

Sixty one LEEDS – MARKETS & ARCADES

Kirkgate Market is huge. The arcades across the road are upmarket jewels. For wonderful shopping with fantastic architecture be forever grateful that neither the Luftwaffe nor the post war planners and architects wrecked this fine city centre.

Either: catch a train from Eccles to Manchester Victoria and change there to a Leeds train via Rochdale.

Or: catch a train from Eccles to Stalybridge. Change there onto a Leeds train.

Alight at Leeds. On leaving the platforms go straight through the shopping concourse and out.

Turn right along the approach road and when it comes to the main road (Boar Lane) turn right along it. *On the left is a large church building, and as you cross Briggate look right to see Balls Buildings.*

As you continue along Boar Lane, The Leeds Corn Exchange of 1862 fills the view ahead. *The cut of its stones gives it a reptilian ruggedness - a giant tortoise of a building with scales and shell!*

Go inside. *The trading floor is in a fine elliptical hall –a special roof design was needed to cover this. At one end of the major axis of the roof there is the Leeds coat of arms - three amusing owls, three stars on black and a suspended sheep with motto ‘Pro lege et rege’. At the other end is the clock supported by sheaves of corn. There is a good café in the basement. A few classy shops are now needed for the trading offices.*

Leave the Corn Exchange (*Notice Dackawell House opposite*) and go to your right up the wide main road (Vicar’s Lane) -ignoring the roads that go right down the side of the exchange.

About a hundred and fifty yards along enter the Kirkgate Market Hall by its corner door. *It is open 08.00 –17.30 except Wednesday & Sunday. Wow! This original hall has a most marvellous iron and glass roof, and the balcony is supported by red wyverns all round.*

Aisles off the side of this hall lead into the functional modern extension that is even bigger and doorways from this lead into the large outdoor market. *From the far end of the open market, look back at the spires of the Victorian market hall.*

Leave the market by the corner where you came in. Cross the road outside (Vicar's Lane). *Briefly look back at the fanciful exterior of the Market Hall with all its spires. You are leaving one fantasy and about to enter another!*

Go half way along King Edward Street *with all its fine red and pink stonework.* Turn right into Cross Arcade. *Wow! This could be Knightsbridge – have you brought plenty of money or a Coutt's cheque book?*

Keeping in the same direction cross a fine street that has been more recently glazed in - *excellent tea and coffee stall on right – serves biscuits that are more like cakes!*

You will then enter County Arcade. *Again - Wow! Fine tiled interior and posh shops.*

Go to the left and exit onto Briggate. Cross over and slightly to the right is Queen's Arcade.

Go through this and turn right at the other end and then right to come back through Thornton's Arcade. *(1877 – look behind you at the clock.)*

Turn right down Briggate. *On the right is The Ship – look along the alleyway called Ship Alley. There are a number of pubs like this in Leeds.* Continue down Briggate.

Turn right along Albion Place. *Notice the buildings with blue plaques on the right and the building behind you called 'Longford' (neo-Jacobean based on Temple Newsam Hall).*

Go left onto Albion Street. At the corner with Commercial Street is The Leeds Shopping Plaza. *Back to 20th century design with a jolt here!* Continue down Albion Street.

Cross Boar Lane and go up Station Approach. Enter the station on the left for trains back to Manchester.

CLASSIFICATION: SHORT, EASY

VARIED SHOPPING, PUBS, CAFES, FOOD & ARCHITECTURE.

RAIL FARE: category four

MAP: Leeds A-Z Philip's Street Atlas West Yorkshire.