HOW DID COVENTRY'S MEDIEVAL GLASS SURVIVE WAR AND RELIGIOUS CHANGE?



WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Thousands of pieces of medieval stained glass from Coventry Cathedral have been photographed and added to a new digital collection. Much of the glass was made in the 15th century, when skilled craftsmen created colourful pictures of saints, Bible stories, animals and the people who paid for the windows. During the Reformation in the 16th century, some of the glass was smashed. Before the Second World War, the remaining pieces were taken down and hidden in wooden crates. This saved them when German bombs destroyed Coventry Cathedral during the Blitz on November 14, 1940. The old cathedral ruins were kept as a memorial, while a new cathedral was built beside them. The glass was never put back together, so conservators now describe it as a giant medieval jigsaw puzzle. The new digital project allows people to study the fragments and learn more about the people who made and paid for them.

WHY IS THIS INTERESTING?

The glass has survived several major changes in British history, including the Reformation and the Blitz. It shows how religious beliefs, war and decisions about preserving buildings can all affect what remains from the past. The fragments also reveal that ordinary wealthy townspeople helped pay for beautiful works of art.

THINK LIKE A HISTORIAN

"Why was Coventry's stained glass saved instead of being left in the cathedral?"

Source: Smithsonian Magazine

https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/dismantled-to-survive-the-nazi-blitz-coventry-cathedrals-stained-glass-is-a-medieval-jigsaw-puzzle-its-12000-fragmen