



The now-iconic photograph of The Beatles crossing Abbey Road (above) is a scene which fans try to recreate when they are in London (right). PHOTOS: APPLE, MARK ANDREWS/REUTERS



The Abbey Road studios (above) was where The Beatles recorded many albums.



A Rosetti Airstream guitar (above) played by Paul McCartney on a demo tape for the duo Drew & Dy on display at the Hard Rock Hotel London.

A Dougie Millings suit (right) worn by Paul McCartney in 1965 displayed at the Hard Rock Hotel London.

GETTING THERE

Singapore Airlines and British Airways both have direct flights between Singapore and London Heathrow.

WHERE TO STAY

The Hard Rock Hotel London (www.hardrockhotels.com/london) has the best rock 'n' roll credentials and a convenient central location.

BEATLES WALK

I went on The Beatles – In My Life Walk, one of three thematic tours. Tours operate six days a week and cost £10 (\$\$17) a person. Go to beatlesinlondon.com



London still Fab after 50 years



The British city is peppered with locations associated with The Beatles' music and lives, with fans thronging the hot spots regularly

Mark Andrews

Fifty years after The Beatles released Abbey Road, the London of the Fab Four retains a sensation of the Swinging Sixties in the places associated with their music and lives.

Released on Sept 26, 1969, the album's cover showed The Beatles coolly striding across the zebra crossing on Abbey Road – one of the most iconic images of the English rock quartet.

The album also contained their last sessions as a group.

The famed thoroughfare and the nearby Abbey Road studios, where they recorded many albums, is the highlight of a 2½-hour tour led by Richard Potter, author of the Guide To The Beatles' London.

Fittingly, his tour begins at Marylebone Station.

In the film A Hard Day's Night (1964), screaming fans pursue the band into the station. This musical comedy fictionalised 36 hours in the life of the Liverpool-born band members – John Lennon, Paul McCartney, Ringo Starr and George Harrison.

Marylebone Station doubles as Liverpool Station in the opening scene. Later, it morphs into a London station where the group bundle into a waiting car on the platform,

before driving out of the station.

"Comedians were from Liverpool, not pop stars," says Potter, going on to explain that all the record companies were based in London.

Despite the group spending thousands of hours performing in Liverpool and Hamburg honing their sound and skills, a record contract eluded them.

Manager Brian Epstein finally managed to get them a contract with Parlophone (EMI) in 1962.

"Epstein told everybody The Beatles would be bigger than Elvis and everyone laughed. Finally, someone didn't laugh and that was George Martin, head of Parlophone Records," Potter says.

While The Beatles might have been born in Liverpool, the recording-on-Abbey Road were very much part of the London scene.

In those days, Liverpool was an eight-hour drive away and the group, after scoring their first No. 1 with Please Please Me, had little choice but to move to the British capital.

Despite the blue English Heritage plaque on nearby 34 Montagu Square linking the property to Lennon, it was actually owned by Starr. He bought the ground floor and basement as his London home, thanks to it being located close to the recording studios in Abbey Road.

After Starr and his family moved to a country house, McCartney used the apartment as a recording studio, installing taping equipment as he could not read or write music. McCartney lived nearby at 57 Wimpole Street with the Asher family, he was dating their daughter Jane at the time.

Later, Lennon and Yoko Ono moved in. It was here that they

photographed the infamous Two Virgins album cover where they appear completely naked.

Not long after, the couple were visited by plainclothes police led by Norman Pilcher, who was suspected of planting drugs on his celebrity victims.

Lennon, tipped off by a press friend about the upcoming drug bust, had thoroughly cleaned the place.

Conveniently passing by at the time was a News of the World tabloid reporter who managed to get shots of Lennon being arrested for drugs found in the apartment.

"John said up to his death that the drugs didn't belong to him and thought they were from previous occupants, Jimi Hendrix lived there for a start," says Potter.

Separately, I had visited the Hard Rock Hotel London, which re-opened this year after a £100-million (\$\$171-million) refurbishment.

In true Hard Rock style, there is no shortage of memorabilia, including three items associated with The Beatles. Displayed near the entrance to the restaurant is Stuart Sutcliffe's cheat sheet. The original bassist when The Beatles played as a five-piece group in Hamburg, he was not a gifted musician and stayed on in Germany to concentrate on art.

Also on the first floor is a guitar used by McCartney in a demo tape for musical duo Drew & Dy. McCartney played the displayed Rosetti Airstream guitar at a recording session at Trident Studios on the edge of Chinatown in Soho.

The song, I Want You, on the Abbey Road album was actually recorded at Trident, as were some tracks on earlier albums.

Pride of place, however, goes to McCartney's black suit, made in 1965 by Millings and displayed on the third floor of Hard Rock Hotel.

Dougie Millings, known as The Beatles' tailor, had a cameo in A Hard Day's Night as a frustrated tailor. His suits set the image of the pre-psychedelic Beatles.

On my own, I also explore Savile Row, a street better known for suits, on which The Beatles gave their last live performance.

Today, a branch of Abercrombie Kids fills 3 Savile Row where, in January 1969 on the rooftop, the group gave a live performance before being gatecrashed by the police.

Meanwhile, the tour also stops at the site of the former Apple Corps shop set up by The Beatles in Baker Street. "The Beatles started Apple for tax reasons because, at the time, they were paying 95 per cent. Hence Harrison's song, Taxman," says Potter.

Stocking psychedelic clothing by The Fool, a Dutch clothing collective who came to the attention of The Beatles, and with a colourful mural on the walls, the shop suffered from rampant shoplifting and a limited desire for making a profit.

"The shop was in the wrong place. It should have been somewhere like King's Road, Chelsea or Carnaby Street that had shops with psychedelic clothes and murals. Baker Street, famous for Sherlock Holmes, was the wrong place," says Potter.

Back in the 1960s, the street was famous for independent boutiques with designers such as Mary Quant and Foale and Tuffin having stores there. Today, the oldest independent shops are The Face and

Sherry's, both of which specialise in clothing from the 1960s and the mods revival.

"Liam Gallagher was in here just a week ago with his son," says Face owner PS Naylor.

Along with stocking brands such as John Smedley, the shop also does limited lines made in London with wool from Yorkshire. Displayed in a cabinet is a gold disc of The Beatles' From Me To You.

My first time to Abbey Road was more than 20 years ago with a musician friend, who went on to have recording success in Poland. Back then, we had the crossing to ourselves, but nowadays, 300,000 visitors a year visit the crossing and the studios.

"It is so everyday, anybody can recreate it. It's just four guys on a crossing," says Potter about the album cover.

The original idea was to call the album Everest, but the group refused to go to the mountain for a photo shoot.

What originally held up traffic by only 10 minutes as photographer Iain Macmillan stood on a step ladder and took six pictures of the Fab Four crossing Abbey Road – three in each direction – has led to a lot of traffic congestion as tourists try to get the perfect shot.

"It's become one of the places in London to get your picture taken. I wonder how many of them can even name the four Beatles," adds Potter.

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Mark Andrews is a Shanghai-based British lifestyle writer and photographer.

The main entrance of Marylebone Station (above), where The Beatles were seen driving out from in the 1964 film, A Hard Day's Night.

Grab PRESENTS

Gourmet TRIBE

The inaugural Gourmet Tribe comes to life on 27 September 2019, where a series of interesting Experiences and Dinner Events have been lined-up in the months of October and November.

Embark on a whole new gastronomical odyssey and enjoy awesome goodness at these trendy restaurants!

For more information, please visit:
www.gourmettribe.sg

EVENTS

THE PRIVÉ BEYOND IMPOSSIBLE DINNER

2 Oct, Wed | 7pm
Privé #01-02, 1 Empress Place
\$179555
\$62.10 (GrabRewards Platinum Members)
\$69.00 (Standard Price)

GEYLANG SUPPERINGS

25 Oct, Fri | 10pm
JB Ah Meng
53A Geylang Road, S389490
\$43.20 (GrabRewards Platinum Members)
\$48.00 (Standard Price)

DOTONBORI

29 Oct, Tue | 7pm
The Horse's Mouth
583 Orchard Road
#B1-38, S238384
\$62.10 (GrabRewards Platinum Members)
\$69.00 (Standard Price)

ASIAN GRILL & GROOVE

2 Nov, Sat | 7pm
Blue Lotus Kitchen + Bar
991B Alexandra Road, S119970
\$58.50 (GrabRewards Platinum Members)
\$65.00 (Standard Price)

EXPERIENCES

PHONE EATS

5 Oct, Sat | 1130am-30pm
The Party Room, Grand Hyatt Singapore
10 Scotts Road, S228211
\$38.00 (GrabRewards Platinum Members)
\$40.00 (Standard Price)

STEADY HANDS WIN

12 Oct, Sat | 10-11am & 11am-12pm
Barlstart Coffee
65 Tras Street, S079004
\$25.20 (GrabRewards Platinum Members)
\$28.00 (Standard Price)

DEARBORN X TOTT PRESENTS THE UPPER CRUST

15 Oct, Tue | 3-7pm
TOTT
3 Tomasek Boulevard
#02-427, S038983
\$166.50 (GrabRewards Platinum Members)
\$185.00 (Standard Price)

KAWAII BY LITTLE MISS BENTO

19 Oct, Sat | 12-2pm
Cooklyn Inc
31 Ah Hood Road, S329979
\$90.00 (GrabRewards Platinum Members)
\$100.00 (Standard Price)

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