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| Leeds City Centre | | |
| 1 st walk check | 2 nd walk check | 3 rd walk check |
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Leeds City Centre

Start & Finish: Leeds City Station (Information and Meeting Point on the concourse)

Leeds City Station, map reference SE 299 332, is 272 km north north west of Charing Cross, 32m above sea level and in **West Yorkshire**.

Length: 9.0 km (5.6 mi), with 55m cumulative ascent/descent.

For a shorter walk, see below **Walk Options**.

Toughness: 2 out of 10

Time: 2 ½ hours walking time.

Transport: Leeds City Station is the terminus of the Leeds branch of the East Coast Main Line from London King's Cross, with usually two trains per hour (journey time from 132 mins Mondays-Saturdays, longer on Sundays).

Walk Notes:

This route leads through the centre of Leeds – the self-proclaimed 'Capital of the North'.

It is the largest city in Yorkshire, known both for its history as a centre of textile making and trading and of light industries and for being a very green city in the eastern foothills of the Pennines.

From the train station, you emerge onto the City Square and then pick up the River Aire where it rushes through four large arches under the elevated railway station. The route leads through some areas west of the city centre dominated by former wool merchants' houses and warehouses, now largely occupied by law and finance firms, with grand old buildings and the tranquil Park Square pleasing the eye.

Large civic buildings along The Headrow (Town Hall, Library, Leeds Art Gallery, Henry Moore Institute) are passed before a loop past the Catholic Cathedral and across Millenium Square leads to the Victorian Quarter, home to many fascinating shopping arcades (a few of which are walked through) as well as the large indoor Kirkgate Market and the former Corn Exchange with its eclectic mix of shops.

Next up is the area of The Calls along the River Aire, full of converted warehouses and including the Anglican Minster Church, followed by a crossing to the south bank of the Aire, where you pass converted industrial buildings as well as the Armouries Museum and assorted river and canal basins with largely sympathetic housing developments.

The route finishes with a short exploration of the Holbeck Urban Village and Granary Wharf areas, formerly dominated by light industry, now filled with new housing and atmospheric pubs and eateries.

Walk Options:

Bus and Water Taxi stops are never far from the route to enable shorter walks.

Outbound and return route are never far from each other to enable shorter walks.

Food and Drink: Numerous options are passed on or just off the route. They are highlighted in the text.

Notes

Leeds City Station

Leeds railway station (also known as Leeds City railway station) is the mainline railway station serving the city centre of Leeds. It is located to the south of City Square, behind the landmark Queens Hotel. The station is the terminus of the Leeds branch of the East Coast Main Line and is an important stop on the Cross Country Route between Scotland, the Midlands and South West England. With its 12 terminus and 6 through platforms (most subdivided into up to 4 sections), Leeds vies with Manchester Piccadilly for the title of busiest station in the North of England by passenger numbers. It was formed in 1938 by the combination and rebuilding of two existing stations (New Station and Wellington Station), with Central Station initially unaffected but then closed down and demolished in 1967.

Leeds

Leeds is located on the River Aire in a narrow section of the Aire Valley in the eastern foothills of the Pennines. It has a population of about 540,000 and more than 800,000 in the wider City of Leeds district and it is part of the fourth largest built-up area within the UK: the West Yorkshire Built-up area with a population of 1.7 Million. Leeds has the most diverse economy of all the UK's main employment centres and has seen the fastest rate of private sector jobs growth of any UK city.

Its name derives from the old Brittonic **Lātēnses* (via Late Brittonic *Lādēses*), composed of the Celtic root **lāt-* "violent, boiling" and the borrowed Latin plural derivational suffix *-ēnses* meaning "people of the fast-flowing river", in reference to the River Aire that flows through the city. This name originally referred to the forested area covering most of the Brittonic kingdom of Elmet, which existed during the 5th century into the early 7th century. The city was only a small manorial borough in the 13th century and a market town in the 16th century but expanded by becoming a major production and trading centre (mainly with wool) in the 17th and 18th centuries.

Leeds developed as a mill town during the Industrial Revolution alongside other surrounding villages and towns in the West Riding of Yorkshire. It was also known for its flax industry, iron foundries, engineering and printing, as well as shopping, with several surviving Victorian era arcades.

Leeds is a one-club football town (Leeds United FC, aka 'Dirty Leeds') and has a prominent Rugby League Club (Leeds Rhinos) and also is the base for Yorkshire County Cricket Club at Headingley.

Leeds is the only town outside London with its own repertoire theatre, ballet and opera companies.

Popular musical acts originating from Leeds include Soft Cell/Marc Almond, Kaiser Chiefs, Gang of Four, Wedding Present, Sisters of Mercy, Corinne Bailey Rae, Alt-J and Southern Death Cult.

River Aire

The River Aire is 148 km (92 mi) long from Malham Tarn in the Yorkshire Dales to the River Ouse at Airmyn near Goole. From south of Gargrave to Leeds it is shadowed by the Leeds – Carlisle railway. Part of the river below Leeds is canalised, and is known as the Aire and Calder Navigation.

Leeds & Liverpool Canal

The 204 km (147 mi) long Leeds and Liverpool Canal links the two cities crossing the Pennines, and includes 91 locks on the main line. The canal has several small branches, and in the early 21st century a new link was constructed into the Liverpool docks system.

It was built in the 18th century to link the Port of Liverpool and the industrial areas of Lancashire with the collieries and textile producers of West Yorkshire, while – via the Aire and Calder Navigation – also enabling trade with the Humber area, thereby linking West and East Coast ports. Its build took 50 years and it was beaten in crossing the Pennines by the Huddersfield Narrow Canal and the Rochdale Canal. Despite this, it survived those two as an active trade route way past the opening of the railways due to the heavy industry along its route, together with the decision to build the canal with broad locks.

WALK DIRECTIONS

At **Leeds City Station** in the centre of **Leeds**, start the walk at the Information and Meeting Point in the centre of the large concourse 40m outside the ticket gate line. With the gate line in the back, **[!]** *turn left* ('Aire Street, City Square'), ignoring the main exit ('Station Street'). Over 140m through the stylish Art Deco hall, you pass the ticket office on the right, then walk between rows of shops and pass a hotel entrance on the right and a Wetherspoon's pub on the left (ignore an exit to the left here). You emerge onto **City Square** with its eclectic mix of buildings and *bear right* across a cyclepath to the centre of the square, passing the former **Majestic Cinema** on the left-hand corner.

On the left you have the **Restaurant, Bar & Grill** in the former GPO (Northern Renaissance style), followed clockwise by **No 1 City Square** (1996-98, postmodern) and on the right some sculptures of **female nudes** (nymphs holding lamps) in a semi-circle as well as – in the middle of the semi-circle – a large equestrian bronze in full armour: **The Black Prince** (Edmund Prince of Wales, 1330-1376), with the classical but unspectacular **Queen's Hotel** as part of the grand station building. Walk back towards the train station but pass it on its right-hand side, crossing **Quebec Street** in the process and continue along **Aire Street**.

Turn right at a mini-roundabout with Aire Street and in 60m *turn left* along an alleyway between a modern building on the left and an older one on the right. Visible ahead is the **Candle House**, a 23 storey cylindrical brick building passed towards the end of the walk. In 40m go up some steps and 20m ahead you have the **River Aire**, just as it rushes through four large railway arches to continue its flow under the raised train station. *Turn right* down some steps and continue along the gravel riverside path. In 80m you pass a large map of the area. In 100m you pass some steps leading up to the right by **No 1 Whitehall** and in 80m reach another large map. *Turn right* away from the river, to the right of a building site and to the left of No 1 Whitehall.

In 60m cross a road at a bend and continue along its pavement. In 30m cross the busy **Whitehall Road** and continue in the same direction along a pedestrianised area between new builds. In 60m you emerge in an open area by a multi-directional signpost. *Bear left* to the **Central Station Wagon Hoist** (including a mini museum) on **Tower Square** 60m away (open 09.00-18.00 weekdays, 10.00-16.00 weekends). Go through the building if still open and have a look at the small exhibition in a separate room at the back, but continue the walk by *turning right* from the front of the tower (i.e. broadly back to where you arrived from) and then continuing ahead to the left of a water feature along the broad pedestrianised **Wellington Place**.

At the end of the street, you cross **Northern Street** at a set of lights a little to the left and *turn left* across **Wellington Street** at another set of lights. The **Editor's Draft** pub restaurant is some 50m away to the left as you continue up along **Queen Street**. You pass **Monarch House** on the left, a converted warehouse, while crossing **Back York Place** and then **York Place**. In 50m cross **Park Place** and in 40m *turn right* along **St. Paul's Street**, with **Leigh House** on the left. In 40m ignore Park Square West on the left and continue with the magnificent **St. Paul's House** on the left (a former Hispano-Moorish factory and warehouse). In 160m *turn left* along **St. Paul's Place** and at the far corner of the house, *turn left* to admire its grand entrance and study a blue plaque.

Continue in the previous direction to enter the tranquil **Park Square** (laid out in 1788) and cross it to the far side, passing the **World Peace Garden** en route. You leave through a gate onto **St. Paul's Square North** and *turn right* along it. In 60m, at a T-junction with **Park Square East** (there are blue plaques on the left and across the road a little to the right), you *turn left* along the opposite pavement. In 50m cross **The Headrow**, the main west-east traffic artery through the city centre, at a set of lights, with **Oxford Place Chapel** (Methodist) away to the left and *turn right* along its opposite wide pavement (beware the cycle lane) with the **Town Hall** on the left (1852-58).

In 90m cross **Calverley Street** and pass the ornate **Pearl Life Assurance building** on the right and on the left the **City Library**, the **Leeds Art Gallery** and the **Henry Moore Institute**, with a **War Memorial** in-between. Facing the **Radisson Hotel in The Light** building, you *turn up left* along the Henry Moore Institute along a shared cycle and footpath. In 70m continue along **Cookridge Street** by the **Cathedral Church of St. Anne** on the right (1901-04, Arts and Crafts Gothic style and well worth a visit), passing the **A Nation of Shopkeepers** pub on the left. *Turn left* along **Great George Street**, with the **Electric Press** on the right (a Grade II listed former printing and carriage works with adjacent warehouses, with an impressive internal atrium).

In 70m *turn right* across the road at a set of lights and continue up into the **Nelson Mandela Gardens**, passing the 'Both Arms' sculpture by **William Kenneth Armitage**, and onto the **Millennium Square**. The large red brick building set back away to the left is the main building of **Leeds General Infirmary** (George Gilbert Scott, 1863-69, in Gothic style) and the **Civic Hall** (1931-33, in free classical style) dominates the upper end of the square. *Bear right* diagonally across the square, exiting to the right of **The Cuthbert Brodrick** (Wetherspoon's, named after the architect of Leeds Town Hall) and to the left of the **Leeds City Museum – Leeds Institute** (1865-68, formerly the Mechanics' Institute). Continue to the left of **Leeds Arts University** (formerly Leeds School of Art; Barbara Hepworth, Henry Moore and Damian Hirst studied here) and pass **The Hedley Verity** (Wetherspoon's, named after an England cricketer).

Turn right along the very wide **Woodhouse Lane** and *turn left* across it at any one of three sets of lights to continue downhill along it. *Turn left* at a four-way junction along **Merrion Street**. *Turn right* across it at one of two sets of lights and continue in the previous direction. You cross the car park entrance lane to/from St. John's Shopping Centre and then pass **Merrion Street Gardens**. Pass the **Parkside Tavern** and **The Social** pub and – opposite the **Grand Arcade** – *turn right* along **New Briggate**, passing the **Howard Assembly Rooms** (Opera North) and the **Grand Theatre** (1877-78) on the left. At a corner on the right, a stepped path on the right leads through a gate in a metal fence to **St. John the Evangelist Church** (Grade I-listed and without a congregation these days, it is the oldest church in Leeds City Centre, built 1631-34).

Follow New Briggate further downhill and cross **The Headrow** at a set of lights and continue along the pedestrianised **Briggate**. You pass **Thornton's Arcade** on the right (but worth a visit if you have spare time, being one of the first arcades in town and for the **Ivanhoe Clock**) and in 20m *turn left* into the **County Arcade** with its gilded mosaics, Dutch gables and grand balconies. Walk through the arcade to **Vicar Lane**, and – with the modern sister development **Victoria Gate** opposite – *turn right* along it. In 30m *turn right* into the **Victoria Quarter** with the **largest stained glass canopy in Europe** and go through this arcade back to Briggate.

Cross the Briggate and continue a little to the right to enter **Queen's Arcade**, the second shopping arcade to open in Leeds in 1888, and still retaining many original features. [A little to the left, another yard leads to and past **The Ship Inn**, and further to the left another one to and past **The Angel Inn**.] At the far end, *turn left* down **Lands Lane** and in 70m cross **Albion Place/King Edward Street** and in 40m cross **Commercial Street**. In another 20m [!] *turn left* along the narrow **Turk's Head Yard** and follow it to the left then right to pass **Whitelock's Ale House**, formerly The Turk's Head. In another 60m you emerge back on Briggate and continue somewhat to the left in the same direction along the pedestrianised **Kirkgate**.

You meet the busy **Vicar Lane/New Market Street** at a T-junction and cross it at a set of lights to the left to enter the ornate **Leeds City Markets/Kirkgate Market Hall** (open to 17.30 Mon-Sat; if already closed for the day, stay to its right). *Veer right* within the initial warren of narrow lanes into the more spacious central part of the market. Explore at leisure but leave the market by *turning right* (from the direction of entry), signed for 'Kirkgate'. Confusingly, you emerge on **New York Street** and have to *turn right* to get to Kirkgate. Cross Kirkgate at a set of lights and continue along **Call Lane**. Where Crown Street turns left, continue along Call Lane through a pedestrianised area towards New Market Street, with the **Corn Exchange** on your left.

Curve to the left around the Corn Exchange and *turn left* up some steps to enter the remarkable building (1861-63). Have a look around its three floors and leave the building through the main entrance back onto street level and *turn left* along a pedestrianised area. In 60m, at a T-junction with Crown Street by **White Cloth Hall** opposite (a newly refurbished food and drink hall), you *turn right* and go under a railway bridge and *turn left* along **The Calls**. In 100m, by **Calls Landing** on the right – with **Ambiente - Tapas y Bebidas** – and the River Aire beyond it but out of sight, *curve to the left* with the road (now called High Court, while The Calls bears right). [A footbridge over the river by Calls Landing cuts out some of the walk route.]

In 25m cross Wharf Street by a blue plaque away to the left for the **Leeds Civic Trust**. In 60m *turn right* at a set of lights to cross the street towards **The Lamb & Flag (Leeds Brewery)**. Continue to the left of the pub restaurant into the churchyard of **St. Peter at Leeds** (The Leeds Minster and supposedly the largest new church since St. Paul's Cathedral). Pass the church on its right-hand side and leave the churchyard in its far-right corner down some steps onto **The Calls** and *turn left* along the cobbled street all the way to a junction with a main road (Crown Point Road). Cross this 25m to the left at a set of lights and *turn right* on the far side, immediately crossing a feeder road and then continuing along the pavement of Crown Point Road.

In another 60m, just before the River Aire, *veer left* and go down some steps onto the riverside path and continue along it. In 120m you pass the **Leeds Dam**, a river weir first documented in 1636, and in 50m go up some steps to cross a footbridge over the river to its south bank. At the far side, briefly *turn right* with the fenced path and in 10m *turn hard left* back on yourself, with the river now on your left and **Leeds Dock** and the **Royal Armouries Museum** on the right. In 60m you pass the **Leeds Lock (Aire Calder Navigation)** then a blue plaque on the right for **John Smeaton**. In 60m *turn right* along a narrow passage between two of the museum's buildings, signed 'Museum Entrance'. In 30m *turn right* across the large **Armouries Square** and in 110m pass a **Leeds Water Taxi** stop (for shuttles upriver to near the Train Station).

Cross the dock basin on a footbridge, with **The Canary** on this side of it, and in 30m *turn right* along the waterfront. In 90m cross a side basin on a wide bridge and in 30m go up two flights of steps to then *turn left* along the riverside path. *Bear right* with the river, ignoring a road ahead. In 110m go under the Crown Point Road bridge and continue through a metal gate and along the riverfront for 100m to the corresponding metal gate. [This seems to be a permissive path only and the gates can be locked; in that case divert to the left around the private development.]

You pass the (Tetley) **Brewery Wharf** development on the left and in 70m notice an info panel a little to the left along a rising path ('Riverfront Heritage – Kirk Ings on the River Aire'). Continue along the river and in 15m go under **The Centenary Footbridge** leading to **Calls Landing** on the far side. Follow a narrow path up some steps and around to the left to stay to the left of a small basin (**Victoria Quays**). Ignore a footbridge to the right ('Private Property – Residents Only') and stay on the left side of the basin. At the end of the basin, continue to the left of a cobbled car park by **Flax House** on the right, and in 50m *turn left* along the cobbled **Navigation Walk** at a T-junction. In 40m *turn right* along **Dock Street**.

In 50m, by **The Adelphi** pub on the left, you meet the junction of Hunslet Road and Bridge End/Meadow Lane by **Leeds Bridge** on the right. *Turn left* along **Hunslet Road**. In 50m cross Waterloo Street on the left and in 50m pass the **Salem Church – Salem Congregational Institute** on the right and on the left the imposing former **Tetley Brewery**, now with **The Tetley** pub inside (**Kirkstall Brewery**). At the far end of the Tetley building, *turn right* along a new building on the left, with a landscaped green on the right. At the far end of the building, *turn right* down some steps and *turn left* through a paved area towards the main road (Meadow Lane).

In 80m cross the road at a set of lights and continue *to the left of a footbridge* over the river to follow the riverside path to the left. In 50m you have **ASDA's HQ** on your left and at the end of it follow a rising path between metal railings to the level of the **Victoria Bridge** over the Aire (the street to the right is a shortcut to **Leeds City Station**, visible to the right). Cross the busy road at a set of lights and continue to the right of **Water Lane**, still along the river. In 70m *turn right* along **Canal Wharf** (road) and in 70m you pass the entrance of the **Water Lane Boathouse**, a former transshipment warehouse for the Leeds & Liverpool Canal.

[!] In 10m *turn right* between pub tables across the pub's outside area to the water and follow it to the left, past an historic crane. This now is the **Leeds & Liverpool Canal**, whose meeting with the Aire is away to the right. In 100m go up some steps to a bridge over the canal and – with the **Canal Offices** opposite – *turn left* along **Wharf Approach** into **Holbeck Urban Village**. In 90m, where the road turns to the left, you continue ahead along a covered walkway to the right of a building. At the far end of it, notice the culverted stream below on the right: this is **the Hol Beck**, whose silt depositions (and that of the nearby Sheepscar Beck from the north) led to a fording place and a small community which eventually grew into the town of Leeds.

You cross **Water Lane** at a pedestrian crossing and *turn right* along it. In 15m *turn left* along **David Street**, with **The Ironworks** modern housing development on the right. In 30m *turn right* along a covered walkway into the development and follow a paved path ahead. In 50m, in a small square with a pub's rear seating area on the right (the

pub is being passed later from the other side), you *turn left* between buildings and in 15m *turn right* along a covered walkway. In 10m *turn left then right* across a cobbled area and through a walkway. In 20m go to the right to emerge in another small square with **Bomba Paella & Tapas** on the right. *Turn left and left again* out of **Saw Mill Yard** to a tall chimney 30m away.

The chimney was part of the former **Victoria Foundry** and you pass to its right and cross a following car park to its far end onto **Marshall Street**. Along the left of the road you have the magnificent Egyptian Revival **Temple Works** (1838-43), a Grade I-listed former flax mill (it was the largest single room in the world when built). [!] *Turn right* along the road, with a converted brick warehouse on the left and the former foundry on the right. At the far end of **Marshall's Mill** there is a blue plaque, and you find **Northern Monk Refectory** 50m away to the left in an old flax store.

Continue along Marshall Street and in 80m meet Water Lane, by the **Out of the Woods** café on the right and with an empty plot opposite and the Tower Works site dominating the view beyond it. *Turn right* along **Water Lane**, soon passing **David Street Café** and **The Cross Keys** freehouse, then **The Midnight Bell** pub restaurant (**Leeds Brewery**). *Turn left* across the road and then across the Hol Beck and *bear left* along **Globe Road**. In 60m cross over to the right-hand side at a pedestrian crossing towards the **Tower Works**, a housing development on the site of a 19th century steel pin factory with three listed Italianate towers, based on campaniles in Florence, Verona and San Gimignano.

Enter the Tower Works and (with a large modern graffito and the first tower on the right) *turn left* towards the second tower. *Turn right* towards the third tower and on to the canal and *turn right* along it. At a bridge over the canal, go up some steps and *turn left* across the bridge into the **Granary Wharf** area. *Turn right* down some steps immediately to the right of **The Candle**, a twisted cylindrical residential tower, passing **Salt Craft & Falafel**, and in 40m *turn left* along a canal basin towards the railway viaduct. At the end of the basin, *turn right* along it and continue to the right of the railway arches (be wary of cars en route to a large car park within the arches). Stay to the left of the Doubletree by Hilton hotel and pass **Archie's Bar & Kitchen** (Ossett Brewery) and **The Hop Leeds** on the left and **Fazenda Steakhouse** on the right.

LIVIN' Italy follows on the left after which you *turn left* up a rising walkway, [!] ignoring steps into the South Entrance of Leeds City Station (a shortcut to the platforms though). In 50m *turn right* with an elevated footpath, crossing the River Aire which runs through four railway arches here. In 25m pass the South Entrance and continue along **Dark Neville Street** along the walkway and pass offices and some car parks in 'The Dark Arches' while walking under an interesting light installation. In 100m *turn left* uphill along **Neville Street** under the Railway Station. In 100m, at **The Scarborough Hotel** pub, *turn left* across the road and up some steps to the main station entrance.

[At time of writing, the station square is **still a major building site and impassable**, so you have to continue up the road for 80m to Boar Lane and *turn left* along the Queen's Hotel to the other station entrance used at the start of the route.]