

Ninety nine**LEEDS – COMMERCE & CIVIC PRIDE**

There is a feast of good architecture, old and new, along Park Row – the civic and commercial centre of Leeds. This itinerary culminates at the city Art Gallery and Henry Moore Institute, and despite all you see on it you don't get ten minutes from the railway station!

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, and change there onto a Leeds express train. Alight at Leeds. *This is a large railway station – there is a canal wharf in the basement.*

On leaving the platforms go into the shopping concourse and turn left through the 1930s booking hall. *Airy and bright this now has various retail premises in it, but for a long time was used as the station junk room. You pass the first of three J.D. Wetherspoon bars (real ales and food) on the left.*

Leave the 1930s booking hall at the far end.

Cross the road (Wellington Street). Then cross Quebec Street.

Go onto City Square. *The architecture is already impressive.*

Walk around the outside of the balustrade crescent *with the scantily clad bronze ladies. The great statue is tribute to Edward the Black Prince. There are then statues to a local preacher and to Joseph Priestley (he is depicted using a burning glass to heat mercury oxide in a mortar & pestle. How do I know this?). Both preached at the chapel opposite.*

Cross Infirmary Street. – *However you may want to look at the flamboyant architecture of the 1894 Yorkshire Penny Bank building a short way down it. It is now an upmarket conference venue (Aspire).*

Pass in front of No 1 Park Row *with its bronze birds.*

Go along Park Row. *This is a street of impressive banking and insurance buildings – notice the Lloyd's Bank black horse.*

On the corner of Greek Street is Beckett's Bank *preserved as a J.D. Wetherspoon real ales and food bar – the second one.*

On the other side is Abtech House *with Jacobean patterns in the granite. Note the bas relief 'trade' frieze depicting Arabs, Dockers and, red Indians. Next to it is the imposing Park Row House.*

A former Bank of England building is on the corner of South Parade. *Opened 1864, designed by Hardwick (who also did the Manchester one).*

Cross The Headrow. *Browns Hotel is on the right.*

Next is the Leeds Cathedral of St Anne. *Take a look in – the interior is light & bright and clean – a combination of neo-gothic and arts & crafts style, circa*

1904. It is a Roman Catholic church -there are side chapels, confessionals, and shrines to Mary. The cathedral has a strong musical tradition. Open daily. Admission is free. Tel: 0113 245 4545. Website: dioceseofleeds.org.uk

Cross Great George Street on to Cookridge Street and continue ahead. On the right is The Leeds City Museum. *It is housed in the rather splendid 'The Leeds Institute' building which is worth a look in its own right. The collections are natural history, archaeology and Leeds history. Admission is free. Opens 10.00 but 11.00 Sat & Sun. Closed on Monday (except Bank Holidays). Tel 0113 224 3732 Website: www.leeds.gov.uk*

Across the way is The Electric Press Building and 'The Cuthbert Brodrick' – *the third J.D. Wetherspoon pub! But this one is purpose built, and none the worse for that. Is that a symbolic rugby ball?*

Turn left between these two buildings and walk in front of Leeds Civic Hall. *A grand icing sugar building. The golden owls are a heraldic symbol of Leeds. The great clocks, one on each side, seem vaguely nautical. This is the main council building.*

Walk away from the Civic Hall across the piazza and down into Mandela Garden. *Opened in 1994 this small garden has attractive planting and fountains.*

Go onto Great George Street and turn right, crossing Calvely Street. Opposite the back of the Town Hall is '**The Victoria Family and Commercial Hotel.**' ****** Built in 1865 it has a dark, mirrored Victorian interior. As one would expect, in 1973, (during that decade of exceptionally nasty, brutish and largely unimaginative architecture) **THEY** wanted to demolish it. It was saved and now sells excellent real ales and straightforward but good pub food.*

Bear left round the Town hall (on Oxford Place) – *notice the very gothic hospital off to the right. Perhaps designed to frighten the patients?*

Turn left in front of the Town Hall with its grand, colonnaded front. *It was designed by Cuthbert Brodrick and opened by Queen Victoria in 1858. It exudes confidence.*

Go left onto Calverly Street for the side entrance. *The town hall is open for guided tours each September during heritage week, and for regular concerts and conferences. Leaflets are available at reception. However you might be allowed to take a peep at the great hall, which is BIG and almost grotesquely confident. There are preachy aphorisms round the frieze –but perhaps our era could usefully take note of some of these? There is a HUGE concert organ - the largest of its type in Europe. Web: www.leedsconcertseason.com Tel: 0113 247 8336.*

Cross the road and go into the library building opposite. *This lobby is a Victorian interpretation of Romanesque (look up), with leaded windows, and floridly carved arches and polychrome tiling.* [Tel:0113 247 6016](tel:01132476016) Web www.leeds.gov.uk

Go right at the bottom of the stairs and you enter the Tiled Hall Cafe (*speaks for itself with didactic panels - 1894*)

Go through this into the City Art Gallery. *It has a highbrow collection of paintings, photography; sculpture (esp. Henry Moore) with many famous artists represented. Make your own mind up on the ultra modern- I found a drink in The Victoria helped me. Open daily. Tel: 0113 247 8248* Web: leedsartgallery.co.uk

Next door is The Henry Moore Institute, either go through the connecting bridge to it or go outside, left past the war memorial and left into it. *See above for details. The building is all front!*

Leave the Henry Moore Institute and cross The Headrow to go straight along Park Row.

At City Square, on the left is the Mill Hill Chapel – *Unitarian, where the chemist (who discovered oxygen by heating mercury oxide) Joseph Priestley preached. Open 11.00 – 15.00 Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.*

In front of you is The Queens Hotel (*opened 1937 by the Earl of Harewood*).

Go towards the right across the square and cross Quebec Street then Wellington Street.

Go back into the station through the 1930's hall.

Turn right to the platforms. Manchester trains usually go from the highest numbered platforms!

CLASSIFICATION: SHORT, EASY

PUBS, CAFES, ARCHITECTURE, ART
GALLERIES, MUSEUM

RAIL FARE: category four

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