

1 October 2014 *For immediate release*

## Two London Tube Stations celebrate National Poetry Day with a poetic takeover



Staff from two London Tube Stations are joining **The Poetry Society** and **Transport for London** to celebrate **National Poetry Day**, on 2 October 2014, and its official theme of 'remember' with a series of poetic happenings for visitors in and around London.

**Covent Garden** and **Oval Tube** stations will become a poetic hub with readings of poetry over the tannoy, poetic Oyster wallet giveaways and a special poem takeover of the much-loved Quote of the Day board.

Covent Garden Station Supervisor and poetry-lover, **Pele Bapere**, enlisted the help of his colleagues to ignite a passion for poetry to visitors to the station. The recordings of poems played over the public announcement system at Covent Garden and Oval stations will feature members of staff from the station itself, plus voices from the London Transport Museum and the Poetry Society, who have helped coordinate the endeavour by enlisting enthusiastic poetry readers from other local businesses to join them.

Many of the poems heard will be on the official 'remember' theme, and specially chosen as an act of remembrance to mark the centenary of the **First World War**. This event joins a wider programme of events both by Transport for London and the Poetry Society commemorating the 100 year anniversary of the conflict.

The **Quote of the Day board** at Covent Garden and Oval, loved and read by visitors, will feature the famous poem 'Dulce et Decorum Est' by the First World War poet Wilfred Owen, offering a moment of written poetic reflection to complement the spoken poems.

Visitors to Covent Garden and Oval stations will also be able to get hold of a free limited edition **Poetry Society Oyster wallet**, and free advance copies of a special **Poems on the Underground anthology**, which is being published as part of London Underground's commemoration of the centenary of the Great War of 1914-1918. This anthology features poetry written by ordinary soldiers and their loved ones in response to the conflict, and all the poems have appeared on the Tube over the past several years, marking Remembrance Day each November.

Members of the public will be invited to take part in the nationwide celebration by Tweeting their thoughts and the poetry they most remember to @CoventGdnTube, @Oval\_Station and @PoetrySociety with the hashtag **#NationalPoetryDay**.

For those who want an even more interactive poetry experience, from 11.30am-12.30pm there will be a **free open mic event** at Covent Garden Piazza, held outside the **London Transport Museum**. Staff members from the London Transport Museum and Covent Garden Station, as well as poets enlisted by the Poetry Society, will read poetry throughout the hour. Members of the public will also be invited to read a poem of their own, or pick one to read aloud from a list of 'remember'-themed work provided by the Poetry

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### **For further information**

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**Page 1 of 3**

Society. The event will be compered by Paul McGrane, and hopes to get people engaged in the act of remembrance through engagement with some of the moving and powerful poetry that has been written on and around the subject.  
[www.ltmuseum.co.uk/whats-on/events-calendar/partner-events](http://www.ltmuseum.co.uk/whats-on/events-calendar/partner-events)

London Transport played a pivotal role during the First World War, providing staff and vehicles to take troops to the Western Front as well as keeping Londoners moving on the Home Front. The First World War had a profound impact on London and its transport system. Nearly half of the Underground's staff were recruited to serve and by the end of the war, more than one thousand employees had been killed. Memorials to them are at several stations across our network.

This is illustrated in a major exhibition at the London Transport Museum, which is part of the Year of the Bus. **'Goodbye Piccadilly – from Home Front to Western Front'** reveals the untold story of London's Home Front during the First World War and tells how drivers took their buses to the Front to support the war effort. The exhibition also includes work from former winners of the Poetry Society's SLAMBassadors national youth slam.

There will be many other events going on in the area throughout the day for those who are inspired by the poetry they encounter at Covent Garden and Oval. The Poetry Society and Southbank Centre present **National Poetry Day Live**, a free afternoon of events running 1-6pm in the Clore Ballroom, with readings from poets including Julia Donaldson, John Hegley, Daljit Nagra and Kei Miller.  
[www.poetrysociety.org.uk/npd](http://www.poetrysociety.org.uk/npd)

The Poetry Society has commissioned four of the UK's most exciting writers for a contemporary response to the legacy of the conflict. **Denise Riley, Steve Ely, Zaffar Kunial** and **Warsan Shire** premiere their searing new poems at **The Pity**, in the Purcell Room at Queen Elizabeth Hall, London SE1 8XX, at 6pm on National Poetry Day, 2 October. The poets will perform their work live, accompanied by visuals created by **Robert Peake**. Tickets £10, Box Office 0844 875 0073. [www.southbankcentre.co.uk](http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk)

And finally, the Poetry Society's Poetry Café presents **'Playing Poetry'**, an evening of experimental poetry performance devised by singers, musicians, actors and poets at the café at 22 Betterton Street in Covent Garden, WC2H 9BX, from 7.30pm. Tickets £4.  
[www.poetrysociety.org.uk/events/event/2850/](http://www.poetrysociety.org.uk/events/event/2850/)

For more information about Poetry Society events around National Poetry Day, visit [www.poetrysociety.org.uk/npd](http://www.poetrysociety.org.uk/npd).

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#### Notes to Editors:

##### THE POETRY SOCIETY

The Poetry Society was founded in 1909 to promote a "more general recognition and appreciation of poetry". Since then, it has grown into one of Britain's most dynamic arts organisations, representing British poetry both nationally and internationally. With innovative education and commissioning programmes and a packed calendar of performances, readings and competitions, the Poetry Society champions poetry for all ages. It publishes the magazine *The Poetry Review*, runs the National Poetry Competition, the Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award and the youth performance poetry championship SLAMBassadors UK. A registered charity, the Poetry Society is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation. [www.poetrysociety.org.uk](http://www.poetrysociety.org.uk)

##### TRANSPORT FOR LONDON

Transport for London is the integrated body responsible for the Capital's transport system. Its main role is to implement the Mayor's Transport Strategy for London and manage transport services across the Capital including London Underground, London Buses, the Docklands Light railway, London Overground, London Tramlink, London River Services, Dial-a-Ride, Victoria Coach Station, Barclays Cycle Hire and the emirates Air Line. TfL's goal is to keep London working, growing and to make life in London better. As one of the world's largest and most integrated transport authorities, TfL delivers a transport system that secures London's position as a world-leading city.

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**Page 2 of 3**

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**POEMS ON THE UNDERGROUND**

The well-loved Poems on the Underground was founded in 1986 and aims to bring poetry to a wider audience. It helps to make journeys more interesting by showcasing a diverse range of poetry, including classical, contemporary, international and work by poets in London Underground cars, with additional posters on London Overground and selected station sites in a major expansion of the programme for 2014, supported by TfL. The latest collection consists of poems written about the First World War between 1914 and 1918 and can be seen in stations from 6th October 2014 and through November. Poems by English, French, Italian and Austrian poets, written during the heat of war service, stress themes of brotherhood and reconciliation, and the ways in which 'we said goodbye to a whole epoch' (Apollinaire). The booklet of the poems, *War Poems on the Underground, 1914-1918*, will be available free to the public from tube stations, with advance copies available at Covent Garden and Oval stations on National Poetry Day, 2nd October 2014.

Poems on the Underground is generously supported by TfL, Arts Council England and the British Council. Posters, designed by Tom Davidson, are available from the Poetry Society and London Transport Museum. *Poems on the Underground: A New Edition (Penguin, 2012)* will be published in paperback in March 2015.

**LONDON TRANSPORT MUSEUM**

London Transport Museum is situated in the heart of Covent Garden and filled with stunning exhibits; the Museum explores the powerful link between transport and the growth of modern London, culture and society since 1800. Historic vehicles, world-famous posters and the very best objects from the Museum's extraordinary collection are brought together to tell the story of London's development and the part transport played in defining the unique identity of the city. Events and exhibitions can be found at [www.ltmuseum.co.uk](http://www.ltmuseum.co.uk)

The Museum is an educational and heritage preservation charity. Its purpose is to conserve and explain the history of London's transport, to offer people an understanding of the Capital's past development and to engage them in the debate about its future. The Museum's charity number is 1123122.

**THE POETRY CAFÉ**

The Poetry Society's Poetry Café (The Poetry Place) is Covent Garden's most congenial literary joint. Serving delicious vegetarian cuisine at lunchtime, and coffee and pastries throughout the afternoon, in the evening the atmosphere is busy and vibrant, with poetry readings almost every night. Exhibitions run regularly at the café – currently showing is 'Digressions', a collection of Philippa Troutman's paintings, prints and cut-ups, in a joint project with award-winning poet Ian Duhig, celebrating Laurence Sterne's masterpiece, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*. Visit the Café at 22 Betterton Street, London, WC2H 9BX. [www.poetrysociety.org.uk/cafe](http://www.poetrysociety.org.uk/cafe)

**NATIONAL POETRY DAY LIVE**

National Poetry Day Live is presented by the Poetry Society and Southbank Centre, London and has run every National Poetry Day since 2009. The programme of events runs 1-6pm and is compered by Joelle Taylor and John Hegley: 1pm – 2.15pm features the best of children's poetry from Julia Donaldson, Joseph Coelho and John Hegley. 2.30pm – 4.30pm features poems and performances for young people from Joelle Taylor, Ross Sutherland, Raymond Antrobus and Josh Idehen, plus poetry films. 4.45pm – 6pm features a host of special one-off performances from Kei Miller, Hannah Silva, Emily Berry, Daljit Nagra and Jean 'Binta' Breeze.

The National Poetry Day Live Scrapbook will be collated by artist Davina Drummond, who specialises in site- or date- specific works, often incorporating the use of text and textiles. Davina's practice explores modes of making artworks which involve the process of social interactions and creative collaborations. [www.davinadrummond.co.uk](http://www.davinadrummond.co.uk)

All National Poetry Day Live events take place in the Clore Ballroom, Royal Festival Hall, Southbank Centre, Belvedere Road, London, SE1 8XX, and are this year presented as part of the London Literature Festival. Admission is free. [www.poetrysociety.org.uk/npd](http://www.poetrysociety.org.uk/npd)

**NATIONAL POETRY DAY**

A annual nationwide celebration of poetry held each October, National Poetry Day is organised by the Forward Arts Foundation. Education resources available online include downloadable activity packs for libraries, teachers and parents, encouraging children to write, read and share poetry. The exercises relate to the letters in the word 'Remember' and have been prepared by each of the partner organisations, including the Poetry Society.

[www.nationalpoetryday.co.uk](http://www.nationalpoetryday.co.uk)

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