

THE HISTORY OF YOUR AREA

The open spaces of Parsons Green and Eel Brook Common have been venues for some surprising events over the years. Having survived rigorous attempts of encroachment and development, they still remain areas for local people to use and enjoy.

Both were originally village greens for two separate communities having been chosen by settlers because of their proximity to water. Parsons Green had a large pond until the end of the 19th century when the New Kings Road was developed – while Eel Brook Common takes its name from the brook brimming with fish and eels running through it.

In the mid 14th century as Europe's population was being ravaged by plague. Fulham's remote location led Eel Brook Common and nearby Hurlingham Fields to be used as burial pits. The 'Black Death' was a swift and merciless killer prompting Italian writer Giovanni Boccaccio to say that 'its victims ate lunch with their friends and dinner with their ancestors'.

Until the end of the 18th century, both Parsons Green and Eel Brook Common were used to graze cattle - there was even a 'pound' on Parsons Green where stray animals were held until claimed by their owners. At around thirteen acres Eel Brook Common came to be used more for recreation and in 1832 horse races were held there to celebrate the passing of the Reform Bill. Between 1883 and 1891, five years before moving to Craven

Cottage, a local amateur football team, Fulham FC played their home games there.

It was also a venue for political rallies. Textile designer William Morris who founded the Socialist League in 1884 was a tireless public speaker and addressed large gatherings on Eel Brook Common in an attempt to win new members for the party.

One event which has survived is the Parsons Green Fair. Dating back to the beginning of the 18th century it was held annually for three days in August until 1823 and was the highlight of many people's year. In 1811 the Bishop of London banned the Fair having been told it was a place of 'riot and profligacy' but finally changed his mind.

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Eel Brook Common c. 1900