

Talking type

Teachers notes

What makes a font stand out?

What makes a font stand out? How do fonts tell us things about the words we are reading? Discover the story behind Transport for London's iconic Johnston Font. Explore how fonts are created, designed and chosen.

Follow our design brief to create a front of your own. You will use this as the title for a poem you will write, inspired by our Poems on the Underground program.

This activity can help your learners:

- ♦ Learn about the iconic Johnston Font.
- ♦ Explore methods for designing font
- ♦ Discover new design terminology
- ♦ Explore the Poems on the Underground
- ♦ Communicate meaning through design

Johnston font

Francis Pick, the Chief Executive at London Transport commissioned Edward Johnston to create a brand new font in 1913. Johnston created the Johnston's Standard Block Lettering for the Underground which has guided Londoners and visitors for over 100 years. Johnston also designed the famous London Underground 'bullseye' symbol, which today we know as the Roundel.

Pick was one of the first people to really think about 'branding'. He wanted a bold and modern font not just to be the face of the Underground, but of London. He did not want the signage to be confused with advertising. He wanted a font that would make it easy to find stations and navigate through them, to help avoid accidents and communicate easily with people so that they had a pleasant experience using the network. Johnstone font is sometimes called the first 'people's typeface'

Johnstone font is described as 'the most revolutionary and inspirational of twentieth-century letterforms.' What is it about this font that makes that true?

The Johnston front, or typeface, is a sans serif font, meaning it has no extra parts or flourishes added. However it has a few noticeable features that have a playful element that designers love.

The letter 'o' is almost a perfect circle
The lower case 'l' as a little flick, like a boot
The dot on top on the 'i' and 'j' is a diamond, rather than a circle



Edward Johnston, typographer, 1902



Poems on the Underground

Poems featured in Tube carriages have been a big hit with the public. The project was launched in 1986, following an idea from the American writer Judith Chernaik, to bring poetry to a wider audience.

The programme helps to make journeys more stimulating and inspiring by showcasing a range of poetry in Tube train carriages across London. The poems are selected by Judith Chernaik and poets George Szirtes and Imtiaz Dharker.

Poems on the Underground highlights classical, contemporary and international work, by both famous and relatively unknown poets. It has been a great success and has inspired similar schemes in cities around the world, from New York to Shanghai. It's proved to be a great way of introducing the public to poetry, with passengers often wanting to read more.

You can explore these here poemsontheunderground.org/



Design brief

Your challenge

Write a poem for Poem's on the Underground that tells story about a journey you've taken. You'll need to create your own unique font for the poem title that is inspired by the words.

Posters audience

People travelling to work or school on the tube.

Poem's purpose:

To inspire people as they travel on the tube.

Activities

Activity 1: poem

Write a poem which says something about your life. The poem can be in any style you like but must be at least 5 lines.

Your poem could be about a place, or a journey. You might like to write about something you do everyday, or about a really special memory. You could write about a friend, a family member, or even a dream!

Activity 2: font design

Materials:

- ◆ Tracing paper (and/or carbon paper)
- ◆ Cut paper
- ◆ Card
- ◆ Scissors
- ◆ Glue
- ◆ Neoprene (if not you can experiment with cardboard or even another fabric)
- ◆ Rollers
- ◆ Water washable block printing ink or paint
- ◆ Paper to print or draw final work onto

We want you to create your own font.
You will use this font to create the title for the poem you have written.

Is it a poem about the sea – can you make the letters in the title look like waves?

Is it a poem about a zoo – can you make the letters look like animals?

Think about what your font will tell people about your poem?

Our talking type livestream introduces some basic elements of typography and techniques based on traditional printing and Letterpress. You'll be able to create your own printing blocks

For this process:

1. Cut your letters out of card, neoprene or fabric
2. Roll with ink or use a paintbrush to cover your letterpress in paint
3. Stamp out your title on your paper

If you are using the letterpress technique remember your letters will all need to be backwards.



Font's purpose:

To compliment your poem so that readers understand the tone and feeling of the poem. Explore the collection to see some examples from our collection about how other artists have used font to communicate their ideas.

Share your poems and fonts with us at [#iheartltm](https://twitter.com/iheartltm)

Explore the collection

RON'S EEL
and
SHELL FISH

*welks, Smoked
haddock, Rollmops
sea food pieces,
kippers, salmon
etc...*

*Every Friday and
Saturday Hoxton st.
Market. SHOP LOCAL*

Bob and Roberta Smith, *Ron's Eel and Shellfish*, 2006
A Platform For Art project to coincide with SHOP LOCAL, a project by Bob and Roberta Smith
commissioned by Peer as part of The Shoreditch Festival (www.peeruk.org)
Platform for Art is the art programme for London Underground
Find out more and feedback at tfl.gov.uk/pfa

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art

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Ron's eel and shellfish, by Bob and Roberta Smith, 2006

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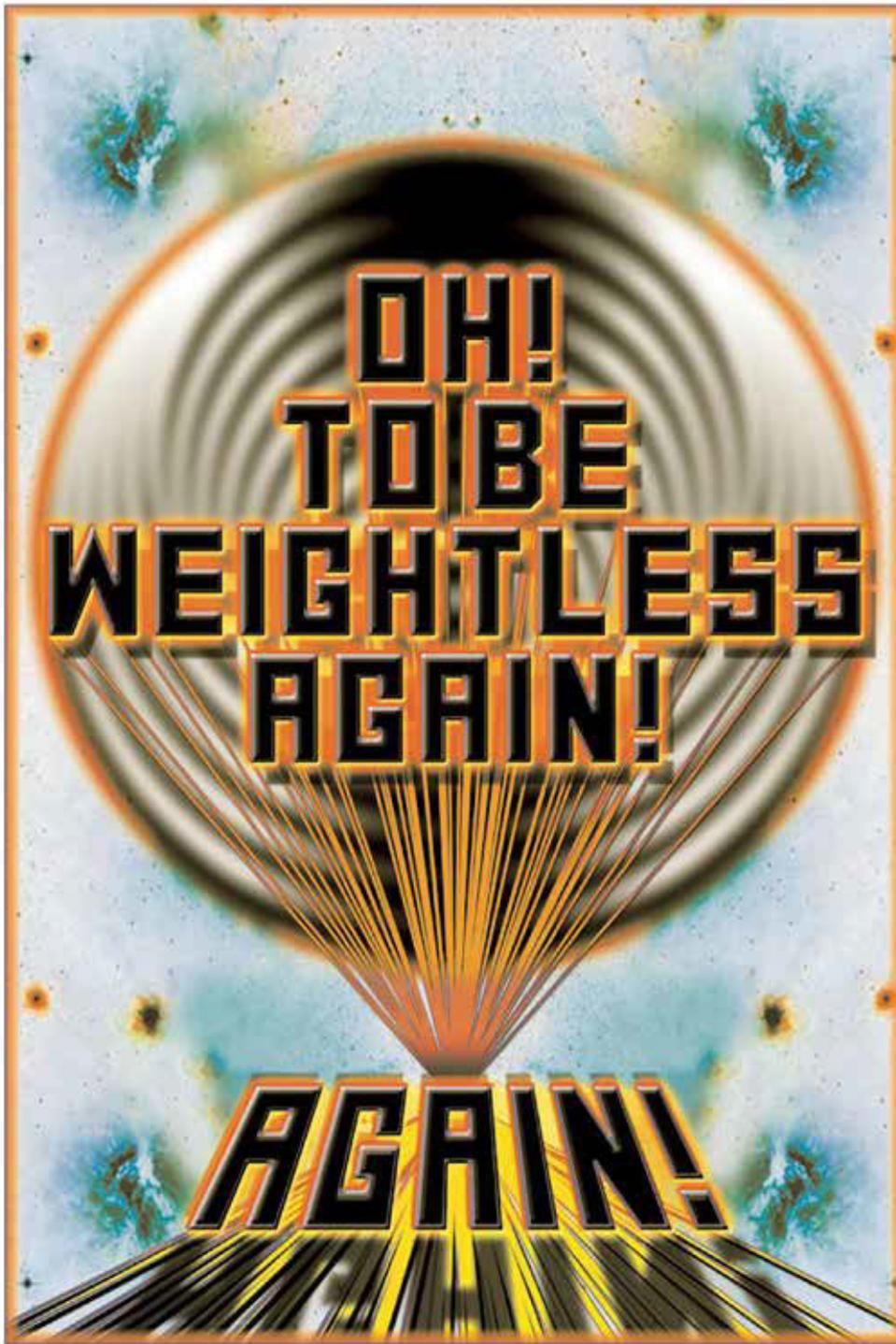


Every journey saved the traveller 30p, unknown, 2003



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Mark Titchner
Oh to be weightless again, 2003
Go to the gallery: Vilma Gold, 25b Vyner Street E2
© Bethnal Green

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art

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Oh! to be weightless again, by Mark Titchner, 2003



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The world's finest nightlife by bus, tube, river & rail

LONDON AFTER DARK

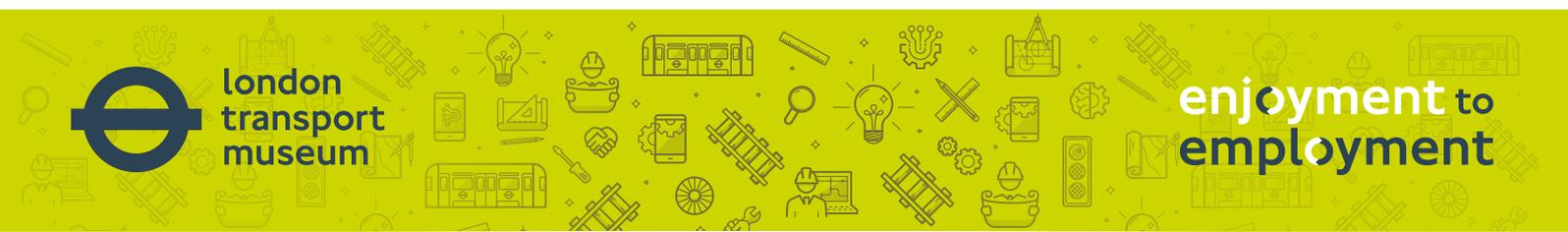


Designer: Andy Spencer
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MAYOR OF LONDON

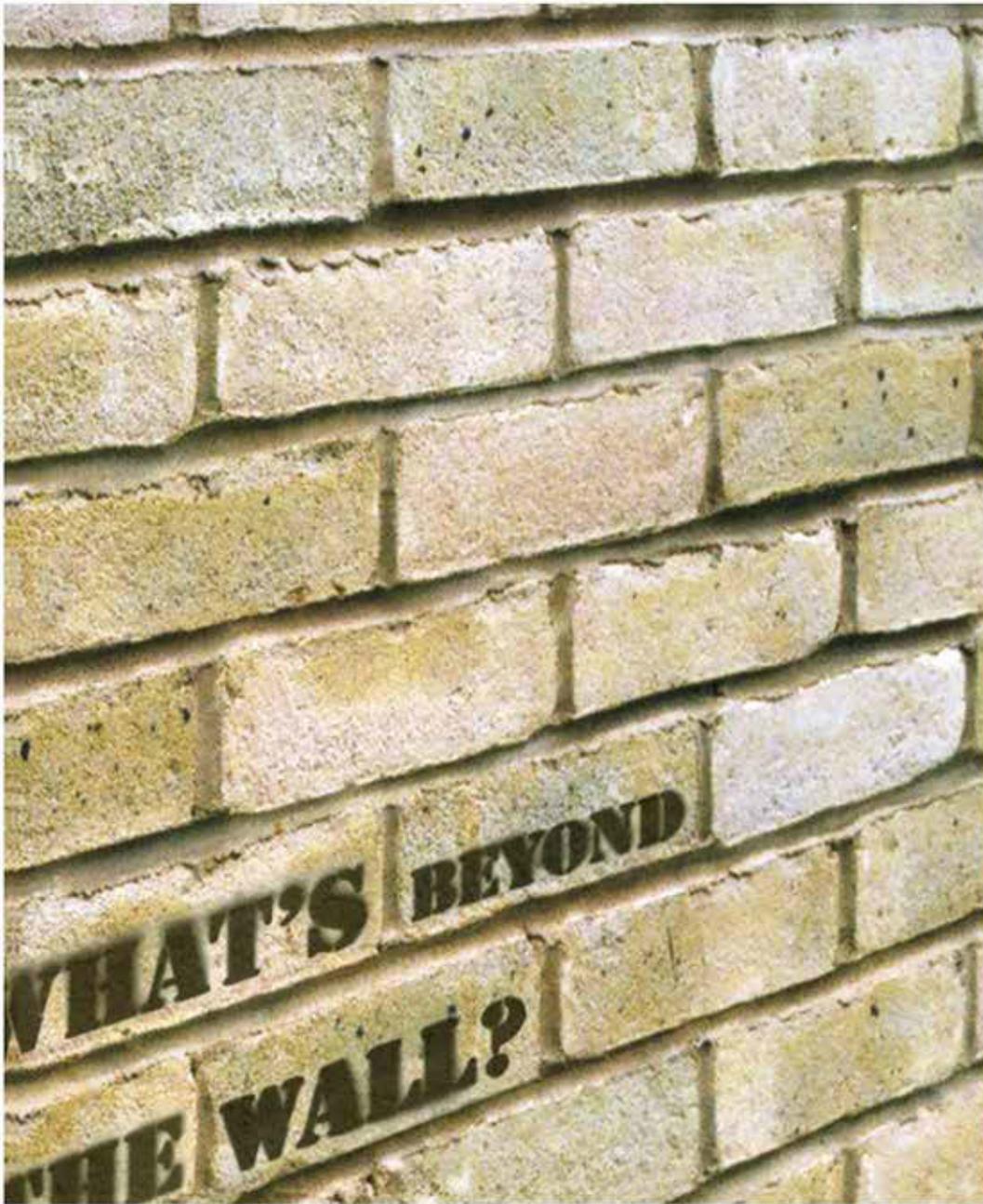


London after dark, by Andy Spencer, 2015



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Ministry of Dissent
explores the non-conformist history of Moorgate,
the breach in the City Wall that led people to quake

Creative Team: Elise Valmorbidia, Martina Fischmeister,
Jermaine Mays, Bejal Patel, Tom O'Riordan, Davis Odelli

From Here to Here – Stories inspired by the Circle line
8 September – 10 October 2005

A collection of posters in every Circle line station. For details on the accompanying book
and exhibition visit: www.tfl.gov.uk/pfa or www.fromheretohere.com

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MOORGATE

Ministry of dissent, by Elise Valmorbidia, Martina Fischmeister, Jermaine Mays,
Bejal Patel, Tom O'Riordan, Davis Odelli, 2005



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Been there ... **Acton Central**, **Acton Town**, **Aldgate**, **Aldgate East**, **All Saints**, **Alperton**, **Amersham**, **Angel**, **Archway**, **Arnos Grove**, **Arsenal**, **Baker Street**, **Balham**, **Bank**, **Barbican**, **Barking**, **Barkingside**, **Barons Court**, **Bayswater**, **Beckton**, **Beckton Park**, **Becontree**, **Belsize Park**, **Bermondsey**, **Bethnal Green**, **Blackfriars**, **Blackhorse Road**, **Blackwall**, **Bond Street**, **Borough**, **Boston Manor**, **Bounds Green**, **Bow Church**, **Bow Road**, **Brent Cross**, **Brixton**, **Bromley-by-Bow**, **Brondesbury**, **Brondesbury Park**, **Buckhurst Hill**, **Burnt Oak**, **Caledonian Road**, **Caledonian Road & Barnsbury**, **Camden Road**, **Camden Town**, **Canada Water**, **Canary Wharf**, **Canning Town**, **Cannon Street**, **Canonbury**, **Canons Park**, **Chalfont & Latimer**, **Chalk Farm**, **Chancery Lane**, **Charing Cross**, **Chesham**, **Chigwell**, **Chiswick Park**, **Chorleywood**, **Clapham Common**, **Clapham North**, **Clapham South**, **Cockfosters**, **Colindale**, **Colliers Wood**, **Covent Garden**, **Crossharbour**, **Croxley**, **Custom House**, **Cutty Sark for Maritime Greenwich**, **Cyprus**, **Dagenham East**, **Dagenham Heathway**, **Dalston Kingsland**, **Debden**, **Deptford Bridge**, **Devons Road**, **Dollis Hill**, **Ealing Broadway**, **Ealing Common**, **Earl's Court**, **East Acton**, **Eastcote**, **East Finchley**, **East Ham**, **East India**, **East Putney**, **Edgware**, **Edgware Road (Bakerloo)**, **Edgware Road (Circle/District/H&C)**, **Elephant & Castle**, **Elm Park**, **Elverson Road**, **Embankment**, **Epping**, **Euston**, **Euston Square**, **Fairlop**, **Farringdon**, **Finchley Central**, **Finchley Road**, **Finchley Road & Frognal**, **Finsbury Park**, **Fulham Broadway**, **Gallions Reach**, **Gants Hill**, **Gloucester Road**, **Golders Green**, **Goldhawk Road**, **Goodge Street**, **Gospel Oak**, **Grange Hill**, **Great Portland Street**, **Greenford**, **Greenwich**, **Green Park**, **Gunnarsbury**, **Hackney Central**, **Hackney Wick**, **Hainault**, **Hammersmith**, **Hampstead**, **Hampstead Heath**, **Hanger Lane**, **Harlesden**, **Harrow & Wealdstone**, **Harrow-on-the-Hill**, **Hatton Cross**, **Heathrow Terminals 1, 2, 3**, **Heathrow Terminal 4**, **Heathrow Terminal 5**, **Hendon Central**, **Heron Quays**, **High Barnet**, **Highbury & Islington**, **High Street Kensington**, **Highgate**, **Hillingdon**, **Holborn**, **Holland Park**, **Holloway Road**, **Homerton**, **Hornchurch**, **Hounslow Central**, **Hounslow East**, **Hounslow West**, **Hyde Park Corner**, **Ickenham**, **Island Gardens**, **Kennington**, **Kensal Green**, **Kensal Rise**, **Kensington (Olympia)**, **Kentish Town**, **Kentish Town West**, **Kenton**, **Kew Gardens**, **Kilburn**, **Kilburn Park**, **Kingsbury**, **King's Cross St. Pancras**, **King George V**, **Knightsbridge**, **Ladbroke Grove**, **Lambeth North**, **Lancaster Gate**, **Latimer Road**, **Leicester Square**, **Lewisham**, **Leyton**, **Leytonstone**, **Limehouse**, **Liverpool Street**, **London Bridge**, **London City Airport**, **Loughton**, **Maida Vale**, **Manor House**, **Mansion House**, **Marble Arch**, **Marylebone**, **Mile End**, **Mill Hill East**, **Monument**, **Moorgate**, **Moor Park**, **Morden**, **Mornington Crescent**, **Mudchute**, **Neasden**, **Newbury Park**, **New Cross**, **New Cross Gate**, **North Acton**, **North Ealing**, **Northfields**, **North Greenwich**, **North Harrow**, **Northholt**, **North Wembley**, **Northwick Park**, **Northwood**, **Northwood Hills**, **Notting Hill Gate**, **Oakwood**, **Old Street**, **Osterley**, **Oval**, **Oxford Circus**, **Paddington**, **Park Royal**, **Parsons Green**, **Perivale**, **Piccadilly Circus**, **Pimlico**, **Pinner**, **Plaistow**, **Pontoon Dock**, **Poplar**, **Preston Road**, **Prince Regent**, **Pudding Mill Lane**, **Putney Bridge**, **Queensbury**, **Queen's Park**, **Queensway**, **Ravenscourt Park**, **Rayners Lane**, **Redbridge**, **Regent's Park**, **Richmond**, **Rickmansworth**, **Roding Valley**, **Rotherhithe**, **Royal Albert**, **Royal Oak**, **Royal Victoria**, **Ruislip**, **Ruislip Gardens**, **Ruislip Manor**, **Russell Square**, **St. James's Park**, **St. John's Wood**, **St. Paul's**, **Seven Sisters**, **Shadwell**, **Shepherd's Bush**, **Shepherd's Bush Market**, **Sloane Square**, **Snaresbrook**, **South Acton**, **South Ealing**, **Southfields**, **Southgate**, **South Harrow**, **South Kensington**, **South Kenton**, **South Quay**, **South Ruislip**, **Southwark**, **South Wimbledon**, **South Woodford**, **Stamford Brook**, **Stanmore**, **Stepney Green**, **Stockwell**, **Stonebridge Park**, **Stratford**, **Sudbury Hill**, **Sudbury Town**, **Surrey Quays**, **Swiss Cottage**, **Temple**, **Theydon Bois**, **Tooting Bec**, **Tooting Broadway**, **Tottenham Court Road**, **Tottenham Hale**, **Totteridge & Whetstone**, **Tower Gateway**, **Tower Hill**, **Tufnell Park**, **Turnham Green**, **Turnpike Lane**, **Upminster**, **Upminster Bridge**, **Upney**, **Upton Park**, **Uxbridge**, **Vauxhall**, **Victoria**, **Walthamstow Central**, **Wanstead**, **Wapping**, **Warren Street**, **Warwick Avenue**, **Waterloo**, **Watford**, **Wembley Central**, **Wembley Park**, **West Acton**, **Westbourne Park**, **West Brompton**, **Westferry**, **West Finchley**, **West Ham**, **West Hampstead**, **West Harrow**, **West India Quay**, **West Kensington**, **Westminster**, **West Ruislip**, **West Silvertown**, **Whitechapel**, **White City**, **Willesden Green**, **Willesden Junction**, **Wimbledon**, **Wimbledon Park**, **Woodford**, **Wood Green**, **Wood Lane**, **Woodside Park**, **Woolwich Arsenal**.



Designed by Conran Design Group for London Transport Museum 2007

Been there, by Conran Design Group, 2007



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Discover the secrets of the Underground, Hidden London, Strand (Aldwych) Station, by Gail Brodholt, 2020



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LONDON

REGENT'S PARK

Underground to Baker Street, then Bus 74

Zoo, by Abram Games, 1976

LONDON TRANSPORT COACH TOUR

On Sundays

from Waltham Cross, Hoddesdon,
Ware and Hertford to
WHIPSNADE ZOO

VIA Digswell, Welwyn, Codicote, Kimpton,
Luton and Dunstable Downs. Return via
Kensworth, Markyate, St. Albans and Hatfield

Leave Waltham Cross	9.45 a.m.	Return Fare	6/-
Leave Cheshunt	... 9.55 a.m.	Return Fare	6/-
Leave Broxbourne	... 10. 0 a.m.	Return Fare	5/6
Leave Hoddesdon	... 10. 5 a.m.	Return Fare	5/-
Leave Ware Crossing	10.15 a.m.	Return Fare	4/9
Leave Hertford	... 10.25 a.m.	Return Fare	4/9
Home about 7.45 p.m. (Waltham Cross)			

Seats can be booked at:

ASPLAND'S, 131 HIGH STREET, WALTHAM CROSS
LOWE, 23 HIGH STREET, CHESHUNT
BROWNING, 2 HAWKENBURY PARADE, HIGH ROAD,
BROXBOURNE
CHAPMAN, 88 HIGH STREET, HODDESDON
E. H. SWEETING, 90-92 HIGH STREET, WARE
ENQUIRY OFFICE, BUS STATION, HERTFORD
LONDON TRANSPORT GARAGE, FAIRFAX RD., HERTFORD

The tour starts on Sunday, 21st May

London Transport coach tour, by Hans Unger, 1950