

# WHITELOCKS OF LEEDS, YORKSHIRE

The following was sent in by Ray Skinner and is extracted from a guide to the Leeds, Yorkshire Archives, published in 1988 to celebrate their 50th anniversary.

Pg.9 "Briggate still houses one of the city's finest pubs, another which claims to be the oldest, and others which are linked with the theatre....Many of these pubs have long since vanished but Whitelocks remains, much changed but none the worse for that.

This splendid tavern stands in Turk's Head Yard, its original name when first licensed in 1715. In 1880 it was bought by the Whitelock family and in 1886 rebuilt in its present form with little changing since then. One wonders what an impression it must have had on the artistic and business community of Leeds that provided much of its trade. Later it was the first place in the city to have electric lighting and an electric clock. Ironically at that time, Charles Francis Tetley, grandson of Joshua and a Lord Mayor of Leeds, was offered a free trial of electricity in his Headingley home and refused it.

John Betjeman enjoyed the atmosphere of Whitelocks. He described it as '...the Leeds equivalent of Fleet Street's Old Cheshire Cheese and far less self-conscious, and does a roaring trade. It is the very heart of Leeds.' It calls itself the '*First City Luncheon Bar*' and it is this function that continues. The yard, entered at either end, is long and narrow and this is reflected inside with the long, marble-topped bar. Long-lost breweries are commemorated here - Joule and Son of Stone in Staffordshire, Vaux and Company of Macauley Street in Leeds - and on etched mirrors soup and bread is offered for sale for a penny! The original trade mirrors are just one element of this grand pub with its art nouveaux glasswork, cast-iron tables fitting snugly into comfortable settles and the general ambience of a century ago. It is, naturally enough, a listed building of special architectural interest.

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