

# GET TO THE HEART OF LEEDS – ON A STADIUM TOUR!



Fan's eye view of what's on offer apart from football...

I stride purposely down the tunnel towards the square of light at the end, where you can just see a section of the lush pitch and the seats in the East Stand opposite. My mind is filled with visions of all the Leeds legends who have taken this same well-trodden path, and have lined up in this same concourse and psyched themselves up for battle, it's almost too much to take in! But today, the silhouettes in front of me aren't Bremner, Strachan or Snodgrass, they are three Irish lads on a stag weekend, plus a couple from Wales and a father and son from Kent.

The Elland Road Stadium Tour is two hours of absorbing indulgence for any Leeds United fan, overflowing with hitherto unseen riches revealing the inner sanctum of our beloved club.

Today we are led on the tour by Brendan Ormsby, a stand-in for the normal host John McClelland, but a more than able substitute having spent 24 years at the club he captained in the

mid-1980s. Ormsby is an affable guide as he regales us with tales of life at Elland Road – plus his opinions on modern-day football.

Highlights of the tour include the trophy cabinets in the Banqueting Suite, Ken Bates' Directors Lounge (which we learn you can't enter on a matchday without a tie of the appropriate length – or if you are wearing brown shoes!), the TV/radio gantry, the LUTV studios and the Internationals Board.

Each stage of the tour is accompanied by Ormsby's stories of the past and present, and you are given five or 10 minutes to wander freely around and take unlimited photos as souvenirs.

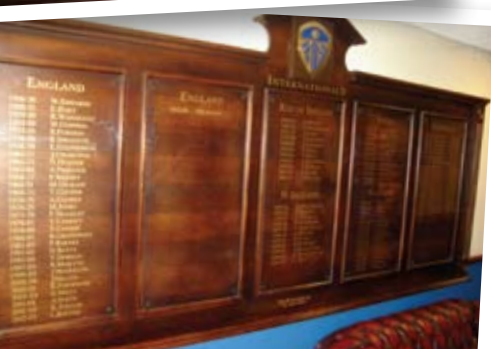
Eventually, we reach the changing rooms. It is hard to imagine you are sharing the same space as all the famous players who have gathered there in our history – often in victory, sometimes disconsolate – all the ranting managers, all the stories...

The home changing room was not as vast as I had expected, but, still, everyone nodded approvingly to themselves upon seeing the relative pokiness of the away changing rooms in comparison!

Other than the walk down



“Great value for money... countless aspects you will have never seen”



the tunnel onto pitchside and an opportunity to sit in the dugouts, the whole tour takes place

in the West Stand, and you had to marvel at how much this old building had been adapted over the years. Even in the Bates era there have been many upgrades to the corporate suites, the LUTV studios and the Directors Box. The stand is now a complex labyrinth of various operations in a moderately small space.

There is no doubt the tour is great value for money, and however many times you have visited Elland Road there are countless aspects of the tour that you will have never seen before. It's almost like you can't say you really know Leeds United until you've been on the Stadium Tour, so here's your opportunity to get properly acquainted. LLL

**Jon Howe**

*Guided Stadium Tours take place on Fridays (3pm) and Sundays (2pm). The cost is £10 for adults and £8 juniors/senior citizens. Tickets must be booked in advance. Mini-tours are also available in conjunction with the Sunday Carvery at Billy's Bar. All tours depart from Billy's Bar.*