

Leeds

Posted on Fri, 16 August 2024 by Christian and Nick

In our Leeds podcast we vada the online reviews for the gay bars and clubs of the Leeds freedom quarter! We pop into Viaduct Showbar, Queens Court, Fibre and The New Penny. Along the way we discuss Kim Woodburn's Dirty Disco, pink grapefruit garnish and the perils of being a Beaver.

Fun Facts about Leeds

One of the biggest cities in the UK and the economic capital of Yorkshire, Leeds has a long and vibrant history.

Fizzy drinks were invented in Leeds 250 years ago as were more recently jelly tots. Leeds was where the first ever film was shot in 1888 and Cluedo was among the most famous board games produced by Leeds-based Waddingtons.

And did you know that Marks and Spencer originates from Leeds after Polish immigrant Michael Marks opened his now famous Penny Bazaar in 1884 and teamed up with Thomas Spencer from Skipton.

The Leeds Gay Scene

The Gay Freedom Quarter of Leeds dates back to the 1930s where the Pelican Social Club in Blayd's Yard, off Lower Briggate, became known for welcoming gay and transgender men.

Others followed suit, and The Mitre pub on Commercial Street (formerly the Horse and Jockey, dating back to 1744) and The Royal Hotel off Lower Briggate became safe spaces for gay customers throughout the 1950s and 1960s.

The Yorkshire Terriers Football Club was established in Leeds in 1997, the first gay-friendly team to be created in the UK and the very first civil partnership was held on 21st December 2005 in Leeds after a special licence was granted to Bar Fibre.

Today, famous Leeds' figures from the LGBTQ+ community include professional boxer Nicola Adams, singer Marc Almond of Soft Cell, and writer Alan Bennett, to name but a few.

Viaduct Showbar

Located in Lower Briggate Street, in the heart of the Freedom Quarter, Viaduct Showbar offers, according to its Instagram page, "cabaret, live entertainment and DJ's seven nights a week!", and is a place where you are "free to be yourself". It's a fantastic venue for drag; indeed, on a Friday or Saturday, for a £10 cover charge, you get multiple performances throughout the night, led by the in-house team of Precious McMichaels, Malibu the Doll, Saki Yew and the Viaduct dancers. They do offer a VIP Package which gets you balcony seating, a glass of fizz and a complimentary Viaduct Showbar Fan!

Website: https://www.viaductleeds.com/

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/viaductshowbar

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/viaductshowbar/

Address: 11 Lower Briggate, Leeds LS1 6ER

Queens Court

Queens Court is also in Lower Briggate Street, just across the road from Viaduct. Their website reads: “This fantastic bar sits in an historic courtyard of the same name. The building, originally a wealthy cloth merchant’s house, named after Queen Anne, dates from 1714. Now, we are a leading LGBTQIA+ bar in the heart of Leeds’ Freedom Quarter. We have been serving the gay community for over 25 years and are famous for our courtyard parties during the summer months, bringing the alfresco party feel to the centre of Leeds. Queens Court is open seven days a week and brings you the friendliest team of staff, along with some of the city’s best drinks deals.”

Website: https://www.queenscourtleeds.com/leeds/queens-court-and-pride

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/QueensCourtandPride

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/queenscourtandpride

Address: 167-168 Briggate, Leeds LS1 6LY

Fibre

According to their website, Fibre has everything you need to unwind after a long day, from fairy lights and mirrors to a large courtyard hosting happy hours every day of the week. As well as a courtyard, it has a balcony and a penthouse and quite a strict dress code which seems sometimes to catch out the punters. It’s also well known for its bottomless brunch!

Website: https://fibreleeds.com/

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/BarFibre/

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/barfibre

Address: 168 Lower Briggate, Leeds LS1 6LY

The New Penny

The New Penny has a blue plaque from the Leeds Civic Trust which reads: This late Victorian public house was formerly known as the Hope and Anchor and since 1953 it has provided a safe venue for the LGBT community both before and following the decriminalisation of homosexuality in 1967. Renamed The New Penny in 1975, it is one of the longest continually running LGBT venues in the UK. The pub has hosted various well-known drag queens on its stage, including the much-missed Lily Savage. It has a very late licence – during the week it closes at 4 am and on Fridays and Saturdays it closes at 5.30 am.

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/TheNewPennyLeeds/

Address: 57-59 Call Lane, Leeds LS1 7BT

Visit www.theonetofiveguide.com for our Gay Scene Guides to: Newcastle, Brighton, Leeds, Soho, Cardiff, Birmingham, Manchester, Edinburgh, Blackpool, Glasgow, Belfast, London, Liverpool and the Regions. And finally, please remember that even if we are a little tongue in cheek in our podcast, we do love each and every venue on the scene, and we urge you all to get out there and support your local gay bars!