

# MMTour REPORT 2024 by BATYA SELAVAN

A few years ago, in a tour report, Jacqueline Campoli began by writing: “Going on the Magical History Tour with Liverpool Productions, hosted by Charles Rosenay!!!, this indeed was the trip of a lifetime! If you love the Beatles, this is a must, so Step Right Up to hear all about what a Fab time was had by all.”



The day arrived for what would be my personal twenty-fourth Beatles tour with our fearless leader Charles F Rosenay!!! For many years, I had the privilege of writing the tour report for the great Beatles magazine, *Good Day Sunshine*, and I was delighted to be able to do it again.

I got to the airport early, and it wasn't long before the rest of our travelers gathered at JFK for our fab adventure where we would follow in the footsteps of The Beatles. There was an equal number of repeat travelers as there were first timers. The way everyone bonded at the airport, you would have thought they all knew each other. They didn't, but most everybody knew (or knew of) Charles. He gave our group a quick orientation, answered some questions, and then we got our boarding passes and headed to our gate. I was just so excited to start this trip!

The flight on Virgin Airlines went well. Most of us slept, but some watched movies. Appropriately enough, one of the films we saw on the plane was 2022's "The Lost Weekend: A Love Story" with May Pang. That couldn't have been a better choice, as May was one of this year's Beatleweek guests!

We landed at Heathrow where we were greeted by our London rock & roll tour guide Colin, and we all boarded our spacious luxury coach. This was very different, because for many years our guide was Rene van Haarlem, a Beatles expert and friend of Charles, who would come from the Netherlands to share his wisdom and take us around. Rene lost his battle with cancer, and he was very missed, but Colin was truly a great guide!

We started with some key Beatles sites in London Town. First, we went to Chiswick Park where the “Rain” and “Paperback Writer” song promos were filmed, along with the cover of the “Nowhere Man” picture sleeve. We remembered Beatles friend Tony Bramwell, who also passed.







At each spot, Colin had pictures to share with us, so we experienced the “then and now.” He would tell us stories that he had gotten first-hand from people who were there. We continued on to film locations from *A Hard Day’s Night* and *Help!* including the four doors from their apartment/flat, and the manhole where Leo McKern popped up from in the colour movie. We went inside Turks Head Pub (the “darts” scene from the black & white movie). In here, we discovered – for the first time - a back room of the pub that was used for the film’s wrap party. We also took pics of The City Barge, as seen in *Help!*, but nobody jumped out the windows.







We went by Twickenham Studios, where they recorded numerous tracks and film scenes, and we actually got inside the gates. That was the first time inside in many years. We took photos of the area where the picture of them inside baby carriages were taken, used in promo materials for *AHDN*. Next time we might have to find some large strollers to recreate the scene!



It's hard to keep track of all the places we visited, including the Hammersmith Odeon, and the Royal Albert Hall. We still don't know how many holes it takes to fill it, but we talked about George Harrison's last concert there, as a benefit for the national law party he supported. Frank Zappa was banned from the Royal Albert Hall for cussing!

We did our historic due diligence by visiting all the historic London sites, such as Buckingham Palace, Big Ben, Westminster Abbey, etc. This was crucial for those who'd never been to England before.



We discovered a pub called the Horse and Groom. The Beatles drank here, and Brian brought his boyfriends here.





We went by Picadilly Circus, the National Gallery, BBC Studios, the Paris theater where all The Beatles movies premiered, the original Hard Rock Café, Hyde Park, Green Park, and 33 Montague Square. That was the home of John, Ringo, John was busted for pot there, and they show the cover for the *Two Virgins* album here. We stopped at Marylebone Station and tried to emulate the side street where George trips in the opening scenes of *A Hard Day's Night*.

This was just for starters

After a full day of sightseeing, we checked into our hotel, a very comfortable Hilton property. Once settled in, some went out to have dinner, some went to the West End to see a show, and some just crashed for the night. A few friends and I grabbed a bite at a local restaurant and then went to bed to get ready for another full day of Beatles sites, most of which a coach can't get to.

The next morning, well-rested, we had a hearty English breakfast at our hotel, and then we walked to the tube station to begin our tour of various sites that included not just important Beatles spots but also other rock and roll icons such as The Rolling Stones, The Who, Eric Clapton, and David Bowie. I can't believe how many locations we fit in.





(photo credit Paul Sorber)

We visited some places we had never been to before, including this alleyway as pictured in the photo with Apple recording artist Mary Hopkin. Those were the days, indeed!

We took many pictures at the Brian Epstein family home.





We stopped by the Scotch of St. James Club where Paul McCartney saw 15-year-old “Little” Stevie Wonder. The Who’s Pete Townshend was also there that same night. Here is a photo of Macca with Wonder (and Charliee Foxx from the music duo Inez and Charlie Foxx) taken after Stevie’s performance. It was Ebony and Ivory long before the two of them collaborated on record!





We saw the Indica Gallery where John met Yoko, and the posh Trap Club where the wedding reception for Ringo and Barbara was held.





We passed the 2i's Coffee Bar, which was the inspiration for the establishment of the Casbah Coffee Club, opened in Liverpool by Pete Best's mom, Mona Best, in the cellar of her family home. In 1960, the manager of Hamburg's Kaiserkeller Club, Bruno Koschmider, visited the 2i's to recruit British rock'n'roll musicians to come and play at his venue. More 2i's factoids: one of the bands Bruno liked was Derry and the Seniors, who was managed by The Beatles' first manager, Allan Williams. As we know, Allan arranged for The Beatles to play in Hamburg for Koschmider. During their time in Hamburg the band worked with Tony Sheridan, who had performed at the 2i's, and later recruited

another 2i's veteran, Jimmy Nicol, to briefly fill in for Ringo Starr on tour. Coming full circle, Ringo mentions "the 2i's Café, that's where Tommy Steele would play," in his song "Rory and the Hurricanes" on the 2015 album, *Postcards From Paradise*. Cliff Richard, Adam Faith, Marc Bolan, and Kris Kristofferson were among the many to play the London basement venue.

Yes, we visited 3 Saville Row and imagined what it was like playing on the rooftop.



(Photo Credit by Greg Kashur)





We were disappointed to hear that the Bag o Nails club - where Paul and Linda met – was now owned by a rapper and the plaque was removed.





We loved checking out the London Palladium Theater, where many say “Beatlemania” began on October 13, 1963. We learned that Brian Epstein had an office next door.





We had a laugh at the spot where John was pictured in front of the gentleman's toilet.



The list goes on. The Blue Garden Club where The Beatles played. Trident Studios. MPL. 57 Wimpole Street (look it up). Pete and Jane Asher's family home. St. John's Wood. Billy Fury's house. The hits just keep on coming!



Finally, we headed to Abbey Road where we all walked across the zebra crossing, sometimes over and over until we got the perfect shot.



Some of us were brave enough to cross bare-footed. We took many photos in front of the recording studio as well, before going inside the gift shop to do some browsing and buying.



In the evening my friends and I went to a pub called the Grapes, Limehouse. The 500-year-old pub is owned by Sir Ian McKellan. Author Charles Dickens drank here! It has very pretty flower beds outside. Inside it's small and intimate. It has Ian's staff from *Lord*

of the Rings bolted to the wall behind the bar. The outside patio has an awesome view of the river and a male statue standing on one the posts in the water. We were told that Ian lives down the street from the pub.

Again, it's mind-boggling how many great sites we visited in London, but the next morning we found ourselves jumping on our coach out of London.

We arrived in Henley-on-Thames for our annual visit to George Harrison's estate. We met up with the Mexican Fan Club there and both groups took lots of pictures in front of the gates of Friar Park. "Crackerbox Palace" was playing in my head when we all pointed up to the sky.







After the respectful visit to George's home, we headed to the village of Henley itself to check out the locals at the bazaar selling everything from toys and candy to fruit and vegetables. We stopped into the Angel Pub where George used to have a drink or two, and the Church across the road to pay our respects to Dusty Springfield.

On our way to Liverpool, different people took the microphone on the coach to tell their Beatles stories. Charles shared many stories and memories. My friend Rosemary told us about meeting Paul and Linda, and seeing George Harrison at a Monty Python play.

It wasn't long before we arrived in The Birthplace of The Beatles, Liverpool.

We checked into our hotel, had a short rest, and took a leisurely walking tour of Liverpool with Charles!!! He pointed out various landmarks, so we could find our way to the Cavern on Mathew Street, and important local places of note. We came across both the Cilla Black and Brian Epstein statues, the Grapes Pub, and the Liverpool Beatles Museum. It was still early evening, so some of us went our separate ways. A few decided to party at the Cavern Club and across the street at Cavern Pub. Some went for dinner while a number of us headed back to the hotel to turn in early.

Our first morning in the Beatles birthplace, we had a nice breakfast in our hotel and met our Liverpool tour guide, Adrien. We filed onto the coach and were ready for anything. We started where Brian was born, saw the Cathedral where Paul was a choir boy, took the Ferry 'cross the Mersey. The Beatles played on the ferry 4 times, and even Pete Best

played on the Royal Iris. There was a very cool poster at the entrance titled “Gerry ‘cross the Mersey.”



(Photos Credit Paul Sorber)





At the dock, we took pictures of and with The Beatles statue there.







Adrien pointed out some famous Liverpool buildings where scenes from *The Batman* (2022) were filmed, including the Liver building and St. George's Hall









We drove through the Wirral, where Paul still has a family home there called Rembrandt. We saw Woolton hospital where Paul was born, the Blue Angel club which was owned and run by Allan Williams, Penny Lane, St. Barnabus Church, St. Peter's where John & Paul met, Dovedale School, a Lennon statue, George Harrison's home, the Empress Pub, Admiral Grove, Gambier Terrace, Ye Cracke, LIPA, the Philharmonic and so many other locations. We traveled to nearby Port Sunlight, a whole neighborhood built in the Wirral area for soap company employees. It was also the home of Hulme Hall, where Ringo made his first appearance as a Beatle on August 18, 1962.





Fans already know some or all of these places; those who don't should take the next Magical History Tour and find out about all these historic spots.

We went inside Strawberry Fields with numerous areas of interest including red gates for taking pictures. In their museum, you get an audio tour. We took photos inside and out. They also have a cafeteria and great gift shop.



We went as a group to the Jacaranda Club for the unveiling of a plaque which designated the famous Liverpool venue as officially being the first place where The Beatles ever played under the name "The Beatles." Allan Williams' family was there for the presentation, as were many celebrities and locals with Beatles connections. We spotted May Pang, Steve Holley, Freda Kelly, and others.







After an incredible day, and what was probably the most complete and comprehensive Liverpool magical mystery tour of Beatles sites ever, we took a break for dinner and then went to a concert with The Overtures as headliners.

The Overtures rocked the crowd with a mix of Beatles and Monkees and Stones and other 60s favorites, with a slide show that gave us great visuals. It was a Beatleful night.

The next day we had breakfast before breaking off into smaller groups to go inside Paul and John's childhood homes. Later there was a bus trip to New Brighton for "Mad Day Out." The beautiful beach-side vacation destination area hosted several concert areas. It reminded me of Atlantic City with its boardwalk, shops, restaurants, arcade, but minus the gambling. It was here in New Brighton that The Beatles played the Tower Ballroom 27 times! The only place they played more was the Cavern Club! Many of the shows were presented by Sam Leach, including October 12<sup>th</sup>, 1962, when they shared the stage with Little Richard.





While there, we visited Chelsea Reach where Paul performed and made a TV documentary in 1973 with his new band. We also got to spend time at the original Grosvenor Ballroom in Wallasey where The Beatles performed in 1962, and which still has the original stage.

**TOWER BALLROOM** NEW BRIGHTON  
*★ Sam Leach Promotions ★*  
**Operation BIG BEAT II**  
**FRIDAY 24th NOVEMBER 1961**  
*Featuring*  
*★ THE Beatles ★* *★ RORY STORM ★*  
*★ AND THE HURRICANES ★*  
**GERRY AND THE Pacemakers** *★ ★ THE Remo Four ★ ★*  
**EARL PRESTON** *AND THE TEMPEST TORNADOES*  
**FARON** *Starts 7:30 PM*  
*★ AND THE FLAMINGOES ★* *Tickets 6!*

This day was a surprise highlight of the trip as we also had the pleasure of meeting with some old time Liverpool legends there, including Faron from Faron's Flamingos and Cliff Richard impersonator Cliff Roberts (of Cliff Roberts & The Rockers), who was there when The Beatles auditioned for Larry Parnes to tour Scotland with Johnny Gentle. They all told great stories, including Cliff's wife recalling Paul coming over her mom's house to hang out and play piano, but because he was dressed like a teddy boy, she thought he was a troublemaker and threw him out! Charles reminded Faron that he attended Faron's daughter's wedding to Horst Fascher in Manchester years ago, and they bonded. Thanks to author and Beatles expert David Bedford for getting these Mersey Beat musicians to join the festivities.

Below is a picture of Faron with The Beatles, and Cliff with Rory Storm & The Hurricanes (Ringo on drums pre-Beatles). Below these is a photo of Charles with Cliff and Faron.









In one of the halls that day we enjoyed a “Beatles vs. Rolling Stones” concert, with the tribute band Rocks Off from Sweden, The Cavern Club Beatles, and a Little Richard impersonator.

That evening there were multiple bands playing several stages in the Adelphi Hotel ballroom.

The next day was the annual Liverpool convention. It was packed with guests, vendors, rare video shows, bands, and much more. It’s where fans from “across the universe” “come together” for a day of fab four fun and festivities unmatched anywhere else in the world. One of the most historic performances on the main stage was by the members of original Quarrymen, with Dave “Liddypool” Bedford in the band in bass.





People on our tour got autographs and had their photos taken with some of the many

special guests. Above is author Mark Arnold with Billy J. Kramer at the convention. Mark and Charles had a table at the convention where they were selling and signing copies of their new book on the band The Turtles that they co-authored, *Not Just Happy Together* ([www.NotJustHappyTogether.com](http://www.NotJustHappyTogether.com)). Charles also had his Beatles book ([www.BookOfTop10BeatlesLists.com](http://www.BookOfTop10BeatlesLists.com)) available there but it sold out. The bands and convention festivities continued late into the night.

The next day we had another nice breakfast and walked over to the Albert Docks for an outdoor event (under blue suburban skies!) for a tribute to the much-beloved Mathew Street Festival. Some of the tribute bands were truly great, and included Queen, Adele, The Who, Elton John, and a young but very talented Beatles act.



Our evening was a gala concert at Grand Central Hall for what was our theater finale, "The Travelling Wilburys Experience" show. We got a tasty selection of Wilburys songs, plus hits from the individual members of this legendary supergroup: Roy Orbison, Bob Dylan, Tom Petty, Jeff Lynne, and, oh yes, George Harrison. They also included Del Shannon! Some of the best tunes were "Handle with Care," and "Pretty Woman," plus the encore "End of the Line" and "She's My Baby." They didn't do enough George songs, though!

The next morning we had a good hearty breakfast before my friend, Rosemary, and I went to Mathew Street to check out the Liverpool Beatles Museum, where the Pete Best family accumulated tons of amazing mementos they had collected and put on display for fans worldwide. It's four levels of endless stuff - from rare photos and letters to drum kits and costumes. They also have a small gift shop. It's a must-visit.

Today was literally "museum day" for our group. I'd been to these many times before, but most of our fellow travelers also visited the Beatle Story exhibition and the Liverpool Museum.

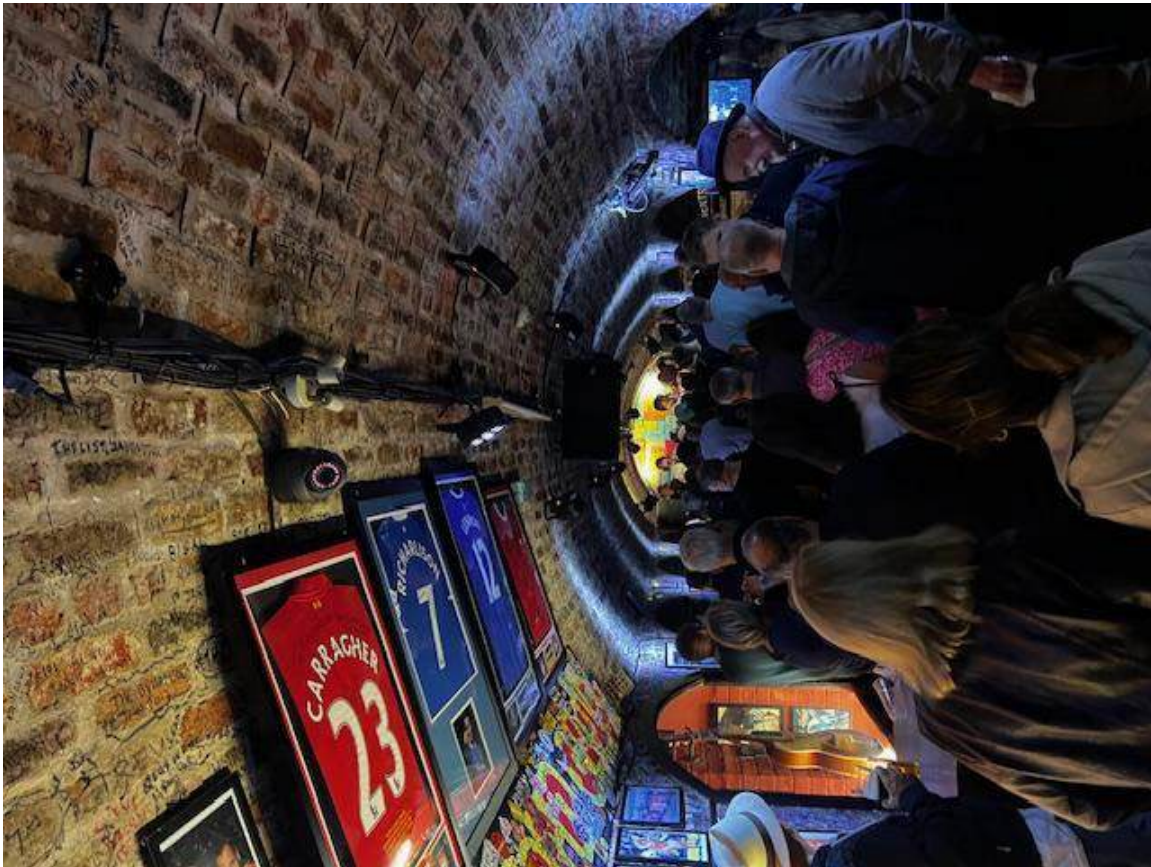




(Photo Courtesy Karen Maize)

While our fellow travelers were exploring the other museums, Rosemary and I went to the Grapes Pub for a pint.

Later that night we had a personal reunion dinner with the other Beatle buds on this year's tour who also vacationed together in 1994. This was a special 30-year reunion for some of us.



(Photo Credit Paul Sorber)

We ended the evening at the famous Cavern Club, where the city paid tribute to musician Andre Barreau, who had passed away the year before. Andre was in the original London cast of “Beatlemania” on the West End in 1979, which transitioned into one of the most beloved tribute acts in British history, “The Bootleg Beatles.” Ironically, one of their Paul McCartney players, Phil Cooper, also just passed (he was originally a member of the Liverpool band Mojo Filter). The “Bootlegs,” as they are called, still play showcase gigs, and will be headlining a night as part of Beatleweek 2025. Andre played George Harrison for nearly 40 years, so this was a worthy tribute to him by fellow tribute artists.

One of the acts on the Cavern stage was our long-time friend Jimmy Poe, who has also played Harrison most of his life, starting in the Los Angeles cast of “Beatlemania” and as a member of “1964 The Tribute” for many years. Jimmy also toured with the Beach Boys for a while. He continues to play in Beatle bands in the U.S., but here he gave us his one-man show. We were blown away when he sang “Blow Away.” He is still one of the best!





This night at the Cavern was a special ending to an unbelievable Beatleweek. Truly, “it’s getting better all the time.”

The next day we took a coach to Manchester Airport for our flight home. “We’re on our way home” and together we recapped and remembered all the fun we just had with great people and good times.

I can’t wait for the next one!!!

Batya Selavan 2024



The 2024 Tour Report, and the Tour itself, is dedicated to Rene van Haarlem, pictured with Charles, and behind Paul McCartney.





