

Teas, buns, pints and pies:

Moor Mill: Family restaurant and bar.

Park Street: The Falcon and The Overdraught Public Houses plus takeaways.

Bricket Wood: The Gate Public House (Station Road).

How to get there:

By road: Moor Mill Restaurant and bar is in Smug Oak Lane, Bricket Wood, AL2 3PN. It is close to the junction of Smug Oak Lane and the A5183 in Colney Street, just north of Radlett. At the time of publishing, you are welcome to park here if stopping for a beverage. There is a countryside car park nearby in Drop Lane (Riverside Way) or further around the route at Hyde Lane, the A5183 end.

By public transport: Bricket Wood is served by transport links from Watford/St Albans. The Abbey Flyer train runs between Watford Junction and St Albans Abbey stations, Bricket Wood Station is a mile walk from the start. 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: Drop Lane Ford, Bricket Wood.

Photos: Melanie Woods, Mark Newton (Drop Lane Ford), Isabel Crozier (Fishing), Park Street and Frogmore Society (Gravel Works) and Kim Aspery (Moor Mill)

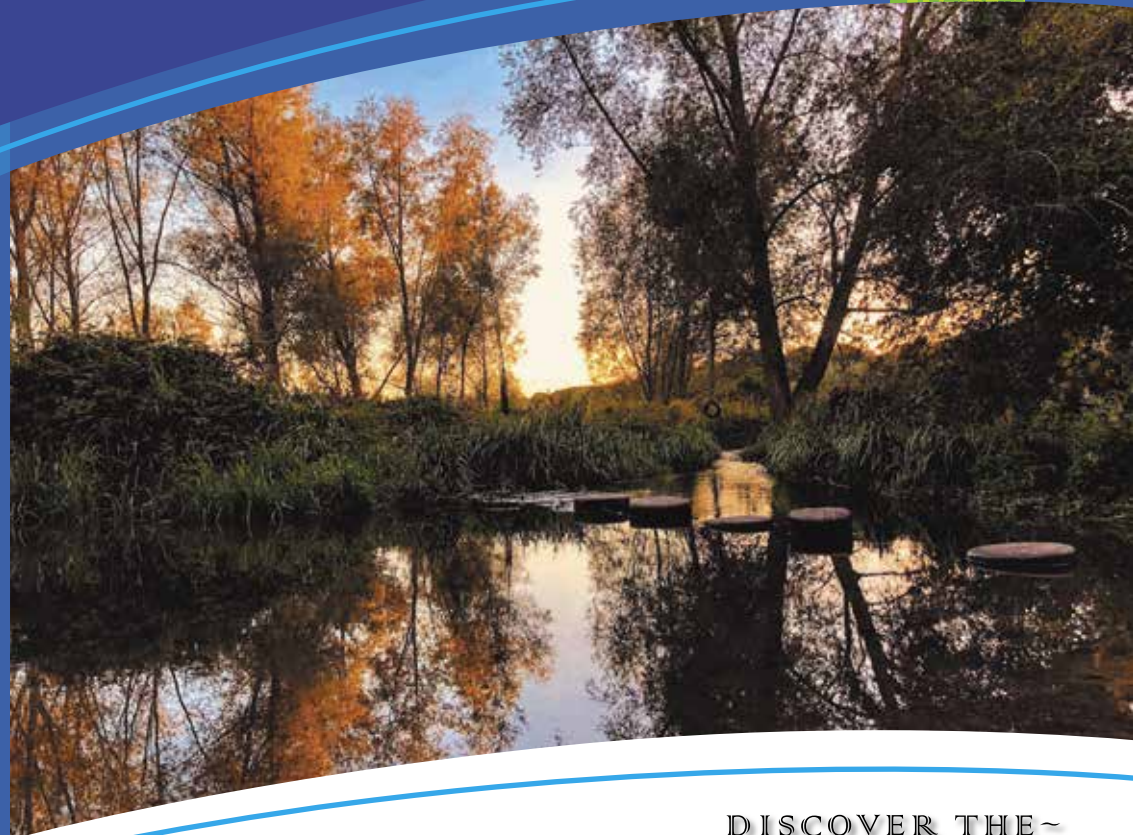
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VER VALLEY WALK 8

The Confluence Walk

Explore the beautiful rolling countryside of this river valley



**Start and finish: Moor Mill,
Smug Oak Lane, Bricket Wood**

**Full walk: 3.7 miles (6 km) –
About 2 hours**



www.riverver.co.uk

PARK STREET AND BRICKET WOOD

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 sand and gravel bands in Hertfordshire lie in the 'Vale of St Albans'. This was the course of the proto-Thames which flowed approximately 2 million years ago out into the North Sea further north than the Thames does today. The bands of aggregate which overlay the chalk aquifer were deposited in vast quantities by the action of this river washed down from the Midlands. The last Ice Age diverted the Thames and Ver to their present courses. From Roman times this aggregate began to be utilised for building purposes: Sand and gravel for mortar, cement, ballast etc and flint for walls. In the 19th century, due to the Industrial Revolution and population increase, demand increased

greatly. By the 20th century modern machinery meant that mineral resources could be extracted on an industrial scale, this often resulted in the route and nature of the river being permanently altered, such as at Drop Lane.



1 Moor Mill

Moor Mill is mentioned in the Domesday Book. Before the Dissolution, Moremyll was a St Albans Abbey possession. From about 1400 the Miller was asked to pay rent in the form of eels, caught in the waters around the mill, for the Abbey's refectory.



3 Park Street Bridge and ford

A ford through the River Ver has existed here for at least 2,000 years. Nowadays the modern Watling Street/A5183 crosses on a sturdy bridge. The old Roman ford or 'watersplash' can still be seen on its downstream side.

5 Hanstead House

The Yule family purchased the house and estate in 1902. It was they who insisted that the nearby Colne Valley groundwater pumping stations were built in a rustic style.

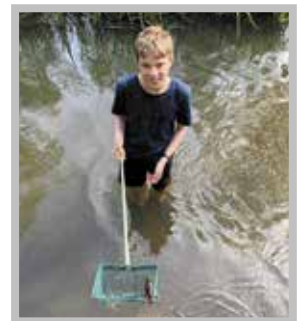


7 Confluence of the Ver with the Colne

Here our chalk stream goes out without a bang by joining the River Colne. Having already passed through Colney Heath, London Colney and Colney Street, the Colne continues west through Watford and greater London to finally meet with the Thames.

9 Riverside Way

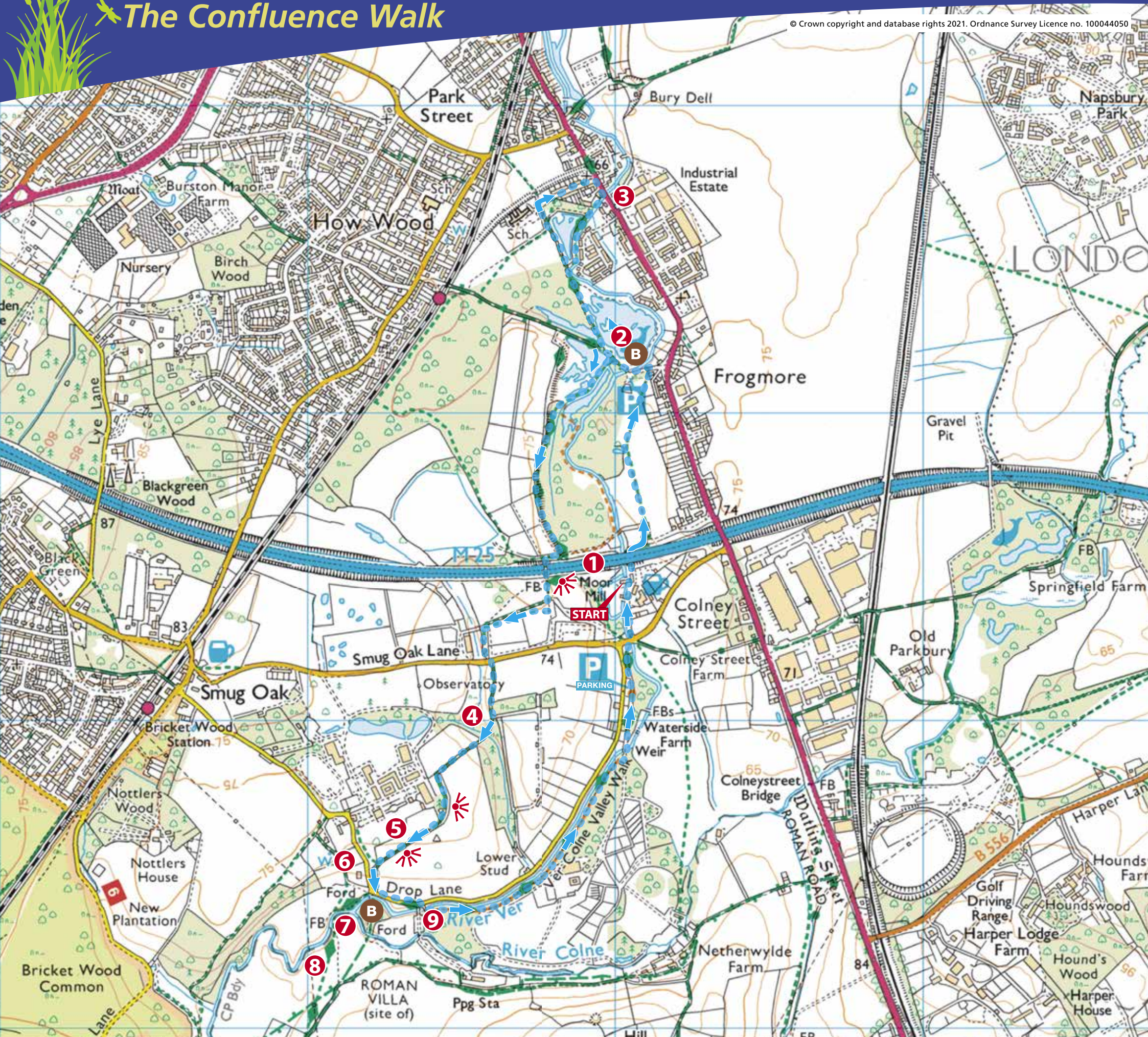
20th century gravel extraction and subsequent 'restoration' has greatly altered the Ver's last mile. The river beside Drop Lane has been canalised and is a great place to see what lives in the water, including the non-native Signal Crayfish.



VER VALLEY WALK 8

The Confluence Walk

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PARK STREET AND BRICKET WOOD

At Moor Mill ❶ follow the footpath behind to pass under the M25. At the corner of the yard by Moor Mill Lane turn left, to follow the clear path through the former sand and gravel washing plant area to Hyde Lane, turn left.

Cross the footbridge over the River Ver into Frogmore and Park Street pits ❷. Walk ahead to Branch Road, then right to Watling Street. At the river ❸ turn right, just before the bridge, onto the riverside path. Retrace the path through the pits. 🦋 Look out for dragonflies and Great Crested Grebe. About 50 yards before the footbridge turn right onto a path up to the infill ridge and the site of Park Street Roman Villa. Turn left. Note how much higher the 'restored' land is in comparison with the river below.

Cross the M25 via the footbridge; on the south side walk ahead through a kissing gate, then right and left through another area of infill to Smug Oak Lane. Cross the road to the bridleway opposite, and follow the gentle slope down to the Hanstead Ditch ❹.


Follow the path around the perimeter of the housing estate, Hanstead Park, on the site of a former training college, and then past Hanstead House ❺.

Follow the bridleway to Drop Lane, then turn right to see Drop Lane Pumping Station ❻. Note the gentle hum of the electric pumps. At the ford stop for moment on the Ver Valley Bench depicting a large Pike and a Grass Snake, both are found in the area. The stepping stones here are popular with children. For a short detour take the footpath alongside the field, following the course of the Ver, to see where it meets the River Colne at their confluence ❼.

The attractive countryside, down the Colne Valley between the confluence with the River Ver and Wall Hall/Otterspool is well worth exploring ❸. For an optional extra loop to this walk, continue beyond the confluence and cross the footbridge over the River Colne and return to Smug Oak Lane and Moor Mill on the Rights of Way via Netherwylde Farm.

To return to Moor Mill from the ford walk a short distance along Drop Lane, then turn right across a footbridge to follow Riverside Way ❹, a popular permissive bridleway running alongside the river. 🦋 On the drive back to Moor Mill watch out for Brown Trout and other wildlife feeding on titbits from customers.

KEY

 Ver Valley Walk 8 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



Nature notes



Position of a Ver Valley Bench

