

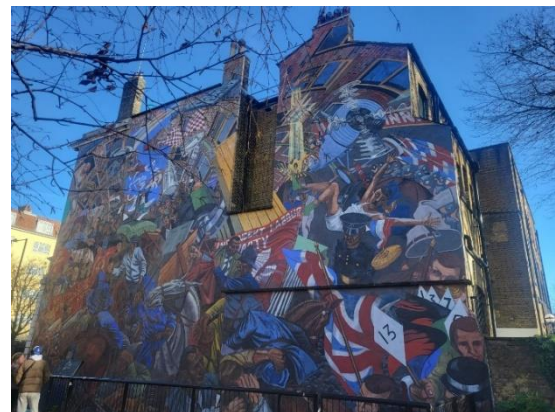
## Greensleeves Morris Men – 100 Bus Tour

In January 1926 Greensleeves Morris Men had its inaugural practice. 100 years on and the club has been busy organising events to see as many friends, old and new, as we can during 2026. At one of our 2026 committee meetings David Cooling came up with the idea of kick-starting the year with a tour along the 100 bus route in London. Besides having some fun, the key idea behind the 100 bus tour was to publicise the club's centenary by writing and submitting an article to the CAMRA magazine, the London Drinker. This is not that article but we thought fellow dancers might be interested in what we got up to.

For those not local to London, the 100 is interesting little route that starts in the East End of London at Shadwell, famous for the Cable Street riots in 1936, and terminates in the City of London at St Paul's.

David has previously organised some other successful public transport related tours including an Uber river boat tour, and an Elizabeth Line tour, so the omens were good. The club plumped for 24<sup>th</sup> January which proved to be a lovely sunny day between days of almost endless rain.

We didn't dance at Shadwell, instead we had the obligatory group photo with the 100 bus outside St George's town hall. The mural on the wall of the town hall depicts the Cable Street riots of 1936.





Two bus stops later we had passed Tobacco Dock and had arrived at the bus stop called Wapping Health Centre. We avoided the health centre and strode across a patch of greenery to our first stop. Turner's Old Star PH.

The artist Joseph Turner lived in the area and in 1851 he converted two cottages that he had inherited into a tavern that he named the Old Star having installed his mistress as the proprietor. And it's been there ever since.

In 1987 it was refurbished and renamed Turner's Old Star. It has been used in several films and TV programmes. It remains a true East End locals' pub and is currently run by Paul and Bernice Drew. We had fantastic welcome there and the pub had even organised a small audience for us. One of the audience members said "we don't get many morris dancers round here!" and other one commented that "it was a great excuse to have a cheeky pint before they went shopping".



Dancing and drinking done we strolled around the back streets for at least two minutes before we arrived at stop number two – the Town of Ramsgate PH in Wapping High Street. Taking the bus would definitely have taken longer.

This too is a locals' independent pub that has origins as far back as the 1460s. There is a small terrace that overlooks the River Thames and alongside is Wapping Old Stairs, a narrow set of steps leading from the High Street down to the river. The pub gets its name from fishermen from Kent who landed their catch downstream of the Pool of London and thereby avoided paying taxes.



Wapping High Street isn't very wide, so we opted to dance in a small garden opposite the pub. Although the pub hadn't arranged any audience we soon collected some curious tourists who watched us dance various Fieldtown and Sherborne dances before we headed to the bus stop for a short bus ride to our next spot.



The Dickens Inn PH is located in St Katharine's Dock and has a lovely circular spot of flat surface ideal for dances like Fieldtown The Rose but it proved a bit of a challenge to get straight parallel lines in the Vandals of Hammerwich. Nevertheless, we persevered. St Katharine's Dock is a popular place, and again we did amass a small audience, including drinkers in the outside balconies.



The building dates to the 1700s and what was thought to have been a tea warehouse and possibly a tavern. The current pub was opened in 1976 by Cedric Charles Dickens, a great-grandson of author Charles Dickens.

Time for lunch. This involved a short sightseeing walk past Tower Bridge, the Tower of London and the old Royal Mint before reaching the Goodman's Field Wetherspoon. It's hard to envisage but the area was once agricultural land leased by Roland Goodman. Haggis, Neeps and Tatties, washed down by Loch Lomond brewery's Auld Acquaintance, was pretty much the order of the day.

Our penultimate stop was the White Swan PH in Alie Street again a mere 2-3 minute walk from our lunch spot. Described by one of our members as a gem of a pub, it's a Shepherd Neame pub, quite uncommon in central London. The pub has links to the former Half Moon Theatre and is a traditional Grade II listed pub known for its historic panelled interior.



Our audience for this stop was rather intimate mainly friends and acquaintances of members of the side, including a musician who many years before had performed the Ampleforth Play in long tatter jackets covered in pieces of paper. They came out of the pub to watch us, and were then joined by the barman, Tudor.

With a nod to history our Squire decided we should dance the “Clever set”: Sarah’s Delight - Fieldtown long figure; and Alison’s Fancy – Sherborne double stick. Bert Cleaver created these dances in appreciation of his two daughters.



The end was in sight now. St Paul’s and the Cockpit awaited us. Not hugely far but tired legs said we should catch the 100 bus for the final time and travel to its terminus. These wonderful portable computers we carry around with us told exactly when the bus was due and when we should leave the White Swan.

I don’t think St Paul’s needs much introduction although it’s interesting to note that when the Central line tube station originally opened in 1900, it was called Post Office reflecting the nearby head office of the then General Post Office.



Greensleeves are no strangers to the St Paul's area. Each Lord Mayor Show day (November), the club performs on Peter's Hill steps with the cathedral in the background. We were just about to start when huge audience descended on us - apparently they were on a school trip from Manchester. They cheered us on through Swaggering Boney - Longborough and went wild while we did Twin Sisters (our version of the Upton stick dance). There was only one thing more we had to do. Walk to one of our favourite pubs, the Cockpit PH.

It's a busy little pub only a stone's throw from St Paul's Cathedral, popular with bell ringers and choir members from the Cathedral, and morris dancers. Three former choristers sat next to me in the pub and chatted while they pre-loaded before heading off to a formal dinner. The Cockpit is a Grade II listed pub operating since the 18<sup>th</sup> century on a site with activity dating to the 1500s. It is the site of the last legal cockfighting venue in London. It remains an independent pub and has been run by the current landlord (Dave Cooke) for 30+ years.



As a way of finishing our day of dancing the Squire suggested we should temporarily interrupt our well-earned refreshment and round the day off with the traditional farewell dance Bonny Green Garters.

Greensleeves are based in Wimbledon, South West London. If you are working or studying away from home and need to get your weekly morris fix, do come along and join us. We'd love to see you especially in this our centenary year.

Please contact our Bagman (Tommy Cooling) at [greensleevesmorrismen@gmail.com](mailto:greensleevesmorrismen@gmail.com).