street to where it joins with the River Colne near Bricket Wood – ultimately to empty into the River Thames near Windsor.

Man has used the river for navigation, for milling, for mineral extraction and for food production – these processes mean the river is much changed from its ‘natural’ state. Today we utilise the Ver in two other ways. Firstly, deep boreholes into the chalk strata (or aquifer) abstract over half of all the water that falls as rain

in the area. Secondly, we use the river and its attractive surroundings for simple leisure and pleasure, by walking through its valley or along its banks, as you might do today by following this route.

Like a good book, the River Ver has a beginning, middle and end, and associated with its twists and turns many characters come and go; through these walks you will follow the story in eight chapters, from source to confluence. We aim to set the Ver in its local landscape and cultural context. For further information about the Ver and the people who lived near it, past and present, visit our website: www.riverver.co.uk

The River Ver links us to the past, present and future. It is...

liquid history

Redbourn Common or Heath is a substantial area of open grassland lying to the west of Roman Watling Street, and to the east of St Mary's Church and Church End. To the south it is bounded by the River Red, or the 'reedy-stream'. In medieval times it was owned or claimed by St Albans Abbey as Lords of the Manor of Redbourn, but villagers had common rights of pasture. After the Dissolution of Monasteries, ownership of the Common eventually passed to the Gorhambury Estate in 1629. In 1947 the Earl of Verulam handed ownership of this most treasured village asset to the Parish Council. At the formal ceremony

to mark the occasion it was rightly, and proudly stated that, "the village had always possessed one of the most lovely commons in the country" and that "cricket and the Common were inseparable."



1 The River Red

The River Red is the largest of the Ver's tributaries. It is not directly affected by groundwater abstraction so is able, generally, to retain a modest flow. Its true source is further west, beyond Church End.



3 M1

Britain's first motorway (opened 1959) has had its own impact on the River Ver and its valley. It crosses the valley at Friar's Wash (Junction 9); rainwater run-off contributes a significant amount of water at times to the river.

Fossils

The ancient remains of sea creatures can sometimes be found in the flinty soils of the Ver Valley. Sea-urchins are most common, especially around Redbourn and St Albans; try looking at Verlam End on this walk.



8 Waterend Lane

Waterend Lane is a pleasant place to paddle after a long walk on a hot summer's day. Sit on the little footbridge, take off shoes and socks and ... ahh ... Ver-y refreshing.

9 Redbourn High Street

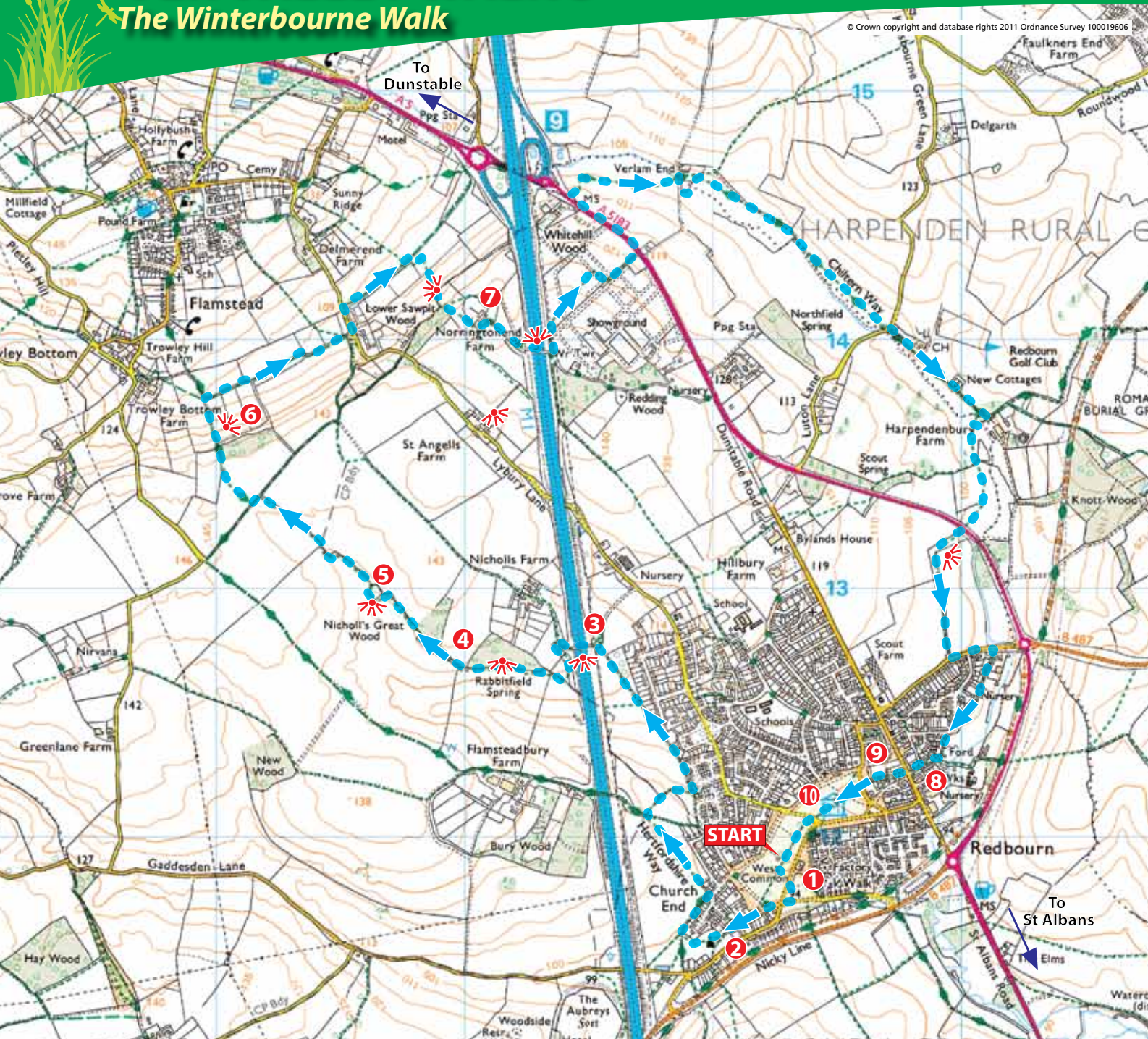
Redbourn High Street is part of Roman Watling Street, and saw considerable traffic during the coaching era. Redbourn market was held at its southern end, where it widens; hence a saying if anything was lop-sided it was "like Redbourn Market, all on one side."



VER VALLEY WALK 3

The Winterbourne Walk

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REDBOURN, NORTH

Starting at the Cricket Clubhouse either take the one mile easy circular path around Redbourn Common or for the longer circular walk, cross the Common over Hemel Hempstead Road and Chequer Lane to the footbridge and 'the Moor' ① to see the River Red.

Follow the Red west to see where the stream falls from its culvert. Cross the road to Church End and enter St Mary's churchyard ②. With the church on your right, turn right where the paths cross in the churchyard and right again into fields west of Redbourn. Cross the M1 near Nicholl's Farm – there are excellent views north and south from the bridge ③ – turn left on the far side beside the motorway, this path leads to the more tranquil Rabbitfield Spring and Nicholl's Great Wood ④.

For the next mile or so extensive views open up across the large arable fields to the west ⑤.

Admire the view ⑥ over the 'dry' valley to Flamstead, and down to Friar's Wash. The footpath and bridleway, right, to Delmerend Lane can be very muddy.

At Norringtonend Farm take the right-hand fork to skirt around the south west boundary of the farm and on to Redding Lane. Re-cross the motorway ⑦, turn left to follow the Herts Showground fence – note the dog-leg path. Cross Watling St. / Dunstable Road ⑧ and follow the pavement left towards the motorway.

Take the footpath right. Skirt the field to the left and then head right to Verlam End. Skirt round the outside of the garden by following the path right onto a farm track, which bears left, then over a footbridge over the river and up to a stile. Listen out for the peewit call of the Lapwing.

Continue from the stile following the course of the Ver heading SE, cross Luton Lane and follow the clear track through the Golf course – look out for Green Woodpeckers. Cross the River Ver via the footpath before Harpendenbury Farm, bear left between the river and fairway to pass through a kissing gate into Porridge Pot meadow.

Cross the Redbourn northern bypass ⑨ and take the path opposite to follow what becomes a 'green' lane to Harpenden Lane.

Turn left, then after about 50 yards turn right onto an enclosed path behind gardens. Emerging briefly to cut across the corner of Crown Street, continue along a short path to emerge at Waterend Lane and the river ⑩. (After a long, hot walk it is refreshing to paddle here – if there's water).

Turn right along Waterend Lane and at the end cross Redbourn High Street ⑨ to an alleyway opposite, back to the Common ⑩. Continue on the path across the Common to return to the Clubhouse.

KEY

Ver Valley Walk 3 uses rights of way to link to the River Ver Trail to enable you to explore the river valley in bite size sections.



Waymarking

Follow these waymarks on your way around the route.



Ver Valley View

Public Footpath

Public Bridleway



Take care when crossing main roads



Nature notes

