

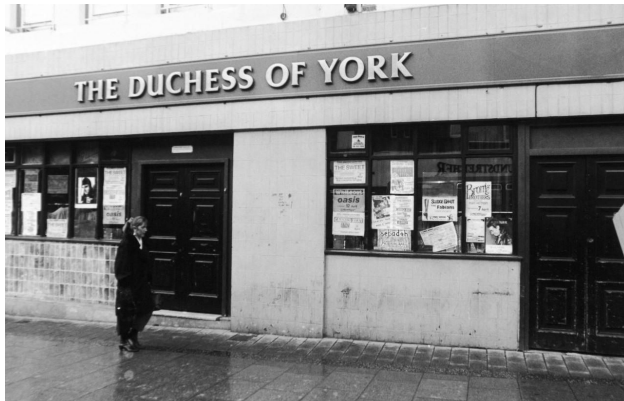


## **A Blue Plaque for The Duchess Of York 1988 - 2000**

A Blue Plaque unveiling on Vicar Lane,  
Leeds. The former site of the Duchess  
of York music venue.

On Saturday 14 September 2024

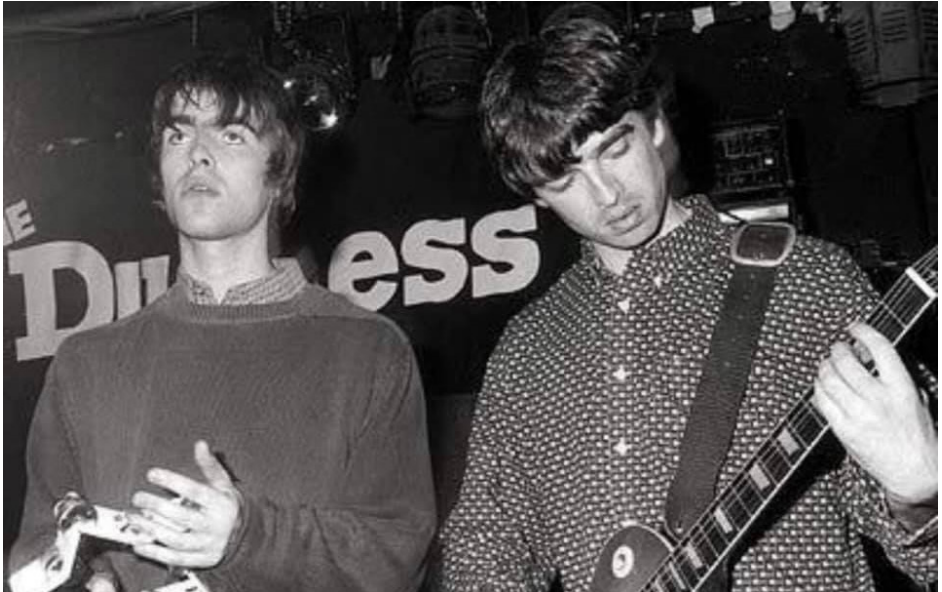
Unveiled by:  
John Keenan



**Leeds Civic Trust is grateful to everyone that has  
donated towards the funding for this plaque. Thank  
you to Amanda Burns, Paul Cockroft, Paul Thompson,  
Brett Lashua and John Keenan for their support and  
enthusiasm.**

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**Leeds Civic Trust is unveiling its 197th blue plaque to celebrate the former music venue The Duchess of York. The blue plaque celebrates the significance of the venue's contribution to the music industry playing host to emerging bands who went on to become commercially or culturally successful.**



The Duchess opened in 1985, with a capacity of 250 people, The Duchess of York (The Duchess) became Leeds' most important grass-roots music venue where emerging bands and artists performed on their way to becoming commercially or culturally successful. The iconic list includes Oasis, The Verve, Radiohead, Blur, Coldplay, PJ Harvey, Muse, Bush, Placebo, Green Day and Pulp.

Situated at 71 Vicar Lane, it was formerly the site of the Robin Hood pub before being replaced by the Marquee. However, with the threat of a lawsuit from the Marquee of London this venue became known as "the pub with no name" for most of 1986 before settling on The Duchess of York with John Keenan as owner transforming it into a music venue. The venue was at its height between 1988 to late 1990's. Tim Hornsby, of Fibbers of York, took over the lease in late 1994

1994 putting Miranda McMullen an experienced band manager as the venue manager.

The venue adhered strictly to its pub opening hours with bands performing at 7:30pm and headliners from 10pm. Bands played almost every night with The Duchess offering variety, regularity and quality of performers as well as a venue for bands to learn their trade. The final gig at the Duchess of York was Chumbawumba, a band who had played the venue multiple times before the venue closed in March 2000.

Oasis performed at the Duchess of York, with reportedly 2 paying customers in 1993. Oasis multi-instrumentalist Bonehead said. “Just two years after playing the Duchess we walked out in front of 250,000 people at Knebworth,” he says, “but those little venues with people are right in your face are where you learn your craft. If you can do it there, you can do it anywhere.”

The Duchess remains a symbol of Leeds’ rich musical heritage and a reminder of the power of music for the community with even a Facebook fan page to its name.



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## Who are we?

Leeds Civic Trust was founded in 1965 and is an independent, non-political and volunteer-led organisation. We are interested in the city of Leeds – past, present and future, striving to make Leeds a better place to live, work and socialise. Our focus includes the built environment and transport, our waterfront and green spaces as well as exploring the history of our city.

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## Membership and Volunteering

For £30 (individual members) or £40 (households) you can be part of the Leeds Civic Trust family. Members receive regular communications via a monthly newsletter and annual review and through their membership influence the direction of the organisation. They also have the opportunity to take part in events (including guided walks, visits to buildings) and discussions about the history and development of the city.

Corporate membership is also available for businesses and other organisations from £300.

Interested in supporting our work? Why not visit our website for current volunteering opportunities. You don't have to be a member to volunteer for the Trust.

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### Images:

Front cover, The Duchess  
Inside Left: Oasis, image by David Maude  
Inside Right The Manics by Tony Woolger  
Inside Right: Newspaper clipping by Tony Woolger

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## Plaque Funding:

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the funding of this blue plaque.

To view all contributors and to make a donation please scan the QR code.