

Now streaming live on the Web, the Abbey Road intersection August 5, 2010

For about 150,000 fans a year, it's something of a pilgrimage. They stop traffic, bring friends to capture the moment, scurry back to the curb, check the image in their digital cameras, and then make their way to the other side of the street, all to recreate that iconic image of the Beatles crossing Abbey Road. They've been doing it for years. The difference now is that it's all being broadcast live from London, England, on the Internet on Abbey Road Studio's home page.

"It's such an intrinsic part of studio life. It's wonderful, I think," said Kerin Purcell, head of brand and marketing at Abbey Road Studios.

"Originally, the camera, which faces out from the recording studio into that now-famous zebra crossing along Abbey Road, was installed as part of security measures for the studio five years ago," said Purcell.



These fans have some fun dressing up to pose on the Abbey Road pedestrian crossing, made famous by the Beatles

This summer, in response to requests from fans who have been looking at the website, the studio upgraded the Web camera in partnership with [EarthCam](#), which has installed cameras in New York's Times Square and along the Great Wall of China, Purcell told the Star on Wednesday.

"The camera has new features," said Purcell. "You can email photos of yourself from the crossing, you can take a photo and email it to friends, and we have a (24-hour) archive facility, as well. If you have been on the crossing, you can retrieve an image of yourself.

"It's a small way for us to interact with our fans because they're not able to come into the studio."

Other website extras are being planned in honour of the studio's 80th anniversary celebrations next year, she said.

Abbey Road Studios began as a recording studio for EMI in the 1930s. A long list of famous musicians has recorded there, including Sir Edward Elgar, conducting the London Symphony Orchestra in 1931, a 16-year-old Yehudi Menuhin in 1932, and Noel Coward. In more recent years, Oasis, the Red Hot Chili Peppers and the Manic Street Preachers have also made albums there. But it was The Beatles and their records, particularly Abbey Road, that made the street and the studio famous worldwide.

The photo of the four Beatles walking along the zebra crossing on Abbey Road was taken spontaneously, according to rock and roll folklore. At one point, the album was going to be called Everest after a brand of cigarettes the sound engineer smoked, and there had been talk of shooting the Fab Four in the Himalayas. Instead, on Aug. 8, 1969, they decided to take the photo just outside the studio. That now-iconic shot was snapped by the late Iain MacMillan, who was given all of 10 minutes, with The Beatles walking single file from left-to-right with John Lennon in front, followed by Ringo Starr, Paul McCartney and George Harrison. McCartney is barefooted and out of step with the others.

Since then, the famous and near famous have recreated the scene. The likes of Seal, Counting Crows, Starsailor and Sugarland have all made the Abbey Road crossing; their images have been captured on Abbey Road's Facebook page. Last year, on the photograph's 40th anniversary, thousands flocked to the spot. Purcell expects the same on this year's anniversary on Sunday.

So why do fans continue to be drawn to the site after all these years?

"Everyone's reason is different," said Purcell, who nonetheless has her own theory. "It's about respecting the music that was made here and making a pilgrimage to a studio which is an iconic symbol of world music."