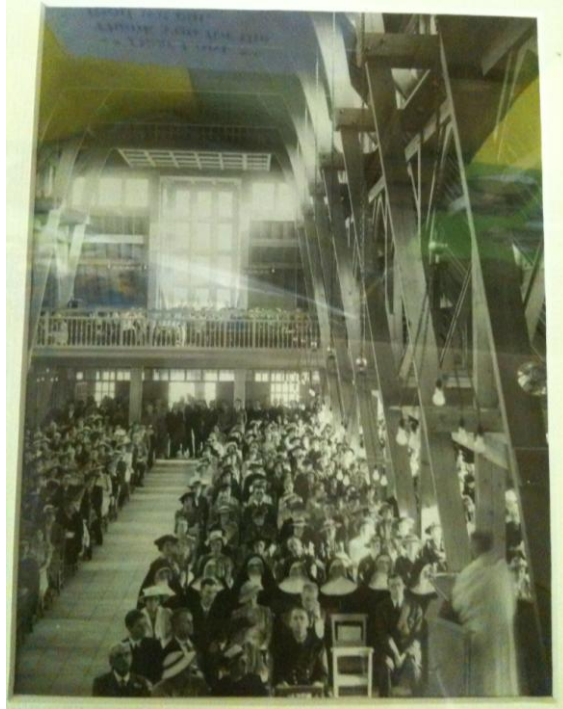


## Can you see yourself in this picture?



The scene is the opening of the Holy Cross New Church on Saturday, 5th July, 1941. The Bishop of Kensington, the Rt. Rev. Bertram Simpson dedicated the new building in the presence of a large congregation, and perhaps you were one of them? If you were present at the opening of the Holy Cross New Church, the rector and congregation of today would love to invite you to come back and celebrate the 70th birthday on Sunday 3rd July, 2011 at a special celebratory Mass at 9.30am. We will continue the celebration with a major event, a Flower Festival, in the Old and New Churches, from Thursday 10th to Sunday 10th July.

Back in the 1930s, the plan for a new church for Greenford was forming in the mind of the rector, Fr. Donald Harris. The problem was that the population of the parish grew and grew with many people coming to live in the new houses built on the fields of the village of Greenford and work in the factories such as those along the A40, like Hoover's and Aladdin. In this period Greenford Magna was the most populace parish in the country. The foundation stone was laid on 10th July, 1939 with huge optimism, but a few short weeks later, the Government declared war on Germany and hopes were floundering. A decision had to be taken – do we stop work until the end of the war or do we build on, despite all the difficulties which war will bring us?

Fortunately, they decided to build during the war and 70 years later, we are celebrating the beauty of the new Church as we continue to call it, and also celebrate the courage and hope and vision which stirred the hearts of those responsible 70 years ago. To build a new church during a world war was a huge achievement.

The new church plan came close to being abandoned on several occasions as shortages of cash and materials led to delays and anxiety. Fr. Harris, whom I met three times whilst he was in his 90s himself told me the story that the wood for the church was shipped from Canada across the Atlantic in two vessels but they were separated after coming under attack from U-boats. One of the ships went to Liverpool and the other to Southampton and were immediately impounded by the authorities in case the wood was of use to the war effort. Fr. Harris wrote to the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for War asking plaintively, "Can we have our wood back, please!"

So, if you would like to share this moment of celebration, please contact the rector, Prebendary Neil Richardson and he will make sure that you are welcomed. or email or visit the parish website.