

Teas, buns, pints and pies:

St Michael's and Verulamium Park: Six Bells, Rose and Crown (currently closed February 2021) and Ye Olde Fighting Cocks Public Houses. The Waffle House at Kingsbury Mill and Inn on the Park cafés.

How to get there:

By road: Verulamium Museum is on the southwestern edge of St Albans, in St Michael's Street, close to its junction with the A4147. There is limited public car parking outside the Museum. Further car parking can be found on the other side of Verulamium Park at Westminster Lodge Leisure Centre, off Holywell Hill.

By public transport: St Albans is served by transport links from London as well as surrounding villages and towns. Regular trains run from London to the city station, as well as to the Abbey Station on the Abbey Flyer from Watford Junction. For details of public transport 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: Shafford Mill.

Photos: Fernando Casanova Ricaldoni (Shafford Mill), Melanie Woods (Cathedral), Alison Debenham (St Michael's), Deth Dolly (Childwickbury) and John Pritchard
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VER VALLEY WALK 5

The Three Burys Walk

Explore the beautiful rolling countryside of this river valley



Start and finish:
Verulamium Museum, St Albans

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



www.riverver.co.uk

**CHILDWICKBURY, REDBOURNBURY
AND GORHAMBURY**

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.

There were once at least eleven mills on the River Ver, but only nine remain (Redbourn ‘Little’ Mill and Cotton Mill disappeared long ago). One retains its original purpose, Redbournbury, now a working museum and bakery; Shafford Mill, Abbey Mill and Sopwell Mill have been converted into dwellings, Pre Mill is disused, Kingsbury Mill and Moor Mill are restaurants, New Barnes Mill and Park Mill are now offices. But all retain their importance in the landscape and in the river corridor in particular. From Redbourn downstream, what we see today as our ‘natural’ river is, in

fact, usually a man-made millstream constructed since Roman times to divert water along the side of the valley to fall onto or over a water-wheel.



2 Hertfordshire Puddingstone

This naturally occurring conglomerate and matrix rock is so named because of its resemblance to a plum-pudding mixture. It has been suggested that large blocks, like the one at Kingsbury Mill, were placed at important river crossings.



1 St Michael's Street and bridge

Arguably, St Michael's remains the most quaint part of old St Albans, it certainly retains a distinct character from the rest of the town on the hill. The bridge is the oldest surviving in Hertfordshire (1765).

5 Childwickbury Estate drive

The attractive estate hamlet of Childwick ('Chillick') Green and house lie along the metalled estate drive, whilst Batchwood and its stunning display of springtime bluebells is nearby. The word bury means the 'estate of' or 'manor'.



11 St Albans Abbey from Gorhambury Drive

Sited on elevated ground overlooking the Ver Valley the Cathedral remains a striking landmark in the local landscape, especially when viewed from Watling Street to the north and Shenley to the south.

VER VALLEY WALK 5

The Three Burys Walk



CHILDWICKBURY, REDBOURNBURY AND GORHAMBURY

From the start walk down St Michael's Street to the river with its ancient ford, and bridge ❶ and Kingsbury Mill beyond. Note the large piece of Puddingstone on the Mill verge.

Bear left into Branch Road, at the end use the nearby zebra crossing and head left, enter the recreation ground and cross diagonally. ⚠️ Cross the main road to the drive opposite.

There are fine views back to the Abbey, and the Ver Valley to the west ❷. Turn left onto a bridleway skirting the perimeter of the golf course. Here are views, west, towards Gorhambury House and Buncefield ❸.

🌿 During springtime detour into Batchwood for a stunning display of bluebells ❹.

Enter an enclosed path through Ladies Grove Wood. This emerges onto the estate drive that leads to Childwickbury House and Childwick Green ❺. Ravens frequent this area, listen out for their distinctive deep 'cronk' call.

Turn left then cross the Harpenden Road (A1081) ⚠️. Follow a footpath to Ayres End Lane. If not too wet, take the path behind the cottages and on reaching the road, East Common, turn left. Otherwise join East Common from Ayres End Lane. Turn left, pass Bamville Cricket and the former Three Horseshoes Pub on The Common ❻.

Follow Cross Lane across Harpenden Common and ⚠️ re-cross the Harpenden Road to Beesonend Lane. Follow this towards Redbournbury Mill. (Detour over the two footbridges to visit Redbournbury Mill ❼, working museum and bakery). See www.redbournburymill.co.uk for opening times.

Otherwise turn south, along the River Ver Trail, towards St Albans. For the next 2kms the path passes beside Redbournbury and Punch Bowl watermeadows ❸.

Passing the Works (former chalk-pit) the footpath leads to the Estate drive on the approach to Shafford Farm and Mill ❾. 🌿 Watch out for Grey Wagtails that build their nests under bridges. ⚠️ Cross the Redbourn Road to the footpath opposite to enter the Gorhambury Estate. N.B. the footpath through the Estate is 'permissive' only. The path is normally open 8am-6pm but closed on certain days including Wednesdays and Saturdays, September to end January. Should the estate footpath be closed, use the roadside path back to St Albans then follow Bluehouse Hill (A4147) to rejoin the route. See www.gorhamburyestate.co.uk for up-to-date information on any closures.

Follow the millstream until the site of Pre Mill is reached ❿, then take the estate road over the river and, at a T-junction, turn left.

🌿 Look out for birds of prey, such as Red Kite and Buzzard – also listen out for noisy Ring-necked Parakeets who have begun nesting in nearby tree holes. There are fine views of the Abbey ⓫ along the drive, before the Roman Theatre ⓬.

Cross Bluehouse Hill via the crossing and walk through St Michael's churchyard to return to Verulamium Museum ⓭.

KEY

- Ver Valley Walk 5 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**
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