

Bombing Raid on Greenford (Sept 1940)

I was born after the war, but prompted by reading Ray Lawlor's (raylor, Article ID: 1951670) account of the Greenford bombing I recall my uncle's story of the incident. On the day of the raid (30/09/1940) my grandfather (William Cook) was at work at Napier's in Acton, but left in the morning during an air raid evacuation of the factory and decided to go home for the day. The bus dropped him at Greenford Broadway just about lunchtime. He would normally have walked straight back to the house in Allenby Road, but on that day he decided instead to have a drink at The Red Lion. This delay he was convinced saved his life because had he gone straight home he would have been in the path of the bombs. There was considerable damage and loss of life in the area of Verulum Road and Ruislip Road. There was a huge crater right outside Priestley's sweet shop on Ruislip Road, but amazingly the shop front was not damaged at all. Houses in Allenby Road were affected by the blast - my uncle recalled seeing a pane of glass that had been sucked out of a window frame lying unbroken on the ground. However, one neighbour recalled a woman in Verulum Road wandering around in her back garden with severe injuries from which she died. My uncle says my grandfather sent him round the shops during that afternoon for a stamp without mentioning anything about the bomb damage in the vicinity of the Ruislip Road shops, but assuming he would go instead to the Allenby Road Post Office. When my uncle entered the area (despite the warning signs and smell of gas) he was challenged by a policeman who went nuts when my uncle replied that he had come to buy a stamp, and sent him on his way with a flea in his ear!

The view I got about the reasons for the attack was that it was indiscriminate and probably a result of some German bombers being surprised by RAF fighters from Northolt and off-loading their bombs to help their escape.

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Greenford Baptist Church (Sept 1940)

War clouds had begun to form and darken the skies and in September 1939 war finally broke out. News of it was first heard at morning service and almost immediately the air raid sirens sounded. It was, however, unanimously agreed to continue with the service in spite of the warning which, in fact, proved to be a false alarm. On Monday, 30 September 1940 the warning sirens were not false and at 12.40 a.m. the church, for which so much hard work had been given, was totally destroyed by a direct hit of a high explosive heavy calibre bomb. Many homes in the area were also struck, doing much damage to property, insignificant however compared with the tragic loss of life and injury. Several church members also lost their homes



Both the Greenford Methodists and friends from the Church of England (Holy Cross) offered all possible assistance and use of premises. At first Church services continued at the Methodist Church, but after a while members met at Stanhope Boys School. On the ruined building was placed a notice, "The Church is down but we are not." Midweek prayer meetings were held at the Manse. .

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