

STASS PARASKOS, c.1960



STASS PARASKOS 1933-2014

Stass came to Leeds in 1953 from Cyprus to work as a waiter. A chance encounter led him to enrol at Leeds College of Art, where he also went on to teach. He became embroiled in a notorious obscenity trial held in Leeds, after complaints about indecent imagery in his exhibition 'Lovers and Romances' at the Leeds Institute Gallery in 1966. This period saw many cases of artists being prosecuted by local authorities using archaic legislation like the 1824 Vagrancy Act in the wake of the DH Lawrence trial. Stass was fined £5 and became the last artist to be charged under the act in this country. The 'obscene' material in question is now owned by the Tate in London but was exhibited at the Tetley Gallery in 2016.

LEEDS ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY

The Leeds Anti-Slavery Society played an important, but largely unheralded, role in the campaign to abolish the American slave trade; although commonly attributed to Wilson Armistead, a prominent Leeds antislavery campaigner, Claire Midgley suggests that the impetus for the group, founded in 1853, can be traced to correspondence between local activist Harriet Lupton and American abolitionist Sarah Fugh. The Leeds group, which met at the Town Hall, was notable in being the only antislavery body in England to establish a committee consisting of both men and women. The Leeds Anti-Slavery Society was responsible for producing a considerable body of antislavery literature, some of which - such as Armistead's "A Tribute for the Negro" - still used extensively in American universities to teach about the abolition of slavery.



LEEDS' VERSION OF THE FAMOUS WEDGWOOD MOTIF



CENTRAL LIBRARY

This project was in collaboration with the Local and Family History Library at Leeds Central Library. They have extensive resources including many Leeds-based papers over time, such as the Northern Star and the Leeds Other Paper.

WEST YORKSHIRE ARCHIVES

There are also extensive resources at the West Yorkshire Archives, who hold significant material on Yorkshire Chartists and Luddites.



BERYL BURTON COMPETING IN 1963

BERYL BURTON 1937-1996

Beryl Burton was a champion cyclist from Morley, Leeds. Her greatest achievements include two world road race championships, five world pursuit titles, 72 national time trial championships and a further dozen national pursuit titles. She achieved her greatness independently, having had no professional coaching and accepted no sponsorships. Besides her cycling accomplishments she held down a day job and was a loved mum and wife. During a time of male domination in sport, Burton had a simple motto "anything lads can do, I can do" and when she got on her bike, she proved that.



LEEDS LIBRARY

Leeds Library has a regular schedule of talks by local authors and historians on various aspects of Leeds' history. The library itself, the oldest surviving subscription library in the UK, has holdings of anti-slavery tracts and abolitionist meetings.

ALICE MANN 1791-1865

Mann ran a radical bookshop in Leeds with her husband James Mann. She printed and published radical political texts and was sent to prison twice for selling unstamped, and therefore illegal, newspapers. She supported the Luddites (cloth workers who attacked mills and machinery in Yorkshire to oppose their terrible working/living conditions) and the Chartists. It is widely believed that she was the unidentified 'Lady Ludd' who led the riots on Briggate in 1812.

RADICALS OF LEEDS

ISABELLA FORD 1855-1924

Isabella Ford was a writer, suffragist, and a social reformer. Born on the 23rd of May 1855, in the Leeds suburb of Headingley, Ford gained a unique insight into the lack of rights given to female mill-workers through her father, who was a solicitor by day and ran a local-night school for mill girls by night. In her mid twenties she became involved in trade unions, which led her to being elected as a life member of the Leeds Trades and Labour Council. She went on to aid in the founding of the Leeds Independent Labour Party and became president of the Leeds Tailoresses Union.

BROTHERTON LIBRARY

The Brotherton Library and Special Collections, another major source of my research, also contains the Feminist Archive North, a particularly valuable resource for researching the Reclaim the Night marches.

'RECLAIM THE NIGHT' 1977-PRESENT

The 'Reclaim the Night' marches are a series of ongoing international feminist marches which 'assert the right of women to occupy public spaces free from fear of rape and sexual violence'. The first 'Reclaim the Night' march was organised in Leeds in 1977, partially in response to the 'Yorkshire Ripper' murders and subsequent police advice to women to 'stay at home at night' - essentially placing women under curfew. There were two marches in Leeds: one beginning in Chapeltown and one beginning in Hyde Park - both areas which were (and still are) notoriously unsafe for women at night - whilst simultaneous marches were organised in Brighton, Bristol, Lancaster, London, Manchester, Newcastle and York.

DAVID MAKOFSKI 1895-1973

David Makofski was from Chapeltown, Leeds' Jewish ghetto of the 1920s, but was one of the first to manage to move from there to the more affluent suburb of Moortown, Leeds. Once described as a 'small man but with a big voice'; a voice which he used to fight discrimination of race, creed or colour, he was responsible for saving the lives of nearly 700 Jews. Makofski would organise the employment and resulting immigration of Jewish refugees to Leeds who were fleeing persecution during the Holocaust. Known by some as Yorkshire's Schindler, his is an incredible story that deserves to be told.

JOHN SMEATON 1724-1792

Smeaton was born in Austhorpe, east Leeds, and went to Leeds Grammar School. As a child he was interested in mechanics and set up his own workshop aged 18. He is considered the 'father of civil engineering', since he started to pursue the practical applications of mechanics for their use in civil society. He played a key role in the change to mechanisation during the Industrial Revolution. He designed waterwheels, steam engines, windmills, a new, stronger cement, and most famously the Eddystone lighthouse.

ALICE MANN



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ISABELLA FORD, c.1890

