

**Stirring Up The Past**  
**A Storytelling Walk Through Leeds City Centre**

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## Stirring Up The Past – Draft Five

### Stop #1 – Mill Hill Chapel

**Loidis:** Pssst! Hey you!

Yes! You! Standing on the flagstones, outside Mill Hill Chapel.

Can you hear me? I hope you can. It makes a nice change, having someone to talk to. Most people don't even know that I'm here. There's no point looking around for me - you won't be able to see me – not until I tell you where I am - but I can see you, quite clearly.

Allow me to introduce myself. This is the city speaking. Or, at least, a part of the city. I am what the Romans would have called the Genius Loci – the protective spirit of this place. As such, I am all around you - anywhere and everywhere within the city's boundaries. I am in the bricks that form the buildings here; I live in the concrete slabs that pave the streets and I dwell in the cold clay that lies beneath them.

Today, I am speaking to you from the stones of Mill Hill Chapel. If you look carefully, you might be able to spot me. Can you see me peering out at you?

I am currently inhabiting the little stone angel on the left-hand side of the door. If you look very hard, you might even see me winking at you.

My name is Loidis. Or Ledis. Or Leeds. I have been called many different things across the years - different names in different tongues - Latin, Old English, Norse. I have seen many languages come and go. I have been here for a very long time - ever since the first people settled in this spot and decided to make a home here.

The people here were farmers then and the shelters they made were simple huts with round walls and thatched rooves. Nowadays, my buildings are made of glass and metal, bricks and mortar. This settlement has changed a lot and it will change again. There are always cranes on my horizon - putting up the scaffolding of new buildings and deconstructing old ones.

Today, I'll introduce you to some of my inhabitants – some of the different people who have lived here over the years. There have been millions of them – and each one of them has left their mark upon me. They have made their presence felt in all sorts of ways, and, if you look in the right places and listen in the right way, you can sometimes hear those people still.

**Priestley:** **(Coughs).** Good morning to you all! How pleasing to see you! It's always a pleasure, welcoming visitors to the chapel. We have a reputation, here at Mill Hill, for being "freethinkers" and many people consider us to be a strange lot, but never let it be said that we are not capable of hospitality.

**Loidis:** Ah! Here is a spiritual personage. This is Dr Joseph Priestley. He was the minister here at the end of the eighteenth century. If you peer through the arched gate that leads out onto the street below, you might be able to spot his statue, standing in City Square. He's stood on a plinth in front of the grand stone building across the way. You can tell it's him by the magnifying glass in his hand. Take a moment to see if you can spot him.

As well as being a minister, Dr Priestley was also a famous chemist. He was one of the first people in the world to realise that the air was made of different gasses - and he was able to split the air into its separate parts. One of the gasses he discovered was oxygen –

**Priestley:** Or “dephlogisticated air”, as I like to call it.

**Loidis:** He also discovered nitrous oxide - often known as “laughing gas”.

**Priestley:** **(Giggles).**

**Loidis:** And he was the first person to find a way of making fizzy water. Without Dr Priestley, there would be no Coca Cola, no Irn Bru, no fizzy drinks at all.

**Priestley:** **(Belches).** Oh, do excuse me. An unfortunate escape of “fixed air”.

**Loidis:** Priestley wasn't the only important person from Leeds to worship at Mill Hill. The current building opened its doors in 1848, but there has been a chapel here for three hundred years and more

**SFX:** **(Congregation singing – “Oh God, Our Help in Ages Past”)**

Can you hear the voices singing deep beneath the ground?

Where is the music coming from? Have a look at the flagstones on either side of the chapel door. The slabs there mark the graves of some of the city's richest families – people whose actions (and whose money) helped to shape the way the city grew.

Who were they - these singers - these people from the past. What names can you see marked upon the stones? What did they look like when they were alive? And what kind of lives did they lead?

Take a moment to read the inscriptions. You can pause this track while you do. I'll be waiting to speak to you again as soon as you press play.

**SFX:** **(The congregation fade out. Keep the Home Fires Burning begins to play softly in the background).**

In 1914, war came to Europe – and to the rest of the world. Many young people joined the armed forces – the army, the navy and the air force. These young people, including many from Leeds, were shipped all over the world – sent off to fight on distant battlegrounds. Some came home, but many others didn't.

The city has not forgotten them though. Their names, too, are carved in stone. If you face the chapel and look to your left, you will see a tall stone pillar. This is the War Memorial, raised in honour of the fallen. Take a moment to read the names on the shiny roll of honour. What stories would they tell if we could hear them speak?

**Jogendra:** **(Clears throat).** Excuse me. I think that I can answer that. My name is Jogendra Nath Sen. I am a member of the congregation here – a fact, I’m sure, that many might find surprising.

My brother and I were brought up in the Hindu faith back home in Chandernagore, near Calcutta. My brother, Jotindra, is still there – a doctor for the Railway company. We are neither of us short of education! My mother made sure that we worked hard at school. It was she who encouraged me to travel overseas.

**Mother:** The British know how to build things, Jogi. You can learn a lot from them.

**Jogendra:** Well, she was not wrong. I spent three years at the University here, a member of the School of Engineering, and since then I have worked at the Power Station on Whitehall Road: Assistant Engineer for the Leeds Corporation Electric Light Company. It is a good job. There is a kind of magic in a Power Station. Coal-fired boilers supplying steam; the generators turning that mechanical power into electric current. Mark my words, one day there’ll be electric light in every home in Leeds!

I was introduced to the Chapel by a friend at the University. I didn’t want to go at first. I was not sure how the people there would take to me. It is still a rarity for people to see a man of my colour on the streets of Leeds. Even after being here for nearly four years, I am still capable of arousing curiosity – and one becomes acutely aware of other people’s attention.

Happily, though, I was welcomed with open arms. The congregation here are all highly educated, and I soon found out we had a lot in common. I even joined the choir! We practice once a week and, of course, we sing on Sundays. Singing, I think, is good for the soul – coming together in sacred harmony.

A friend in the choir, Miss Wicksteed, once asked me if I saw myself as a Christian. “On consideration,” I said, “I feel it is possible to understand the world in many different ways, and I do not find it needful to be bound to just one of them.” She smiled at that.

**Cicely:** “You are a wise man, Mr Sen. Perhaps the world would be a better place if more people thought as you do.”

**Jogendra:** Perhaps it would. But whether I am a Christian or not, I am part of this community. I will miss my regular Sunday morning walk to the Chapel. I will miss being part of the choir.

Three weeks ago, I put my name forward to join the “Leeds Pals” - the new city regiment. There was a notice in the local paper.

**Brotherton:** Join the Leeds City Battalion. Age Limit 19 to 35. Register yourselves at the Town Hall, Leeds. Open Daily, 9 A.M. to 9 P.M. Your friends are joining, why not you?”

**Jogendra:** “Well, why not?” I thought. Britain is my home now. It has given me a lot. And besides, my friends *are* joining up. The city is filled with patriotic fervour. Everybody wants to do their part and show their defiance of the enemy. Two other men from the choir have signed up as well and so has one of the engineers from work. The rumours say that we leave next week for basic training.

My friend from the choir, Miss Wicksteed, told me that I must apply for a commission.

**Cicely:** A man of your qualities would be wasted in the ranks, Jogi. The Pals would be lucky to have you as an officer. You’ll make a natural leader!

**Jogendra:** I caused quite a stir when I entered the Victoria Hall and marched up to the recruiting desk. They weren’t expecting an Indian to apply. I don’t think they knew what to do with me – although the fact that I had a university degree meant that they couldn’t turn me away. I am better qualified than many in this city – including those doing the recruiting. Nevertheless, I was told I must apply as a private soldier. “Perhaps we’ll find something for you later on,” they said. But I don’t think they will.

I have been met with great kindness here in Britain. But there are unspoken rules ... I know it would cause resentment if I were put in charge of men with paler skin. I fear it is something that Miss Wicksteed does not fully understand.

Nevertheless, she is a fine woman. The last time I saw her, she gave me a gift. A picture of herself, and a little book, full of sayings and quotations. I told her that she had no need to give me anything. “Cicely,” I said, “Your friendship and affection are the only gifts that I ever needed.”

But, the truth is, I am glad to have a keepsake. It will help me to remember the friendships I have made here and the many thoughtful people I have met. Whatever happens over the next few months, I hope that they remember me as well.

**SFX:** (The sound of guns firing and the explosion of artillery shells).

**Loidis:** Jogendra Nath Sen was killed in action at the age of 29, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of May 1916 – two months after arriving in war-torn France. He was sent out onto the battlefield and was hit by shrapnel in his leg and neck.

**SFX:** **(Guns fade out and are replaced by The Last Post).**

His body is buried in Colincamp in France. His spectacles and the book, which was given to him by Miss Wicksteed, were sent to his family in Chandernagore. His name is carved on the War Memorial at Leeds University and on the cenotaph here at Mill Hill Chapel ... Can you spot him? Pte Sen, J. Nath, West Yorkshire Regiment.

Jogendra Sen was many things. A soldier; an engineer; a citizen of Leeds; a proud Bengali; a man of faith; a brother; a son; a friend. How do you think he would like to be remembered?

**SFX:** **(The Last Post fades away).**

**Loidis:** It is time to move on now. Time to leave Jogendra and the Chapel behind.

Make your way through the arched gate and down the chapel steps – onto the pavement below. Turn right and start walking up Park Row. Keep going until you reach the entrance to Bond Street on your right. I will meet you by the steps at the city information point.

## **Stop #2 – The Philosophical Hall**

**Loidis:** Pssst! Can you hear me? If you can, you're in the right spot – by the information point at the entrance to Bond Street. Take a moment to look at the map of the city that's displayed here. Can you find out where you are? Do you recognise the street names? One day, this map will have to be redrawn. It will have to change to reflect the changing city. Perhaps the streets will follow different routes? Perhaps they will be called by different names? What names would you choose to call them if you could?

If you'd like a little time to look at the map, then press pause. When you are ready to listen again, press play.

While you're thinking, turn around and look back the way that you have come. Can you see the buildings on the far side of Park Row? Straight ahead, on the right-hand side, is HSBC bank. The bank has been there since the 1960's but it's a new arrival. For nearly 150 years, the site was home to "The Philosophical Hall". This was the city's first public museum.

It was a grand building, filled with extraordinary objects from all around the world. Some of these items belonged to ancient inhabitants of Leeds. Among them are the bones of a prehistoric hippo that once lived in Armley. The bones have been dated and could be up to 130,000 years old.

**SFX: (Soundscape of prehistoric river; buzzing insects, cries of tropical birds, sound of slowly moving water, bellow of hippopotamuses.)**

Imagine the banks of a tropical river, the muddy shore littered with the basking bodies of gigantic hippopotamuses. It's strange to think that Leeds was once the home of tropical animals – animals which may have been hunted by our distant ancestors. Imagine those ancient people, stalking their prey on the banks of the muddy river. What would they think if they could see what the place where they once hunted had become?

The hippo's bones are still in the city. Part of its skeleton has been put back together and is now on display in Millenium Square, in the current Leeds Museum.

**SFX: (Hippo bellows for the final time. Fade out.)**

**Loidis:** Not all the exhibits in the old museum came from Leeds itself. Many of them were brought to the city from across the globe. Some of these were the remains of animals – and people. In 1824, an Ancient Egyptian mummy case was opened at the hall, and the body inside unwrapped. This was the coffin of Nesyamun. He was a priest, who lived and worked in the enormous temple of Karnak in the city of Thebes, during the reign of the Pharoah, Ramses XI. So, how did his body end up here?

**John Blayds:** He was a gift from me - John Blayds Esquire, master of Oulton Hall in Wakefield and banker of this town. I came across the mummy in question on a trip I made to London. I saw it on display in a museum down there, and I thought – “that’s just the kind of thing we ought to have at home in Leeds. Why, we have men of learning in our town, who are just as capable of gleaning knowledge from the ancients as any of the learned men of London!” And, so, I made an offer for the corpse and its display case.

Now, thanks to the efforts of the experts at The Philosophical Hall, we’ve been able to find out the fellow’s name. He was called Natsif-amon – and he served an ancient god called Amon-Ra.

It was quite a thrill, I can tell you, watching the body being unwrapped; the layers of bandage being peeled away, one by one – and then, at last, a glimpse of that ancient, noble face – unseen by anyone else for three thousand years! What a triumph for Leeds, to have him on display here – one of the great treasures of antiquity!

**Loidis:** Mr Blayds’ gift was a generous one, but what of Nesyamun? He was mummified and laid to rest, in the hope that his soul would reach the afterlife. How might he feel about his coffin being dug up and sold? How might he feel about being unwrapped and put on display, in a strange city? How would you feel, if it was you?

**SFX:** **(The rattle of a sistrum).**

**Nesyamun:** Oh, Mother Nut, [hear the words of your servant Nesyamun]. Spread out your wings over my face so you may allow me to be like the stars-which-know-no-destruction, like the stars-which-know-no-weariness, and not to die over again in the cemetery.

**SFX:** **(The rattle of a sistrum).**

**Loidis:** Whatever Nesyamun feels about being moved, Mother Nut has certainly protected his body. During the Second World War, a bomb struck The Philosophical Hall during an Air Raid. The story goes that two other mummies, and their cases, were destroyed, but Nesyamun escaped unscathed. Like the Armley hippo, you can find him now in the current Leeds Museum.

Time to move on; leave Nesyamun and the hippos behind. Turn and head down Bond Street, away from Park Row. Keep walking until you reach the junction with Albion Street. I will meet you on the corner, just across the road from Boots.



### **Stop #3 – Pablo Fanque’s Circus**

**Loidis:** Here we are at the junction of Bond Street and Albion Street. It’s always been a busy spot. It’s a rare day when there isn’t a busker here, singing a song or playing a piece of music. But the buskers are by no means the only performers to have played here ...

**Pablo:** Roll up, roll up, roll up ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls! Opposite the White Horse Hotel, Boar Lane... just down there... and by permission of the worshipful Mayor of Leeds: Pablo Fanque’s Circus Royale, will open the most neat and spacious, the best arranged and handsomest circus, ever erected in this town, for gymnastic and horse-riding performancizzz-a !!!

My name is Pablo Fanque, owner of Pablo Fanque’s Circus Royale. In my younger days, I toured all over this fair land - performing for rich and poor alike. I was what people nowadays would call a “national celebrity”. Quite a feat for a man of colour - and one born into poverty what’s more.

I was born in a Norwich workhouse, in 1810. Circus was my way out of poverty as a child - through hard work and strong guidance from good adults, I earned myself a trade and career for life! People also asked me to teach them how to ride and share with them my expertise on horses, so that was extra income too...

Of course, it’s many years now since I performed on horseback – or since I presented the work of others to the folk of this fine town – but Leeds is a place that holds many memories for me.

Back in 1838, I performed here, as a young man, in a show that told the story of Queen Victoria’s coronation ceremony that same year. The nation was thrilled to see a young princess being crowned a Queen - and through the magic of the circus, we recreated the special occasion for the nation’s enjoyment. The public loved our show and we loved them. A very special memory, right here... where you’re standing.

Also performing here, in the same Coronation special, was another performer of colour, like me, but younger, so they called him Young Pablo, on account of me being already familiar with the public. His real name was Billy Banham. The Northern Star newspaper though, here in Leeds, admired his skills and called him an ‘African Gem’! So rare to hear an African described in such a positive way by a British journalist - African Gem! It made me feel positive about the future for people of colour in Britain.

Another reason 1838 was so special is that was also the year that Britain finally stopped slavery in its colonies. Ha-le-lu-jah! The demand for sugar was so high that to keep it affordable to the people of Britain, for hundreds of years they didn’t pay the people who grew it and treated them badly too. There I was, groomed for success in Britain, whilst others like me in the West

Indies were forbidden from even learning to read! It was such a happy time knowing that at last they would be free forever more.

People here in Britain and many others in the West Indies made a difference and I was determined to make a difference too. I enjoyed showing everyone that people with different colour skin are just as capable as anyone else. So, I then started my very own circus, here in Yorkshire, aye, in 1841 - with my good wife we rose to become the circus king and queen of the north! Susannah, button maker's daughter from Birmingham, was my right arm, I relied on her.

We always enjoyed performing in Leeds until, the unthinkable happened, in 1848. On the Headrow, up there... King Charles Croft it was called then, around where the City Varieties now is. Our show was sold out and people were still lined up outside hoping to get in. I was on duty in the circus ring as Ringmaster and our son, Lionel, was on the tightrope - when, all of a sudden, a section of the seating collapsed onto the box office where my Susannah was working.

Whilst most of the public injuries were minor, my wife, Susannah, was the only person to not survive. Our son and I attended her funeral together. It was written about in the papers that thousands lined the streets to say their goodbyes. I had purchased a plot in the new Woodhouse Cemetery and that is where Susannah was finally laid to rest.

Only 47 she were, Susannah... and still missed. It was a struggle without her, I cannot lie, but my circus ran altogether for 30 years until the day came for me to join my Susannah. That day arrived in 1871, 150 years ago. My coffin arrived in Leeds by train, from Stockport where I lived. 10,000 Yorkshire folk lined the streets again, all the way up to Woodhouse cemetery, to say farewell to old Pablo.

By all rights, everyone should've forgotten about Pablo and Susannah, but then along came a rock and roll band called the Beatles, who mention me in a song on their famous Sergeant Pepper album in the 1960s - the track is called 'For the Benefit of Mr Kite' and the lyrics go on to say - "late of Pablo Fanque's fair". So thrilled and grateful to that song and the songwriter John Lennon - for immortalising us... not letting us be forgotten; well, we all need a little help from our friends, don't we, eh?

**Loidis:** Time to move on now. Let's leave Pablo to the peace and quiet of the cemetery and to the glory of the eternal circus.

Cross over Albion Street and keep walking down Commercial Street until you reach the Co-operative bank. Our next stop is just next door, by the arched entrance to The Leeds Library. If you're having trouble spotting it, just look up. The name is written above the door in big gold letters.

#### **Stop #4 – The Leeds Library**

**Loidis:** This little doorway is the entrance to The Leeds Library. It is the oldest subscription library in the country and one of the founding members was Dr Joseph Priestley, the famous scientist we met at Mill Hill Chapel. It is not just stones that hold stories. The library is currently home to over 150, 000 books. If you listen carefully, you might be able to hear them, muttering on the shelves as they wait to be borrowed.

**SFX:** **(The books speak, their voices overlapping as they do).**

**Book One:** Mr and Mrs Dursley, of number four, Privet Drive, were proud to say that they were perfectly normal, thank you very much ...

**Book Two:** 12th June 1942: I hope I will be able to confide everything to you, as I have never been able to confide in anyone ...

**Book Three:** Marley was dead, to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that.

**Book Four:** In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit.

**Loidis:** Some members call it “the secret library” because it is so hard to spot. Lots of people walk right past it without ever knowing it’s there. For those that do find it though, there is always a warm welcome

**Mary:** Good day to you. What pleasure it gives to welcome visitors to our little library. I am the librarian here. Mrs Mary Robinson at your service. This library was founded in 1768 and it is, I like to think, one of the jewels of our town. We have books in our collection, on almost any subject you could think of! Everything from Mathematics to Egyptology.

My father was Mr Joseph Ogle; bookseller, at the sign of “The Dial” in Kirkgate. He was the Library’s first librarian. For a good long while, the library was run from a room above my father’s shop. It was his job to buy the books, requested by the members, a task that he accomplished with aplomb. I’m proud to say, I’ve followed in his footsteps. When my father died, I was elected as librarian – a task that I have carried out for nearly thirty years.

Of course, I’ve seen some changes in my time. The biggest one was moving here. This building opened its doors in 1808, and, in my view, it’s the perfect library - warm and spacious, with plenty of room for books. The big windows give the members lots of light to read by and the great fireplace in the main room has become a general meeting place for all the great and good of this fine town. I love to stand at the top of the spiral staircase and listen to the conversations happening below. Such wonderful discussions; such wonderful speakers; such a wonderful place to work!

**Loidis:** Of course, some stories speak more loudly than others. There is one book on the Library’s shelves that contains a set of words that helped to change

history. The book is called, “The West Indies in 1837” and the words belong to a young man called James Williams. James was a former slave on the island of Jamaica. His ancestors had been brought to the island from Africa and made to work, for no money, by rich British businessmen.

The British government abolished slavery in 1833, but although James was no longer enslaved, the law said that he had to work as an “apprentice”, for the man who used to be his master. This rule applied to all former slaves above the age of six years old. Apprentices were often treated cruelly – sometimes more cruelly than when they had been slaves.

James spoke out against this situation.

**James:** I am about eighteen years old. I was a slave belonging to Mr Senior and his sister and was brought up at the place where they live, called Peshurst, in Saint Ann’s parish, in Jamaica. I have been very ill treated by Mr Senior and the magistrates since the new law come in. Apprentices get a great deal more punishment now than they did when they was slaves; the master take spite, and do all he can to hurt them before the free come; - I have heard my master say, “Those English devils say we to be free, but if we is to free, he will pretty well weaken we, before the six and the four years done; we shall be no use to ourselves afterwards.”

**Loidis:** His words were reprinted in pamphlets and newspapers across the U.K. They helped to shame the government into changing the law and made sure the former slaves were able to be truly free.

A copy of the book can still be found in The Leeds Library and, by odd coincidence, one of the men who helped to write it worked just down the street. His name was Thomas Harvey and he used to own a chemist’s shop at No 5 Commercial Street. In 1837, he travelled to Jamaica, with a man called Joseph Sturge. It was there that they recorded James’s story.

Would you be willing to travel around the world, like Thomas Harvey, to try and make things better for others? Could you find the courage to speak out about injustice, like James Williams – even if it might put your life at risk? These are hard questions to answer. Take a moment to ponder them as you walk to the next stop.

Time to move on now. Let’s head down to Thomas Harvey’s chemist’s shop. Nowadays, it’s a branch of Goldsmith’s the jewellers. When you arrive, take a moment to admire the jewellery in the shop window. You may find someone waiting there, with a story of their own to tell.

## Stop #5 – Leonora Cohen

**Loidis:** Here we are, outside Goldsmith’s jewellers. Take a moment to look at the window display. What kind of jewellery can you see? What kind of people might wear it? Is there anything you might like to buy?

Goldsmith’s is one of many jewellers on this part of Commercial Street. How many others can you spot?

Perhaps the most famous jewels in the country are the ones that are kept in the Tower of London. The crown jewels – as worn by the Kings and Queens of England.

In 1913, those jewels became part of this city’s story. It happened because of a woman called Leonora Cohen. In those days, the world was very different. Women were not allowed to vote. They couldn’t stand for parliament and they had no say in the running of the country.

This was something Leonora felt very angry about. So much so that she felt she had to take direct action. In 1913, she travelled to London. While she was there, she planned to ask the government for a change in the law. However, it soon became clear that the Prime Minister was not going to listen. As a suffragette, Leonora knew she had to act.

Take a moment to close your eyes and travel with me, back in time – back to the Tower of London in 1913 – back to the moment when Leonora found herself fighting for her rights.

### EXT. TOWER OF LONDON ENTRANCE. SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1<sup>ST</sup>. 1913

**SFX:** QUIET DISTANT CROWD NOISE

**Leonora:** Calm, Leonora. Calm. Deep breaths.  
Drop your shoulders. Stop those legs shaking.  
Stop it! ... That’s better.  
This is what you have to do.  
Read your Guide Book and breathe.

**Leonora:** SHE TAKES IN A DEEP BREATH AND READS. *The Tower of London was built in the 1070s by William The Conqueror ... The Jewel House contains one of the largest public displays of royal regalia in the world.’*

**SFX:** Voices closer and then passing by.

**Gateman:** (AT DISTANCE) Straight ahead please ladies and gents. Please pass through the security check before you enter the Tower.

**Leonora:** Perhaps Mrs Morrison’s right?

'There're guards everywhere; you won't stand a chance. You'll be arrested before you get anywhere near the crown jewels.'

I told her, my husband Henry has a jeweller's shop in Leeds; we've seen smash and grabs; we've seen shops lifters; we've seen how they use distraction, how they blend in to avoid suspicion... I've studied and I've learnt. And some ... people .... are simply ... invisible. Especially well-dressed middle-aged women with children – and if they look a little ... dowdy ... plain ...like a schoolma'am, even more so...

Of course, I don't like to think I look dowdy ... or plain! ... but ... for the cause... anything. Even that! SHE ALLOWS HERSELF TO LAUGH.

Anything that will not hurt others... Mrs Pankhurst says.  
But we can do what we want with our own lives... for the cause, she says.

My hand's shaking. I don't know if I've the strength to wipe my nose let alone...

Stones are no good for this job...When I told Mrs Morrison I needed an iron bar ... she was almost in tears. Ladies don't buy ironmongery; least of all in Kensington. Then I saw the metal bars in the fire grate.

Perfect. But too long to hide at my waist; we had to cut it in two!  
All night ... six hours to file it through... six hours! ... No wonder my arm's so stiff ... I can hardly flex my wrist. And then I had to sew this cloth bag so I could hide the bar in my skirt.

Oh! Is that guard looking at me? Has he noticed the bulge at my waist?

Turn away.

I could ... even now ... still ... *go* away... catch the tube train back to Kensington. I'd be at Mrs Morrison's by lunch time. There'd be tea and sandwiches and buttered scones... I could tell her the Tower had ... closed for maintenance ... was too crowded. I could be back in Leeds by the fire with Henry this evening.

No, I can't let Mrs Pankhurst down. She's called for militancy, action ... When she heard the government had dropped the Suffrage Bill, when it was clear women would be denied the vote again... I was standing almost beside her. ... Her face. 'The truth is at an end,' she said. 'We have been tricked once more.' What else can women do but act - when parliament won't listen to reasoned argument? And she's right...

But breaking shop windows in Bond Street as she suggested? Who does that hurt except the shop keepers - people like my husband! It should be government property that's damaged ....

My London guidebook's alphabetical... art galleries, bathing pools, cathedrals ...

I couldn't fancy anything till I came to the T's and I thought, that's it. Tower of London. Saturday morning, free admission.

**SFX:** THE SOUND OF SCHOOL CHILDREN APPROACHING.

Least my legs are functioning now. When I got off the tube I could barely stagger here. One iron bar tied around my waist, one in my right skirt pocket, a hammer in the left skirt pocket. I never thought they'd be so heavy! But the brown paper wrapping is doing the trick - no suspicious clanking so far. My three parcels ... and each one labelled with a message for the government ... Votes for Women.

**Teacher:** GETTING CLOSER. Come along boys, come along now.

**Leonora:** (DEEP BREATH.) This is the moment! Remember your plan; wait for a group of children and follow them in, an invisible middle-aged school ma'am. Follow them all the way through to the Jewel House and when the way is open, release the iron bar. Smash – and wait to be grabbed.

**Teacher:** CLOSE BY. Come along boys. Keep moving.

**Leonora:** QUIETLY - BUT ALOUD. That's right, boys. Keep moving, keep moving. I'll be right behind you ... all the way.

**Loidis:** On Saturday, February 1<sup>st</sup>, 1913. Leeds suffragette, Leonora Cohen, threw an iron bar over the heads of schoolboys and into a glass case in The Jewel House at The Tower of London She was immediately thrown to the ground by a Tower Guard. Inside the smashed glass case, tied to the iron bar, he found a parcel label declaring:

"Jewel House, Tower of London. My Protest to the Government for its refusal to Enfranchise Women,' The parcel label can still be seen at Leeds Museum.

Leonora made a stand for something she believed in. She raised her voice and made sure people heard it. How far would you be willing to go in order to make sure your voice was heard?

I will leave you to ponder that, as we walk to our next destination. Leave behind the jeweller's window. Keep on walking down Commercial Street, until you come to the intersection with Briggate. Cross the road and pause a moment before you enter Kirkgate. I will be waiting in the paving slabs to lead you to your next destination.

## **Stop #6 – Kirkgate / Briggate Junction**

**Loidis:** Here we are at the intersection of Briggate and Kirkgate – two streets whose names date back a thousand years and more; back to the time when Leeds was just a few small roads and houses.

Gata is a Viking word - another name for a street. Brycg is Old English and means “bridge”. So Brycg Gata or Briggate means Bridge Street

Kirkja is the Viking word for a church. So Kirkja Gata or Kirkgate means Church Street.

Kirkgate is the oldest street in Leeds and there is still a church on it today.

Kirkja Gata. Kirkgate. Brycg Gata. Briggate. How long do you think these names will last? Will they sound the same in another thousand years?

**Voice:** Though we who pass our time along the stone

May not perceive the marks we make today

They will endure; our ways are scoring lines

Into the song of us and will not fade away.

**Loidis:** Where are those words coming from? Look down - they are cut into the flagstones at your feet.

There are other poems here – hidden in the stone - carved into the granite benches at either end of the street. The first bench is just ahead. The second is a little further down. The words on the benches have faded over time, but they are still there. As you go past, press your fingers to the stone and see if you can make out what they say.

When you're ready, I will see you at the end of the street - by the information board, just before you get to Vicar Lane.



## **Stop #7 – Kirkgate / Vicar Lane Junction**

**Loidis:** Here we are by Vicar Lane, just across the road from Kirkgate Market. People have been trading there, from as far back as 1822. It's an amazing building that's still sells goods from all around the world but, of course, the market hasn't always been there. For many years, the land where it now stands was just an open field. The field was known as Vicar's Croft and belonged to the Vicar of Leeds and there were many in the town who thought it was an eyesore.

**Parsons:** And I, for one, was moved to write about it at the time.

**Loidis:** That's the Reverend Edward Parsons, a local historian and a man of firm opinions.

**Parsons:** The Vicar's croft, as the plot of ground was called, which is now occupied by the market, was a field immediately adjoining the Vicarage on the west side, overgrown with weeds and the common receptacle of every abomination. How such a place was ever suffered to exist in the centre of a large town, is indeed astonishing.<sup>1</sup>

**Loidis:** Eventually, the land was bought by the Leeds Improvement Commission, who offered space to farmers to sell their pigs and cattle there on market days. There was also space for people selling other kinds of goods – fruits and vegetables, pies and cakes. Before this, people had simply set their stalls up on the town's main streets – Briggate, The Headrow and Vicar Lane.

The new market grew and grew over the years and, in 1857, the first covered market was opened on the site. It sold all sorts of different things. If you listen carefully, you might be able to hear the cries of some of the market traders, echoing down the centuries and over Vicar Lane.

**SFX:** **(A bustling market hall. People talking. The sounds of animals).**

**Trader #1:** Now then, ladies, don't forget your figs, real scripture fruit.

**Trader #2:** Long leather laces, penny a pair, short 'uns ha'penny a pair.

**Trader #3:** Proctor's 'erbal tablets for a cough or a cold.

**Trader #4:** Pies, a' lot lads, pies, a'lot, penny each, penny each.

**Trader #5:** Fine, fresh oranges. Look at that juice! Makes your mouth water, don't it?

**Loidis:** We're going to go inside now, for one final story – but, before you cross the road, I suggest you take your headphones out. Vicar Lane is always filled with traffic, and you'll need your wits about you as you cross.

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<sup>1</sup> Kirkgate Market: An Illustrated History. Steven Burt and Kevin Grady (Leeds, 1992) ISBN 0 9512883

Take the crossing right in front of you and go into the market through the corner entrance. When you're inside, take your first left and then keep on walking, until you reach Marks and Spencer's Penny Bazaar. I will meet you by the big green clock, just to the side of the stall.

## **Stop #8 - The Penny Bazaar**

**Loidis:** Here we are beside the Penny Bazaar in Kirkgate Market. This little shop is the ancestor of a famous high street store. Its founder, Mr Michael Marks, came to Britain from Belarus in Eastern Europe. He was forced to leave his hometown because of anti-Jewish laws. He arrived in Leeds in the early 1880s, with little money and very little English.

What would you do in that situation? How would you survive?

Michael Marks took jobs with anyone who would pay him – often working for very poor wages. In spite of this, he worked hard and managed to save a little bit of money until, at last, he had enough to set up his own business – buying and selling cheap but useful goods around the villages near Leeds. Eventually, he made enough to open a market stall – in the outdoor market, here at Kirkgate. The stall proved very popular – so much so, that in 1894 he made an offer to a business partner...

### **AGNES SPENCER, AGED 34, IS LOOKING AROUND MICHAEL MARK'S STALL AT LEEDS MARKET, 1894.**

**SFX:** MARKET TRADERS. GIRLS SELLING AT THE STALL. GENERAL TRADING HUBBUB

**Agnes:** Who do you trust? That's the question.

Who do you trust with your good name? Who do you trust with your hard-earned cash – our hard-earned cash? Your own brother? Or someone who you barely know?

That's why I'm here. Undercover if you like. Poking around Michael Marks' Penny Stall at Leeds Market. And thinking about that slogan 'Don't ask The Price: it's a penny.' But how many handkerchiefs, needles, nails, lengths of lace and all this flumgummery can you sell? How many pennies can this stall earn in an average day ... month ... or year? And how many is ... enough?

It all started Friday evening. Tom didn't come home from work at his usual time. The six o'clock horse tram went by ... no Tom. If my Tom's late there'll be a reason. He's a man of routine. He likes order. He wouldn't have risen to be chief cashier at a big firm like Dewhirst's if it wasn't for his regularity.

That said, on a Friday night, at the end of long week, it's not unknown for him to be sat in Whitelocks bar with the market traders ... but ... there *will still* be a reason.

Sure enough at 9pm he comes in – not drunk - a little louder than usual perhaps ...

He says to me, 'Agnes, how much money can we put together in a week?

So I'm, 'Whatever do you mean?'

And he's, 'Make me a cup of tea and I'll tell you.'

You can imagine what's going through my mind while kettle boils. Has he got himself into some kind of trouble? Debts? Gambling? ... Surely not my Tom?

He's always dreamt of having a farm; horses, cows, a few sheep... Maybe there's a smallholding come up?...

And there's his brother who's far too keen for Tom to sink our money into the family shoemaking business in Skipton... I fear where that'd lead...

But it's none of that. It's Michael Marks who runs this place – he's offered him a partnership; wants him to put £300 into his Penny stalls and expand his drapery business across the north. Well, it's not exactly drapery – it's not just cloth and the usual Marks has in mind – it's pots and pans, toys, stationery ... there doesn't seem to be any limit to what Marks thinks he can sell - given time – and - a reliable partner.

Well, my first question was, 'Do we *have* £300?' Tom's been sensible with his money and I, I've been single, earning my own money for 20 years. I've been a seamstress, teacher and headteacher before I married Tom. And I've been *very* careful.

And now here I am, living comfortably in a respectable suburb close to Potternewton Park, with a dependable husband on a decent wage, contemplating investing everything in market stalls run by a Polish Jewish pedlar who's a virtual stranger!

Actually ... in the village where I grew up, I liked to buy from pedlars. They let you handle their goods – braids, threads, beads, - have a proper look, not like the shops in town where everything's kept behind the counter 'til you're parted from your cash.

**SFX:** SHE'S HANDLING THE GOODS

**Agnes:** It's like that here on Marks' stall. These cards of buttons ... you can pick them up and feel the quality.

Are these buttons wood or bone?

**Assistant:** They're antler, ma'am. And these are mother of pearl.

**Agnes:** IMPRESSED..... Well ... not bad ... pretty good, I'd say.

NARRATING. Turns out, adding everything together, we do have £300. But do we *want* to hand it over to someone who doesn't even know his own date of birth, who's been in the country for little more than ten years and whose English is ... patchy to say the least?

Mmm, but these are very nice buttons, a good finish... he doesn't sell tat. I must say.

And you have to admire his achievements. He started with nothing! Tom first met him when he persuaded his boss, Isaac Dewhirst, to lend him £5. Marks bought goods from their warehouse and sold at a profit in the villages around Leeds. Then he started a market stall here; six days a week, toiling morning 'til night. Now he's got stalls in Castleford, Wakefield, Wigan, goodness knows where...

And ... *if*... Tom goes into partnership with him they'll set up their own warehouse, offices, which Tom 'll run, while Marks takes care of the selling. He says he wants stalls - shops even - in city centres across the country!

If it's a success Tom might even get his farm!

But it's like I said, can we trust him?

How do you judge a man?

By what people say about him? By his actions?

Or simply, on the quality of his buttons?

**Loidis:** Tom and Agnes Spencer decided to take up Michael's offer. From that point on, the business grew and grew, opening stores across the country. In 1903, Tom retired and bought his farm, but Marks and Spencer continued to be run by the Marks family for many years and it remains a household name today. It's quite an achievement for a Jewish refugee, who arrived in Leeds with nothing but a will to work. What could *you* achieve if you really put your mind to it?

Michael Marks. Leonora Cohen. Pablo Fanque. Jogendra Sen. Four people who achieved amazing things. I hope you enjoyed listening to their stories – and to those of the many other people that we've met while on this walk. There are still more tales for the city to tell, but they will have to wait for another occasion. Our time together is nearly at an end. Soon I will return to the stones where I dwell, and I will leave you to return to the present.

I hope you've enjoyed the time we've spent together, stirring up the past. I hope you remember the people that we've heard from and the stories that

they've told. Before you go, take a moment to think about your own lives. Think about the journey that you've taken today and the journeys you will take in the future. What marks will you make upon this city? What stories will you leave behind?

I am the Genius Loci here and I will see and feel each step you take. I will listen and remember your stories – for, without them, I and this city are nothing but empty stones and lifeless bricks and mortar.