

Teas, buns, pints and pies:

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

Redbourn High Street: The George Public House, The Enchanted Tea Rooms
plus general stores, coffee shops 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 second roundabout. There is public car parking at The Common, AL3 7NG.

By public transport: Redbourn is served regularly by buses from St Albans, Harpenden, Hemel Hempstead 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 300 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: Cricket on the Common, Redbourn. Jeanette Lendon.
Photos: Melanie Woods, Kelly Field (St Mary's) and Gillian Thornton (Porridge Pot Bench).
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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 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.

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.



Ver Valley Bench

The bench, one of eight along the Ver, is situated just south of Porridge Pot meadow, said to have been named after the shape of the chimneys on the Flint Cottages that once stood there, now depicted on the bench.



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



REDBOURN, NORTH

Starting at the Cricket Clubhouse either take the one mile easy access circular path around Redbourn Common or for the longer circular walk start with the Cricket Clubhouse behind you. Then, cross Hemel Hempstead Road to follow the grassy path down the slope past the old school, and cross Chequer Lane to the flat bridge over the River Red by the side of The Moor..

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 – 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 path to Delmerend Lane can be very muddy.

Turn right and follow the path all the way up the hill to Norrington End Farm. Keep to the right of the farmhouse then turn left around the front of the farmhouse to join Reddings Lane.

Re-cross the motorway **7**, turn left to follow the Herts Showground fence. Cross Watling St. / Dunstable Road  and follow the pavement left towards the motorway.

Take the footpath right. Cross the arable field to Verulam End. Turn right onto a farm track then left to the south of the garden to cross the Ver on a footbridge.  Listen out for the peewit call of the Lapwing. Follow the garden fence up the slope: about half way between the footbridge and the gap in the hedge at the top of the hill, there are waymarks on the fence. Turn right here and head SE, parallel with the River Ver.

Cross Luton Lane and follow the bridleway ahead, along the clear track through the golf course  look out for Green Woodpeckers. Cross the River Ver via the footbridge 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  and take the path opposite. Stop to take in the view from the Ver Valley bench then follow what becomes a green lane to Harpenden Lane.

Turn left, then after about 100 metres 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 **8**. (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-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

