A GUIDE TO THE RUINED CATHEDRAL

On 14 November 1940, the city of Coventry came under a sustained attack from the bombs of the Luftwaffe. The cathedral suffered a direct hit and burned with its city. Its ruins are what you see today.

**The Sanctuary** is the central feature of the ruins. Its medieval coloured glass was removed at the beginning of the war, and some is displayed in the Visitors' Centre. Observant visitors may notice squirrels carved in the stonework, believed to represent the woodland which surrounded Coventry. Another animal intruder is a mouse carved on the wooden Bishop's chair, the signature of its maker, Robert Thompson. Bishops Gorton and Bardsley were enthroned in this chair.

**The Charred Cross and Altar of Reconciliation**
As the Cathedral burned in 1940, two of the charred roof beams fell in the shape of a cross. They were lashed together and placed in the ruins. An altar was built from the rubble, and the cross was erected.

The words 'Father Forgive', spoken by Jesus on the Cross, were carved in 1948. This Altar of Reconciliation is at the heart of the Cathedral's ministry.

**The Tower and Spire**
The tower was built between 1373-1394 and its spire, the third highest in England, was added in 1433. Along with much of the rest of St Michael's, the building of the tower and spire was made possible because of the generosity of the Botoner family, who are remembered by statues on the tower. Sir Christopher Wren declared it to be a masterpiece of Gothic building. It escaped destruction in 1940. Twelve bells were rehung for the Cathedral's Silver Jubilee in 1987 and rang for the first time in 100 years when Coventry City won the FA cup final.

**Bishop Haigh's Memorial Chapel** is one of the oldest parts of the Cathedral. It is named as a memorial to the Bishop of Coventry at the time of the destruction and is also known as the Chapel of the Resurrection. Morning and Evening Services were conducted in this Chapel before the new Cathedral was consecrated.

**The Guild Chapels** around the walls are a distinctive feature and remind the visitor of Coventry's industrial history reaching back to medieval times. They have been made into 'Hallowing Places', reminding us that the whole of our lives should be holy.

**The Cappers' Room** above Bishop Haigh's Chapel is the only Guild Chapel above ground level to have survived the bombing. Now restored, it is used for the Annual Meeting of the Cappers' Guild.

**A Pinnacle** in front of the Tower marks the spot where King George VI stood when he visited the Cathedral in 1940 to view the war damage.

The **Wyley Chapel and Chapel of the Cross**, situated in the crypt under the ruins, survived the bombing to the extent that it was possible to use them for Sunday services. The Chapel of the Cross was the original Chapel of Unity.