

Self-Guided Walk – The Beatles in London

On June 6th 1962 The Beatles completed their first recording session at what later be called Abbey Road Studios and their links to London continue from that point. The walk below takes in a host of London sites that have overt links to The Beatles and forms them into a sensible self-guided route.

This walk is split into two parts (Soho and St. John's Wood) and you will need to take the Underground in between the two parts. Total walking distance is about 2.7 miles (4.5 kms) and will take about 56 minutes for the walking part, with 15 minutes on the Underground. And then you just need to add time for photographs!

For any pictures, the named locations are blue circles, the walking routes red arrows. All other colour circles and arrows are to help but aren't part of the walk as such. All maps and images are from Google Maps as per their Geo Guidelines.

The Soho section is as follows.

Stop 1 – London Pavilion, 1 Piccadilly

Stop 2 – Prince of Wales Theatre, Coventry Street

Stop 3 – Dougie Millings and Son, 63 Old Compton Street

Stop 4 – Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street

Stop 5 – Trident Recording Studios, 17 St. Anne's Court

Stop 6 – Blue Gardenia Club, 20 St. Anne's Court

Stop 7 – MPL Publishing, 1 Soho Square

Stop 8 – The London Palladium, 8 Argyll Street

Stop 9 – Bag O'Nails, 9 Kingly Street

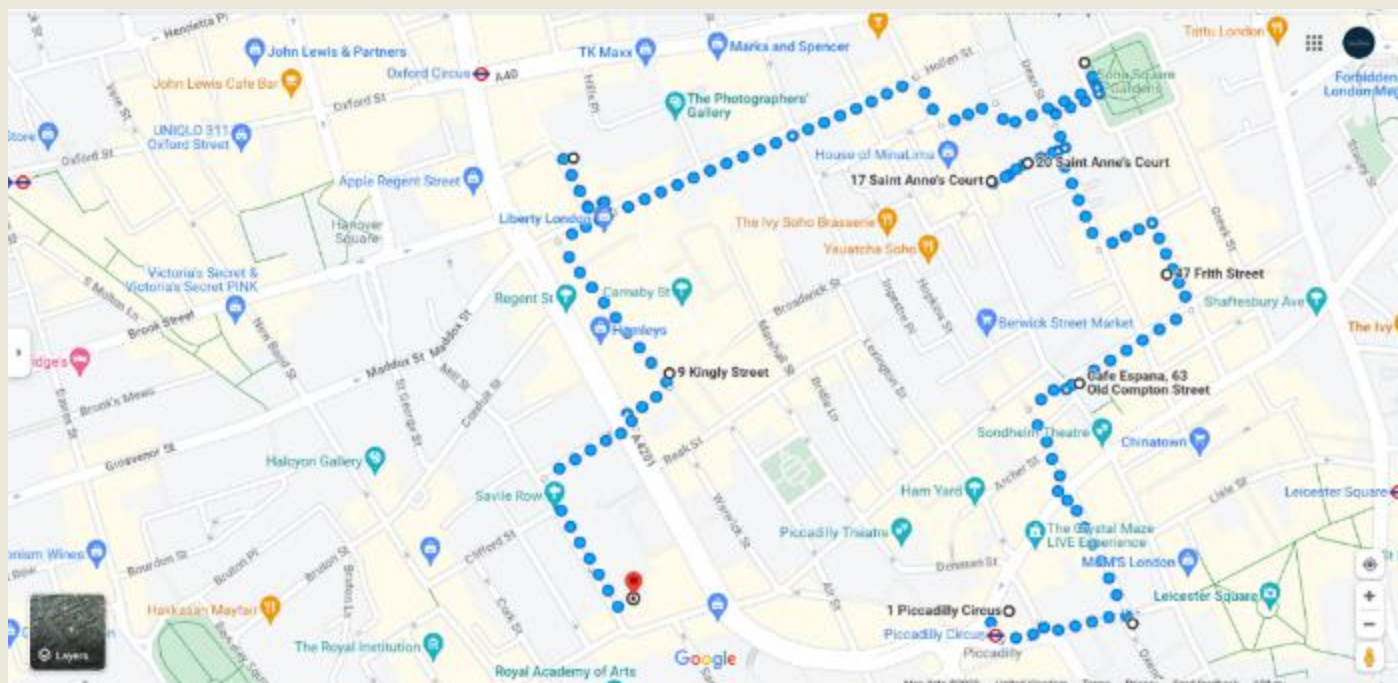
Stop 10 – Apple Records, 3 Savile Row

The St. John's Wood section is as follows.

Stop 11 – 7 Cavendish Avenue

Stop 12 – Abbey Road Studios, 3 Abbey Road

Here's the map of the Soho section of the walk. It's about 1.9 miles (3.1 km) and takes 38 minutes to walk with no stops. That distance and time includes a last section from 3 Savile Row back to Piccadilly Circus station that isn't marked on the map (but there's a dedicated one further down).



This section of the walk is going to start and finish at Piccadilly Circus Underground station – there you will find the Bakerloo and Piccadilly lines. To begin the walk just make your way there by Underground.

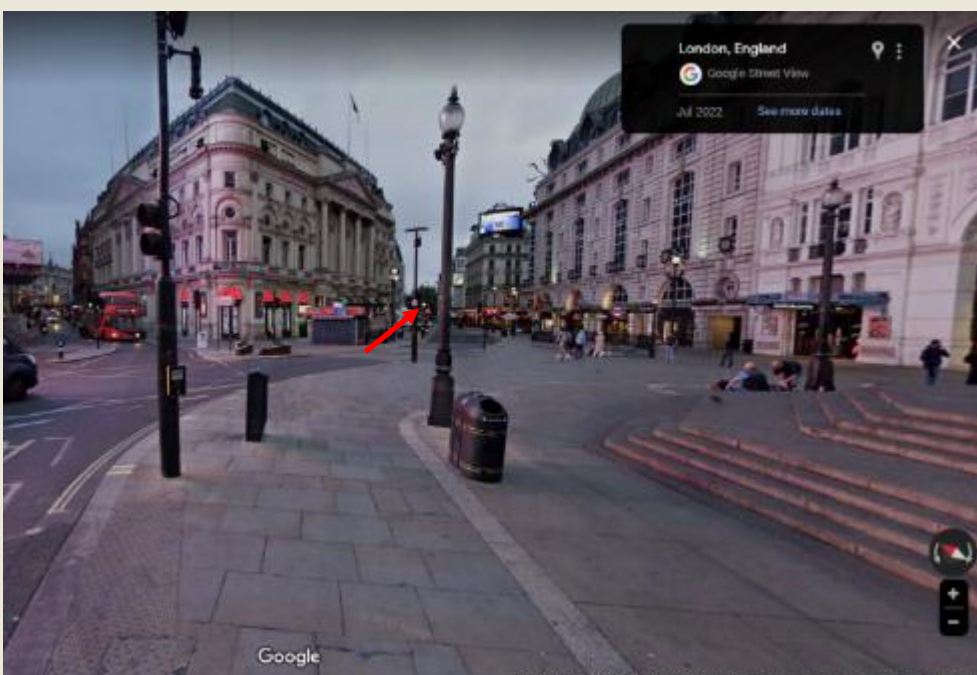
Stop 1

Overview - 1 Piccadilly Circus – the London Pavilion. This entertainment venue played host to the premiers of four of the five films, namely *A Hard Day's Night* (July 1964), *Help!* (July 1965), *Yellow Submarine* (July 1968) and *Let It Be* (May 1970). It is on the corner of Shaftesbury Avenue and Coventry Street and is home to the Trocadero. The London Pavilion was built in 1859 then rebuilt in 1885 when Shaftesbury Avenue was constructed. At that time, it was considered the absolute forefront of music hall theatre. It would then be converted to a cinema in 1934. For many, it's high point was the premier of *A Hard Day's Night* in July 1964. Sadly, the cinema closed in 1981, and it lay empty for five years, but has been revamped into what you can see today.

Directions - On arrival at Piccadilly Circus you need to head for exit 4 for the Trocadero. That will bring you out onto the street right in front of the London Pavilion (Underground exit is the red circle below, the London Pavilion is the blue circle).



Once you have finished you need to head along Coventry Street – that's the road that runs to the right of the London Pavilion as shown by the red arrow below. You will also see a large screen on top of a building – at ground level that is an Angus Steak House and just keep that to your right as you head along Coventry Street at the junction of Haymarket.



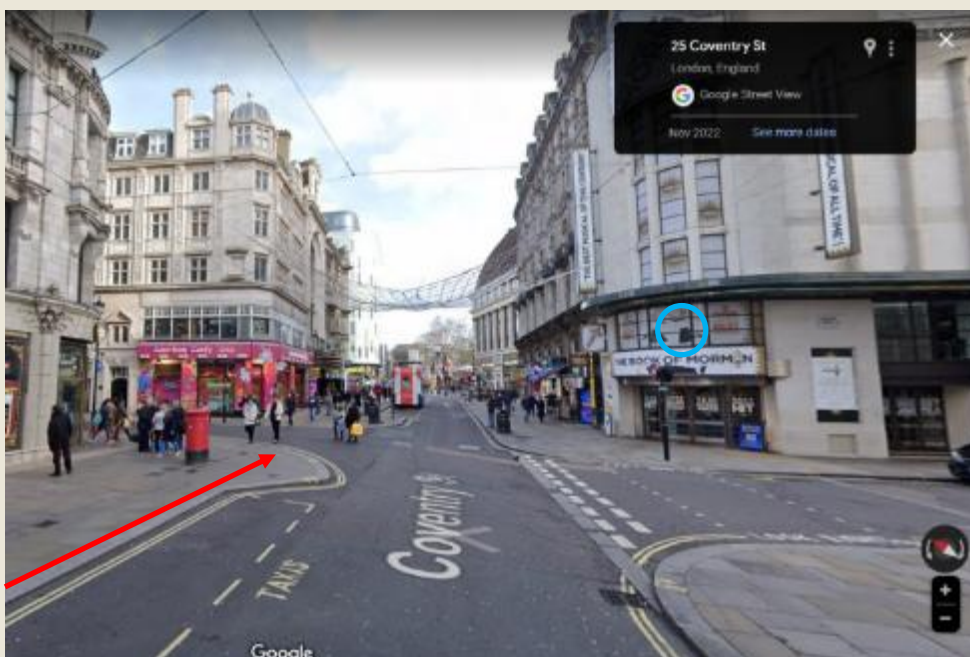
Stop 2

Overview – Prince of Wales Theatre, Coventry Street

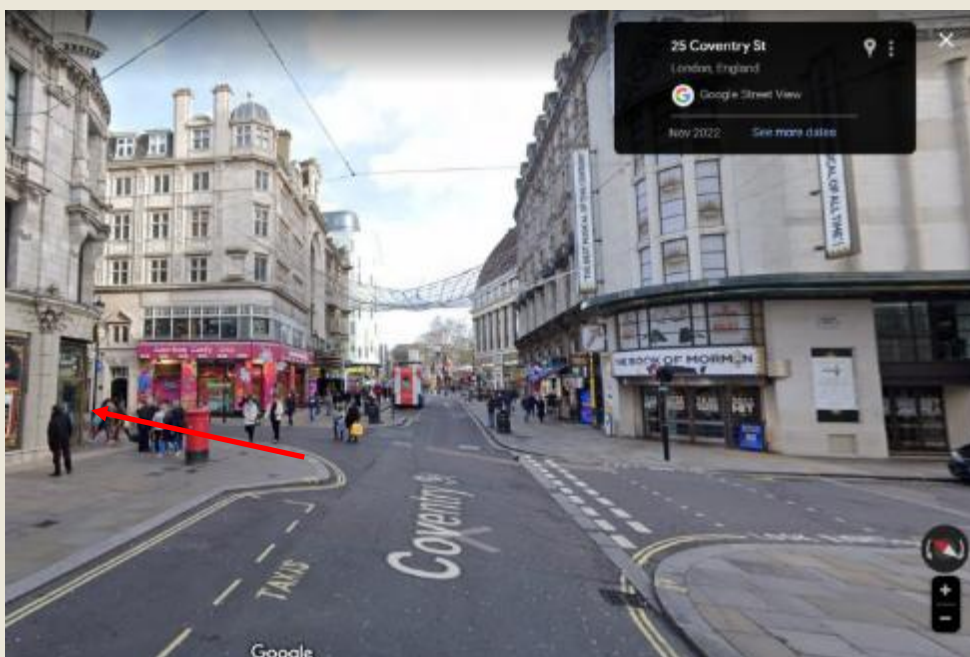
This theatre is one of the many venues to host the Royal Variety performance – that’s an annual event that sees a number of mostly British acts, musicians and entertainers perform an evening of short pieces to an audience including the monarch or other senior members of the Royal Family in support of the Royal Variety charity. It’s run most years since 1912 and has been televised since 1960. This theatre only hosted the event in 1961 and 1963 and it’s the second one that gives us a reason to stop.

In front of Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother and Princess Margaret, The Beatles played a number of songs and closed with *Twist and Shout*. Famously John said “For our last number, I’d like to ask your help. For the people in the cheaper seats, clap your hands. And the rest of you, if you’d just rattle your jewelry.” His cheeky request was laughed at by all and the band considered to be able to transcend class barriers.

Directions – leaving Haymarket behind you will find the Prince of Wales theatre at the next junction where Coventry Street is crossed by Oxendon Street/Rupert Street. It will be on the right hand side (blue circle).



Once you have finished you need to turn left into Rupert Street as shown below.



Stop 3

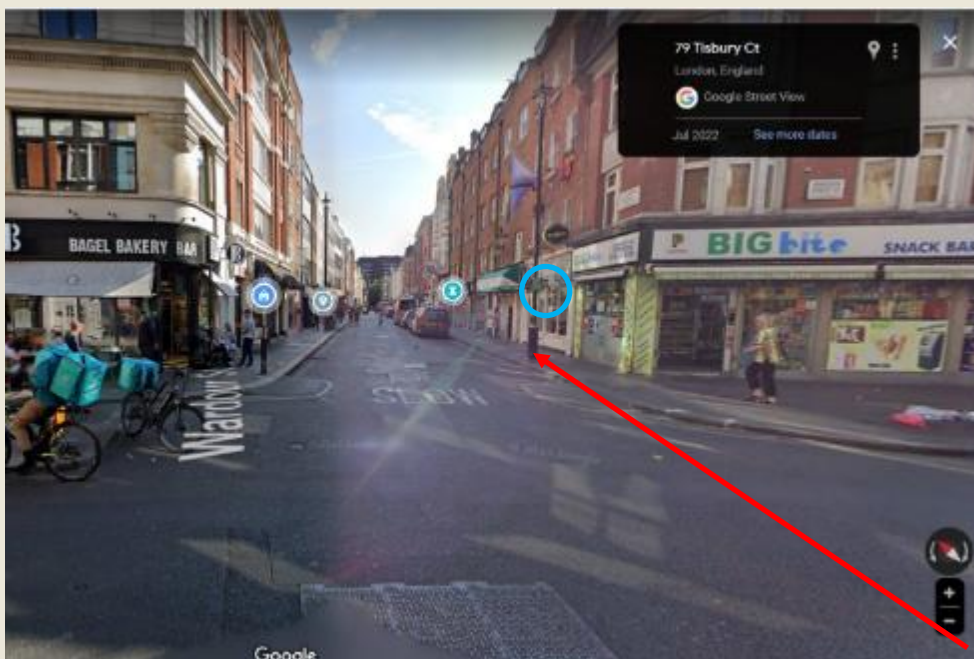
Overview – Dougie Millings and Son, 63 Old Compton Street (now La Pastaia)

John Lennon went to the tailor that used to be on this site and asked for something different – and the result was the collarless suits the band became famous for. They all became regular customers and crowds would regularly gather in the hope of catching a glimpse of one of the band picking up their new suits. The real tailor, Dougie Millings, even has a brief cameo in *A Hard Day's Night*. He went on to make over 500 outfits for the band including their stage outfits for *Help!*

Directions – from Coventry Street you turned left onto Rupert Street. Follow it and cross over Shaftesbury Avenue, keeping on Rupert Street. You will pass a road on the right, Winnett Street, and then need to take a narrow passage that's also to the right. It's called Tisbury Court and on the corners you will find White Lily Spa and Prowler.



At the end of Tisbury Court you will come to Wardour Street that runs from left to right. The proper road directly ahead of you is Great Compton Street. Here's a view as you come out of Tisbury Court – La Pastaia, at number 63, is the second premises on the right and is marked with a blue circle.



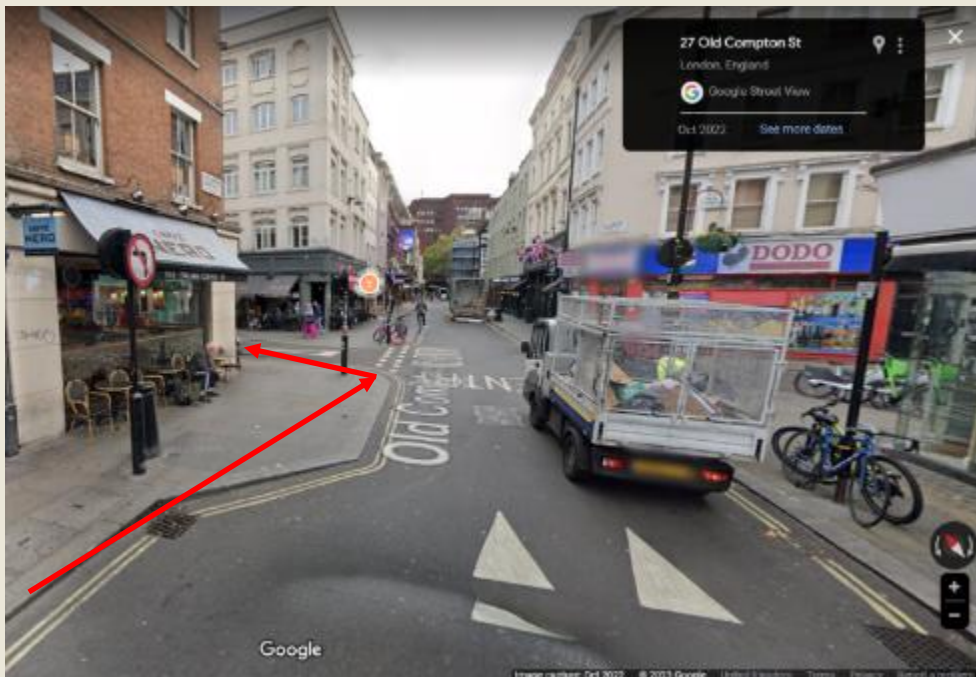
Once you have finished just continue along Great Compton Street.

Stop 4

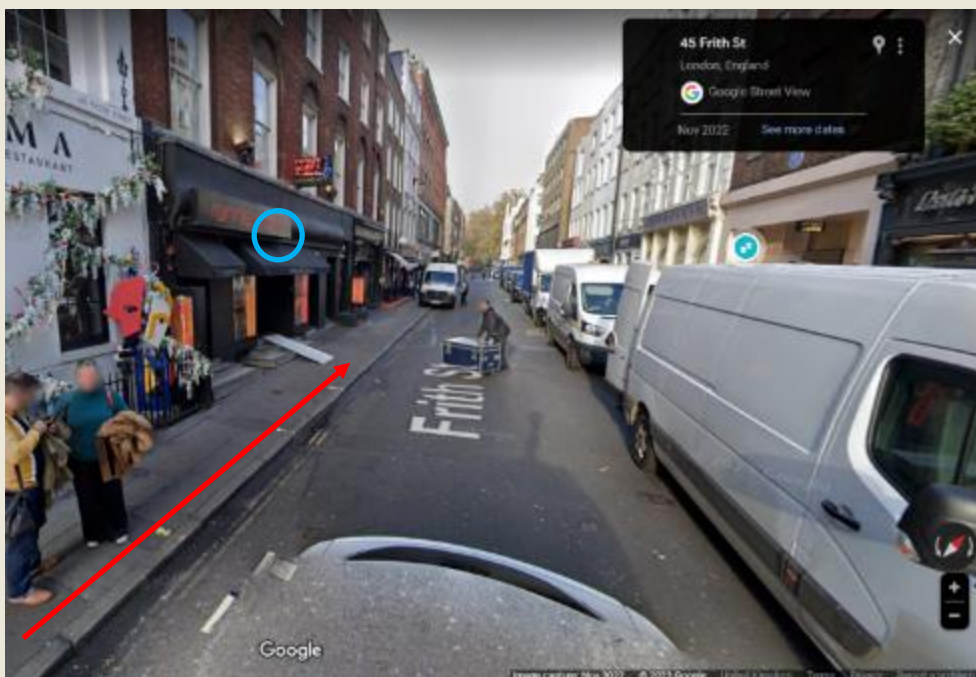
Overview – Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street

This is the home of the famous jazz club and the founder, Ronnie Scott, is known for having played the saxophone solo on *Lady Madonna* in 1968. The club was the second version of the name and founded in 1965. Amongst its notable performances was the last public show by Jimi Hendrix in 1970.

Directions – Leaving number 63 Old Compton Street behind just keep going along Old Compton Street. You will pass Dean Street and then need the next left into Frith Street. On the corner you will find a Café Nero as follows.



After turning into Frith Street you will find Ronnie Scott's just a few premises along on the left (blue circle below).



Once you have finished just keep going along Frith Street.

Stop 5

Overview – Trident Recording Studios, 17 St. Anne's Court

Despite its unassuming appearance, this studio was responsible for recording a lot of music. In relation to The Beatles, they recorded a number of later songs such as *Hey Jude*, *Dear Prudence*, *Savoy Truffle*, *I Want You (She's So Heavy)*, *Martha My Dear* and *Honey Pie*. In addition solo works were recorded there by Paul, George and Ringo. Other notable recordings include Elton John's *Your Song*, David Bowie's *The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars* and Queen's *Queen*, *Queen II* and *Sheer Heart Attack* and many more. There is a blue plaque on the outside for David Bowie.

Stop 6

Overview – Blue Gardenia Club, 20 St. Anne's Court

This long-lost club is probably where The Beatles performed their first London gig. The rumour is that their driver knew it was open late and didn't have an act. In addition, if true, they performed as a three-piece as George was at home ill.

Directions – Leaving 47 Frith Street behind take the next left, Bateman Street. You will find Canwood and the Dog and Duck pub on the corners. At the end turn right onto Dean Street, with the Crown and Two Chairmen pub on the corner.

Here's a view down Bateman Street.



You will pass Richmond Mews on your left then need the next left, St. Anne's Court. On the corner is Make Mine and the entrance is directly opposite a NatWest bank.



You will find St. Anne's Court is quite a narrow passage – if you get to Wardour Street then you have gone too far.

Only one of the locations can be found today.

Trident Recording Studios is marked by the blue circle. You can see the blue Bowie plaque.



If you turn your back on the studios, you will see an even smaller passage called Flaxman Court and it is likely that the Blue Gardenia was off that passage. It's one for the imagination.

Stop 7

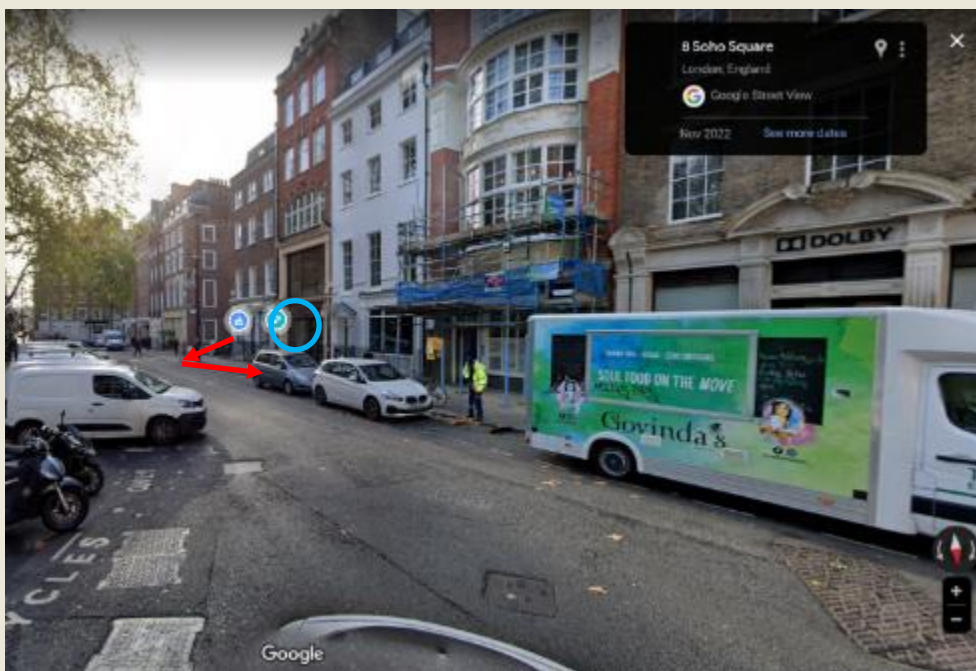
Overview – MPL Publishing, 1 Soho Square

Founded in 1970 by Paul McCartney, this publishing house was set up to manage his own work as well as a host of other artists, many of which are catalogues that the company has bought over the years, including works by Buddy Holly and Carl Perkins.

Directions – from 17 St. Anne's Court head back the way you came into Dean Street. Turn left. And at the end of Dean Street you need to turn right onto Carlisle Street. It will look like this.



At the end of the second arrow above you will have reached Soho Square and need to turn left as shown by the third arrow. The second building on the left is MPL Publishing (blue circle below).



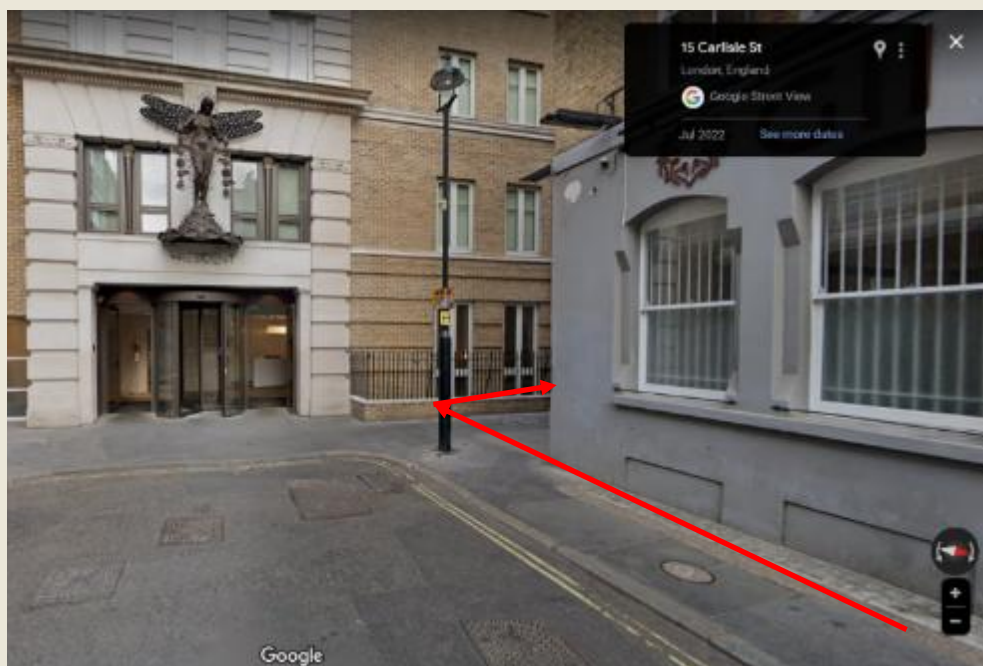
Once you have finished go back to Carlisle Street by turning right off the square.

Stop 8

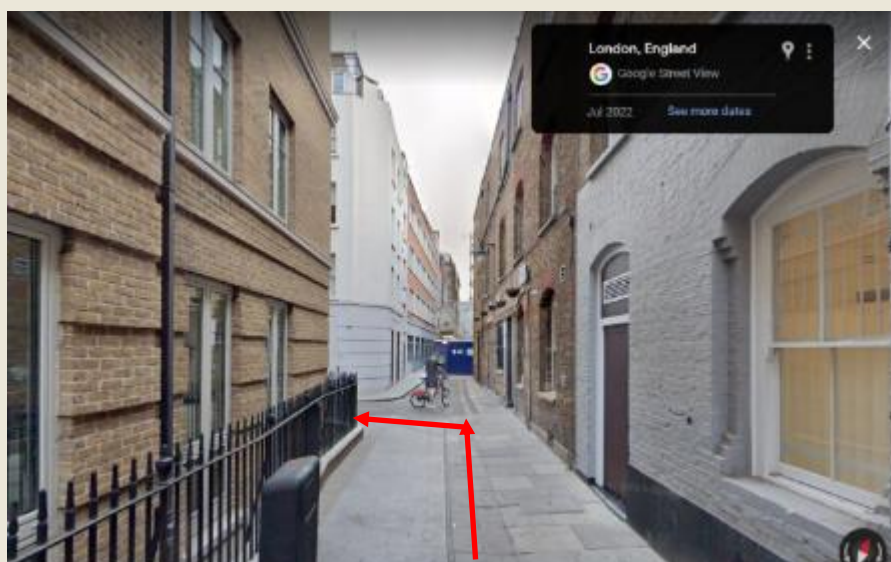
Overview – The London Palladium, 8 Argyll Street

This theatre has stood since 1910 but wasn't quite ready for what happened in 1963. At that time (from 1955 to 1969) the theatre hosted a popular television show called Sunday Night At The London Palladium and on the 13th October 1963, The Beatles played. Thousands packed the theatre and about 15 million people watched on the television. The concept of Beatlemania had started. And as the fans flocked to the stage door to meet their idols the band made a hasty exit out of the front doors.

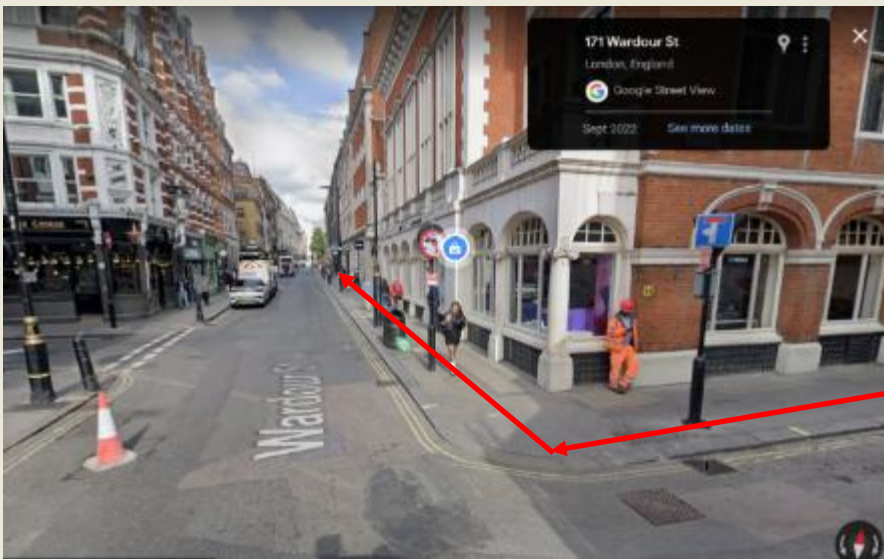
Directions – having rejoined Carlisle Street just follow it to its end and you will find a narrow passage to the right.



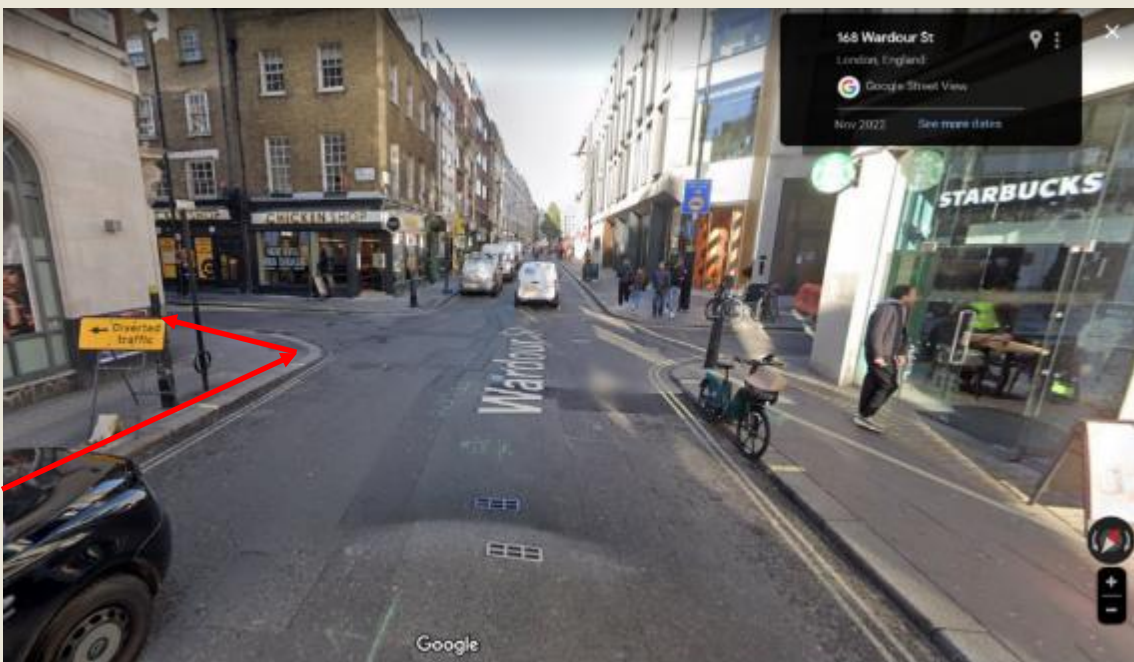
That passage is very short and at its end you need to turn left onto Sheraton Street as follows.



And at the end of Sheraton Street, you need to turn right onto Wardour Street. You'll find a Yamaha music shop on the corner.



Ignore the almost immediate left but instead take the second left, Noel Street. There's a Chicken Shop on the corner.

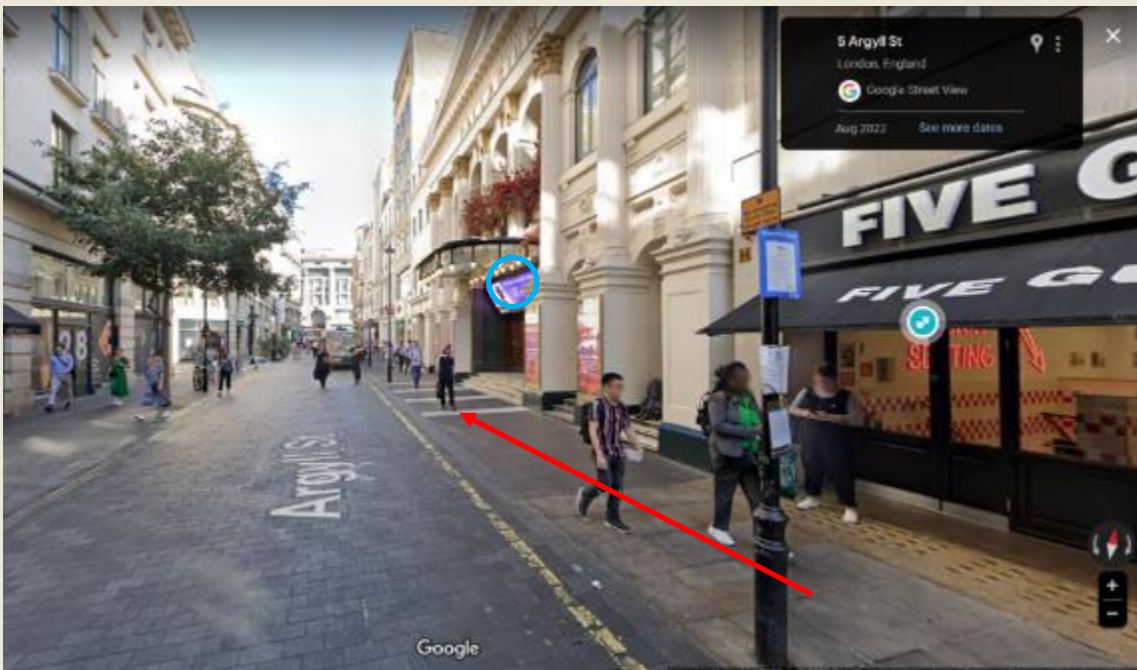


Follow Noel Street as it crosses Berwick Street then Poland Street. At that point it changes name to Great Marlborough Street.

After a while you need the next right, Argyll Street. On the corner you will find Spaghetti House and Lavazza.



The Palladium is a little way along on the right (blue circle).



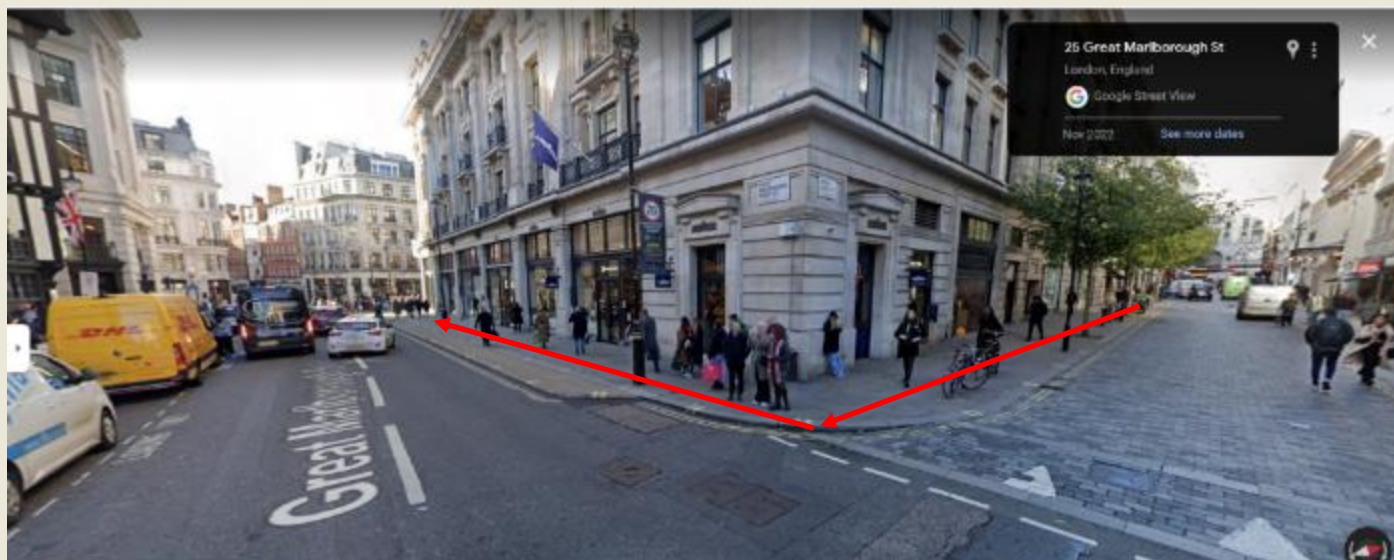
Once you have finished here just turn back the way you came along Argyll Street. When you reach Great Marlborough Street you will be turning right.

Stop 9

Overview – Bag O’Nails, 9 Kingly Street

This was a private member’s club from 1965 to 1968. In its short life it was a favourite haunt for musicians to meet and play their music. Paul McCartney was a regular visitor, so much so that he had his own private table. And it’s also where, on 15th May 1967, he met future wife Linda. It’s also the location of the first gig by the Kim Hendrix Experience on 25th November 1966.

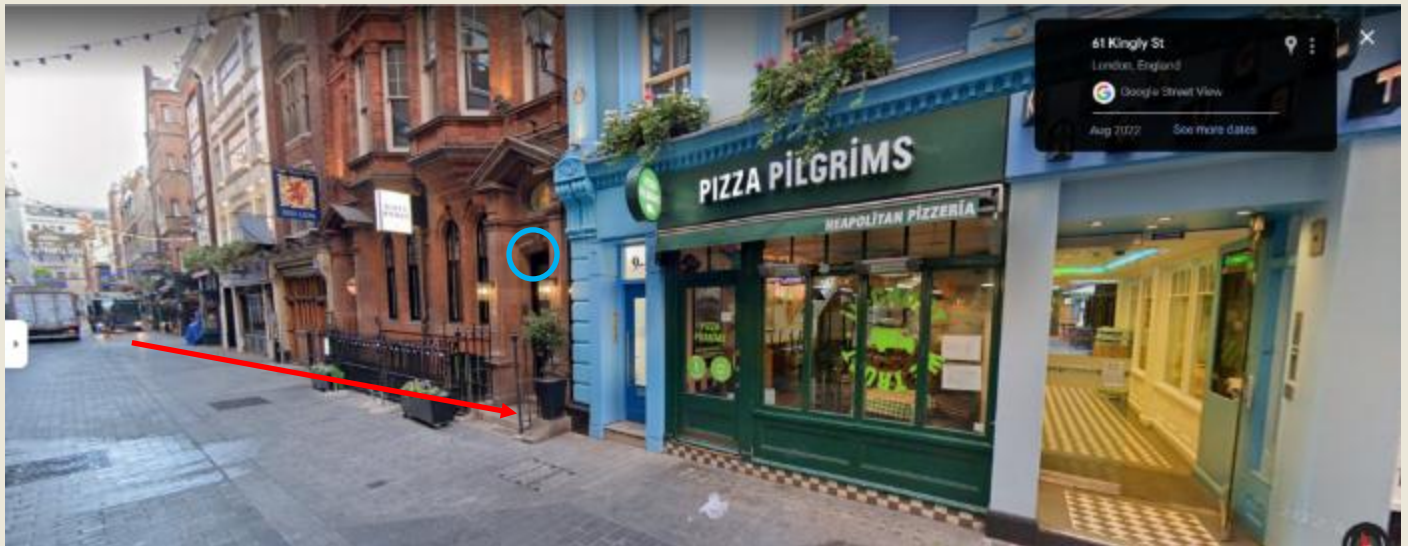
Directions – At the end of Argyll Street turn right onto Great Marlborough Street.



About where the second arrow above end you will need to cross as you need to turn left into Kingly Street. Here’s a view looking back the way you have come from along Great Marlborough Street. You can see the distinctive arch at the top of Kingly Street and the black and white building is Liberty.



After a while you will pass the Red Lion pub on your left – you'll find the club location just to the left. Its most recent incarnation was as The Court.



Once you have finished keep going along Kingly Street – although you are taking a right turn very soon.

Stop 10

Overview – Apple Records, 3 Savile Row

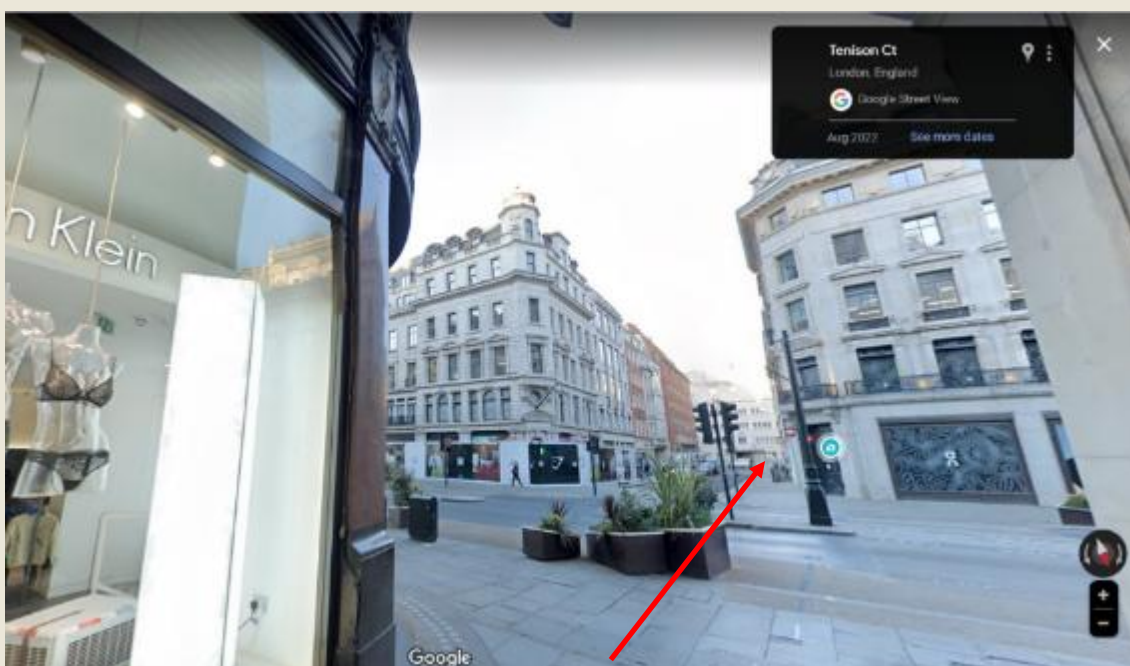
In July 1968 The Beatles moved their Apple Corps company to this address. A studio was built in the basement and despite being deemed poorly designed they recorded *Let It Be* there. A new studio was built in 1971 and it was used by a number of artists until it closed in 1975 such as Mary Hopkins and Marc Bolan.

It is of course much more famous for one event – on 30th January 1969 The Beatles started playing live on the roof. This was recorded and formed part of the film *Let It Be* but the performance was stopped by the police. It transpired to be the last ever live performance by the band.

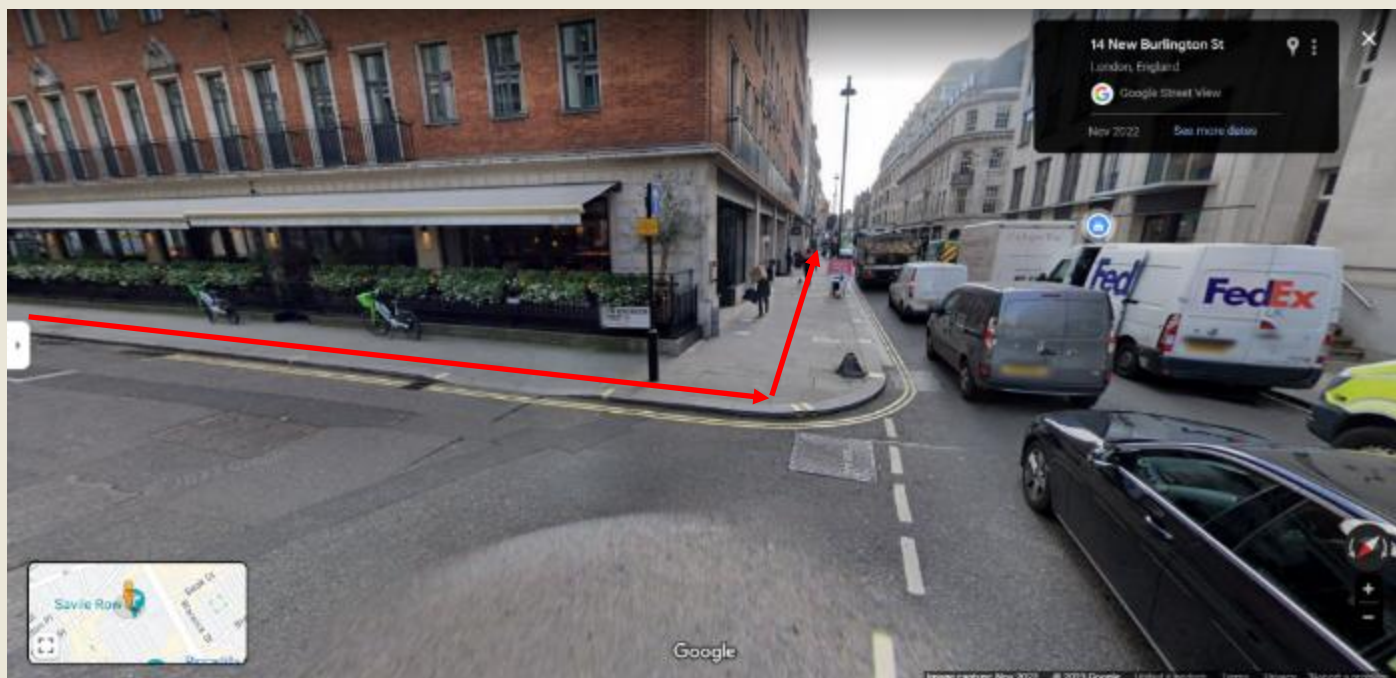
Directions – from 9 Kingly Street you need to continue along Kingly Street then look for an almost immediate right turn into Tenison Court.



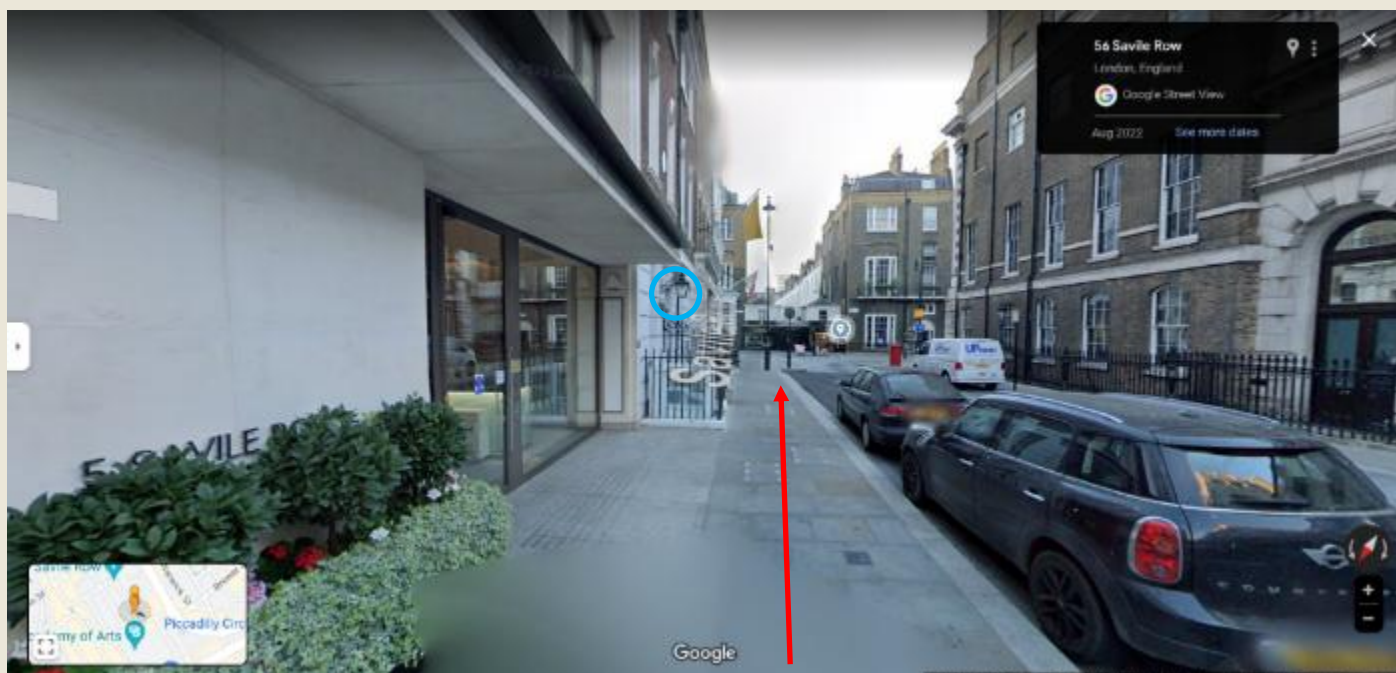
That will come out onto Regent Street and you need to cross over and take the more or less opposite New Burlington Street. There is a Calvin Klein store on the left as you join Regent Street.



Take New Burlington Street to its end and turn left onto Savile Row. On that corner you will find Sartoria.

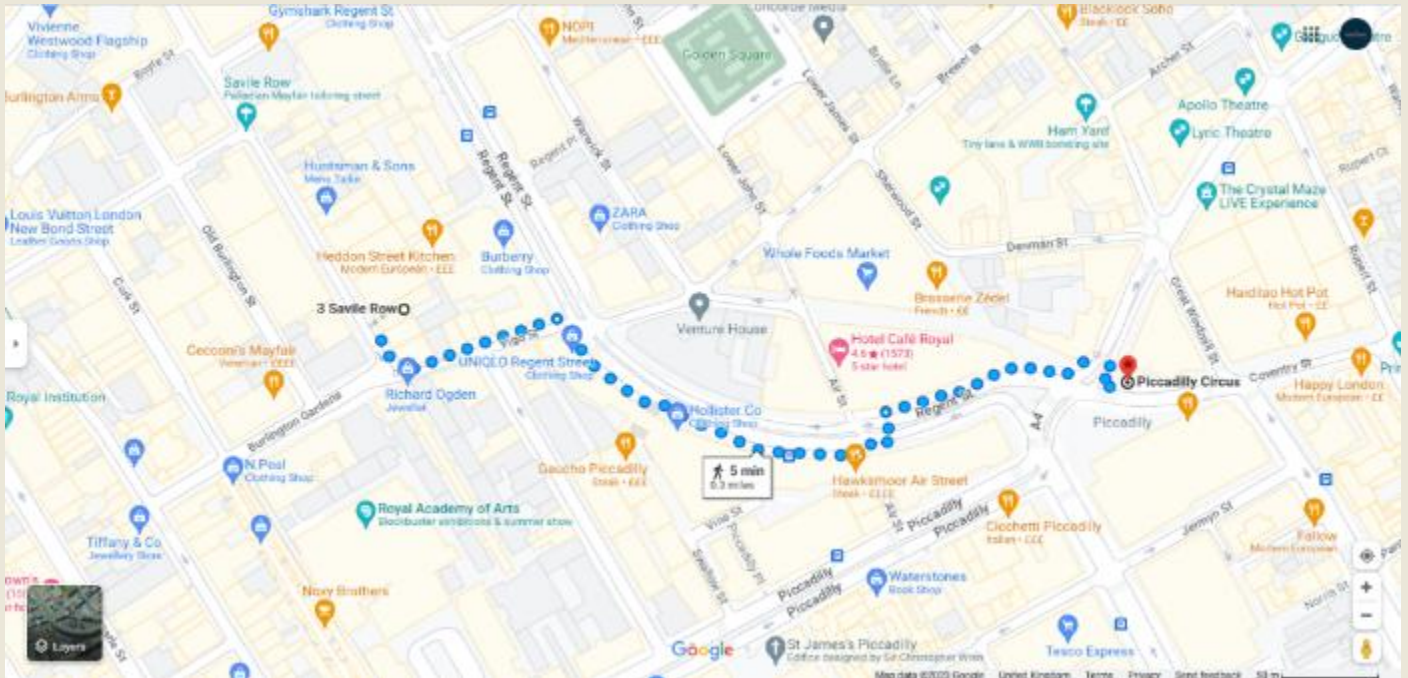


Just before the end of Savile Row you will come to number 3. It's now Abercrombie and Fitch although their store closed some years ago. There's a blue plaque on the building.



Back to the Underground

This route ends at Piccadilly Circus.

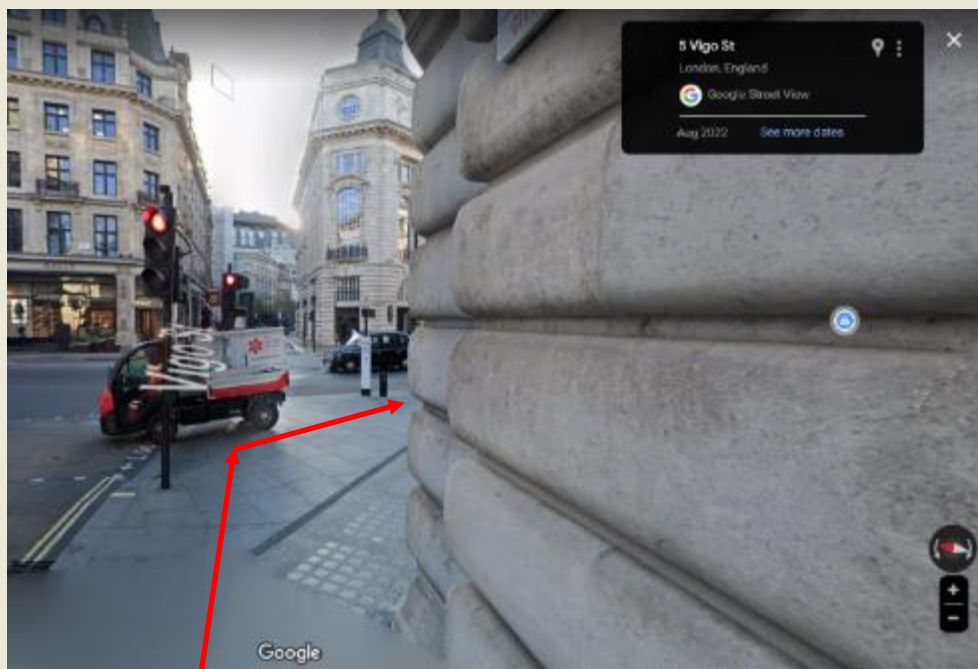


From 3 Savile Row continue along it to its end where it meets Burlington Gardens and Vigo Street. You need to turn left onto Vigo Street. Gieves and Hawkes is on the corner.

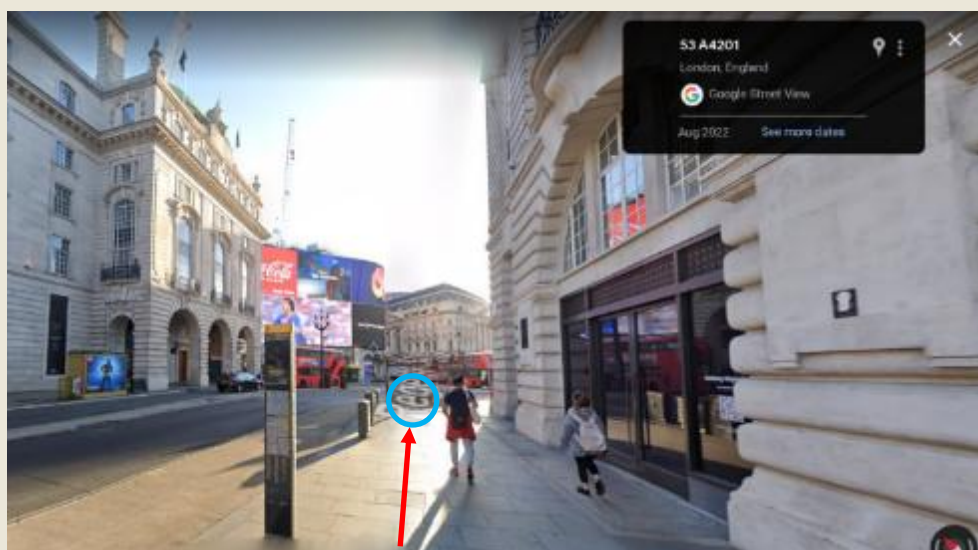


You will pass Sackville Street on the right but just keep going until the next road – Regent Street.

There, turn right. On the corner you will find Superdry and Burberry on the corners as you turn.

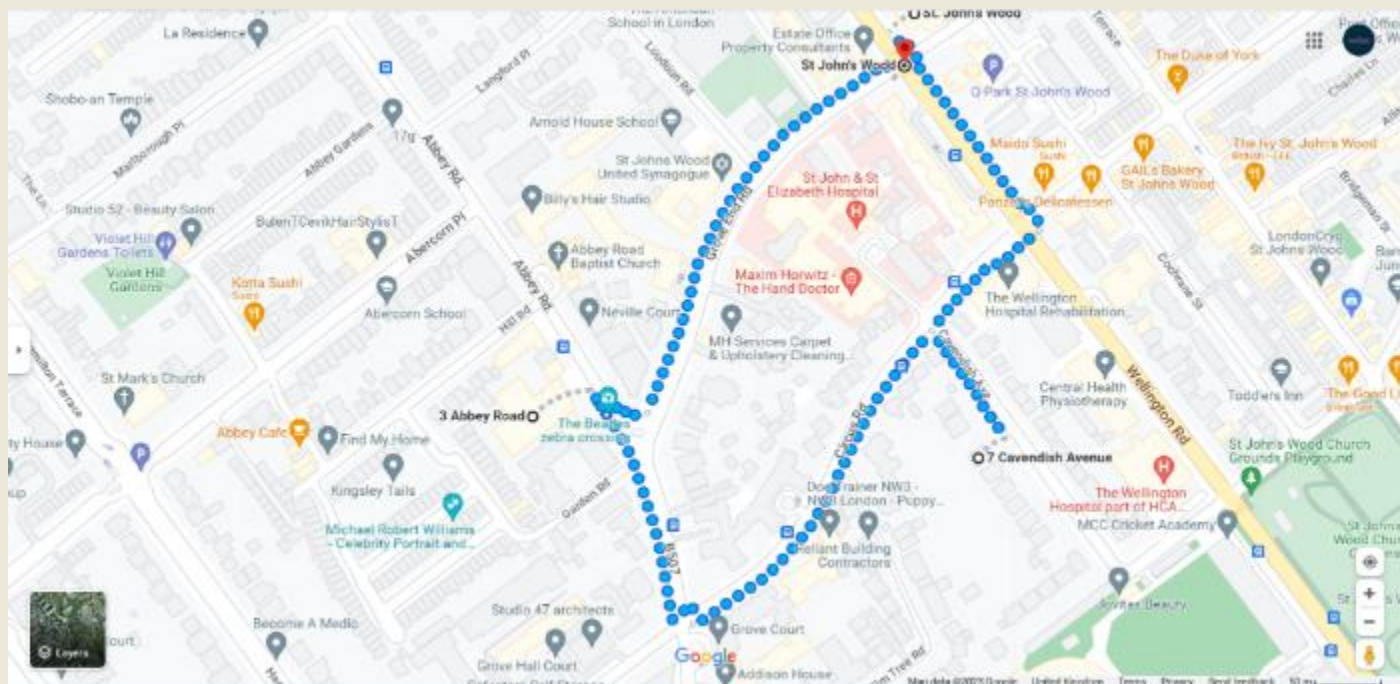


As you get to the end of Regent Street you will be back at Piccadilly Circus Underground station. You can use any entrance to the station but the first one is marked by the blue circle below. Incidentally, that's the London Pavilion directly ahead of you.



Within Piccadilly Circus station you need to take the Bakerloo line, coloured **BROWN** on the maps. Take that 3 stops to Baker Street. There change lines to the Jubilee line, coloured **SILVER/GREY** on the maps. Take that 1 stop to St. John's Wood. This will take about 15 minutes and is a single fare. If you have daily capping in mind this is all within zones 1/2.

Here's the map of the St. John's Wood section of the walk. It's about 0.8 miles (1.4 km) and takes 18 minutes to walk with no stops. It starts and finishes at St. John's Wood Underground station which is on the Jubilee line.



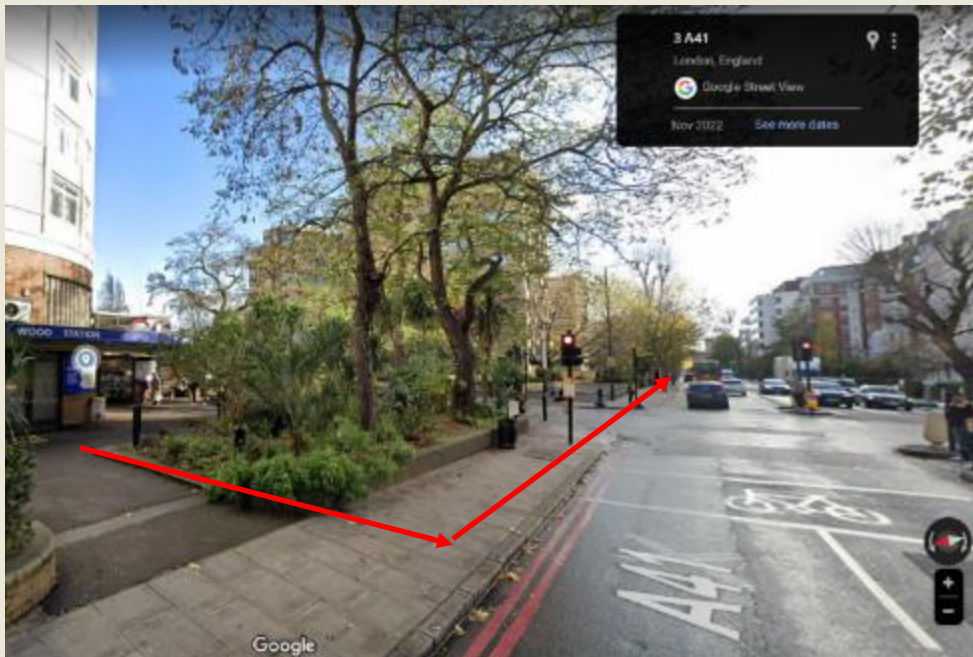
Stop 11

Overview - 7 Cavendish Avenue

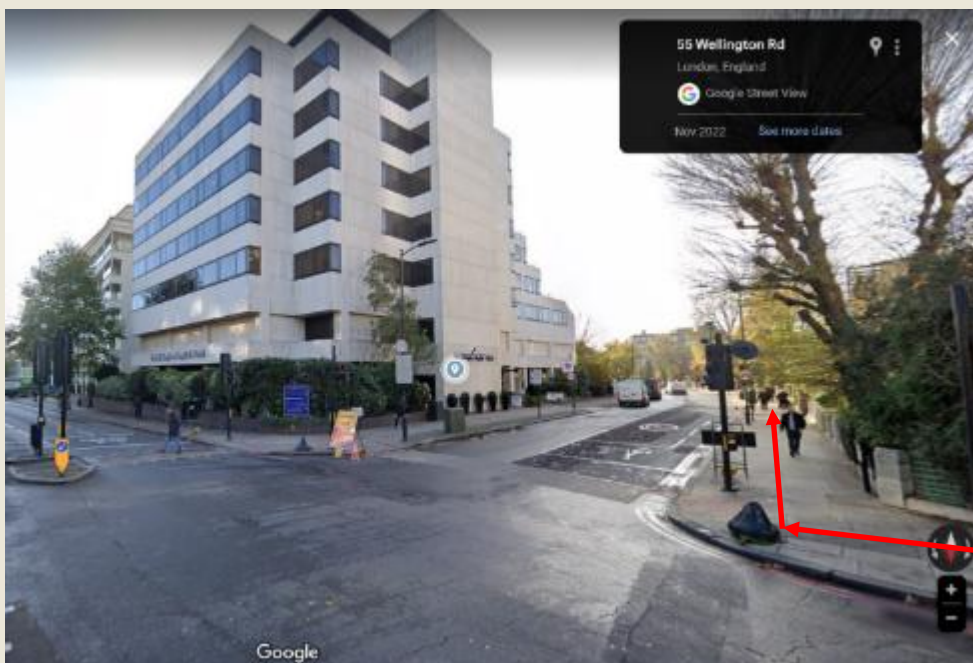
This very pleasant road, with Lords Cricket ground at one end, is the home of Paul McCartney. He bought number 7 in April 1965 and has had it as his London residence ever since. As you will find it's very near Abbey Road Studios and that's also why the band would often meet up here.

There's no pomp in the street and you can walk up to the gate readily enough. But, understandably, privacy is protected by gates and a high wall.

Directions – From St. John's Wood station you will come out at a crossroads and need to take the main road south-eastwards, Wellington Road, as follows.



Head along Wellington Road for a short while, looking for the next right, Circus Road. On the corner you will see the Wellington Hospital North.



You are then looking for the next left, Cavendish Avenue. It's just after the end of the hospital grounds.



You'll find number 7 on your right, about 100 metres along (blue circle).



From number 7 retrace your steps back to Circus Road and turn left.

Stop 12

Overview – Abbey Road Studios, 3 Abbey Road

One of the most famous recording studios in the world, and made extra famous by the iconic picture that is on the sleeve of the *Abbey Road* album, it's the perfect place to end the walk.

Founded in 1931 by the forerunner of EMI, it was owned by the famous record label until that company broke up in 2012. Whilst the roster is impressive the band most associated with the studios is of course The Beatles. They recorded the vast majority of their output there from 1962 to 1970. They particularly used Studio Two and this was where they developed so many unique ideas and innovative sounds. The building, a former nine bedroomed Georgian townhouse, dates from 1831 and was listed in 2010. That status, ensuring it is protected from any major alterations, was also conferred to the famous zebra crossing the same year.

Directions – As you go along Circus Road you'll pass a road on the left (Elm Tree Road) and the road you are on will curve to the right a little. It then comes to a crossroads, and you need to turn right onto Grove End Road.



Follow that road and it will come to a junction with a monument in the middle of it. Just keep going straight with the main road as, after the monument, it changes name to Abbey Road.



In the previous picture, just to the left of the tip of the red arrow, you might be able to see a zebra crossing. The zebra crossing.

As you approach it the view will be as follows – the zebra crossing is obvious to see, and the studios are second large building on the left, the blue circle. They are about where the third red arrow ends in front of the white wall that is covered in fan written graffiti. And just past the studio is a gift shop.



Once you have finished here you will head back to the station. The first part of the route is back the way you came along Abbey Road to the monument in the middle of the road.

Back to the Underground

From the studios/zebra crossing head along Abbey Road and then take the very next left, Grove End Road.



Just follow this to the next crossroads. You will pass a couple of streets to the left (Loudoun Road and Waverley Place) and then come to the junction with Wellington Road. The station is ahead and to the left.



St. John's Wood is on the Jubilee line so you can take a train to more central areas – it runs roughly south east across a central part of London connecting with Baker Street (Bakerloo line), Bond Street (Elizabeth line and Central line), Green Park (Piccadilly line and Victoria line), Westminster (Circle and District line) and Waterloo (Bakerloo and Northern line, and main line rail).

In addition, you will find a café in the station that sells Beatles memorabilia.

The walk is now over. There are of course other Beatles related sights in London but the above lend themselves well to a two-stage walking route. There is one place to mention that might be of interest – The Beatles Store. It's very near the intermediary station of Baker Street. Head for the Baker Street exit and turn right and you will find the store at 231-233 Baker Street on the left. Do note, if you break the journey from Piccadilly Circus to Baker Street then it counts as two single fares.

That concludes our self-guided Beatles route.

If you prefer to go on a guided trip, try the following – the first one that comes up after clicking the link is rated very highly.

