

Fulham Society 50th Anniversary Walk

Section 2: Imperial Wharf to West Brompton (1.7 miles)

This section, shown as a **pink line**, starts at Imperial Wharf Station and continues to West Brompton Station. [Click here](#) for the TfL journey planner. There is a more detailed map on the next page. This is a diverse walk, going through some high quality new residential developments, then past Chelsea Football Club, before detouring into Chelsea to walk through the fascinating and beautiful West Brompton Cemetery.



18. Exit the station, turn right into a pedestrianised area with an avenue of clipped trees and the station on your right. Continue ahead walking alongside a narrow water channel, over a pedestrian bridge towards a tall fence behind which is a huge construction site. Turn left with the hoarding on your right. This development is taking place on the site of the Imperial Gasworks. The Imperial Gas Light & Coke Company bought the Sandford Manor Estate in 1824 and began producing gas soon afterwards. Coal was brought here by barge up the river and along the creek. It became London's leading gas company acquiring more land and making it increasingly difficult for the nearby market gardeners to continue. One of the byproducts was ballooning gas and a pipe was laid to the Hurlingham Club in 1908 to allow an international contest involving 31 balloonists. The BFI have film footage of a balloon race here in 1914 (player.bfi.org.uk). The advent of North Sea Gas in the 1970s led to closure of the gas works. Imperial Wharf on the river was the first area to be developed and another section is being developed as Chelsea Creek. The main site is now being developed as Kings Reach. Some of the old buildings have been listed and are being preserved, including Gasholder no 2, built in 1830 and believed to be the oldest surviving gas holder in the world. Turn left and then immediately right into Thurston Street which leads into Imperial Road where you turn right. Walk along the main road past the Kings Reach building site on your right and take the next right into Emden Street which leads left into Imperial Square.
19. Imperial Square was built in 1868 to house gas workers, possibly Germans brought in as strike breakers. It became known as German Square and certainly many Germans lived in the area. Walk through the passageway into Harwood Terrace and turn right. Go ahead over the roundabout, past the Rose pub on the right and a building called "The Old Gasworks" on the left. Continue ahead, past a motorbike shop into Michael Road.
20. At the end of the road turn right into Cambria Street which then bends left. At the end of this cul de sac, turn left along a pathway with a grassy area on the right and beyond that is the railway line. On the left, behind a high wall you can glimpse Grade II* Sandford Manor.
21. Sanford Manor is a possible home of Nell Gwynne, mistress to King Charles II. Legend has it that the "merry monarch", once rode his horse up the staircase here when visiting his lover. However, the evidence that Gwynne lived here is flimsy. The Lost Hours bar on the corner of King's Road was previously called the Nell Gwynne. There is stronger evidence for a later occupant of Sandford Manor being Joseph Addison, essayist and joint founder of The Spectator. The house was later used for various industrial uses and then as accommodation for senior gas works officials. It is this manor, once occupying a large area, that gave the name "Sands End" to this riverside section of Fulham. The river flowed along the present

railway line (and is still culverted beneath). Emerge onto the Kings Road and cross over. Go down Wandon Road and along the footpath at the end to the Fulham Road.

22. Chelsea FC's football ground is opposite on the Fulham Road. Despite its name, it is in Fulham. Opening in 1877 as an athletics ground, the Stamford Bridge site became the home of Chelsea FC in 1905 when a new club was formed to pay at the site (Fulham FC having turned down an offer to move here). Turn right onto the Fulham Road, crossing the railway line into Chelsea. Cross the road and continue along the Fulham Road until you reach the gates of Brompton Cemetery on the left. Enter the cemetery.

23. Brompton Cemetery is a Grade I listed 39 acre cemetery that opened in 1840 and is one of London's "magnificent seven". Designed by Benjamin Baud as a vast open air cathedral, its main entrance on Brompton Road represents the cathedral door, the central avenue with its stately limes is the aisle through nave and chancel, a great circle of catacombs

with elegant brick walkways above stands for the cathedral dome and the chapel stands in place of the altar. Catacombs were also built along the western side of the site, with a promenade on top overlooking what was then the waterway marking the boundary with rural Fulham beyond. Very soon the waterway became the present railway, the fields of Fulham were developed and structural defects were found in the catacombs. The privately funded cemetery project ran heavily over budget and was eventually bought by the State. It is now managed by the Royal Parks Agency. It is believed that Beatrix Potter, who lived nearby, used names from gravestones for her characters (including Peter Rabbett, Jeremy Fisher, Mr McGregor, Mr Nutkins). There are many grand and interesting memorials, chiefly on the eastern side (see map at royalparks.ork.uk), including: Emmeline Pankhurst, suffragette, "Gentleman" John Jackson, champion heavyweight boxer in 1795 and pioneer of English boxing clubs; Dr John Snow, the man who discovered the cause of cholera and was a pioneer of anaesthetics; Sir Henry Cole, instigator of the Great Exhibition of 1851 and pioneer of all the South Kensington arts institutions including the V&A, the Royal College of Music, Imperial College; and Frederick Leyland, businessman and generous patron of the arts, with a monument designed by Edward Burne-Jones. Exit by the north entrance by a cafe and turn left to West Brompton station.

