



The War Archive takes the unusual step of sending to its friends and supporters a "preview " of an official invitation, to be sent soon, for our end-of-year event and presentation to take place on **Saturday 10 December at 7.30**. Given this dates, we will not have a November presentation.

The Archive has always prided itself that we tried to present events covering all aspects of war

and not just battles. An accurate view of the way we would have wanted the presentations to feel and look like, would be to style them as presentations on "aspects of societies under pressure-and the ultimate pressure of war in particular"

In this context we are delighted to announce the December presentation will be entitled

"War an Architecture: The rebuilding of the Coventry Cathedral in UK as a gesture of reconciliation"

The presentation will be in English

The presenter will be Anthony Blee who worked as young architect in the building of new cathedral and was a member of the team of architects working under of the well-known architect Sir Basil Spence who designed the new cathedral. Anthony married the daughter of Basil Spence and continued to work with him.

The industrial city of Coventry was massively bombed by the Germans on 14 November 1940 and the medieval cathedral, built in 1043, was completely destroyed. The ruins of the cathedral become an iconic picture of the horrors of war. However the archbishop of the cathedral swore to have it rebuilt after the war as an act of forgiveness and reconciliation towards the Germans and not as an act of defiance and of victory. Needless to say his position was extremely controversial at the time, despite the fact that it was, in the spirit of Christianity, "turning the other cheek" and "forgiving your enemies".

The new cathedral was started in March 1956 and was officially opened in May 1962. It is a stunningly beautiful building not only architecturally but also in terms of its decoration and art. All the best of British painting, sculpture, carpentry, ceramics, glass, jewellery etc was used and all of the internal and external designs were specifically formed to focus on reconciliation. Leaving aside the purely "Christian" aspect of this building, it is a unique example of the impact of war on faith and on art and on the combination of the two to express a different view of what war meant.

We are extremely privileged to have among us someone who actively participated in the building and the design of this cathedral and who was also acutely aware at the time of the controversial nature of the project, as the building started just ten years after the war had ended, a war who had cost a lot in terms of lives and money to the UK.

Please mark the date in your diaries. You will receive by email the usual invitation, but if you know now that you will be able to attend, let us know by email of phone (Maka 69-98088220 or 210-8676390)