

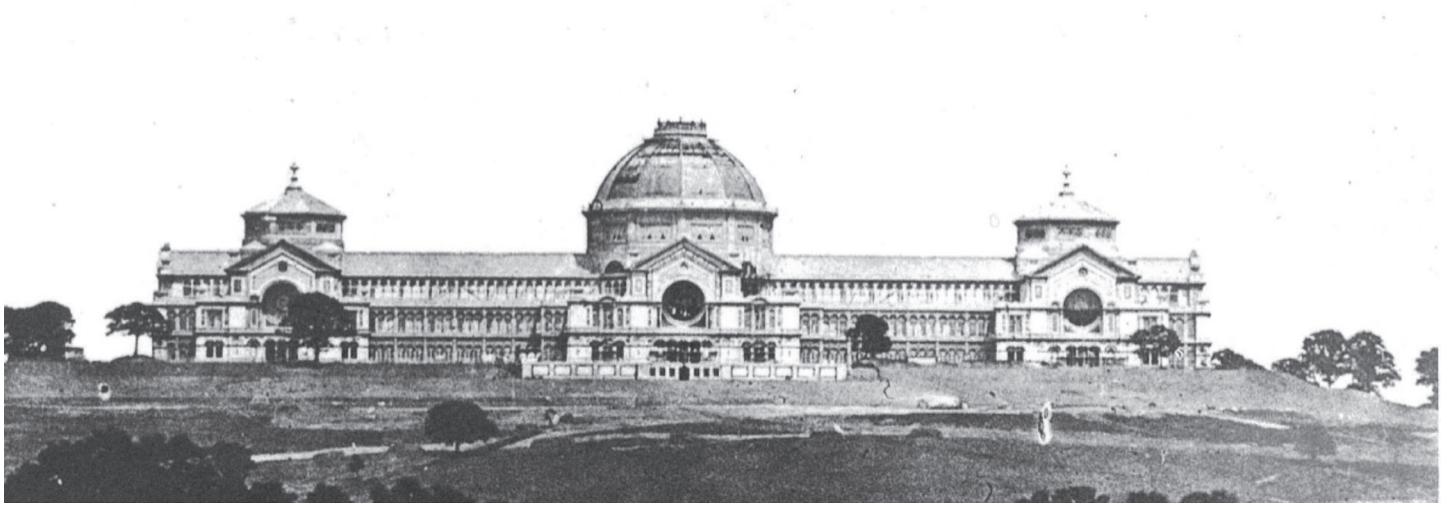
Alexandra Palace the people's palace.

Alexandra Palace: A Brief History

Alexandra Palace first opened in 1873 as 'The Peoples Palace' to provide the Victorians with a great environment and recreation centre. **Situated in 196 acres of parkland on top of a hill with spectacular views over the capital,** the Palace was joined by a branch line of the Great Northern Railway to Highgate; it attracted thousands of people who came by train, carriage or on foot.

Sixteen days after it opened, when 124,000 people had visited the Palace, it burned down as a result of a fire in the dome which could not be extinguished.

On the 1st May 1875, less than 2 years after the destruction of the original building, a new Palace opened. Covering 7 acres, it was centered on the Great Hall, which could



seat 12,000 people in addition to the 2,000 in the orchestra stalls beneath the mighty Willis Organ, which was driven by two steam engines and vast bellows. In other parts of the Palace, there were displays of paintings and sculptures, exhibitions, a museum, lecture hall, library, banqueting rooms, a 3,500 seater concert room which was subsequently turned into a roller skating rink and a theatre capable of seating 3,500. The cost of the Palace including materials, building and grounds amounted to £417,128. The park had a popular racetrack, a trotting ring, cricket ground, ornamental lakes and a permanent funfair.

The popularity of the Palace continued unabated until the end of the century. After certain financial difficulties, an Act of Parliament in 1901 created the Alexandra Palace and Park Trust, administered by the local authorities in the area. The Act required the Trustees to maintain the Palace and Park and make them, subject to several provisions, 'available for the free use and recreation of the public forever'. From this point, the Palace continued to develop its organ concerts, shows, exhibitions and numerous indoor and outdoor events. **In 1935, the BBC leased the eastern part of the building from which the first public television transmissions**

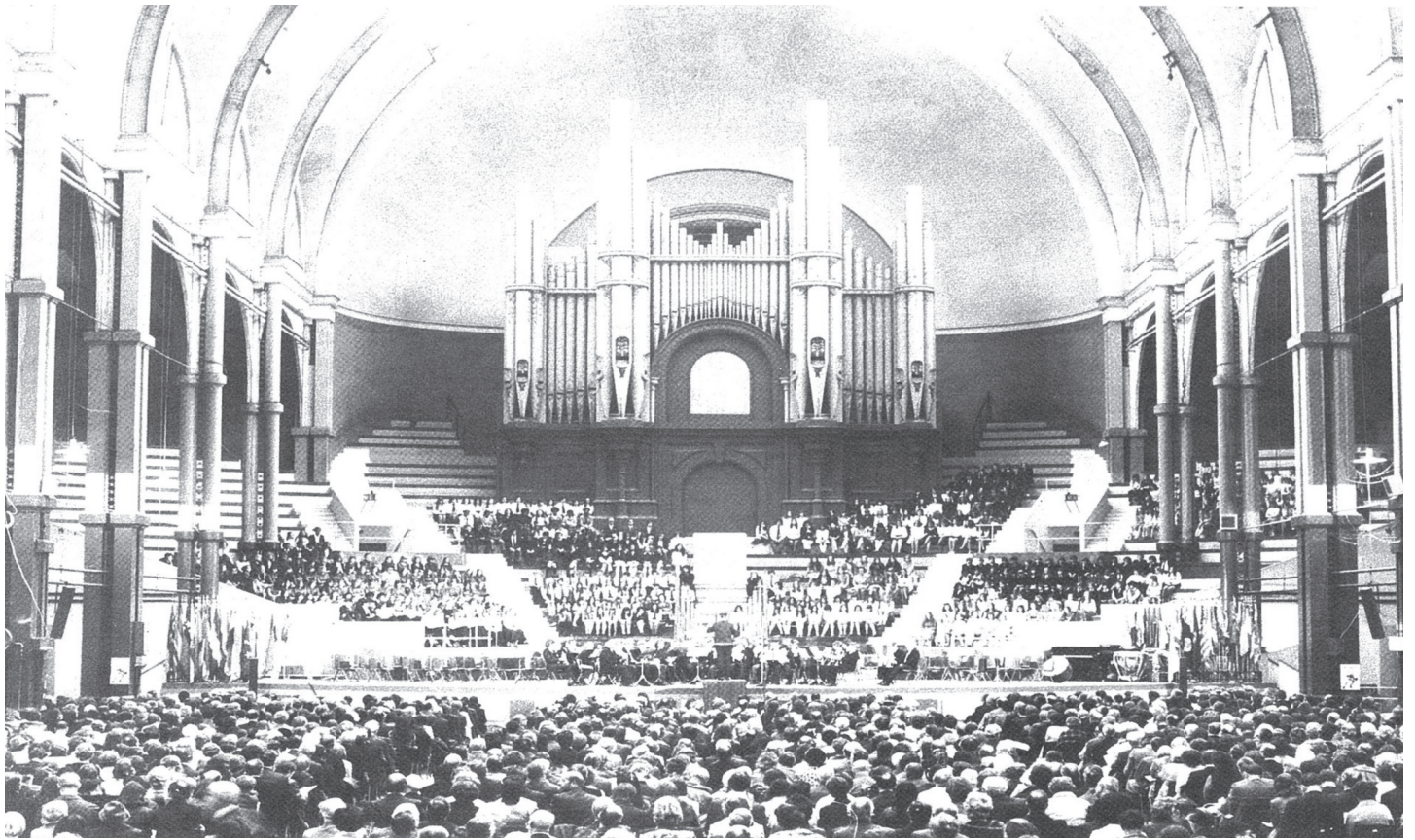
were made in 1936. Alexandra Palace was the main transmitting centre for the BBC but after 1956 was used exclusively for the news broadcasts.

On 10th July 1980 the Palace caught fire for the second time and an area comprising of the Great Hall, Banqueting Suite, former roller rink together with the theatre dressing rooms were completely destroyed. This represented just under half the total building (143,000 ft sq of a total 329,000 ft sq). The area occupied by the BBC was not damaged nor was the Palm Court. It was immediately decided to proceed with the rebuilding, with funding partly from the GLC dowry and partly from the anticipated insurance settlement.

There was much public interest in the proposed development and subsequent planning application for the scheme. The Secretary of State called for a Public Inquiry which was held at the Palace in February-May 1982, however, the outcome of the inquiry was not released until August 1983. **The development and restoration work began soon and the Palace was re-opened on 17th March 1988.**

Discover your Ally Pally.

Alexandra Palace the people's palace.



Currently Alexandra Palace operates as a Charitable Trust administered by the London Borough of Haringey.

The 8000sqm roof over the Great Hall was recovered with double glazing and underlined with a fabric ceiling of silicone-coated glass fiber, the first major application in Europe. The new roof is slung below two colossal steel lattice girders, which in turn are supported on eight new steel columns 1m in diameter. It was designed by Haringey Council's architect, Dr Peter Smith, with Pell Frischemman as structural engineer and was built by Taylor Woodrow Management Contracting.

In September 1999 'Alexandra Palace Trading Limited' was formed, taking on the responsibility of all commercial activity. As part of the Trading Company's commercial efforts the new Panorama Room was added to the extensive facilities offering an additional 1,000sqm of space.

Alexandra Palace has now become one of the UK's most versatile exhibition, conference and banqueting venues. In addition to hosting a wide range of events for prestigious clients, Alexandra Palace also boasts London's largest banqueting hall and a varied programme of public exhibitions and community events.

The Palace also offers a variety of leisure facilities available for the general public including an on-site Ice Rink and the Bar & Kitchen. The surrounding Park grounds have received an injection of funds from the Heritage Lottery Fund, this was used to upgrade the boating lake and café, 18 hole pitch and putt course, animal enclosure, children's playground, skate park and a conservation area.

Discover your Ally Pally.

For enquiries please email: enquiries@alexandrapalace.com or call 020 8365 2121

www.alexandrapalace.com

