

## JOLLY BOYS LONDON HERITAGE ROUTEMASTER TOUR 22 November 2007

The objective is to visit a number of pubs featured in the CAMRA Regional Inventory for London, or to select those which enjoy, generally, Grade II listed status, travelling between them by the Heritage Routemasters. As usual with London trips, opening times generally remain at 11.00, but in the City, the Wetherspoon outlets open at 09.00. We therefore commence the tour at a JDW, not listed, I'm afraid, but for those who want to start really early, I can recommend The Market Porter, 9 Stoney Street, Borough Market, which is open from 06.00 to 08.30, when it closes until 11.00. You can then either walk or take a bus to Tower Hill.

We start at the Eastern end of the tour, and make our way west, in four, roughly equal, ten minute bus journeys.




One-day bus passes are available for purchase at most principal bus stops. (£3.50, exact money only) Although there is no PT reduction on the bus, the PT Oystercard can be used, and is capped to the daily maximum of £3.00, which is less than a one day bus pass. Buying a new one seems to be extremely complicated for a "one-off", and only suitable for regular users, but if you really want to..... ([www.atoc.org](http://www.atoc.org)) Brian's email 21/7/06 offers help.





The design icon Routemasters run on part of the central London sections of routes 9 and 15 and have been repainted to look the way they did in the 1960s, down to the 'London Transport' logo and original cream stripe across the side.

Heritage Routemasters run every 15 minutes, every day between about 09:30 and 18:30 on the following routes, although other types of bus increase the frequency on the same routes:

### Heritage route 15

- Tower Hill 
- Monument 
- St Paul's Cathedral
- Fleet Street
- Strand
- Charing Cross 
- Trafalgar Square

### Heritage route 9

- Aldwych
- Strand
- Charing Cross 
- Trafalgar Square
- Piccadilly Circus 
- Knightsbridge 
- Royal Albert Hall (Westbound only)

### Food

Since all the pubs on our tour are either "City" or "West End", the availability of good value solids in any of them is very limited.

M&S sandwiches from your arrival station "on the hoof" may be a better bet than some of the prices charged by some of these establishments, two of which are part of the Nicholson chain, promoting the "Dick Whittington Ale Trail". They all, however, offer decent, but pedestrian, ales.

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**Pub 1** The Liberty Bounds, Trinity Square, Tower Hill EC3N 4AA.

The statutory JDW establishment, which opens at 09.00, and is the first meeting place for the Routemaster Heritage Tour.



10.30 – 10.45 We cross the road outside the Liberty Bounds, turn left to Bus Stop TA (ticket machine is available) to take a Number 15 bus from Tower Hill to Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese, passing The Monument and St Paul's Cathedral *en route*. Alight at the second bus stop in Fleet Street (Fetter Lane), and walk back a few yards, cross the road, past Starbucks, and down the narrow passage way called Wine Office Court.

11.00 – 11.45 **Pub 2** Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese 145 Fleet Street, EC4A 2BU

This opens at 11.00, and is a Sam Smith tied house. It must be one of the last remaining Sam's houses in London serving OBB on a handpump, and at £1.78 a pint, must also be one of the cheapest.

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On the ground floor are two rooms. The smaller is a very dark panelled bar with a large open fireplace and high mantle. Above this is a portrait of William Simpson, who started as a waiter in 1829, which was to be passed down to future landlords.

The Chop Room across the corridor is usually reserved for diners. Here high backed settles have been arranged back to back to create small booths. A portrait of one of the Cheese's most famous patrons, Dr. Samuel Johnson (his house is around the corner) hangs on a far wall, and his chair set upon a shelf. A copy of Johnson's dictionary should be nearby. Another painting of Johnson and his biographer, Boswell, was found in a cellar relatively recently and restored.

In the main stairwell increasingly narrow steps lead up to a couple of atmospheric dining rooms and to private quarters. Unfortunately these rooms are often closed, which is a shame as they give a feel to the rambling nature of this wonderful old building.

Negotiating the narrow and awkward steps down to the cellar bars is rewarded with the discovery of the vaults, a fascinating series of tiny, honey coloured stone rooms. These vaults were part of the original guest house's chapel. The steps continue into the cellar proper, where a further bar and dining area can be found.

Volumes of visitors books were kept and signatories include Ambassadors, Prime Ministers and Royalty. Unfortunately these records began after the likes of Dr. Johnson, James Boswell, Voltaire, Thackeray and of course Charles Dickens (originally a Fleet St. journalist) drank here. One famous resident was a parrot whose mimicry entertained customers for 40 years, its death was announced on the BBC and obituaries appeared in newspapers all over the world.

Each generation that passes through the Cheese adds to its rich history.

You may wish to use the adjacent sandwich bar, "Loafers", in Wine Office Court to stock up. It appears to be fairly good value. As we crossed the road, you would have noticed another pub, the Tipperary, 66 Fleet Street, just a few doors along. This, too, is Grade II listed, but being a member of the Admiral Pubco, beers appear to be limited to London Pride or GK IPA, but if you have just missed a bus, and want to wait 15 minutes for the next Routemaster, rather than catching a big red box, it may be worth a swift half, even if only to view the mosaic floor.

Apparently the first Irish pub in London (taken over by Mooneys of Dublin, so it is said, c1700, though this sounds an improbably early date). The Mooney name appears on a slate slab at the entrance and shamrocks appear in the mosaic flooring. A single, long bar with panelling bar-back and floor from a refitting in 1895. Two magnificent glass panels advertising stout and whisky (note – in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Irish whisky was often spelled without an 'e') made by "H. West, Houghton street, Strand WC". More panelling in the upstairs bar known as the Boar's Head, the original name of the pub. The pub acquired its present name after 1918 to commemorate the Great War song.

11.45 - 12.00 Re-join a Number 15 bus to The Strand. En route, in the "sixfoot" we pass Temple Bar, the western boundary of the City, and then the Royal Courts of Justice on the right. We get off at the first stop (Savoy Street) after passing Waterloo Bridge. Walk on about 50 yards to our next watering hole

12.00 – 12.45 **Pub 3** The Coal Hole, 91 The Strand.



The Coal Hole occupies a corner of the Savoy Building, designed by Thomas Colcutt. The theme of stone, dark wood and leaded light windows, carries on into the street level bar. The ceiling is very high with heavy black beams. Hanging banners suggest something medieval, but no, it was decorated in 1904. Under the mock beams is a beautiful marble frieze of wistful maidens picking vines.

Beside the bar, in a corner, is a magnificent terracotta fire surround, heavily decorated with reliefs of vines. New lighting has brought to life the pub's wonderful features. The gallery, converted from an office, is a good vantage point from which to view the friezes. The rare art nouveau décor was a brief interlude between the brashness of the late Victorian gin palaces and mega-pubs, and a new sentimental movement which was to favour the fake "ye olde inn", harking back to more wholesome times.

The cellar bar (The Coal Hole) is open in the evenings and has its own entrance in the Strand. It was in the basement of the pub's former incarnation that the Wolf Club was founded, by actor and lush Edmund Kean. Supposedly a place where hen-pecked husbands could enjoy a sing-song, its real role was less innocent, and involved heavy drinking and loose women.

Deuchars IPA, London Pride, Timothy Taylor Golden Best, Black Sheep Bitter, Wells Bombardier.

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Speciality is pies, bought in from a pie-maker in Northampton. With mash and veg, £6.95 to £7.95, depending upon your taste in pies.

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If you need to eat something else, you may like to continue walking to the next bus stop, cross the Strand, turning right into Bedford Street, then first left into Chandos Place to visit The Harp. Not a listed building, but it comes highly recommended by my son.



Given that drinking real ale in the middle of London can often result in a Wetherspoon experience, this little freehouse so close to Trafalgar Square comes as something of a surprise. The regular ales are Timothy Taylor Landlord, Harvey's and Black Sheep, with guest beers on offer. On my visit, Sharps Special, Hop Back Summer Lightning and Newmans Mendip Mammoth. The pub specialises in O'Hagans sausage (there are several varieties to choose from) sandwiches. This one fills up most evenings but if you can find a seat, or catch it at a quieter time, we recommend a visit. Keep an eye out for stained glass and the oil paintings - the one of a young James Mason is especially fine.

12.45 – 13.00 From the Coal Hole, return to the Savoy Street bus stop, or from The Harp, return to the Bedford Street bus stop down William IV Street, and take a Number 9 bus. An upstairs seat will afford fine views of Trafalgar Square and the National Gallery, or Buckingham Palace viewed down The Mall through Admiralty Arch. As the bus turns left into Piccadilly itself, after Piccadilly Circus, alight at the first stop. Walk forward a few yards, turning left down Eagle Court to Jermyn Street, turn right, and then first left to Duke of York Street, and facing you will be The Red Lion, our next pub.

13.00 – 13.45 **Pub 4** The Red Lion, Duke of York Street



Built 1821. One of Britain's most remarkable pubs. It is tiny but has a truly spectacular display of furnishings installed at the end of the 19th century, including glass, brilliant cut mirrors and rich woodwork. Yet, despite the size, it is clear that the building had several internal divisions – hence three doors at the front, each of which would have led into a separate compartment. Built on the site of a previous pub, the Red Lion was redesigned in the 1870's. It is often described as a 'gin palace' but was refitted long after the 'mother's ruin' gin era. This pub was designed to impress and create an aura of opulent respectability. It served the staff of the surrounding grand houses and, in its own way, provided some of the sumptuous 'above stairs' living for those 'below stairs'. Even now the rear and front parts, separated by the polished mahogany island servery, have their own different characters.

Timothy Taylor Landlord, London Pride, Marstons Pedigree, Shep's Spitfire.

The pub runs a suggestions box for customers to request Guest Beers. Coming soon: GK Abbott, Black Sheep.

Meals look OK, but could be pricey, and because the pub is small, there is not a lot of space to spread out!

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13.45 – 14.00 You can either return to the same bus stop, or cut through Church Passage to Piccadilly, turn left and make your way to the next bus stop for another Number 9 to Knightsbridge. Alight at the first bus stop after we pass Knightsbridge tube station (Harrods is actually in the Brompton Road) Walk forward about 20 yards to our next, and final, port of call,

14.00 - close **Pub 5** The Paxton's Head, Knightsbridge.



The Paxton's Head occupies a small part of the massive Park Mansions redevelopment of 1897 – 1902 (architect G D Martin). Its presence in the otherwise retail and residential block is because there had long been a pub on this spot. It was rebuilt in the second phase of the redevelopment (1900 – 2) and retains some very impressive mirrors and woodwork from the time. Originally there would have been several bars surrounding the island servery; the gantry on top of the counter is late 20

In contrast to pubs 1 – 4, there is plenty of space to spread out in this house.

Adnams Broadside, GK IPA, London Pride, Marstons Pedigree, Wells Bombardier.  
Pricey meals – specials and mains around £7 - £8, starters £3 - £5 – don't bother!

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And finally..... if you want to make your way home by bus:

Euston and Kings Cross      Number 10 bus from Knightsbridge

Liverpool Street              Number 9 bus to Aldwych, then Number 11 or 23

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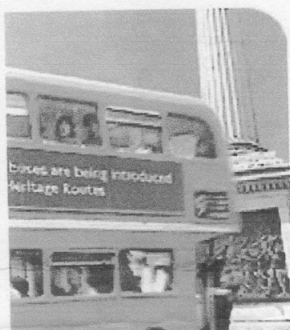
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

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Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese is one of the few pubs in London that can justify the 'Ye Olde' in its name. It was well known in the 17th century and many pubs have previously occupied this site, one of them, the Horn Tavern is recorded in 1538. The earliest incarnation was a guest house belonging to a 13th century Carmelite Monastery, the pub's vaulted cellars are thought to belong to that building. The pub was destroyed in the Great Fire of 1666 and rebuilt the following year. Approached through a narrow alleyway (Wine Office Court) the Cheese beckons you into a bygone world. By the entrance a board lists the reigns of the 15 monarchs through which this grand old pub has survived. The dark wooden interior is an enchanting warren of narrow corridors and staircases, leading to numerous bars and dining rooms. There are so many, even regulars get confused.

On the ground floor are two rooms. The smaller is a very dark panelled bar with a large open fireplace and high mantle. Above this is a portrait of William Simpson, who started as a waiter in 1829, which was to be passed down to future landlords. The Chop Room across the corridor is usually reserved for diners. Here high backed settles have been arranged back to back to create small booths. A portrait of one of the Cheese's most famous patrons, Dr. Samuel Johnson (his house is around the corner) hangs on a far wall, and his chair set upon a shelf. A copy of Johnson's dictionary should be nearby. Another painting of Johnson and his biographer, Boswell, was found in a cellar relatively recently and restored.

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