

# Circular walk from Redbourn Common

With **Andrew Clark**

A lovely route to the south of Redbourn with good views and pleasant walking through the Ver Valley. This area is steeped in history from ancient Britons to the present day.

**START:** Redbourn Common AL3 7DB.  
Grid ref: TL 103119

**DISTANCE:** 4.5 miles/7km

**TERRAIN:** An easy stile-free walk on good paths with a number of gates. There's one climb towards the golf course. Total ascent 230ft/70m

**MAPS:** OS Explorer 182, Chiltern Society 27

**REFRESHMENTS:** None on the walk.

Plenty of cafés and pubs in Redbourn

**PARKING:** Car park beside the cricket pavilion, Redbourn Common AL3 7DB

**LOCAL TRANSPORT:** There are bus stops along Redbourn High Street. Please check [www.traveline.info](http://www.traveline.info) for services.



Map: Glyn Kuhn  
Photos: Colin Drake

## Route

**From the rear of the car park go towards a surfaced crossing path just before the cricket pavilion.**

1. Turn right along the path following the line of trees. Cross Lybury Lane and, at the fork, go straight ahead. Cross the next road and continue between the brick walls to the High Street.
2. Bear right over the road into Waterend Lane, walk along to the sometimes-dry ford and cross via the bridge on the right. Stay on the main track past a barrier, climb up the hill and drop down a set of steps to a major track, The Nickey Line. Turn left and immediately right past a gate to a busy road, the A5183. Cross the road, climb the steps and go through a gate into a field. Continue uphill to the right of overhead cables and directly ahead through a gap in the hedgerow. Keep straight on along the right-hand field edge into the wood.
3. Follow the path to the edge of a golf course. Stay in the same direction to the right of the 8th tee, follow the path round to the left and along the boundary of the course past the 9th tee and turn right on a path just before the surfaced track. Follow the path through the wood, walk past the 12th tee, turn immediately right to an information board and go through a gate into a field.
4. Cross the field to the right of the line of trees, go through a gap on the left and past a kissing gate onto a lane. Turn right along the lane passing the entrance to Hammonds End House and keep straight ahead between the farm buildings. Stay on the track past the large barn on the left and go round to the right to a field entrance.

5. Follow the track round to the left, walk along to the next path junction and turn left again past a bench. Walk down the track towards the farm gates at the bottom, follow the field edge round to the right and continue for 300m to a crossing path. Keep straight ahead for a further 300m to a T-junction by the entrance to Redbourn Fishery.
6. Turn left along the wide track to a ford, take the footbridge on the right, walk past the farm to a lane and turn right to Redbournbury Mill.
7. Go through the gate to the left of the entrance gates and take the path on the left of the mill house. Follow the path through two gates, and along the field edge to pass through a further gate onto a very busy road, the A5183 (Watling Street). Cross to the concrete driveway opposite, and keep straight ahead past the entrance to Doolittle Mill House for a few metres to a kissing gate on the left of the wooden outbuilding.
8. Go through the gate, follow the path into a field and turn right along its edge to the next busy road, the B487. Cross it, take the path to the right of Chequers Lane, go over a crossing path and continue ahead to meet The Nickey Line once again.
9. Turn left along it, drop down a set of steps, cross the road and continue for a further 250m, then take the path on the right signposted to Redbourn Common. Cross over the River Red and Chequers Lane and walk up the hill to the left of the playground to return to the car park.

*Continued overleaf*



Waterend Lane



Hammonds End House



Redbournbury Watermill



Cricket pavilion

## Points of Interest

**Redbourn** has been continuously settled since at least Saxon times and is recorded in the Domesday Book. Redbourn Common used to be owned by the Abbey of St Albans. It was eventually the property of the Earls of Verulam who passed it over to the parish council. The route passes the Cricketers pub on the right and next door is Redbourn Museum.

**The River Ver** is a chalk stream that rises near Kensworth and flows south via Redbourn and St Albans, before joining the River Colne near Bricket Wood. It's fed by groundwater from the aquifer. Like many rivers in the country, the Ver is threatened by low rainfall, extraction for public water supply and pollution from sewage, chemicals and road run-off. Many organisations across the country are involved in protecting these precious habitats, including the Ver Valley Society, the Chilterns Chalk Streams Project and the Chiltern Society.

**The Chiltern Way** is a 134 mile circuit of the AONB, highlighting the best features of this historic landscape: old picturesque villages, downland with extensive views and the characteristic Chiltern patchwork of woods and fields. The route has recently been updated and now passes through Redbourn. It follows this walk from waypoint 1 to The Nickey Line.

**A. Hammonds End Farm** is small family-run organic farm. They grow wheat, oats, spelt and rye. Much of their produce goes to traditional artisan mills across the country, including Redbournbury Watermill & Bakery.

**B. Redbournbury Watermill & Bakery** 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. It's now established as a museum and is the only working mill on this river producing stone-ground flour. The mill produces organic flour principally from locally grown organic grains (from Hammonds End Farm), so if you buy bread it will have been grown, milled and baked all within two miles! The bakery is open on Saturdays from 9am-1pm and the museum from 2.30-4.30pm on Sundays – see [www.redbournburymill.co.uk](http://www.redbournburymill.co.uk). There's also an Information Board outside.

**C. Watercress** was one of the oldest green vegetables known to man and a major industry in the Chilterns. The River Ver, with its clean mineral-rich spring water, was ideal for producing this wonderful superfood. Locally, there were watercress beds behind Redbournbury Mill.

**D. Watling Street** is a trackway which was probably made by ancient Britons. The Romans then used it as a major route from Dover to Wroxeter.

**Do-Little Mill:** The walk passes the Grade II listed Doolittle Mill House. The mill, however, used to be on the opposite side of the road. Although there were many mills along The Ver, the only ones listed in the Domesday Book were this one and Redbournbury.

**E. The Nickey Line**, a former railway branch line, is now a footpath and cycleway forming part of the National Cycle Network.

### Further information

Ver Valley Society – [www.riverver.co.uk](http://www.riverver.co.uk)

Chilterns Chalk Stream Project – [www.chilternsaonb.org](http://www.chilternsaonb.org)

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