



LONDON
IN THE
COMPANY OF
PAINTERS

RICHARD BLANDFORD

Battersea

On the south bank of the River Thames, facing Chelsea (with Chelsea Bridge, Albert Bridge, Battersea Bridge and Battersea Railway Bridge joining the two), the district of Battersea contains several sites of particular significance to London's infrastructure. Clapham Junction is one of the busiest train stations in Europe, with many changes between services taking place there, and with routes beginning at both Victoria and Waterloo stations passing through.

Battersea Power Station (9), with its iconic four chimneys each at the corner of a brick 'cathedral' design, operated as a coal-fired power station from 1933 to 1983. The fourth largest brick building in Europe, it is world-famous for appearing on the cover of Pink Floyd's *Animals* LP, with an inflatable pig floating above between two chimneys.

Battersea Park (built on the site where one Colonel Blood attempted to assassinate Charles II, and the Duke of Wellington once fought a duel) is a popular location (8), notable for its bandstand, boating lake and the London Peace Pagoda, a Buddhist structure intended to promote thoughts of unity and peace.

Battersea Dogs and Cats Home has housed and rehomed unwanted or stray dogs since 1871, and cats since 1883. The home looks after 9,000 animals a year, with an average of 14 dogs and 8 cats admitted daily.

8 Christopher Wood, *Battersea Park, London*, early 20th century. Dorset County Museum



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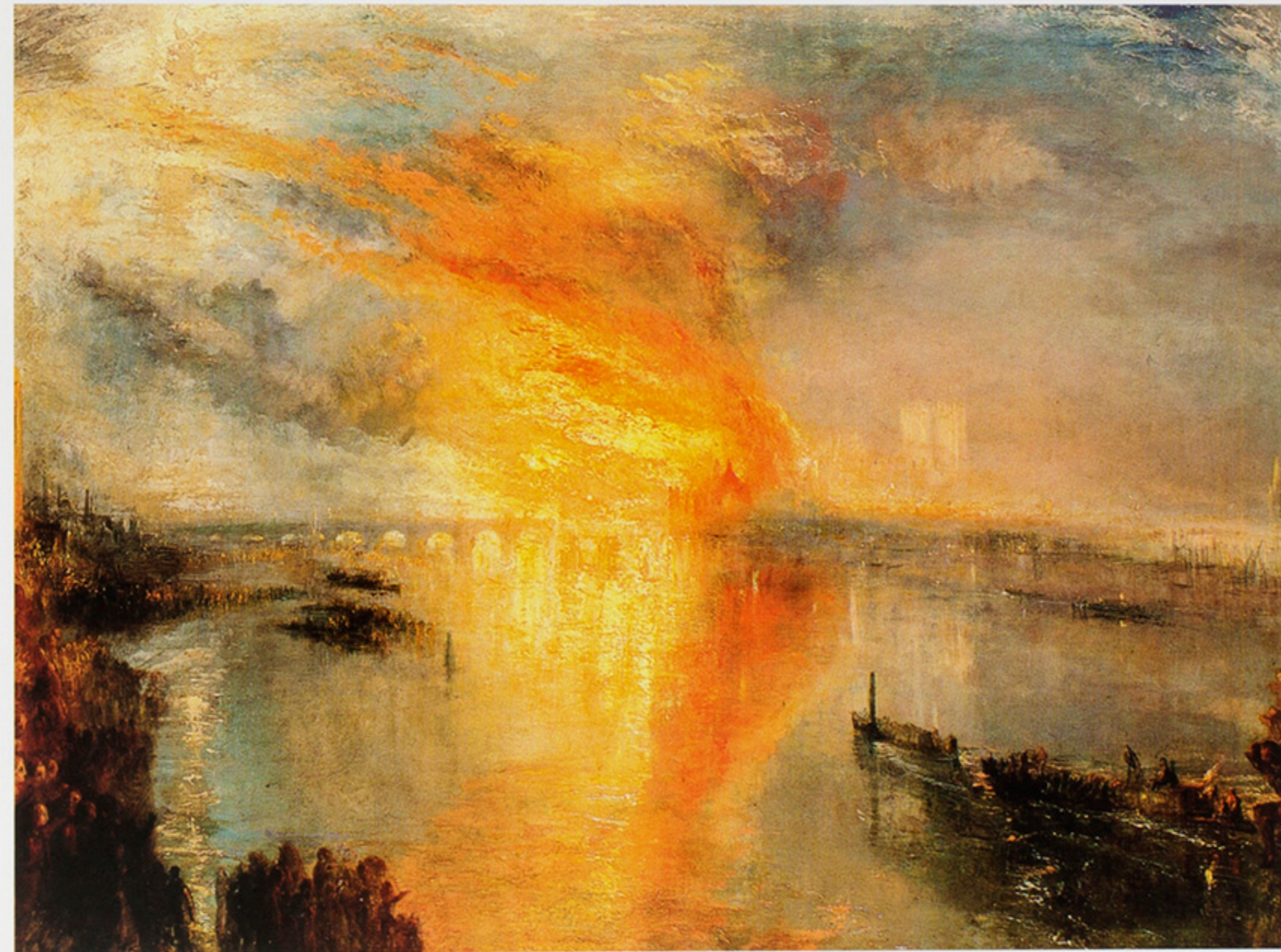
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32 J.M.W. Turner,
*The Burning of the Houses
of Lords and Commons*,
16 October 1834, 1835.
Philadelphia Museum of Art

33 J.M.W. Turner,
*The Burning of the Houses
of Lords and Commons*,
16 October 1834, 1835.
The Cleveland Museum of Art



While the first city of London was established in the Roman period, the story of London in art really begins in the seventeenth century, with the rise of the panoramic city view as a painting genre, and continues to this day.

Organized around nine areas or districts, this sumptuous visual history moves roughly from west to east across London, as does the River Thames, which acts as the city's spine. Within each area, works of art are grouped around specific locations or monuments, providing a glimpse of the city's changing and unchanging topography through the ages.

Despite London's tumultuous history - the rise and fall of Empire, attacks from above in two world wars, relentless expansion into the surrounding villages and suburbs - it nevertheless becomes clear that many of the city's landmarks remain surprisingly constant.





The Palace of Westminster

The Palace of Westminster, or the Houses of Parliament as it is more commonly known, is the meeting place of the House of Commons and the House of Lords, the elected and non-elected sections respectively of the British government. The building that we know is not the original, however. The Old Palace (30), established as a residence for the king during medieval times, held meetings of government from the thirteenth century on. Surviving the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, and extensively remodelled over the years, this palace finally burned down in 1834 (32).

The new Palace of Westminster, its distinctive exterior by Charles Barry in the Neo-Gothic style complemented by interior ornamentation by Augustus Pugin, was completed in 1870 (34). Its tower - erroneously known as Big Ben - was until 2012 simply known as the Clock Tower, and is now the Elizabeth Tower. Big Ben is in fact the largest of the five bells it contains, and is the largest chiming bell in the world. When first installed, the clock's accuracy was checked twice a day by a telegram to Greenwich Observatory, a practice that continued until the line was bombed in World War II. The Palace of Westminster was itself hit during the War, with the Commons Chamber totally destroyed and the Lords Chamber damaged. A new Commons Chamber came into use in 1950.

34 David Roberts,
*New Palace of Westminster from
the River Thames*, 19th century.
City Club, London