

Radlett & District Museum – where we have come from, where we are and our future plans

Before his untimely death in 2015, local historian, Philip Eastburn, had started a search for a possible site for a museum in which to store and exhibit his extensive archives. Philip's sudden death accelerated the need to find suitable accommodation for his valuable collection. Stuart Nagler quickly assembled a team of volunteers to take on this task. This was the birth of the Radlett Archives Group (RAG).

RAG is now known as the Radlett & District Museum (RADM) and it has been registered with the Charity Commission. It has a trustee board of eleven. All are volunteers and bring different skills and experiences to the table.

Temporary storage facilities were provided by Aldenham Parish Council prior the acquisition of a short - term lease of a room above the Radlett Library. Whilst being a good short - term solution, the room in the Library was too small in which to exhibit and far too expensive.

After further extensive searching, a site and a provider of a bespoke building were identified. The site is at the bottom of the garden of the Radlett Village Institute (RVI). The trustees of the RVI, who have been very supportive throughout, agreed a lease at a peppercorn rent. The providers of the building, Portable Offices, manufactured a bespoke timber clad cabin and installed it onto pre-prepared ground. The groundworks and necessary services were installed by local builders Griggs Homes.

An ongoing challenge throughout the project has been, and will continue to be, the availability of funds. The cost of the capital works has been covered by a donation from John Apthorp and grants from Hertsmere Borough Council and Aldenham Parish Council. In

addition, Griggs Homes has given their services at a discounted rate and have guaranteed to cover the cost of signage and Aylett Nurseries have landscaped the site. Donations have also been given by local residents (including £500 from RSGBA).

The trustees are currently fitting out the site with furniture, storage units, display cabinets and boards, window blinds, computer and ancillary equipment. Current plans are restricted by the availability of funds.

In addition to the foregoing, the trustees have to fund annual running costs (insurance, maintenance, electricity and water, cleaning, communications, licences, etc) of some £2500 to £3000 p.a.

Whilst the Museum has been, and will continue to be, run by the trustees and other volunteers, entrance to it will be free of charge. Consequently, the trustees rely on fund raising events, grants, donations and legacies in order to complete the building project and cover ongoing costs.

The opening of the Museum was originally planned for April 2020, but COVID 19 and the associated restrictions delayed this and the completion of the internal fitting out project. The Trustees are poised to resurrect the fitting out project and replan the opening as soon as the current restrictions are lifted.

Once open, visitors to the Museum will be welcomed. Initial opening hours will be on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 10.00 to 12 noon. The site will provide parking facilities and the building is wheel - chair accessible.

The Museum will offer permanent displays and themed exhibitions (for example of: Schools, Religious establishments, Radlett in the First and Second World Wars, Transport, the High Street, local

residents of note, etc) plus recordings and transcripts of interviews with local residents. Off-site exhibitions, displays and talks will be offered. Educational visits, particularly by local schools, will be encouraged. Regular newsletters and publicity material will be aimed at attracting everyone who is interested in the rich history of Radlett and its surrounding areas.

History does not stand still so the Museum, its content and what it offers will continue to evolve. The Museum's success will depend on the continued enthusiasm and dedication of its volunteers and the availability of the necessary funds.