

## Radhuni Restaurant

The Radhuni opened at the end of November 2004. The name means “the lady who cooks” and was chosen because the restaurant aims to use homemade domestic ingredients in its cuisine. The Chef is from Bangladesh and his family have a tradition of cooking for the mogul emperors going back some 250 years ago. So it is a pretty up market “lady who cooks”.

It no doubt helps the quality of the cooking that the Head Chef, Mohommed Abul Kalam Azad, is a partner in the business with Aktar Miah who is the more public face of the restaurant.

Mr Miah came to England when he was twelve. He says he always wanted to work in restaurants and he began to learn his trade by working for other people in Manchester. He learned to both cook and to manage a restaurant. By 1987 he had got his own premises in Manchester. In 1994 he came to London and had a restaurant in east London. He later sold the business to his cousin and set about looking for a good location around the M25. He eventually found the premises he wanted in Flackwell Heath.

The family of Mr Miah still live in Docklands. He is looking for a house in Flackwell Heath for his wife and children but until the right one comes along he travels home each night except at the weekend when things are too busy. There are five fulltime staff in the kitchen and four fulltime and three part-time in the restaurant. The staff work split shifts six days a week – they have a break between the lunch time and evening shifts. Now they are established they are beginning to recruit new staff locally.

The restaurant has spent a lot of money locally on publicity for Radhuni. It pops up in advertorials in the Bucks Free Press which are aimed at drawing in customers from beyond the village and they are supporting village events such as sponsoring the Cherry Fayre, advertising in sports club programmes and giving fund raising dinners for local organisations like Carrington School PTA. And it seems to be working. The week before our meeting Radhuni had its best week ever.

Another of Mr Miah’s good ideas is the Spice Club. 600 regulars have a gold membership card and 5 % off their bill. They also get advance invitations to special events and to members-only food tastings. The idea of the Club is to make people feel that Radhuni and its staff are their special local restaurant.

Mr Miah aims to make Radhuni the best restaurant in the area. I hope he is successful as it would attract more eating places to the village. The proposed legislation on smoking in pubs could mean that one of our three village centre pubs will become a gastropub – to have a successful restaurant proving that there are potential customers could give a pub the courage to make that change.

Tim Kendell