The Radlett Timeline

Unless otherwise stated, dates signify the time of the photograph, not necessarily the building's origin.

Roman times, 3rd Century

In a densely wooded area, lying in the valley of Tykes Water, a lone potter sets up his workshop near Watling Street, close to the path crossing from Sheriley to Aldenham.

The Romans brought pottery-making skills with them when they arrived in Britain.

The illustrations show how the potters might have worked. The potter would probably have made rolled clay pots or used a wheel as shown, using river water for lubrication of the clay. The pottery would have been heated or baked over an open fire.

There is evidence of pottery-making at St Albans (Roman Verulamium), and at Peterborough where there was a huge pottery industry, and also evidence in Peterborough, in particular, is very distinctive as the items are finished with a coloured liquid glaze applied in blue, red and black known as 'slip'

Radlett - possibly evolving from the old English Rad-gatwete (roads cross). Watling Street, in old English 'Waeclinga Straet' is paved road, the original track formed by the Ancient Britons and later paved by the Romans, the old route from Canterbury in Kent to St Albans and on to Wroxeter in Shropshire.

Running parallel with Watling Street through Radlett is a stream known as Tykes Water. Fed by springs on Stanmore Common, 8km to the south, it supplies Aldenham Reservoir (built 1790) and, in turn, the lake at Aldenham Park. Then, after merging with a brook from Aberford Park, Borehamwood, the water flows northwards through Radlett before joining the River Colne, just north of Harper Lane.

785

A charter granted by King Offa, who founded St Albans Abbey, mentions that the area is heavily wooded and by 1084 is noted as being a danger to travellers making their way to London.

Piggotts House, Letchmore Heath, 1910

1256

The monks claimed Aldenham manor was given by King Offa and that a Domesday survey of 1086 in Thorncot was held by the Abbot of St Peter of Westminster.

Abbot Frederick of St Albans claimed he had leased the manor to the Bishop of Westminster with an agreement to keep Watling Street safe for travellers. The lease continued until 1250 when it was settled in the King's Court in favour of St Albans, with many stipulations including an agreement that both Abbots should have the use of the galleries at Kempsnee for hanging prisoners from the local area.

Cy ales al Thiberius assek ke vitrei al al lerre le
les nuse al Tiberius ash acere vitrei lierres
Ellen lue a rekene le skick ke reprehi nouele dreth
de 'vrire' de wase, ake utricrik de lurks vrete ash
brlaurie le lek mein wur ise here name, the here gret,
hee here lere ash hee helefel d astered,
he lalek lee fork pete ise 23 Aldrige ash s here out,
ar 12 Aldrige mekrek of the out.

Source text from: Thiberius, Historian
Letters of the County of Hertford
Volume 1 1905, pp. 1-2

http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=105&type=hist#n1

1340

John Le Porter, son of Roger Le Porter of Aldenham acquires the mansion and grounds of Porters Park, previously part of the Kendals estate.

During the 1700s, the Architect Nicholas Hawksmoor and then the Admiral Lord Howe live in the mansion. Lord Howe constructs the road between Radlett and Shenley, so that it does not cross his estate.

In the 1840s local residents and visitors to the mansion, notably Dr Ross Smyth, realise the potential of the garden for a golf course. Porters Park Golf Club becomes established and opens in its present location in 1899.

1507

The school at Aldenham is started by Richard Platt - the proprietor of a London Brewery and twice Master Brewer of the Worshipful Company of Brewers - who is given permission by Queens Elizabeth I to start the school and build some almshouses.

Aldenham House, 1907

1754

The Red Lion Inn is established at the crossroads of Watling Street and Sheriley Hill as the first public house in Radlett.

Old Watling Street & The Red Lion Inn, Radlett

Nearby, and shortly afterwards, the 'Cross Keys' opens in 1786 (now becoming The Railway Inn). It was converted to a restaurant in the early 2000s.

The Cross Keys, Watling Street, Radlett

1795

After the construction of the Grand Union Canal, Aldenham Parish manorial is excavated to provide a number of flat-to-holy-maintain local river levels.

It is not until 1922 that Hillfield Park Reservoir is constructed close by to provide drinking water for the area. It is given up in 1989 and established as a nature reserve under the care of the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust.

Hillfield Park Reservoir, 1922

Early watercolour 'On the road to Radlett', 1796

1823

In Radlett, a notorious murder is committed by John Thurtell, who had gambled away a large amount of insurance money received by him following a warehouse fire. He sought revenge in a similar manner to Eugene Aram, murdering William Weare, a lawyer, who had won £1,000 in bank notes and coins in a London pub. On the pretence of taking him to a shooting party at a house in Gills Hill Lane, Thurtell shot Weare, cut his throat and, with the help of the owner of the house, William Probert, disposed of the body in a nearby pond.

John Thurtell was a character. Apprenticed in the navy and one time officer in the Royal Marines, he became a failed manufacturer in Norwich, a boxer and sometime actor, George Borrow, the writer allegedly used him as a character study for his book 'Lavengro'.

Eventually the evidence for the murder was so strong against him, his colleagues had to turn Knight's evidence. He was tried in Hertford and is noted for delivering his own remarkable defence, but to no avail. He was found guilty and executed on the gallows that he had designed himself.

Disgraced, Probert fell into crime and, being subsequently unable to find work, was eventually hanged at Newgate prison, London.

A poem written about the murder:

They cut his throat from ear to ear,
His brains they battered in,
His name was Mr. William Weare,
He dwelt in Lyon's Inn.

Lyon's Inn was a street in Thrusloe Field

The murder inspired many poets and playwrights, and Sir Walter Scott especially visited Radlett to view the scene of the crime.

Gills Hill Lane was still nicknamed Murder Lane by children as recently as the 1930s.

Gallows Tree Common, Radlett, 1909

1850

The 'Cat and Fiddle' was originally two cottages in Colnbrook Hill, Watling Street, with a stable block on the other side of the road from the road. The cottages are converted to a beer house at the end of the 1830's. The bar on the left-hand side is added much later (1970s) on the site of the stables.

In 2015, the Grade II listed pub, now closed, and the site around it, is being considered for residential use.

The Cat & Fiddle, Colnbrn Hill, Radlett c 1910

1852

Horse building in Radlett begins for the people working on the now well-established manor estates.

The Flint cottages opposite the Red Lion are owned by the Phillimore family, replacing derelict farm buildings.

Local streets begin to take shape around 1895 and are easily recognisable from photographs taken in the early 1900s.

The Flint Cottages, Watling Street, Radlett, 1900s

1860

The Midland railway main line is extended southwards from Bedford into London, running locally through the valley of the Tykeswater stream.

The Railway Station, Radlett, 1909

The Platt estate in St Pancras, London, is sold to developers. The endowment for Aldenham School is compulsorily purchased for the construction of St Pancras railway station in a measure to provide funds for the transformation of the time as a violent act of confiscation.

From Aldenham, 1880 - Aldenham Reservoir

Kendal Hall, Watling Street, Radlett, 1906

From the proceeds, £8000 (£1.2bn in today's money) is used to finance the opening of two boys' schools, one serving Elstree and Radlett at Medburn, near Butterfly Lane (now a private house) the other serving Aldenham at Delrow.

1864

Aldenham and Radlett are divided into 2 parishes. Christ Church is built on land donated by local landowners, principally the Phillimore family, owners of the Aldenham estate and Lord of the Manor. See the Equal Family, whose names appear on memorials in the church. Now, local Radlett people don't have to journey to Aldenham to **worship.**

Christ Church, 1898

Radlett Congregational Hall, Watling Street 1930s

Gladdale (the Hunderton Trades Clothiers), Colnbrn Hill Radlett, c 1930

1876

Two pairs of semi-detached cottages are built at the entrance to The Rose Walk, between 1876 and 1893 and in 1905 were converted into a single house by the Furniture Trades Benevolent Association (The Furniture Trades Orphanage).

The building which is now the Masons Hall was added to the rear to provide communal facilities for the home. Soon after WW1, the orphanage was relocated to Highgate, North London.

The Radlett Stores as it started 1883

1883

The first shop in the village - a co-operative called The Radlett Stores - is built by Mr Charles Parr.

Mr Parr also owns the land on which the shop is built, including this land near the station which, in later years, was the site of Barclays Bank, which closed in 2023.

Land is also donated by Mr Parr for the adjoining Radlett Recreation Ground, now known as Radlett Gardens, and for the construction of the Congregational Hall (Lane and Watling Street, built in commemoration of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1887).

Radlett stores moves across the road in 1902 and the Village Hall is converted to a cinema in the 1920s.

A corner grocery shop is built at the corner of The Dell and Scrubbitts Park Road (on the corner of Shetland Court garden).

The shop opens on Wednesday afternoons when Radlett shops have 'early closing'.

Kendal Hall, Watling Street, Radlett, 1906

1901

Radlett Cricket Club, founded in 1894, when a group formed of the Hon. Rev. Dudley Fortescue-Beckett, Charles Pollock, with Charles Parr and two other gentlemen, use a small field given by Sir Francis Head from his grounds at Newberries to play matches.

In 1967, commemorating Queen Victoria's 63 year reign, a fretched pavilion is erected.

Land for Radlett Cricket Club's pitch

1905

Radlett Congregational Hall is built on Watling Street, designed by the architect Geoffrey Harrison.

Radlett's First Library, Watling Street

1907

Christ Church main aisle and chancel is added, partly funded by the Diocese of St Albans, subject to an agreement for the abolition of the lower rent system, leading to the seats being free for everyone.

Christ Church Aisle, Nave and Chancel, 1907

Hillfield Park Reservoir, 1922

1910

St Anthony of Padua Catholic church is built in Cotsgrove.

St Anthony's Church, Cotsgrove, Radlett 1960

Aldenham House, c1850

1921

Radlett Remembers World War I.

Unveiling Radlett's War Memorial 19th June 1921

1929

In 1928 the new Congregational Church is built in front of the existing one, which becomes the church hall.

Radlett Aerodrome Synagogue 1938

Radlett Aerodrome opens as a grass airfield, just east of Park Street, by Handley Page Ltd. for the production of aircraft.

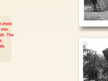
Handley Page Aerodrome 1929

1932

Vicary Gibbs, son of Lord Aldenham, inherited Aldenham House in 1908. He and head gardener Edwin Beckett, RHS, transformed the estate gardens where fifty gardeners were employed.

The estate had been planted by Vicary Gibbs' father, Henry Hucks Gibbs, who was Governor of the Bank of England 1875-77, and reputedly the richest man in Engla

After colle said Gard



Former Radlett Post Office, Watling Street

1934

The estate opens as a smart country club with a polo ground. It is fashionable for fellow countries stars from as a grass field.

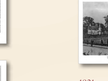
During WWII the BBC took over and used the house for war-time international broadcasts. In 1943 when the Aldenham Company bought the estate and school from cramped premises in north London.

1935

George V Jubilee.

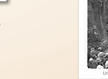
Radlett Rail Station in 2007, modernised 1979

Radlett George V Jubilee Parade, Gills Hill, 1935



Edge Grove School 1935

'Art Deco' shape & flats, built 1920s



George V Jubilee Parade, Upper Station Road 1935

1938

The iron and wooden hut in Station Road, erected to serve as the Methodist Church in 1903, is replaced by a brick building.

Radlett United Free Church 1938

1953

St.John's Church is opened in Gills Hill Lane to serve the residents of Battlers Green.

In 2023 the site is redeveloped to provide a new church, hall and affordable housing.

In 1972 the Congregational and Presbyterian Churches in Watling Street merge to form the United Reformed Church (URC), which from amalgamations with the Methodist Church in 1981.

Radlett URC moves to Station Road and the two churches become the United Free Church.

The Radlett and Bushey Reform Synagogue moves into the vacated premises in the High Street.

The Oakway Parade, Radlett c1950s

Radlett Village Institute, Watling Street, 1930s

In the 1950s '60s & '70s

In 1953 the Post Office is built and by 1955 Radlett has a Library.

Former Radlett Post Office, Watling Street

Radlett Rail Station in 2007, modernised 1979

Edge Grove School 1935

Radlett Preparatory School, Hillside Drive, 1950

Radlett Preparatory School opened in a large house at the top of Hillside Road in the 1940s.

It moved to its present site - the Drake & Island Georgian 'Kendal Hall' in 1980.

Radlett Village Centre 1938

1954

Porters Park Golf Club is seriously damaged by fire.

The Art Station, Park Road, Radlett

Public Conveniences are built in Radlett Gardens, formerly the Radlett Recreation Ground.

In 2015, the PCs were replaced with 'Dotsy's in the Park'.

Radlett Gardens, Pre Queen's Silver Jubilee, 1977

1955

The pool at Aldenham Lodge is opened for public swimming.

Radlett Station is modernised to a design by Eric Aslee and Partners, whose practice was in the village.

Radlett Rail Station in 2007, modernised 1979

Radlett Village Centre 1938

Radlett Village Centre 1938

Radlett Preparatory School, Hillside Drive, 1950

Radlett Village Centre 1938

1962

A new library is built as an extension to the house that serves as Parish Council Offices on the corner of Aldenham Avenue and Watling Street. It replaces the old timber building on the site.

Radlett Library, Aldenham Avenue, c1980

Newberries Parade, 1970s

St.John's Church

Bruce Martins, architect and designer of the Old Meadow flats

sold the Wall Hall estates to Octagon Homes. It is developed it with luxury apartments and homes set within private grounds. It is accessible to non-residents by public footpath A12.

WALL HALL
FROM FARMHOUSE TO UNIVERSITY
EDITED BY RAYMOND TOOLEY AND DAVID BOWERS

Radlett Library, Parish Council Offices and adjoining flats on Aldenham Avenue are demolished to make way for the new Radlett Centre and Library.

Radlett Station is modernised to a design by Eric Aslee and Partners, whose practice was in the village.

Radlett Rail Station in 2007, modernised 1979

1964

The Radlett Village Institute is built in 1928 as a community hall in the Arts and Crafts style of the Lutyens.

In 1930 a large part of the Newberries estate is sold and made ready for development, though not much happened until the 1950s.

Radlett Shops 1964

Radlett Library, Aldenham Avenue, c1980

Former Radlett Post Office, Watling Street

Match at Radlett Cricket Club 1969

Radlett Rail Station in 2007, modernised 1979

The Radlett Centre, built 1978

Former Radlett Fire Station, in 2013

1950s '60s & '70s

Newberries shopping parade is extended in the late 1950s, early 1960s when the remaining Newberries estate is sold and the house demolished.

Radlett Shops 1964

Newberries Parade, 1970s

1962

A new library is built as an extension to the house that serves as Parish Council Offices on the corner of Aldenham Avenue and Watling Street. It replaces the old timber building on the site.

Tabard Rugby Club moves to land adjoining the Cricket Club, Cobden Hill from White Horse Lane, London Colney and the clubhouse is opened in 1968.

Woodland Lodge, Scrubbitts Park Road, Radlett c2000

Match at Radlett Cricket Club 1969

Radlett Library, Aldenham Avenue, c1980

Radlett Station is modernised to a design by Eric Aslee and Partners, whose practice was in the village.

Radlett Rail Station in 2007, modernised 1979

The Radlett Centre, built 1978

1979

The Radlett History Society and the Green Belt Association merge to form a Civic Society representing the interests of residents of the Civil Parish of Aldenham The Radlett Society & Green Belt Association.

Radlett Shops 1964

1987

The Great Storm hits Radlett.

Radlett Village in Shelley Hill, Winter 1987

Woodland Lodge, Scrubbitts Park Road, Radlett c2000

1992

The new purple hut in Scrubbitts Park Road opens, designed by local Architect, Ken Herbert. This replaces the original Guide HQ in Watling Street, which had served the Guiding movement since 1926.

The old hall stood on Watling Street opposite Goodyers Avenue and was used by the Radlett Scout Association and local Youth Guides Headquarters in the county 'when it opened'.

Match at Radlett Cricket Club 1969

Radlett Library, Aldenham Avenue, c1980

Radlett Station is modernised to a design by Eric Aslee and Partners, whose practice was in the village.

Radlett Rail Station in 2007, modernised 1979

The Radlett Centre, built 1978

1995

The Village Hall is put up for sale. The Radlett Synagogue, separating themselves from the synagogue in Borehamwood, make it their new home.

In the mid-1990s, the Plymouth Brethren's Church in Watling Street is sold and the Village Hall Centre is sold to developers for housing.

Radlett United Synagogue, 2022

Radlett Village Institute, Watling Street, 1930s

Former Mann Egerton cars

Woodland Lodge, Scrubbitts Park Road, Radlett c2000

Radlett Village Institute, Watling Street, 1930s

Radlett Station is modernised to a design by Eric Aslee and Partners, whose practice was in the village.

Radlett Rail Station in 2007, modernised 1979

The Radlett Centre, built 1978

1999

One policeman is appointed to patrol the Radlett area. However, Radlett Police Station, which was located in an Oakway shop, is closed after service is cut to one hour a day and then reduced to just a telephone link to the Police Station in Borehamwood. The old shop is now home part of the Ki Pensteno Italian restaurant.

Restaurant in the Oakway, Watling Street, Radlett

Early in the new millennium the Radlett Centre is home to a number of shops, including Waitrose (near the Red Lion public house), previously the site of a farrier, garage and showroom which had originally been a blacksmiths and wheelwright's workshop.

Fit-Fit Watling Street, after Sainsbury's Local closed

After Sainsbury's closed in 2005, the premises were converted to a Fit-Fit store and later joined next door by a Gym which operated a franchise for Curves Ellen. In 2023, it's being fitted out for BIC Watches.

Former Mann Egerton cars

Waitrose, Watling Street, Radlett, 2007

Radlett United Synagogue, 2022

Christ Church hall is demolished and the new Vision Hall is built

Waitrose Hall, Christ Church, Watling Street 2002

Waitrose Hall, Christ Church, Watling Street 2002

2001

The garage and former petrol station station, on the corner of Thumbnail Crescent and Watling Street closes and Watling Mansions are built.

2012

The Post Office and Royal Mail Sorting Office are moved from re-development, through late, the Post Office moves across Watling Street to Rudgens.

Radlett Post Office, 1930

Conway House, built in 1936, formerly a hairdresser's, a café called Pat's Pantry and more recently, Chinese restaurant, Pangs Cottage, is sold for redevelopment.

Costa coffee removes the building to provide a café with residential flats over.

In 2023 Costa Coffee closes and Gail's Coffee and Bakery shop opens.

Conway House, 120 Watling Street, Radlett

Radlett celebrates the Queen's Diamond Jubilee with a wet but very enjoyable street party.

The Olympic torch bypasses Radlett. However, the Olympic Flame is welcomed to St Albans.

Radlett sports enthusiasts have to choose between travelling to part the lawn and following the Wimbledon Men's Singles Final between Andy Murray and Roger Federer.

Radlett Station, the Southern Entrance, c1980

2016

The decision on not to reopen Radlett Fire Station is finalised, despite opposition from the public, and is demolished to make way for residential apartments.

Shortly afterwards, Burrell & Co builders' merchants, on the adjoining site on Watling Street, is also demolished, making way for new retail units, apartments with underground car parking.

Former Radlett Fire Station, in 2013

2019

The Cat and Fiddle pub closes.

The Cat & Fiddle, Colnbrn Hill

2020

The Easter opening of the new Radlett Museum is postponed along with all other museums due to the Covid 19 Coronavirus outbreak.

2022

The last Petrol Station in Radlett is closed to make way for an office development.

Radlett celebrates Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee with a street party and a beacon on Jubilee Hill at Tykes' Water.

Many of us were in the Bourne enclosure had cooled, the Queen died aged 96, on September 8th in Balmoral Castle, Scotland. The Prince of Wales immediately became King Charles III.

Radlett & District Museum

Waitrose Hall, Christ Church, Watling Street 2002

Waitrose Hall, Christ Church, Watling Street 2002

2005

Christ Church hall is demolished and the new Vision Hall is built

2006

A planning application for a Strategic Rail Freight Terminal on the former Hendrey Page Radlett Aerodrome site is submitted. Allowed on Appeal in 2012 by the Secretary of State but, since then, construction is delayed by the land-ownership situation.

Radlett Fire Station Closes.

2007

Radlett Fire Station closes.

Waitrose Hall, Christ Church, Watling Street 2002

Waitrose Hall, Christ Church, Watling Street 2002

Waitrose Hall, Christ Church, Watling Street 2002

Waitrose Hall, Christ Church, Watling Street 2002

Waitrose Hall, Christ Church, Watling Street 2002

Waitrose Hall, Christ Church, Watling Street 2002

Waitrose Hall, Christ Church, Watling Street 2002

2023

The Kings Coronation took place on May 6th. Radlett joined in by holding a Jubilee Lunch in a video screen in the Recreation Ground.

Credits

This timeline was devised and written by **Vic Hennigan** and **Graham Taylor.** It is based on a version which first seen in Radlett Library in 2013.

Our thanks go to the numerous named photographers and collectors whose dedicated and invaluable work is reproduced in this display.

We also thank **Hertsmere Design & Print Services** for the design and printing.

Radlett & District Museum, May 2023.