

Chalk Streams

The river Ver is a chalk stream that rises near Kensworth, in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Chalk streams are a globally rare habitat. With their clear waters and stable conditions, they are able to support many plants and animals, including rare species like the water vole.

Chalk streams are fed from 'groundwater'. This is stored in the 'aquifer' – layers of chalk which soak up water like a sponge. At various points the water emerges in the form of springs which feed the streams.

We take our water from the aquifer too; we can help protect the river Ver and its wildlife by using water wisely in our homes.

Flood Meadows

Farmed traditionally, the mosaic of wet grassland, marsh and stream has long been an area important for wildlife, including many species that are rare or declining nationally. The

meadows support a diverse community of birds. Finches, thrushes, waders and wildfowl spend the winter here and other birds breed on the meadows in summer.



Lapwing

The production of watercress was an important industry in Redbourn from the late 19th Century to the mid 20th Century. The river Ver had the qualities that watercress needs to thrive: clean water with cool and constant temperatures. The industry declined in Redbourn, however, the disused watercress beds still provide a haven for freshwater wildlife.



Redbourn Common

Redbourn Common, owned and managed by Redbourn Parish Council, is an area in excess of 30 acres of species rich semi-natural grassland. This sort of habitat is rare in Hertfordshire and has to be managed in a particular way to ensure the survival of its diverse range of animals and plants. It would have been grazed by the Commoners' animals. Although these grazing rights still exist, they are no longer exercised and the Common is mown.



Harebell

Redbournbury Mill

Redbournbury Watermill was almost certainly built on the site of a Domesday mill, flour has been ground here for over 900 years. The Mill has been rebuilt on at least three occasions following fires, the most recent of which was in 1987.

The Mill is now established as a museum and it is the only working mill on this river producing stoneground flour. The Mill is regularly opened to the public.

Silk Mill House - Redbourn Museum

Silk Mill House, on the Common next-door to the Cricketer's pub, houses Redbourn's Museum. Its exhibits range from Roman times to the present, including stones and carvings found locally and originate from a medieval priory. It is open to the public at weekends.

The house was built in 1857 for the manager of Woollam's Silk Mill which was on this site until 1938. Here raw, imported silk was 'thrown' into thread suitable for weaving. Later the site was used by the Brooke Bond Tea Company for packaging tea and the house was given to the village when they left in 1999.

The Ver Valley Society is a group set up to ensure the conservation of water and wildlife in the Ver Valley. Visit their web site for more information on www.vervalley.clara.net or tel. **01582 712001**.

An initiative of the Chilterns Conservation Board, **the Chilterns Chalk Streams Project** is a partnership which aims to conserve and enhance all major chalk streams in the Chilterns and to encourage enjoyment and understanding of them. The project provides advice to landowners and managers on riverside management, carries out practical projects to enhance the streams for wildlife, undertakes surveys of rare species and provides educational materials for schools. For more information, contact the Chilterns AONB Office on **01844 271300**.

The Countryside Management Service promotes walking in the countryside and has a number of self guided walks in the St Albans area.

Leaflets are available in large print and other languages.

If you would like further information, contact the CMS on **01727 848168**.

Please be considerate in the countryside – keep to footpaths, especially through crops, and leave farm gates as you find them.

Getting there:

Redbourn is situated 3 miles north-west of St Albans on the A5183 and 1 mile north-east of Hemel Hempstead on the B487.

Public Transport: Buses regularly serve Redbourn and stop outside Redbournbury Lane leading to the Mill.



Contact **0870 608 2 608** for bus times and routes.

Cycling: The CMS recreational cycle ride number 7 takes cyclists on quiet roads from Hemel Hempstead and further west, and number 12 takes in Redbourn, Redbournbury and Harpenden. Pick up a leaflet in Redbournbury Mill or call the CMS on **01727 848168**. Cycle parking facilities are available at the Mill or on the Common.

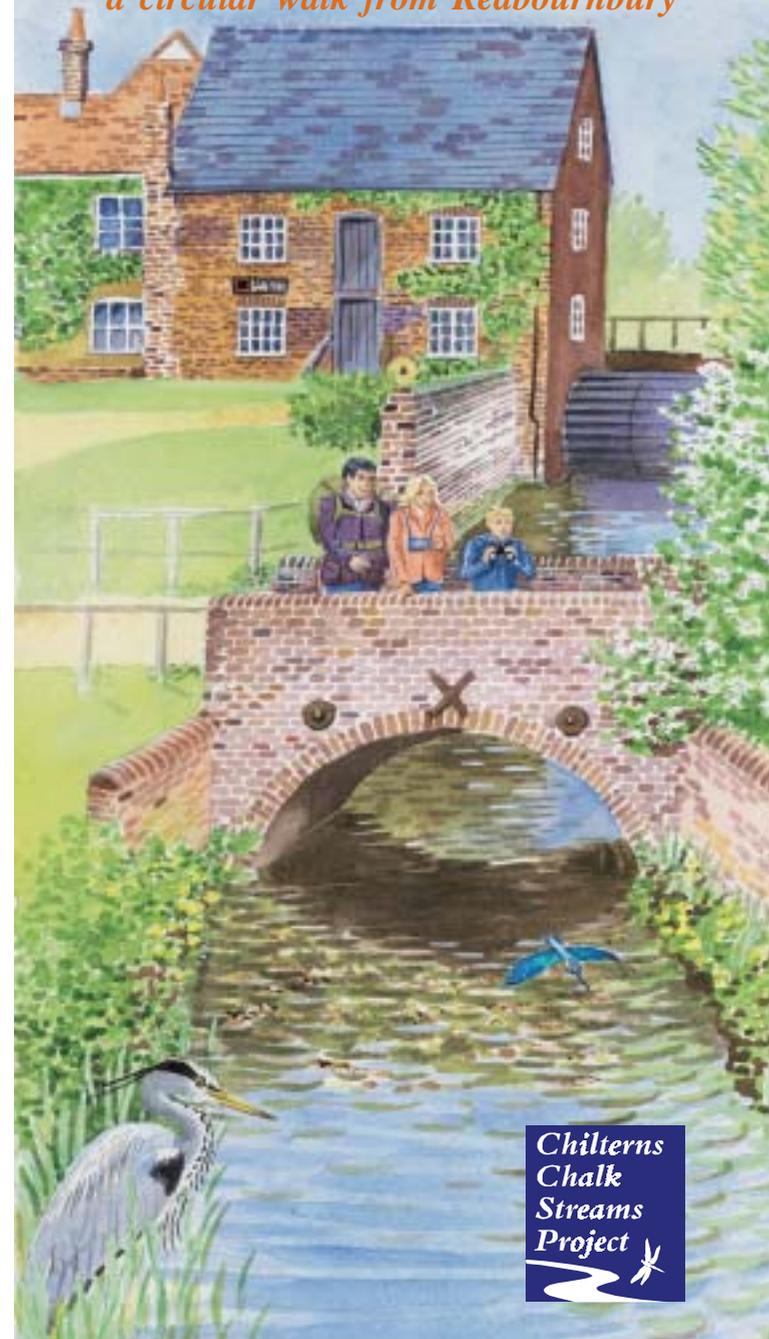


Parking: There are two public car parks at Redbourn Common and limited parking for cars at Redbournbury Mill. The Mill has additional parking facilities which can be made available for groups if booked in advance. Call **01582 792874**.



Views of the Ver Valley

a circular walk from Redbournbury



Views of the Ver Valley

Information about the route:

Long route 4 miles, Short route 3 miles

Start:

Either Redbourn Common or Redbournbury Mill

Short route:

3 miles (5km) Time: approximately 2 hours

Long route:

4 miles (6½ km) Time: approximately 2½ hours
Allow extra time to stop for refreshments

Refreshments:

There are a number of opportunities to stop on the route for refreshments, including public houses in Church End, on the Common and in Redbourn High Street

Rating:

Moderate, some hills, stiles and steps

Seasonal:

Paths can be muddy under foot, wellingtons recommended in winter, sturdy boots or shoes in summer

Crossing Main Roads:

There are three places on the route where care must be taken in crossing main roads

Path waymarking

The plain arrows show what sort of path you are using:



footpaths are for pedestrians only



bridleways may be used by horseriders, cyclists and pedestrians



The Ver Valley Walk is a linear route between Redbourn and Bricket Wood. A leaflet is available from the CMS



Pied and yellow wagtail



Southern hawker dragonfly

Long Route Notes on the walk in a clockwise direction starting from Redbourn Common

- 1 Follow the avenue of lime trees across the common towards the village centre
- 2 Take the path into the woodland and then follow it around the edge of the golf course
- 3 Turn right and follow the track around the edge of the first ford. Notice the lumps of puddingstone here, a conglomerate of stone unique to this part of the country. The track goes over another ford and beside the Mill
- 4 At Do-Little Mill House, pass through two kissing gates and follow the narrow path alongside a horse paddock

Short Route Notes on the walk heading south from Redbourn Common

- 1 From the car park, head down, past the play area, on to the Nicky Line. Turn left towards point 5
- 5 After crossing the High Street on the bridge, leave the Nicky Line, via the Old Station Site - now a picnic area. Taking the steps down, turn left onto the High Street and cross the main road at the roundabout
- 6 Leave the road by climbing the steps and going through a kissing gate into a field
- 7 Join the long route here and head down towards Redbournbury Mill picking up notes on the long route at point 3