

Cathedral area locations. See rear cover from more locations in city centre

19

18

10

11

8

9

7

6

5

4

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1

2

16

14

15

17

# Coventry Peace Trail

*A guide to peace sites in Coventry*  
*UK City of Peace and Reconciliation*

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## Key to locations

Welcome from the Lord Mayor

- 1 The Cathedral Ruins
- 2 The Charred Cross
- 3 Commemorative Plaque
- 4 Reconciliation Sculpture
- 5 Choir of Survivors
- 6 Memorial to Civilians Killed in War
- 7 Oak trees for peace
- 8 Peace Pole
- 9 Chapel of Unity
- 10 Stalingrad Madonna
- 11 The Cross of Nails
- 12 Global Candle-stand
- 13 The Font
- 14 Herbert Art Gallery and Museum
- 15 Twin Cities Plinth
- 16 St. Mary's Guild Hall
- 17 Coventry Council House
- 18 Holy Trinity Church
- 19 Volgograd Memorial
- 20 Godiva Statue
- 21 Dresden Place
- 22 Phoenix Statue
- 23 Ira Aldridge Plaque
- 24 Lidice Place
- 25 St John the Baptist Church
- 26 Belgrade Theatre
- 27 Millennium Place
- 28 The Public Bench
- 29 The Future Monument
- 30 St Michael's Peace Garden

Links for More Information

Peace Locations outside city centre

Follow the map online at [covpeacetrail.uk](http://covpeacetrail.uk)

# Welcome from the Lord Mayor

Thank you for taking this walking tour which visits many sites associated with peace in Coventry city centre. The city's willingness to set the past aside after the second world war and hold out the hand of friendship has given it an international reputation as a city of peace and reconciliation.

In 1944, the people of Coventry and Stalingrad (since renamed Volgograd) declared a formal friendship link between their two war-devastated cities. Now 26 towns and cities around the world are twinned with Coventry.

The global ministry of Coventry Cathedral, dedicated to peace and reconciliation and active in many troubled parts of the world, has reinforced that pioneering civic initiative. It was strengthened further by the founding of Coventry University's Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations and the establishment of my Committee for Peace and Reconciliation which has produced this booklet and works with the city, cathedral, and university to promote the study and discussion of issues related to conflict resolution and to organize events such as the annual peace festival held in November each year.



I hope you will enjoy your tour and your visit to our wonderful city.

Lord Mayor of Coventry

# 1 The Cathedral Ruins

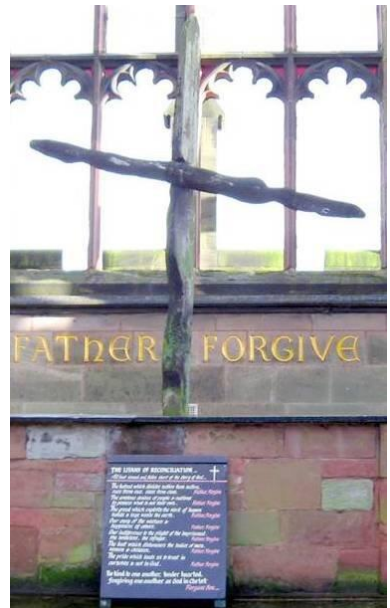


St Michael's Cathedral was destroyed from the air on the night of 14 November, 1940, the only cathedral church in Britain to be lost in this way. The ruins stand not only as a

powerful symbol of the impact of war, but also as a place of pilgrimage, visited by many thousands each year who see the ruins as a vision of hope in the world.

## 2 The Charred Cross

At the altar of the ruined cathedral stands a charred cross, a replica of two beams found lying in a cruciform shape in the rubble on the morning after the destruction. On the wall behind it are the words Father Forgive, a plea directed not just at the aggressors, but also at those who suffered. A Litany of Reconciliation is said in the new Cathedral at noon every weekday and before this altar every Friday

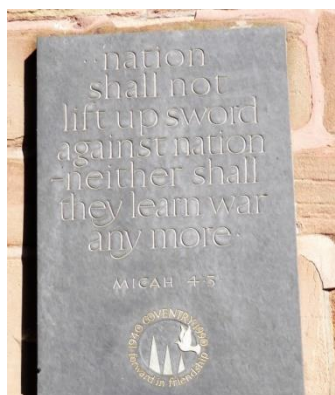


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as well as in other centres of reconciliation, reaffirming the Cathedral's special ministry of reconciliation and renewal.

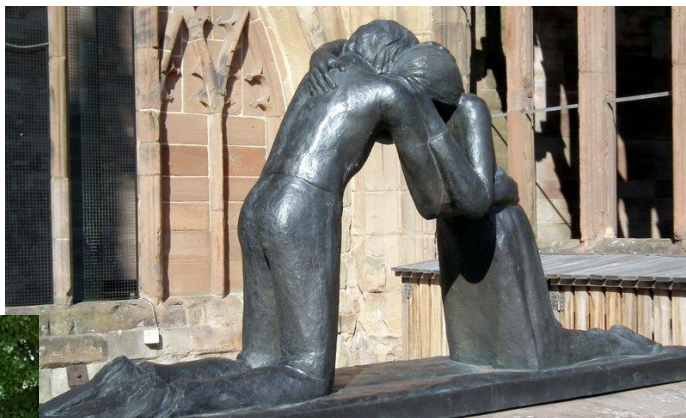
### 3 Commemorative Plaque

A plaque unveiled by Her Majesty The Queen Mother during the commemorations on 14 November, 1990, marking the 50th anniversary of the Coventry Blitz. It bears the words, 'nation shall not lift up sword against nation...neither shall they learn war any more.' Micah 4.3



### 4 Reconciliation Sculpture

A work by Josefina de Vasconcellos, representing the reconciliation of those divided by war. It was



donated to Coventry Cathedral by Sir Richard Branson in 1995 to mark the 50th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. Identical sculptures have been placed in the Peace Garden at Hiroshima, the gardens of Stormont and in Berlin.

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## 5 Choir of Survivors

A sculpture dedicated to civilians killed or injured in aerial bombing during wars past and present. When the sculpture was unveiled in 2012 specific reference was made to German civilians killed in the Allied bombings in 1940-1945, particularly in Dresden. It is the work of contemporary German artist Helmut Heinze and was donated by the Frauenkirche Foundation of Dresden.

It is the first permanent memorial to German civilians within the grounds of the Cathedral.

## 6 Memorial to Civilians Killed in War

In the shadows of the ruined cathedral lies a stone commemorating non-combatants killed in war. Brought from the United States of America in 2001, the stone was exhibited in many locations before being installed in the gardens of the cathedral.



## 7 Oak trees for peace

A few metres from the memorial to civilians killed in war, just across St Michael's Avenue, are two Japanese oak trees. They were planted by Yoko Ono when she opened the city's peace month on 14 October 2005. On 15 June 1968, Follow the map online at [covpeacetrail.uk](http://covpeacetrail.uk)



John Lennon and Yoko Ono had planted two acorns for peace in the Cathedral grounds.

They were planted in easterly and westerly positions, symbolizing the meeting of the couple and the union of their two cultures. This was the first of many peace events that the couple would initiate throughout their lives.

## 8 Peace Pole

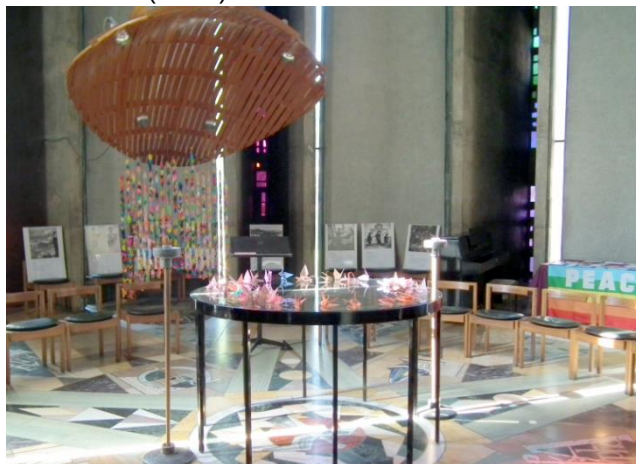
A hand-crafted white wooden pole, displaying the message 'May Peace Prevail on Earth' in English, French, German and Japanese.

More than 100,000 peace poles have been placed around the world in over 180 countries.



## 9 Chapel of Unity

At the time of the cathedral's consecration (1962) the idea of a separately administered, ecumenical chapel, for use by many denominations of the Christian faith, was truly innovative. Every year on 6 August, to commemorate the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, an event is held with readings and music to remember those who died and to commit to the creation

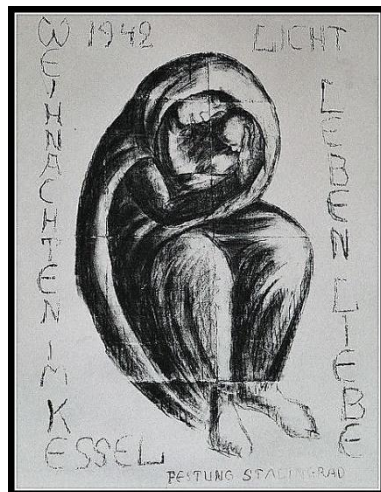


Follow the map online at [covpeacetrail.uk](http://covpeacetrail.uk)

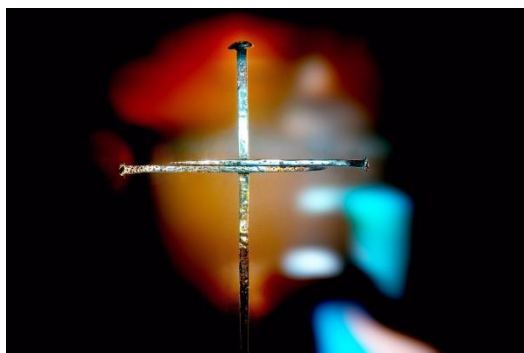
of a world without nuclear weapons. The event is open to the general public and people of all faiths.

## 10 Stalingrad Madonna

A sketch drawn by German army doctor Kurt Reuber while serving on the Eastern Front – the words Light, Life, and Love point to the confidence of hope amid the turmoil and chaos of war. The original is now in Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtnis-Kirche, Berlin, while copies of the Stalingrad Madonna hang in the cathedral's Millennium Chapel and in Volgograd (formerly Stalingrad) itself.



## 11 The Cross of Nails



The original cross of nails was made from medieval roofing nails found amongst the rubble on the morning after the blitz. Since then the Cross of Nails has become the symbol of the cathedral's international ministry for reconciliation. A network of

Cross of Nails Centres exists around the world.

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## 12 Global Candle-stand

This gift to the Cathedral from Kiel was designed with candle-holders for each of the victims, and perpetrators, of the London bombings of 7 July 2005. The candle-stand is a symbol of the cathedral's enduring commitment to sharing together in building a community and future for us all. Kiel, Germany, which was heavily bombed in the Second World War has been twinned with Coventry since 1947.



## 13 The Font

Sited beneath John Piper's stunning Baptistry window the baptismal font is crafted from a boulder from a hillside near Bethlehem. It was donated in 1960 by the government of Jordan as a gesture towards Muslim, Christian and Jewish cooperation.



## 14 Herbert Art Gallery and Museum

The Peace and Reconciliation Gallery within the Herbert Museum reflects Coventry's experience of war and the city's post-war commitment to reconciliation. It explores themes of friendship, peace, and reconciliation at local, regional and international levels.

In the history section of the museum are some items from the 2-tone era, created by Coventry musicians in the late 1970s with a black and white logo representing the desire to transcend and defuse racial tensions in Britain.

The Herbert also has a gallery of paintings illustrating the life and legend of Lady Godiva.

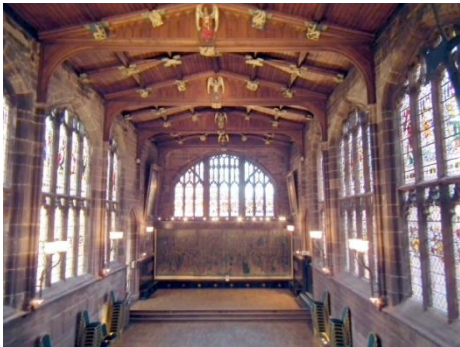


## 15 Twin Cities Plinth

A peace garden was formally opened by Her Majesty the Queen Mother in 1990 and a sculpture and plaque marking that event stands at the main entrance to the Herbert Gallery and Museum with olive trees representing peace. A plinth engraved with the names, direction and distance from Coventry, of the city's 26 twin towns and cities around the world, originally placed in the peace garden, now stands in the Herbert Gallery grounds, at the side entrance to the Gallery.

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## 16 St. Mary's Guild Hall



One of the finest surviving medieval guildhalls in England, St. Mary's Guild Hall was first built in the 1340s and enlarged and embellished at the end of the fifteenth century. Its main attraction is the Great Hall, with its stained glass windows, ceiling of carved angels and rare tapestry.

Coventry's annual Peace Lecture is normally held in the Great Hall.

## 17 Coventry Council House

The construction of this beautiful building was interrupted by the First World War and finally completed in 1920. The Lord Mayor greets foreign dignitaries in his/her parlour. His/her Committee for Peace and Reconciliation meet here, as do Coventry Association for International Friendship. The recently completed panels of the Godiva Tapestry marking periods of war and peace during the history of the city is on display in the lower ground floor.



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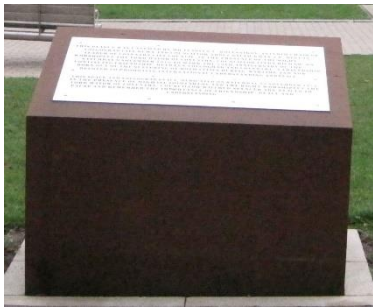
## 18 Holy Trinity Church

This church is committed to peace and reconciliation. The Peace chapel remembers the lives lost in the sacrificial work for peace. Its stone memorial is inscribed with the names of sailors who died in the sinking of HMS Coventry and the two kneeling-desks were donated



by two families who lost a loved one in the Falklands war. The weather vane is a dove of peace.

## 19 Volgograd Memorial



Coventry's links with Volgograd, formerly Stalingrad, were established in 1944 as a result of both cities experiencing the devastation of the Second World War. The epic battle for the city raged from the spring of 1942 to February 1943. More than 1,000 tons of bombs were

dropped on the city and fierce fighting took place. At the time of the onslaught women from Coventry sent a message of hope to the women of Stalingrad, having experienced the Blitz a few years earlier: 'From this city scarred and ravaged by the enemy of civilisation, our hearts go out to you, who now face slaughter and suffering even more fearful.

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## 20 Godiva Statue

Godiva was a historic person, the wife of Leofric, the 11th century Earl of Mercia. Legend has it that she rode naked through the streets of Coventry – covered only by her long hair – to gain a remission of the oppressive taxation that her husband had imposed on his tenants. Godiva has become a powerful symbol of compassion and commitment to social justice, and is the most important civic icon of the city.



## 21 Dresden Place



Dresden was twinned with Coventry in 1956 and remains one of the city's closest links. A plaque marking the square was unveiled in 1974 by the Lord Mayor of Dresden, testimony to the friendship link 'born out of wartime destruction and now devoted to international

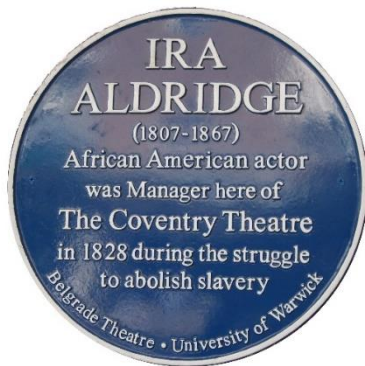
understanding and peace.'

## 22 Phoenix Statue

Near Dresden Place is the Phoenix sculpture. Coventry sculptor George Wagstaffe's 1962 work is a personal take on the phoenix that symbolises the new city arising from the flames and destruction of the old.



## 23 Ira Aldridge Plaque



In 1828, in the age of slavery, Aldridge became Manager of the Coventry Theatre - the first black person ever to run a British theatre. His performances and the plays he presented led the city to petition Parliament to abolish slavery. He was only 20.

Ira Aldridge broke through the racial barriers. He came to England to escape racism in America (he had been savagely beaten for daring to act in Shakespeare) only to encounter prejudice once again. But he persevered against all odds, performed for the crowned heads of Europe, and has become an inspirational figure for artists from Paul Robeson to Adrian Lester.

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## 24 Lidice Place



At the entrance to the Lower Precinct a decorative plaque on a free-standing plinth commemorates another of Coventry's friendship links born out of suffering, this time with the Czech village of Lidice, razed to the ground by the Nazis in 1942.

## 25 St John the Baptist Church



Founded in 1344, the medieval St John the Baptist Church has seen much over its long history. The church hosts a copy of a prayer of atonement, from the Black Prince, seeking peace following his battles in France.

In the spirit of reconciliation, in 1951 the congregation commissioned, out of their own pockets, an outstanding set of Stations of the Cross carved in Bavaria. When open, the church offers the St John the Baptist chapel for quiet prayer and contemplation.

## 26 Belgrade Theatre

The city's main theatre is named in honour of the capital of Serbia, once part of Yugoslavia, which was twinned with Coventry in 1957 and provided a gift of wood for the interior of the new building. On the building's street frontage there is a sculptured relief depicting Belgrade in 1684.



## 27 Millennium Place

Opened in 2003, Millennium Place, outside the Coventry Transport Museum, features artworks concerned with friendship and reconciliation on both a personal and community level.

## 28 The Public Bench

The Public Bench by the German artist Jochen Gerz is decorated with plaques celebrating personal friendships, placed on the wall by more than 2000 local people.



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## 29 The Future Monument

Also created by Jochen Gerz, the Future Monument is a glass obelisk surrounded by plaques celebrating former enemies that have become friends to Coventry, while a smaller ring of plaques represents many of the different communities to be found in the city.

## 30 St Michael's Peace Garden

One of Coventry's 18 Peace Gardens is planted within Lady Herbert's Gardens. Each is dedicated to a country where Coventry has a twin city. Look for the triangular group of a trees representing the famous three spires that survived the Blitz.



Follow the map online at [covpeacetrail.uk](http://covpeacetrail.uk)

## **Links for More Information**

### **1 Coventry Cathedral**

<https://www.coventrycathedral.org.uk/wpsite/teacher-resources>

### **5 Choir of Survivors**

<https://www.dresden.de/en/city/07/03/Remembrance.php>

### **6 Memorial to Civilians killed in war**

[www.peaceabbey.org](http://www.peaceabbey.org)

### **8 Peace Pole**

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peace\\_pole](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peace_pole)

### **14 Herbert Gallery**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M-v-S4zpbU8>

### **15 Twin cities plinth**

<https://www.coventry.gov.uk/twintownsandcities>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twin\\_cities](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twin_cities)

<http://www.caif.co.uk/>

### **20 Godiva Statue**

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lady\\_Godiva](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lady_Godiva)

### **24 Lidice Place**

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/lidice>

### **26 Belgrade Theatre**

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belgrade\\_Theatre](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belgrade_Theatre)

<https://www.belgrade.co.uk/>

### **28 & 29 Public Bench & Future Monument**

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jochen\\_Gerz](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jochen_Gerz)

### **30 St Michael's Peace Garden**

<https://covpeacetrail.uk/3-trees-peace-gardens/>

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## **Peace Locations outside city centre**

### **3 Trees Peace Gardens**

Each of the city's eighteen 3 Trees Peace Gardens, one in each of the 18 Wards, is dedicated to one of the eighteen countries with whom Coventry shares a sister City.

<https://covpeacetrail.uk/3-trees-peace-gardens/>

### **Other Peace Places in Coventry**

Find the locations of the following at

<https://covpeacetrail.uk/other-peace-places-map/>

### **Coventry Peace Orchard**

The project is a partnership between Cardinal Newman, Normandy Day UK and Coventry City Council, who have offered the site and will help maintain it. The orchard commemorates soldiers who fell among the apple orchards of Normandy during the Battle of Normandy between June and August 1944 and is the brainchild of 93 year-old decorated Coventry Normandy veteran, Dennis Davison. <https://www.peaceorchard.co.uk/>

### **Breathing Space**

Breathing Space offers an online retreat to reflect on the events of this year, to restore perspective and refresh your faith. The property is tucked away behind other houses and the local post office. Walk down the short driveway towards 123A, then turn right across the courtyard towards the green garage doors. Steps and the path to the front door are on your left.

<https://www.breathingspacecoventry.org/>

### **Allesley Peace Tree**

Oak tree planted in memory of those who have given their lives that others might live in peace.

### **St Mary Magdalen Church**

The "church with the blue roof" in 2020 is developing a Peace Garden in the green space along Hearsall Lane

### **German Peace Garden**

The garden was opened on 8 May 1963 by the German Ambassador, His Excellency Dr Hasso von Eetzdorf.

### **Japanese Peace Garden**

This garden is currently under construction within the aviary of Coventry War Memorial Park.

<https://coventrycityofpeace.uk/japanese-peace-garden-project/>

Follow the map online at [covpeacetrail.uk](https://covpeacetrail.uk)

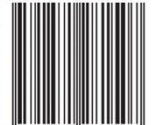


See front cover for cathedral  
area locations.

Interactive maps available  
at

[covpeacetrail.uk](http://covpeacetrail.uk)

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**Coventry Lord Mayor's Committee**  
*for Peace & Reconciliation*