Site History & Use

The Paddock is a historic island within the Lea Valley, bordered by watercourses to the north, east and west.

Site History

The Paddock has had a long and surprising history. Until the mid-19th century it formed the northern half of the Mill Mead water meadow. This was common land supplying grain to neighbouring Tottenham Mill. It was one of many mills located along the River Lea. The earliest mention of a mill at Hale Wharf is in 1254.

Archaeological excavations in 2018 at Hale Wharf uncovered 16th century foundations of the mill. Until its destruction by fire in 1860, the mill had produced flour for local villagers for centuries, grinding their grain grown on the meadow. The mill also manufactured very fine flour and, at times, woven paper, both aimed at the luxury market.









After World War One, the land became a sports and football ground owned by the nearby Harris Lebus furniture factory. Attracted to the open space, since 1901 this world-class name in industry expanded over the surrounding marshes. A major employer in the area, it provided outdoor facilities for its workforce. After Lebus closed in 1970, the site was abandoned, occasionally used to graze horses, hence the origin of the name 'Paddock'. The building of the Victoria Line Extension between 1962-1968 also saw excavated clay deposited on the land, creating undulating ground levels.



Current Use

The Paddock Community Nature Reserve opened in 2000 providing a valuable habitat for wildlife and opportunities for visitors to enjoy the natural environment. Classified a key, designated site for nature conservation and biodiversity within Haringey, it neighbours an ecologically rich area comprising the Walthamstow Wetlands, Tottenham Marshes and the River Lea.



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