

Fulham Society 50th Anniversary Walk

Section 4: Riverside Studios to Putney Bridge (2.3 miles)

This section, shown as a **black line**, starts at the Riverside Studios, close to the two Hammersmith Stations and ends at Putney Bridge Station. [Click here](#) for the TfL journey planner. There is a more detailed map on the next page. It is mainly a river walk, looking west across to the natural Barnes riverside and is the site of the famous annual university boat race, where you might see rowing or sailing at any time of the year. The walk continues past Fulham Football Club, through Bishops Park and the ancient scheduled monument of Fulham Palace. It passes some interesting parts of old Fulham before ending at Putney Bridge station. There are many places to stop and drink or eat on this section of the walk.



38. The Riverside Studios originally opened here in 1933 in a former iron foundry building as a film production facility. In 1954 it was bought by the BBC as a television studio and many popular shows were made here, including Top of the Pops, Blue Peter and Doctor Who. After the BBC left in 1974 it continued as a charitable trust and became a highly regarded theatre, music and arts venue. David Hockney, Yoko Ono and Antony Gormley all exhibited here and live performances included the Sex Pistols and Amy Winehouse. Television production restarted in 1996. The studios were then completely redeveloped between 2014-2019 and today it offers cafes and restaurants as well as a variety of arts entertainments and state of the art facilities. Sales of the residential flats above funded the rebuild. Continue southwards along the riverside, past the attractive Fulham Reach development with its bars, restaurants and rowing club.
39. The Oxford & Cambridge university boat race begins by Putney Bridge and continues for four miles upriver to Mortlake. First held in 1829, the record time was set by Cambridge men in 1998, 16 minutes 19 seconds. The first women's race took place in 1927 but it was not until 2015 that the women's race took place on the same course and on the same day as the men's race.
40. Further along, The River Cafe on Thames Wharf (a former oil storage warehouse), first opened in 1987 as an employee's cafe for the Richard Rogers architectural practice next door (since departed). Run by Ruth Rogers & Rosie Gray, the restaurant pioneered fine but relaxed Italian cuisine, earning a Michelin star in 1997 and training celebrity chefs including Jamie Oliver and Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall. Continue southwards along the river, past the Crabtree Pub (where a small inland wiggle is required).
41. The Thames now never floods this bank, thanks to the embankment, the Thames barrier and the locks upstream. Before these interventions, flooding was frequent and could be severe sometimes carrying away barges and sheep. It was also relatively common for the Thames to freeze over in a hard winter, with at least 5 years when the ice was thick enough to hold ice fairs. In early 1789 this part of river and upstream froze over and a fair was set up with puppet shows, roundabouts and refreshment tents. According to the Annual Register of

February 1789: “In short, Putney and Fulham, from the morning dawn till the dusk of returning evening, is a scene of festivity and gaiety”. Continue downriver until you reach Fulham Football Club. Turn left and right at the road to go past the listed facade of the club.

42. Fulham FC has been here since 1896 when an amateur club, which was started in 1879 by a local teacher and churchwarden of St Andrew’s church moved here. They became professional in 1898 and joined the national league in 1907. It took until 1950 to reach the top division. The high point came in 1975 when the club played in the FA cup final, but the 1980s and 90s saw the club slowly sinking to the third division. In 1997 Mohammed Al Fayed bought the club and brought much needed investment, resulting in the club’s rapid rise to the premiership in 2000. In 2009 Fulham reached the final of the UEFA Europa League. In 2013 Shahid Khan bought the club, but it was relegated in 2014, promoted in 2018, relegated in 2019, promoted in 2020 and relegated again in 2021. The Riverside Stand is currently being rebuilt and a new river walk will be open to the public alongside the club on non-match days. Continue walking until you see a gateway into Bishops Park on the right. Enter the park and walk ahead to rejoin the river. Turn left.



43. Bishops Park was created on land that was part of Fulham Palace’s estate. It was donated to the local council in 1893 by the Ecclesiastical

Commissioners with covenants to ensure the area would remain a public open space and on condition the council built an embankment and laid out the area as a public park. This is just before the nearby houses were built and it was part of an enlightened London-wide movement at the time to provide public recreation space for the local population. The park is Grade II listed and is designated as “Metropolitan Open Land” giving it it London-wide importance and protection as an open space. The park was restored in 2012 with help from a major grant from the National Lottery in conjunction with a bid to restore Fulham Palace. When you reach the large concrete open play area, cross over by the cafe to the exit on Bishop’s Avenue. After leaving the park turn immediately right into the gates of Fulham Palace.

44. Fulham Palace. This site has been occupied for at least 6,000 years according to artefacts found on the site, and then later by Roman and Saxon settlements. The reason is that the river Thames was relatively easy to cross here. In 704 Bishop Waldhere acquired the site along with Fulham, Hammersmith and a vast area around. It has been owned by the Bishops of London ever since. After the Norman Conquest it became the largest moated site in England. It is thought the Vikings may have built the moat when they encamped here earlier in the 8th century. The oldest part of the present buildings date from Tudor times and external brickwork from this period has been restored recently. The last Bishop of London to live here left in the 1970s and the site is now run by a charitable trust with a long lease from the Church

Commissioners. Walk through the Palace or around its right or left side into the gardens (there is a cafe, museum and gift shop here).

45. If the walled garden is open it is well worth walking through this wonderfully restored kitchen garden. The gardens of Fulham Palace were once one of the earliest botanic gardens in the country, first coming to prominence in the 16th century when Bishop Grindal sent grapes every year to Queen Elizabeth I. He also introduced the Tamarisk tree to Britain. Later, Bishop Henry Compton planted many unusual plants at Fulham Palace in the 17th century, introducing plants from the newly colonised Americas in particular. He was perhaps inspired by the recently established botanic garden at Oxford where he was bishop before his appointment to London. A liberal bishop, he had been entrusted by Charles II with the education of his nieces Mary and Anne, but was suspended from office by James II when he became King. The Bishop was one of the "immortal 7" of leading nobles who invited William of Orange and his wife Mary (daughter of James II) to depose and replace James as joint monarchs. Compton had earlier married William and Mary and later presided at their coronation. So he was a transplanter of monarchs as well as exotic plants. Some of the plants first introduced to Britain by Compton have been replanted recently. If the walled garden is closed, skirt around it to the right or to the left. At the back of the walled garden, take the small gate leading into the churchyard of All Saints.
46. All Saints Church is the original parish church of Fulham, with many interesting burials in the graveyard, including many Bishops of London, Granville Sharp, a 19th century lawyer campaigning for abolition of the slave trade and the naturalist explorer William Burchell discussed in Section 1. Exit the churchyard through the north gate to walk along Church Gate boards the traffic lights.
47. The Grade II* William Powell almshouses on the left were rebuilt in 1869, after an endowment by Sir William Powell of Munster House (died 1680) for twelve poor widows. Continue to the main road. On the left corner is the Temperance Pub.
48. The Temperance was built in 1909 as a Temperance Billiard Hall, one of a network across London and the north of England, designed to offer an alternative social venue to a pub. Its current use is somewhat ironic, but at least they have kept the name. A few other Temperance Halls survive, including one on the Kings Road in Chelsea, now a shop. Cross the road (Fulham High Street/Putney Bridge) at the lights and walk up the New Kings Road. On the left, by the junction with Burlington Road, is a vestigial bottle kiln, all that remains of the once highly influential Fulham Pottery.
49. The Fulham Pottery was founded in 1672 by John Dwight, the first recorded maker of stoneware pottery in England. It was especially famous for its salt glazes and figures. He was also a very early experimenter with porcelain and kept scientific records of his efforts. After Dwight died in 1703 the pottery continued uneventfully until its closure in the 1980s. John Doulton, founder of Doulton & Co of Lambeth (now Royal Doulton) was an apprentice here in 1815.
50. Slightly further up the New King's Road, near Elysium Street, but with nothing to see today, was Elysium Row, where lived the brother of Sir Arthur Sullivan (composer of Gilbert & Sullivan comic operas). Sir Arthur visited his brother on his deathbed there and composed the music to a sentimental poem the "The Lost Chord" which remains well loved today. The Victorian artist Holman Hunt also lived in Elysium Row. From the Fulham Pottery, cross the New King's Road and take the pathway on the right hand side of Majestic Wine, leading to Putney Bridge station where the walk ends.