

THE HISTORY OF YOUR AREA

Known as 'The Town Meadows', Sands End's riverside location was once an important hay producing area. The rich, damp soil made it famous for its prolific production of watercress as well as an ideal spot to graze cattle.

The area is thought to have been named after John de Saundeford who lived here during the reign of Edward I at the end of the thirteenth century. Charles II built Sandford Manor house in the 17th century which he used as a country retreat.

Like most of Fulham, the area was largely rural, reliant upon market gardening – Bagleys Lane is named after the Bagley family whose orchards stretched to thirty five acres.

But 1824 saw the arrival of major industrialisation and the Imperial Gas Light and Coke Company bought the 28 acre Sandford Manor Estate along with the house which they used as accommodation for senior employees. The company footed the bill for the creation of Imperial Road and Square when they needed to extend the works. Around the turn of the century, a strike forced the firm to import labour from Germany and Emden Street is named after the harbour town in Northwest Germany that most of them came from.

By the 1920s the company was employing around 20,000 people locally producing gas from coal transported down the river to wharfs at Sands End. Their service became so important that during World War II the Luftwaffe was instructed to destroy it – fortunately they failed.

The company's decline came quickly with the discovery of natural gas in the North Sea and production came to an end in 1975. Only one of the cylinders survived and is used today as gas storage. The oldest in the world, it is protected by a preservation order.

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