



The Prospect of Leeds from the Knostrap Road (1712) – Francis Place



Leeds from Holbeck Junction (1868) – Illustrated London News

Cover image: *Leeds from Beeston Hill – S. Wagstaff (1875)*

Opening times

Monday – 9.00am – 8.00pm

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Prospects
of Leeds

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PTS = *Publications of the Thoresby Society*



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Essential readings and sources for the history and development of 'Prospects' of Leeds, from the 17th to the 19th centuries.

Prospect paintings are a genre of art that offer wide, elevated, or panoramic views, showcasing specific, identifiable local environments, whether country estate, town or a designed landscape. Through a continuous sweep of landscape, architecture, and horizon, Prospects aim to document the growth, pride, or commercial vitality of a specific location.

The first Prospect of Leeds was created by William Lodge in the 1680s and reproduced by Ralph Thoresby in his *Ducatus Leodiensis* (1715). The 1700s saw significant developments in the field, including Prospects by Francis Place (1712) and Samuel Buck (1745). 19th century works by artists such as J. M.W. Turner, and the Leeds painter Joseph Rhodes, traced the growth of the town through the industrial era, peaking with Pettingell and Thompson's 'Bird's Eye View of the Town of Leeds' in 1885. Photography has largely replaced the true, painted Prospect in the 20th century.

- Beresford, Maurice. *East End, West End: The Face Of Leeds During Urbanisation 1684–1842*, PTS, LX-LXI (1988). Includes material on the Prospects by William Lodge, Samuel and Nathaniel Buck, and Francis Place
- Beresford, Maurice. 'Observations on East Prospect of Leeds in Yorkshire from Chevalier Hill,' PTS, LXIV, *Centenary Publication: Leeds in the Seventeenth and early Eighteenth Centuries* (2008), p. 127-132. An unfinished article on Buck's first attempt at a Prospect of Leeds in 1720
- Borsay, Peter. *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town 1660-1770* (1989). A general overview of cultural representations of urban topography.
- Burt, Steven and Rachael Unsworth. *Leeds: Cradle of Innovation* (2018). Short articles about Prospects of Leeds by J. M. W. Turner (1816) and Thomas Burras (1844)
- Burt, Steven. 'Ralph Thoresby and the Compilation of the Ducatus Leodiensis,' PTS, *'Ducatus' Tercentenary*, Volume I: A Celebration of Ralph Thoresby (2015), p. 5-44. Includes material on the Lodge and Place images
- Friedman, Terry F. 'The Ingenious Mr. Lodge's View of Leeds,' *Leeds Arts Calendar*, No. 79 (1976), p. 25-26
- Friedman, Terry F. 'Leeds in 1844,' *Leeds Arts Calendar*, No. 79 (1976), p. 27-32
- Hollis, Kyla. 'Land Lovers: The Rise of English Topographical Art in the 17th century' (2015-16). On the 'York Virtuosi', a group of scholars, scientists and artists who met in York, including William Lodge and Francis Place
- Nickson, Chris. 'The Evolving Shape of Leeds' (2018). Overview with commentary and images of Leeds in paintings and photography. Available at chrisnickson.co.uk/2018/06/13/the-evolving-shape-of-Leeds
- Ramm, Antony. 'Arranging and Disarranging Books: William Boyne's *History of Leeds*,' PTS, Volume 35, *Ralph Thoresby and his Legacy: Leeds First Historian* (2025), p. 77-106. Includes material on original sketches by Lodge and Place in Boyne's grangerised edition of Thoresby's *Ducatus Leodiensis*. Boyne's *History* is in the Central Library collections and is available on request (*)
- Sweet, Rosemary. *Antiquaries: The Discovery of the Past in Eighteenth-century Britain* (2004). Contains material on Samuel Buck
- Tyler, Richard E. G. 'Drawings by Francis Place in Leeds,' *Leeds Arts Calendar*, No. 62 (1968), p. 12-19
- Various authors. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* entries for: William Lodge (Prospect: 1684), Thomas Gent (Prospect: 1733), Samuel Buck (Prospect: 1745), and Charles West Cope (Prospect: 1826). Leeds Libraries members can access for free at libraries.leeds.gov.uk/digital-library

See the Leeds Libraries page on the Google Arts and Culture platform for reproductions of key Prospects: artsandculture.google.com/partner/leeds-libraries