

# Fulham Society 50th Anniversary Walk

## Section 1: Putney Bridge to Imperial Wharf (2.5 miles)

This section, shown as a **blue line**, starts at Putney Bridge Underground station and ends at Imperial Wharf Station. [Click here](#) for the TfL journey planner. There is a more detailed map on the next page. This is a quiet part of the walk, going through several parks and quiet residential streets before a vibrant riverside section with views across to Wandsworth. The walk reaches Chelsea Creek, the border with Chelsea, and ends at Imperial Wharf Station.



1. Putney Bridge Station opened in 1880 as the terminus of the line, until the rail bridge was built over the Thames to link with East Putney and on to Wimbledon. At the end of the southbound platform near the river is a surviving WWII pillbox built to defend the railway bridge. Exit the station, turn left and left again under the railway to start the walk along Ranelagh Gardens.
2. Ranelagh Gardens runs through the former home of the 6th Viscount of Ranelagh who had acquired houses and 55 acres here through marriage in 1804. He was so incensed by a boating party who picnicked on his land by the river that he pushed the boats into the water, broke the oars and forced the party to leave by foot. They sued for assault whereupon the Viscount horsewhipped their lawyer in his chambers. Ranelagh died soon afterwards. Later the Ranelagh polo Club started here before moving to Barn Elms where it remained until 1939. Ranelagh Gardens in Chelsea, the site of the Chelsea Flower Show, was home to Ranelagh's ancestor, the First Viscount, treasurer of Chelsea Hospital. Afterwards it was developed into the exclusive Ranelagh pleasure gardens, which led to gardens of the same name springing up in New York, Paris (which remains), Dublin and Liverpool. The famous Chelsea Ranelagh pleasure gardens closed in 1803 just before the Viscount acquired his new Fulham property.
3. The Hurlingham Club, at the end of the road, is a private members club with a Georgian clubhouse set in 42 acres of land. Founded in 1869 as a pigeon shooting club, it developed primarily as a polo club, publishing the rules for the sport in 1873 and was the world polo headquarters until the Second World War. The Croquet Association had its headquarters here from 1959 to 2002 and the club is now well known for tennis, with 40 courts. Turn left and walk up Napier Avenue to the end, then turn right. Into Hurlingham Road.
4. Pass Foskett Rd on the left. The land between here and the New Kings Road was occupied by Churchfield House, home to the Burchell family of horticulturalists who ran the pioneering Fulham Nursery for over a century. The most famous was William Burchell, naturalist and adventurous explorer of St Helena, Brazil and especially South Africa in the early 19th century. He was one of the most prolific collectors of specimens, now preserved in Kew Gardens and in the Oxford University Natural History Museum. He is best remembered today for Burchell's Zebra, but discovered many other species too. He also made an early map of South Africa and his reports were used to promote colonial settlement in the Eastern Cape which led to the 1820 settlement. This proved controversial because the relevant land was effectively a buffer zone in the war between white colonialists and Xhosa tribes. Back home in Fulham from 1830, he was said to have kept an ocelot in his garden here. He died at his own hand in 1863 and is buried in All Saints Church Fulham.



5. Turn right into Hurlingham Park. Before World War II, this was the Hurlingham Club's No 1 polo field. An annual polo tournament is now held here in June. During the war, the land was leased as allotments and in 1951 it was purchased by the Council for use as a public park and sports ground, with a huge running track and tennis courts. Earlier, Mulgrave House stood in a corner of the park. In 1844 it was occupied by a Mr Price, who claimed to be Charles Louis Bourbon, Duke of Normandy and heir to the French throne. He was also known as Karl Wilhelm Naundorff, an eccentric watchmaker and weapon maker who carried out explosive experiments and claimed there were three attempts to assassinate him. His descendants still claim recognition as France's deposed royal family. Leave the park by the gate on Broomhouse Lane, cross the road go through Sullivan Court.
6. Sullivan Court is a well designed 1950s estate of 432 flats built by Fulham Borough Council on the site of the Hurlingham Club's no 2 Polo field, also subject to compulsory purchase after WWII. Named after the Sullivan family who were 19th century benefactors living at Broom House. Cross Peterborough Road and turn into Clancarty Road before entering South Park on the right.
7. South Park. This land was formerly Broom House farm, owned by the Sullivan family. During the Victorian era it was leased to the famous Exeter & Chelsea based Veitch & Sons nursery. Veitch were perhaps the world's leading plant nursery in the 19th century, employing plant hunters to source exotic species from around the world. Among the thousand or so plants brought into British cultivation were the Giant Sequoia tree in 1853 (originally named Wellingtonia after the Duke of Wellington) and the paper handkerchief tree (there is a lovely specimen in Prior's Bank Gardens which can be seen in section 4 of the walk). In 1901 the park was sold to Fulham Borough Council for a public recreation ground, with a covenant that the land should remain as open space. So it has remained, except during the first world war when it was occupied as a training ground by three Fulham brigades of the Royal Field Artillery. In the second world war large quantities of sand were excavated to fill sand bags and an air raid shelter was built here. Today there is a recently installed water fountain/bottle filler, part funded by the Fulham Society. Leave the park at the far end and turn left into Hugon Road.
8. Cross Wandsworth Bridge Road on the crossing. A few yards to the left is St Matthew's Church, home of the H&F Foodbank (one of the first in London, opening in 2010). Continue on

Stephendale Road which is directly opposite Hugon Road and take the first right into De Morgan Road.

9. De Morgan Road commemorates the 19th century Sands End ceramic works of William de Morgan, famous ceramicist and collaborator of William Morris. He created large scale pictorial tiled schemes using his unique lustre glazes and medieval subjects for house interiors, working with architect Halsey Ricardo. From 1882 he created tiles for luxury P&O steamships. Sadly, nothing remains here. At the end of De Morgan Road cross Townmead Road.
10. Just to the right of the huge Sainsbury's, notice the blue plaque for Kops Brewery, founded in 1890 by a Polish entrepreneur, the first brewer of non-alcoholic beer in the UK, employing 400 people. Kops exported stouts and ales all over the British empire at the height of the Temperance movement. Walk past Sainsbury's, cross over the roundabout and take the path leading off to the right, down to the river.
11. At the river, look right and you can see Wandsworth Bridge, which opened in 1940 and retains its original dull blue colours, designed as camouflage against air raids.
12. But the walk continues downriver, by turning left at the river. This area of Fulham was always a marshy rural backwater, liable to flooding, suitable only for grazing until the Victorian era when industry arrived and it was embanked. From 1901 this area was occupied by the vast Fulham Power Station which operated until 1978. It was fired by coal brought upriver by barge and offloaded at the jetty here. Continue with the river on your right and a variety of modern developments on the left.
13. Imperial Park, Fulham's newest park, was created by the developers of the flats on land once forming part of the vast Imperial Gas Light & Coke Company, set up in 1824. The Waterside pub just beyond is a good place to stop for refreshment.
14. Chelsea Harbour. The river walk continues under the railway bridge and over the bridge across the inlet to Chelsea Harbour, which is worth a detour. The Chelsea Harbour complex, with its iconic Belvedere tower and home to the Design Centre for upmarket interior decoration, despite its name, is still in Fulham. Continue on the river path to Chelsea Creek where the path bends left.
15. Chelsea Creek, the mouth of Counters Creek, is one of London's "lost rivers", originally rising at Kensal Rise and flowing down past Kensal Green cemetery, underneath what is now a railway line through North Kensington, Shepherd's Bush. Olympia, West Brompton (where a remnant can be seen beside platform 4) before arriving here. This marks the north eastern border of Fulham with Chelsea. It has probably been a boundary marker since Saxon times.
16. Across the creek in Chelsea, you see the imposing brick edifice of the former Lots Road Power Station. This opened in 1905 and at the time was the largest power station in the world, fuelled initially by coal and later by gas. It closed in 2002 and is now being transformed into luxury flats.
17. Walk alongside the creek to the road, cross by the roundabout and continue ahead past Chelsea Island on your right towards the railway line. The road ahead bends sharply left and goes downhill to Imperial Wharf Station which opened in 2009.