

Teas, buns, pints and pies:

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


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

Redbourn Mill: Bakery and light refreshments open on selected dates.
www.redbournmill.co.uk.

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 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 other walks in the series visit www.riverver.co.uk

The Ver Valley Society exists to protect and promote all aspects of the River Ver and its valley. We have over 200 members and are always pleased to welcome new ones. These walks were originally developed by the Ver Valley Society working with the Countryside Management Service in 2011. The walk leaflets were revised and updated and waymarking refreshed by members and friends of the VVS in 2021. We hope you enjoy them.

For lots more walk routes, photos, memories, information on membership and working parties visit the VVS website: www.riverver.co.uk

Front cover photo: West Ford at Redbournbury Mill.

Photos: John Pritchard, Chintan Desai (Girl on stepping stones), Geoff Webb Collection (Mr Quick).

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VER VALLEY WALK 4

The Rebournbury Walk

Explore the beautiful rolling countryside of this river valley



Start and finish: Redbourn Common

Full circular walk: 6 miles (9.7 km) –

About 3 hours

Circular Common walk: 5 miles (8 km) –

About 2.5 hours



www.riverver.co.uk

REDBOURN, SOUTH

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 as much as half 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.

The River Red is the most important of the River Ver's tributaries. Groundwater drains from a large area west of Redbourn into the Red. This extra water often keeps the Ver flowing downstream from its confluence with the Red, behind the Chequer pub, whilst upstream the Ver can be completely dry.

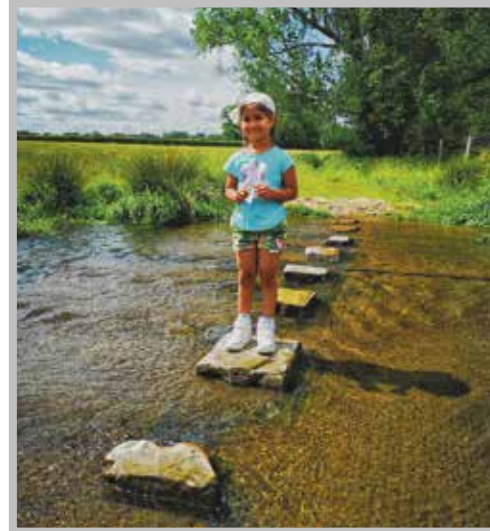
Although the Red is in a culvert until it re-emerges beside the road on the Common, its natural perennial head lies in the marshy ground, once known as Seven Springs Field, now occupied by the M1. Intermittently these springs revive and merge with waters flowing

down the line of Gaddesden Lane. Even today the truncated stream on Redbourn Common (The Moor) contains rich marginal vegetation such as reeds and bulrushes, so this is probably the derivation of Redbourn – ‘the reedy-stream’.



2 Citizen Science

The Red is just one of the places trained volunteers monitor water quality by testing for nitrates and phosphates. Kick sampling to survey the invertebrates living on the river bed also takes place. Generally speaking, the more diverse the sample the better the water quality.



7 Redbournbury Mill

Redbournbury Mill has been completely restored by the James family, following a devastating fire in 1987. Through hard work, determination and the help of numerous volunteers, the mill now operates as a working museum and craft bakery.



6 Stepping stones, Redbournbury watermeadows

The concrete sill-and-pipe structure was built in the mid 1990s to enable more river water to flow along the valley floor, the River Ver's more natural course.

10 Mr Quick

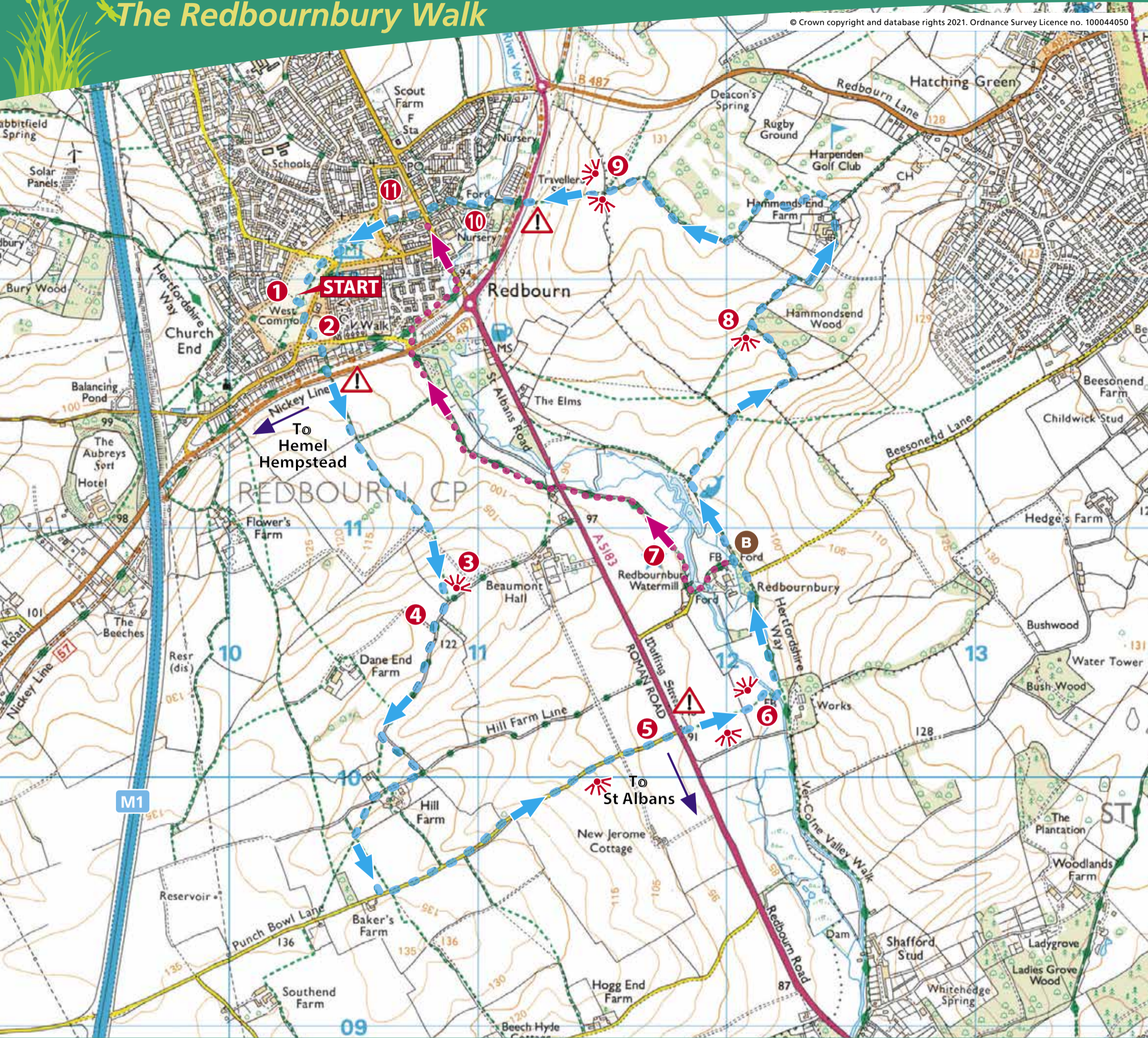
Mr Quick worked the watercress beds in Redbourn, from Harpenden Lane ford to the Osiers. He died in 1896.



VER VALLEY WALK 4

The Redbournbury Walk

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REDBOURN, SOUTH

From the Cricket Clubhouse on Redbourn Common ① cross Hemel Hempstead Road and Chequer Lane to follow the grassy path down the slope past the old school, to the footbridge over the River Red and The Moor ②.

Keep ahead, cross the Nickey Line (footpath and cycle track) and descend the steps to the southern bypass. ⚠️

Cross and continue south, through arable fields; there is a steep ascent across the third field, up to the far corner where the path meets Beaumont Hall Lane. Take in the fine views back towards Redbourn and the Ver Valley ③.

When the track forks at New Cottage, keep left into a quiet 'green' lane ④. At Hill Farm Lane, turn right, walk on past Hill Farm and Bohemia House then continue for about thirty metres beyond the end of the tarmac, to take a path half left up the slope and into a paddock. On leaving the paddock, turn left to reach Punch Bowl Lane. Turn left.

⚠️ Cross Watling Street (A5183) ⑤ – the ancient Roman road between London and Chester – the building was formerly the Punch Bowl Inn: take the footpath down the right hand side and then cross the arable field and the watermeadows to the stepping-stones and footbridge crossing the River Ver ⑥.

You may wish to take a short detour here to Redbournbury Mill (working museum and bakery) ⑦ or go this way to follow the shorter circular route, follow the River Ver Trail waymarks back to the Common. Otherwise continue on the east side of the river.

🦋 You may spot a vibrant blue Kingfisher as it flies from its perch. At the fishing club entrance (former watercress beds), turn right to Hammondsend Wood ⑧ and Farm.

Beyond the old farmhouse – 🦋 look out for Barn Owls – pass through a kissing-gate, left, to cross a small paddock to another kissing-gate; keep left along the fence line and, when you come to a tee, turn left and follow the path through a small wood. Emerging opposite a green, turn left and continue along the edge of the golf course. The path turns right at a tee, then left into another copse.

Emerging from this, follow the path ahead along the edge of an arable field, keeping the hedge on your left, and ⑨ descend into the valley. Cross the bypass ⚠️ from the Nickey Line climb the steps and take the path to meet the river at Waterend Lane ford ⑩.

Continue and cross Redbourn High Street ⑪ the alleyway opposite, and back to the Common and its avenue of lime trees.

KEY

Ver Valley Walk 4 uses rights of way to link to the River Ver Trail to enable you to explore the river valley in bite-sized 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



Position of a Ver Valley Bench

