



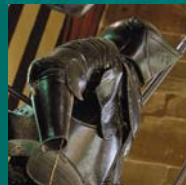
## OPENING HOURS

10.00am to 4.00pm  
Admission Free  
Open Easter to to end of September,  
Sunday to Thursday (closed Friday and Saturday)

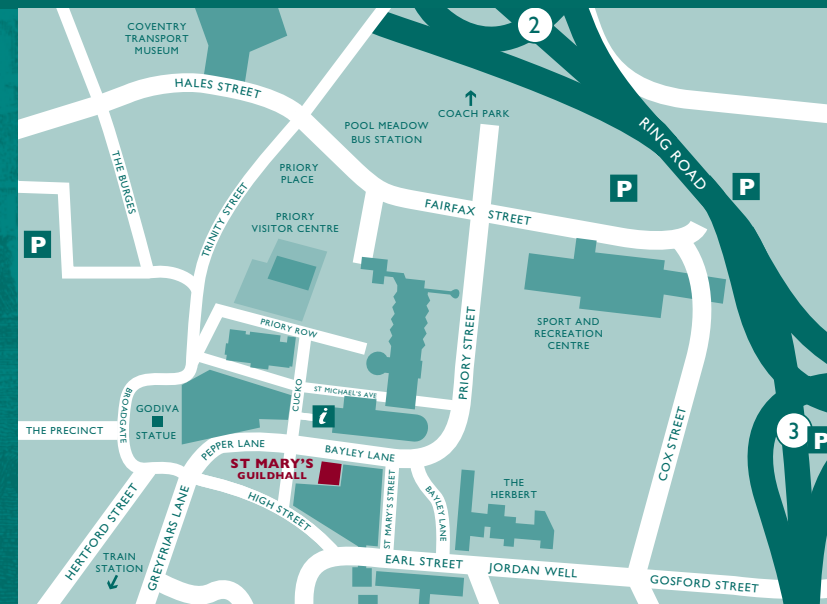
To check opening times and for all other enquiries, please contact:  
**St Mary's Guildhall** **Tel:** 024 7683 3325  
Bayley Lane **Fax:** 024 7683 3329  
Coventry CV1 5RR **Web:** [www.coventry.gov.uk/stmarys](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/stmarys)

## ACCESSIBILITY

St Mary's Hall is partly accessible to people with wheelchairs. There is a stairlift to the Great Hall and another for access to Godiva's café in the Undercroft. Staff can give assistance if required. The Ante Room, Armoury, Minstrels' Gallery and Mary Queen of Scots Room are unfortunately not accessible to wheelchairs.



Please telephone 024 7683 2381 if you require this information in large print, braille or tape format.



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**St Mary's Guildhall**  
City Services Directorate  
Bayley Lane  
Coventry CV1 5RR



## ORIEL WINDOW

On the west side of the Great Hall, the Oriel window probably dates from 1394 – 1414 and was rebuilt in 1826. Some of the glass was placed there from the north window when it was restored in 1893. Standing in the Oriel is W.C. Marshall's mid 19th century statue of Lady Godiva, and either side are two early stone statues from the demolished Coventry Cross.



## ARMOURY

This is approached up a narrow stone staircase. Half way up the staircase is the Ante Room with its sloping floor and a tapestry made of metal installed in 2001. The Armoury itself housed the city's armour, surviving pieces of which are displayed on the Minstrels' Gallery.



## TREASURY

This room is approached through the Old Council Chamber. It has a fine tiled floor which may have come from the Great Hall when the original floor was replaced. The Treasure Chest appears to be 13th century and therefore pre-dates the Hall. The wooden statue is of St. George, who, as one legend has it, was born in Coventry. The Treasury is in Caesar's Tower which was badly damaged in the Second World War and later restored.

## MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS ROOM

It is believed Mary Queen of Scots was imprisoned at the Guildhall when she was brought to the city in 1569 from Tutbury. Displayed here is a copy of the letter from Queen Elizabeth I ordering the citizens of Coventry to keep Mary secure. The original is still in the City's Archives.



# ST MARY'S GUILDHALL

COVENTRY'S BEST KEPT MEDIEVAL SECRET

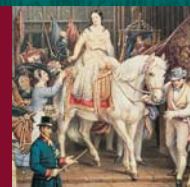






# THE GUILDHALL

St Mary's Guildhall is one of the finest medieval guildhalls in England. It has stood at the heart of Coventry for over 650 years and witnessed events of both national and local importance. It served as the centre of King Henry VI's court during the Wars of the Roses and as a prison to Mary, Queen of Scots. William Shakespeare is thought to have staged his plays here and George Eliot who knew the Hall well used it as the setting for a scene in one of her novels. Its kitchens have prepared banquets for visiting monarchs and have fed starving weavers. It has been the good-humoured starting point for the famous Godiva Processions and been damaged in violent election riots. It was scarred by but survived the Blitz of Coventry during the Second World War and it continues to this day to welcome visitors from all over the world.



Flemish Tapestry



Coventry was an important medieval city and one of the largest in England in the 14th and 15th centuries. Its prosperity was founded on cloth production. This could trace its origins back to the wool trade that grew up around Coventry Priory, endowed by Lady Godiva and Earl Leofric in the 11th century.

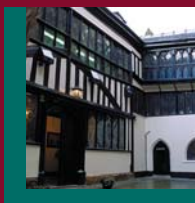
The Hall was first built in the early 1340s for the merchant Guild of St Mary. This Guild later merged with others to form the powerful Trinity Guild which counted Dick Whittington, Lord Mayor of London amongst its members.

The 1340s was an important period in Coventry's history. The decade also saw the foundation of the Whitefriars Monastery that still partly survives on the edge of the city centre and the building of St John's Church. In 1345 the Charter of Incorporation granted the city the right to have a Mayor and, since that time, St Mary's Hall has been at the centre of the city's government.



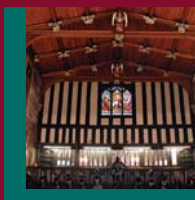
## ENTRANCE

The entrance to St Mary's Hall is on Bayley Lane which runs on the south side of the ruins of the 'old' Coventry Cathedral, along the approximate line of the bayley to Coventry's former castle. The outer Porch, with its sturdy 15th century gates and magnificent 14th century vaulting is particularly fine. From the Courtyard visitors enter the small 'Cloister' and climb the staircase, with its carved handrails, to the impressive Great Hall.



## GREAT HALL

This dates from the late 14th and early 15th centuries. The timber roof is adorned by a series of angel musicians and other finely carved ceiling bosses. The stained glass on either side of the Hall incorporates designs from the original 15th century windows, including historical figures amongst whom are royalty, members of the nobility, religious figures and mayors who played an important role in the history of the city in medieval times. Dominating the north wall is a fine late 15th century stained glass window, depicting actual or legendary rulers of England from the Roman Emperor Constantine and King Arthur through to Henry V and Henry VI.



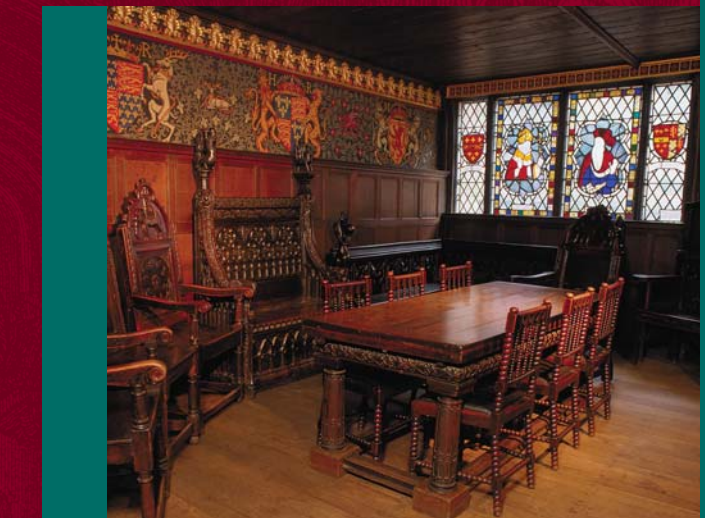
## TAPESTRY

On the north wall is an outstanding 15th century Flemish tapestry, thought to depict King Henry VI and Queen Margaret. This tapestry is of particular importance, not just for its age, quality and condition, but also because, more than 500 years later, it remains in exactly the location for which it was made.



## OLD COUNCIL CHAMBER

This room housed meetings of the city's governing body from at least 1421 to 1863. Restored in 1936 the oak panelling came from the Coventry Arms and the window includes the main surviving portion of glass from the east windows in the Great Hall. It includes the intricate and beautiful Guild Chair dating from around 1450. The oak table dates from around 1610 being purchased for the Hall in 1903 for £20.



## PRINCE'S CHAMBER

The name the 'Prince's Chamber' derives from the association of Coventry with the Black Prince, the son of Edward III who inherited the manor of Cheylesmore, which included Coventry, from his grandmother Queen Isabella in 1358. Camera Principis (the Prince's Chamber) is on the city's traditional coat of arms.