

# St Paul's Harefield

The organization Taking Stock\* has described St Paul's, Harefield thus:

**Harefield - St Paul**

**Diocese: Westminster**

**Architect: Broadbent, Hastings, Read & New of Twickenham**

**Original Date: 1964**

**Conservation Area: Yes**

**Listed Grade: Not listed**

*An economically built mid-1960s church originally built as a dual-purpose church and hall, with later additions. The building is located in, but makes no great contribution to, a local conservation area.*

Until the building of the present church Mass was said at the hospital of Harefield Hospital in a chapel shared with Anglicans. Later a British Legion hut was used.

The present church was built as a dual-purpose church and parish hall, providing space for Sunday Mass and weekday activities, together with a small oratory. However, the need was later felt for a parish social area and club room separated from the church, so a hall was built on to the rear of the church in 1973-74 at a cost of c. £15,000, using materials to match the existing building (architects Burles, Newton & Partners). Later a further hall - a former commercial building - was bought for church use and lies at the rear of the 1970s hall.

The building is an economical structure, built of stock brick under flat roofs. The core is a rectangular space which formed the dual nave-hall area in the 1960s. Projecting from it and facing the road is a polygonal sanctuary, marked out by a large, red brick cross set into the wall.

The upper part of the frontage has artificial tile cladding. To the right is the entrance; to the left a chapel. Also on the right-hand side is a range with a meeting room, sacristy and kitchen: on the first floor is what was once a chapel. Over this area is a square open box which houses a single bell. The windows are a mixture of vertical and horizontal lights.

Inside, the building is remarkably dark due to the bare brick walling, a natural wood-coloured boarded ceiling, and a lack of windows: only the rear of the main space is well illuminated due to three top lights in the flat roof: artificial lighting is therefore essential when the building is in use.

The sanctuary still retains the folding shutters that enabled it to be separated off when the nave was in secular use. On the left (facing the sanctuary) are two sets of plain shutters giving access to the kitchen area. In the chapel to the right of the sanctuary is some lurid red glass. There are no fittings or furnishings requiring notice.

*\*Taking Stock is a project of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. It began in 2005, and has been undertaken on a diocese-by-diocese basis. There are 22 dioceses in England and Wales. Therefore Taking Stock is a snapshot of the dioceses at the time that the report was made.*

*The purpose of Taking Stock is to provide an architectural and historical audit of the Roman Catholic churches in England and Wales. It is intended to be an aid to the dioceses, to parishes, to the statutory authorities, and to the general public when questions arise involving churches.*

Hmm... Not very flattering but things have changed at St Paul's - and are continuing to change.

**A brief timeline of the development of St Paul's Parish reads as follows:**

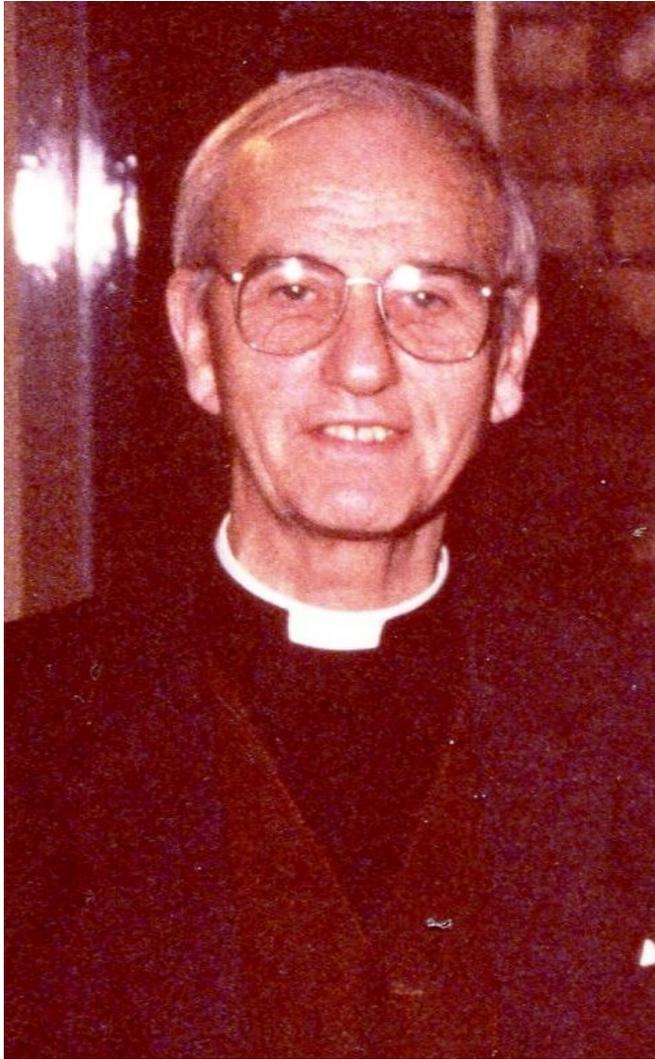
**1929** In March 1929 the Diocese of Westminster bought a piece of land which was part of the Old Vicarage Estate. His Eminence Cardinal Bourne signed a restrictive covenant on the land. The Cardinal was advised in this matter by Canon Reginald B Fellows, the first Parish Priest of St Matthew's in Northwood, and a former Anglican. Canon Fellows had been a barrister and a stockbroker before the priesthood and was astute in financial matters.

The most relevant part of the covenant signed by Cardinal Bourne was to restrict the type of building which could be erected i.e. no building can be erected other than a church, hall or school; or a private dwelling house costing over £700.



**Francis Alphonsus Cardinal Bourne**

In the 1930s and 1940s, although there was no parish as yet, the Harefield area was serviced from Ruislip and did have Sunday Masses at various locations. For some time a priest travelled each Sunday morning on horseback from Ruislip.



**Fr Lionel J Keane ... the first Parish Priest of St Paul's Harefield**

**1954** Bungalow 2 Merle Ave was purchased.

**1955** September 1955 Planning permission given to erect presbytery, hall and caretakers cottage for Canon Rivers on land alongside Merle House. Plans drawn for proposed church hall.

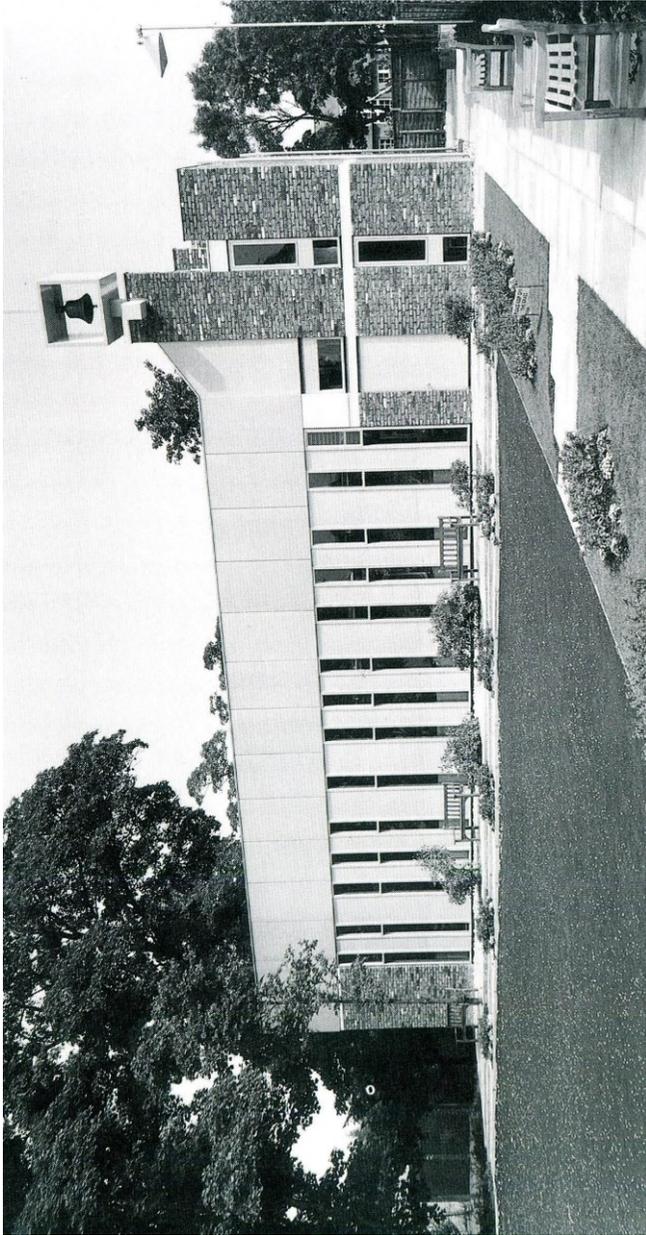
**1962** 1 Dunster Close purchased by the Diocese

**1963** Fr Lionel J Keane moves into 1 Dunster Close. Masses celebrated in the Legion Hall and in the chapel of Harefield Hospital. Masses also celebrated in the garage adjoining No 1 Dunster Close.

**1964** Hall and bar built as the first phase of development. Hall to be used as a temporary church.

**1965** Masses begin to be celebrated in hall

**1966** Fr Keane officially appointed Parish Priest



**The church hall was constructed in 1964**

**1967** His eminence John Carmel, Cardinal Heenan, Archbishop of Westminster on 5th April 1967 canonically erected the parish of Harefield, and dedicated it to Saint Paul, Apostle of the nations.



**John Carmel, Cardinal Heenan**



**Cardinal Heenan on a pastoral visit to the parish**

**1968** Fr Keane started to have considerable trouble with the owner of the unadopted road who was trying to restrict access to the church site across his land. The problem arose because the access gate to the bungalow was being used to access the new hall. It appears that the solution was to stop up this gate.

**1973/1974** Social club/bar area was improved. The warehouse was erected on what was a builders' yard behind the hall.

**1977** Fr John Helm appointed Parish Priest

**1981** Survey in April 1981 found that the church hall was in poor state of repair. Most of the window frames were rotten and the roof needed major repairs. Plans drawn up in 1981 to complete the development of the site by adding a new church building and porch to the existing church hall. Plans were scaled back due to lack of funds. Go ahead was given in June to add the present sanctuary, day chapel and porch. In September 1981 further plans were drawn up to extend the building forward towards Merle Ave to form a new church. December 1981 the plans were redrawn to include a new presbytery and offices/meeting rooms. Total cost for this work was estimated as £186,000.



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Reference: 03/OB/GRT

10th April 1968

Dear Father Keane,

I understand from our Religious Broadcasting Department that they wish to broadcast a service from St. Paul's Roman Catholic Church, Harefield, Middlesex on Sunday, 28th April 1968 from 10.30-11.15 a.m. in the Home Service, Radio 4.

I am, therefore, asking our Accounts Department to forward you a cheque for £31.10.0. after the broadcast has taken place; this amount has been made up as follows:-

Facilities Fee	£7. 7. 0.
Personal payment	£10.10. 0.
Piano accompanist	£ 3. 3. 0.
St. Aidan's Club Guitar Singers (10), directed by Father G. Burke	£10.10. 0.

I should be most grateful if you would kindly distribute the above fees accordingly.

Yours sincerely,

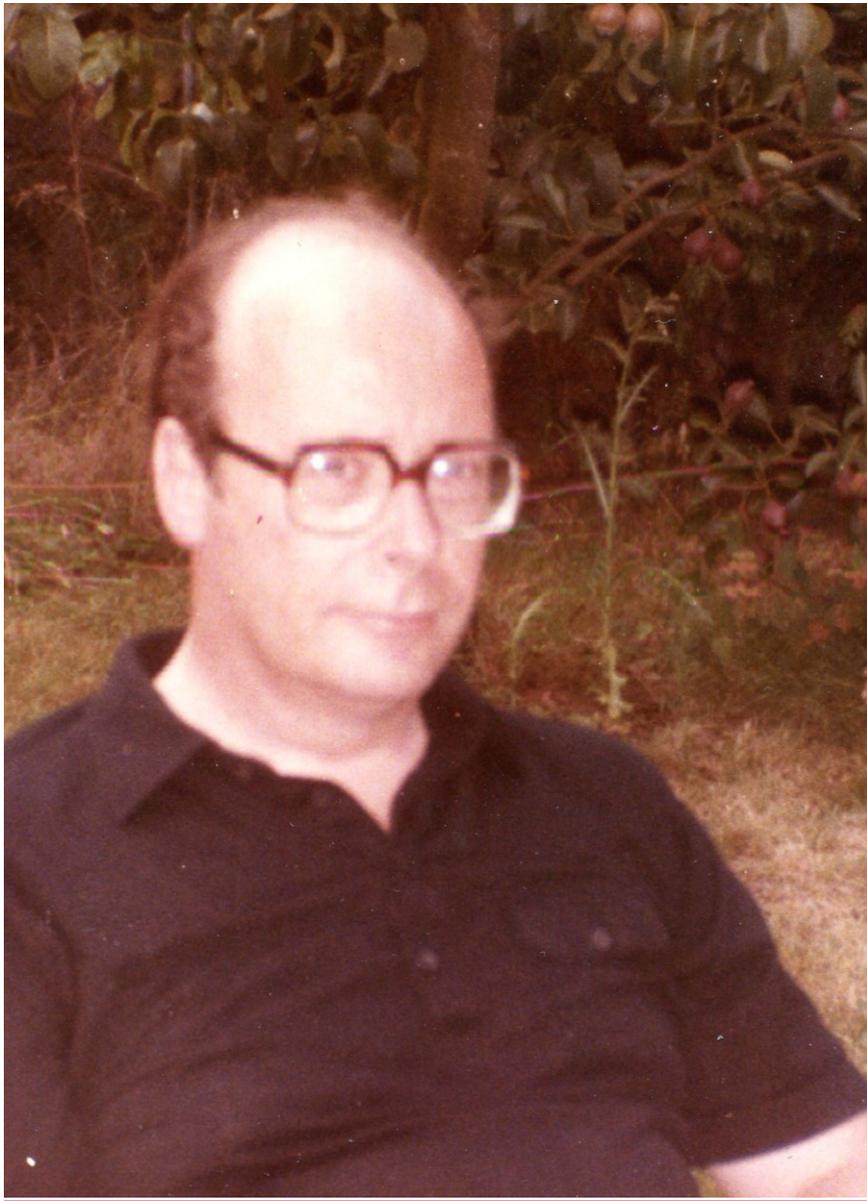
(G.R. Topping)

Outside Broadcasts Organiser (Radio)

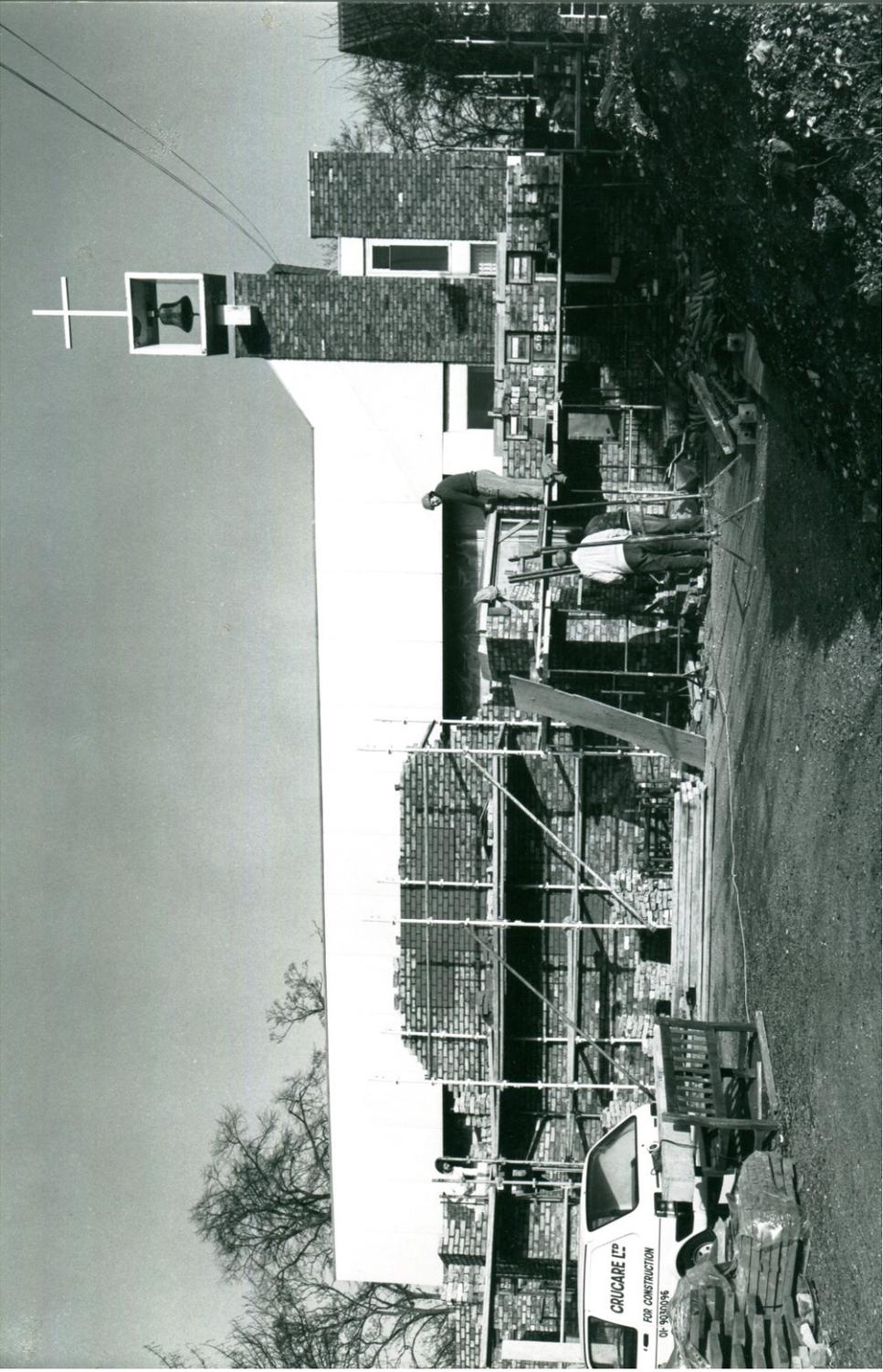
Father L.J. Keane,  
St. Paul's Roman Catholic Church,  
Harefield,  
Middlesex.

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**BBC Radio 4 broadcast the Sunday morning Mass at St Paul's on 28<sup>th</sup> April 1968**



**Fr John Helm was appointed parish priest in 1977**



In 1983 a new sanctuary, altar and entrance was added to church hall

**1982** Planning permission given to construct the new sanctuary and chapel. Builder was instructed to go ahead in August.

**1983** New sanctuary, altar and entrance added to church hall. Altar consecrated by Cardinal Hume June 1983

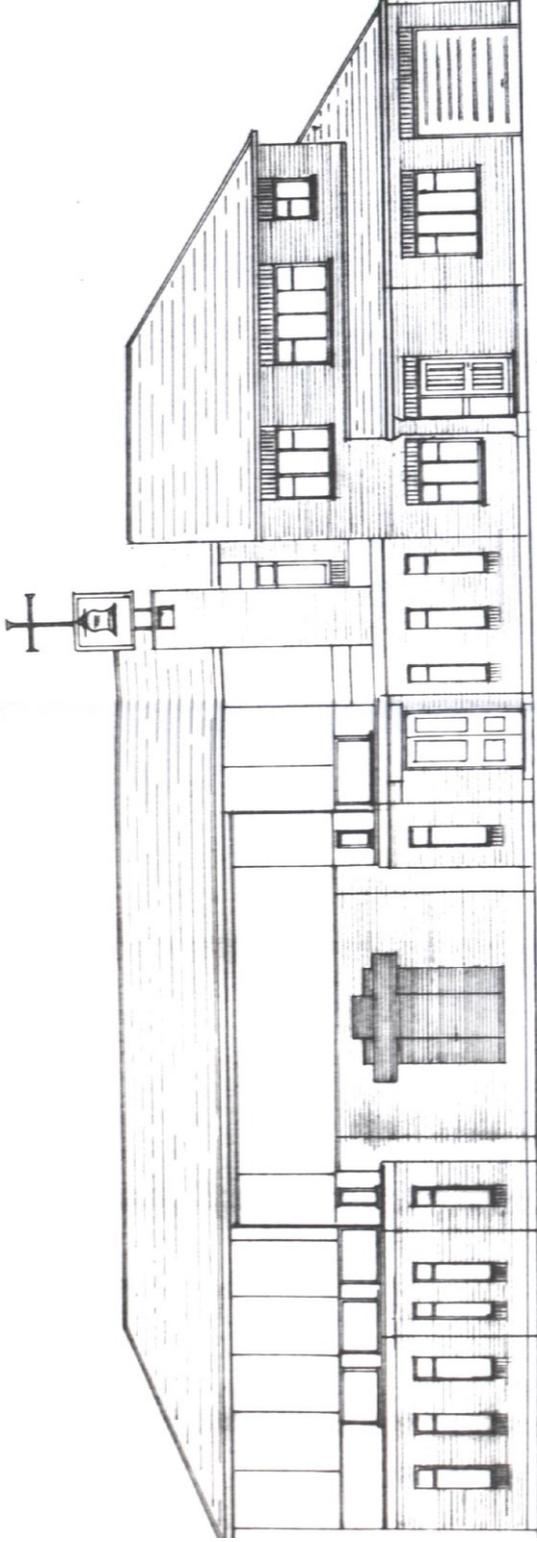
**1982-1987** Further work was done on the plans to complete the church and add a presbytery. The planning officer was consulted about the exterior look of the building.

**1986** Fr Joe Gibbons was appointed Parish Priest.

**1987** Planning consent was sought for the plans but alterations were requested by the Local Authority. The plans were duly altered and Fr Gibbons gave permission for the bungalow to be demolished in readiness for the next phase of development. This was done to prevent squatters moving in.



**Fr Joe Gibbons appointed Parish Priest in 1986**



An architectural drawing depicting the proposed new church design and presbytery premises.  
Plans for this project were abandoned circa 1990.



**Fr Cedric Stanley was appointed parish priest in 1988**



**Joan Cecil began work as pastoral assistant in the parish in 1988. Her work included being catechist to First Holy Communion and Confirmation groups and she was responsible for introducing some new and imaginative features to the liturgy.**

**1988** Fr Cedric Stanley was appointed parish priest.

Planned extensions to the church were put on hold. The figure for Sunday Mass attendance was between 130 and 140 and it was felt that the proposed extensions were not financially viable due to the parish's low income.

**1993** Harefield Hospital was under threat of closure.

The ramifications of this proposed closure would have a big impact on the area and of course affect church attendances and jeopardise the viability of any further building plans.

**1994** After protracted negotiations Roure House, 38a High St Harefield, and a small workshop to the rear of the church hall were purchased for £120,000. The right of way across the unadopted road at the back of the shops was part of this purchase.

A door was inserted in the back wall of the bar to give access to the workshop. A garage was constructed at one end of the building.

Roure House was converted into two flats for use by Harefield Hospital transplant patients and their families who were visiting Harefield Hospital

**May 2005** Fr Stanley reported that the conversion of Roure House into two flats had been completed.

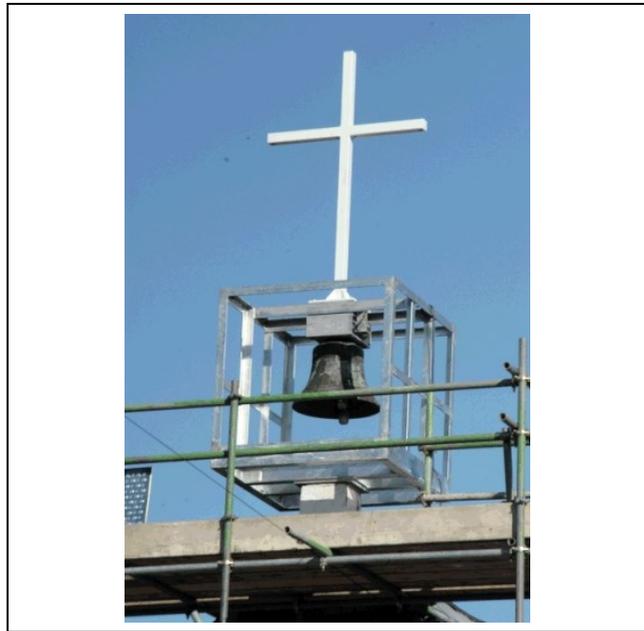
The address of the premises had been changed to St Paul's House, 2 Merle Ave. The first transplant patient and his family were in residence

**2005** Trimlock fencing was installed along the boundary behind the shops

**2008** The church bell and its housing (which was seriously deteriorated) were refitted and rehung and timing mechanism installed.

**2012** Fr James Mallon was appointed Priest/Administrator for the parish. Fr Mallon had a new heating system installed necessitating the church boilers being replaced. (The boilers had apparently been condemned some time earlier.)

An asbestos survey was carried out and the asbestos was removed.



**2008 ... Church bell rehung and timing mechanism installed**

St. Paul's has a single 2'-0" diameter bell cast at the world-famous Whitechapel Bell Foundry in 1966. It was refurbished in 1982 as the wooden cross mounted on top had rotted at the base and broken off while the cage itself was heavily corroded. A replacement cage was fabricated to the same external dimensions at the foundry, and a new cross made from hollow steel section. A timing mechanism was also installed.

**TREND &  
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**ROURE HOUSE, 38a HIGH STREET, HAREFIELD, MIDDX**

WAREHOUSE/LABORATORY 1,755 sq.ft.  
TWO STOREY OFFICE BLOCK TOTALLING 900 sq.ft.  
FOR SALE FREEHOLD



**SITUATION**

The property is positioned on the western side of the High Street at its northern end close to its junction with Park Lane, Rickmansworth and Breakspear Roads. It is basically within the village centre itself close to Harefield Hospital and Trafalgar House Medi-Park presently under construction. Good access onto the A412 North Orbital Road and Junctions 16 and 17 of the M25 motorway is available. The village of Harefield itself is surrounded by Green Belt land and is of a mixed residential, rural and commercial nature.

**DESCRIPTION**

The premises comprise two buildings. There is an office block constructed in 11" cavity brick and blockwork under a pitched roof covered with interlocking concrete tile. This comprises ground floor accommodation of 376 sq.ft. net usable floor area plus kitchen and reception as well as ladies and gents w.c. facilities. The first floor is partitioned and totals 533 sq.ft. of net usable area.



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**Roure House for sale**



**Fr James Mallon was appointed as Priest/Administrator in 2012**

**2013** Fr Mallon began an extensive decluttering of the church and the church premises. A team of parishioners, affectionately known as The Wrecking Crew, began a programme of dismantling, demolishing, disposing of what was unwanted and unneeded. The team includes among others: Mike Cassidy, Marie Pearson, Donna Holland and Bernadette Mitchell.



**A trio from The Wrecking Crew ...  
Marie Pearson, Donna Holland and Bernadette Mitchell**

**2014** To provide a regular income to the parish the club and warehouse were let on a long lease to First Cheer a firm specialising in the production of cheerleading clothing and accessories.

**2015** Fr Jim Mulligan appointed Parish Priest. Fr Jim also took up duties as Roman Catholic chaplain to Harefield Hospital – the hospital had been without a regular Catholic

chaplain for some time.



Fr Jim Mulligan

In the spring of 2015 works were started to upgrade the building and fix problems with the roof. The Perspex awning had perished and much damage had been caused by leaks where lead flashing had been stolen.

The parish room was renovated and furnished. Work started to develop into a Lady Chapel the the area to right side of the sanctuary which was being used for storage.

A statue of St Paul - the design based to some extent on the St Paul statue at the entrance to The Basilica of St Paul Outside the Walls in Rome - was purchased from the USA and placed on a plinth in the church entrance.

Other statuary placed in the church at this time included a cold cast bronze of St Michael the Archangel, a Statue of Our Lady of Fatima, a statue of Our Lady of Grace, and a Sacred Heart of Jesus statue.

Two new electric votive candle stands plus a votive candle stand burning fifteen hour candles were installed. Other innovations included the hanging of sanctuary tapestries and the purchase of a parish Book of Remembrance and the installation of a Remembrance Book cabinet.

In the autumn of 2015 a complete set of much-needed new church seating was supplied.



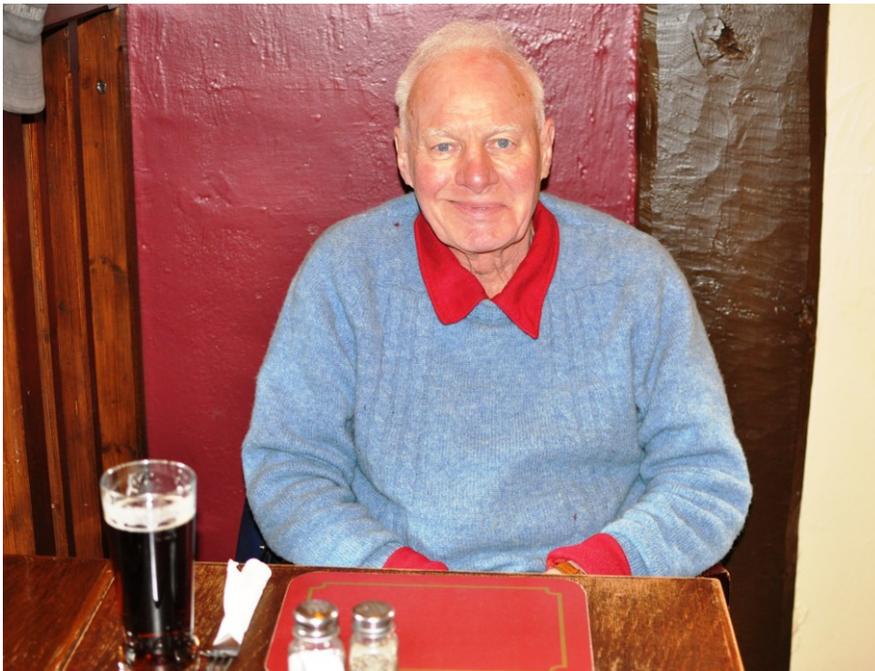
**Parish Priest Fr Jim Mulligan airborne on a WWII Boeing –Stearman biplane in the skies over Oxfordshire on Saturday 25th July 2015 in a sponsored wing-walk to raise money for new seating for the church.**



**The new church seating**



**The new Lady Chapel ... completed 2017**



**Fr Cedric Stanley still lives in Harefield in his retirement. He is photographed here enjoying a pint in the Harefield Kings Arms with Fr Jim Mulligan.**



Recent acquisitions: oak pulpit, Epistle lectern and Remembrance Book cabinet



**The Lourdes grotto in the parish prayer garden was consecrated on 15<sup>th</sup> August 2017,  
Solemnity of the Assumption**