



A  
SCHOOL  
OF  
PURPOSES



Fougasse Posters, 1939—1945,  
introduced by  
A. P. Herbert

METHUEN & CO. LTD.

OTHER BOOKS BY FOUGASSE

HOME CIRCLE  
FAMILY GROUP  
SORRY—NO RUBBER  
RUNNING COMMENTARY  
THE CHANGING FACE OF BRITAIN  
JOTSAM  
STOP OR GO  
DRAWING THE LINE SOMEWHERE  
THE LUCK OF THE DRAW  
P.T.O.  
E. & O.E.  
DRAWN AT A VENTURE  
A GALLERY OF GAMES  
FUN FAIR

✕

In collaboration with W. D. H. McCullough :

YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED  
ACES MADE EASY

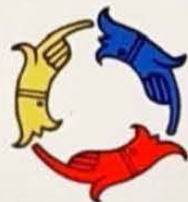
✕

With A. W. Bird :  
JUST A FEW LINES

A  
SCHOOL  
OF  
PURPOSES



A Selection of Fougasse Posters, 1939—1945,  
introduced by A. P. Herbert



METHUEN & CO. LTD. LONDON  
36 Essex Street, Strand, W.C.2

First published in 1946

Printed in Great Britain by  
JAS. TRUSCOTT & SON, LTD., LONDON AND TONBRIDGE

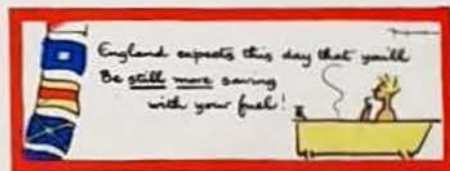
## INTRODUCTION

BY

A. P. HERBERT

I CANNOT IMAGINE why an introduction from a mere writer is necessary to a collection of famous and effective posters. Surely the whole population knows a "Fougasse" when they see it—and can tell a "Fougasse" across three platforms. Indeed, I am not sure that there should not be a "Fougasse" to end "Fougasses"—a warning to the citizens who miss their Underground trains or obstruct the flow of pedestrian traffic through studying his works with too prolonged delight.

But there is one good turn I can do for those who buy or borrow this book (for those who lend it I have no sympathy whatever). Do not, as all you foolish fellows do when you look at *Punch* or the minor illustrated papers, first study all the pictures and then turn—or not turn—to the letter-press. Read first the artist's own fascinating essay on the art and craft of the poster. His own work, like all good work, looks easy. Anyone who can draw at all, I am sure, says to himself "Well, I could have done that." Now, perhaps, he will. For in his essay Fougasse has given away all his secrets—except, ungenerously, the secret of his individual and (I hope) inimitable line and his own delicious sense of humour. But for those two details, we can all go ahead now and do good posters. But the essay will teach us that the job is not quite so easy as it looks: and you will enjoy the pictures even more if you have got in your head the difficulties and the objectives that were in the artist's head when he began.



Fuel Economy Label

Take, for example, "Once Is Too Often", and see how well Fougasse the writer's requirements, A, B and C, are supplied by Fougasse the artist. The poster is bound to stand out against almost any background. It is a "horror-theme" treated humorously, but without possible offence. Nothing could be simpler—yet it is not too simple. We can see from a distance that the young airman is going to foul the telegraph wires. That is evidently an undesirable thing, and already we are persuaded nine-tenths of the way, but not more, as the artist wishes. We are still not quite clear what has happened: but the poster has made us curious enough to go nearer and read the message about "taking off before our engine warms up". Now we are one-hundred per cent. persuaded: and the message—one message only, as the artist stipulates—will remain with us. But why should I pompously re-write his essay for him? Apologies to you—and good luck to him.



One of a set for the R.A.F.



For the Soldiers', Sailors' & Airmen's Families Association



Elephants are out of place in  
a rush-hour queue

SO ARE SHOPPERS!

ORGANISED IN SUPPORT OF THE MINISTRY OF WAR TRANSPORT'S ROAD SAFETY CAMPAIGN BY  
THOMAS TELFER LTD.

*A Transport appeal*



To those travelling with children

This is just to ask you to  
take your child on your knee,  
when the bus is crowded, so  
that someone else can sit  
down — + also to ask  
everyone else to do the same  
for you.

*Another Transport appeal*

In 60 years,  
the  
**NSPCC**  
has come to the rescue of  
5½ MILLION CHILDREN  
PLEASE HELP US, IF YOU CAN

THE NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO CHILDREN (DIAMOND  
JUBILEE YEAR APPEAL) VICTORY HOUSE, LEICESTER SQUARE, LONDON, W.C.1.

Child rescue

## PROPAGANDA-POSTERS

The word "Propaganda" is here used in its less ominous sense, and the word "poster" is used to cover anything stuck up on a wall with the object of persuading the passer-by; for the purposes of this article, therefore, "Propaganda-poster" covers everything stuck up with the object of persuading the passer-by for the common good—of persuading him to lend all his money to the State, for instance, or to keep to the left in the subway.

(Further, it may be taken as including all its smaller relations, the booklet and leaflet-covers, whose simple object is to persuade the beholder to turn over the page and to read what's inside.)

In order to succeed in its aim, the propaganda-poster has three main obstacles to overcome—

- firstly, a general aversion to reading any notice of any sort;
- secondly, a general disinclination to believe that any notice, even if read, can possibly be addressed to oneself;
- thirdly, a general unwillingness, even so, to remember the message long enough to do anything about it.

In consequence, the propaganda-poster has obviously three main functions to fulfil:—

- (A) It must attract the attention of the passer-by;
- (B) It must then persuade him; and
- (C) It must keep him persuaded long enough to take action on it.

These three functions, A, B and C, differ widely from one another, and often

TO TEACHERS + PARENTS:  
Please don't let your children go  
birdnesting.

HOW WOULD YOU LIKE IT YOURSELF?

The Children's Federation for Adult Welfare will gladly send on request some (and please!) regarding children's wild and domestic animals and birds: apply C.F.A.W., 284, Regent's Park Road, London, N.2

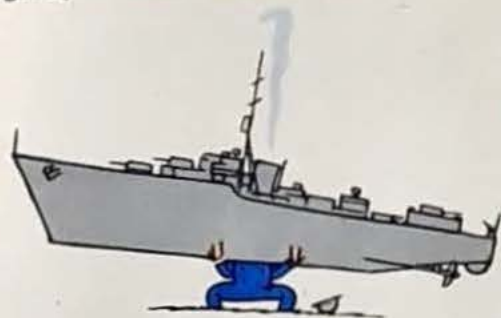
Bird protection



"EVERY SHILLING'S  
A SHELL!"

KENSINGTON WAR WEAPONS WEEK  
May 17th - 24th

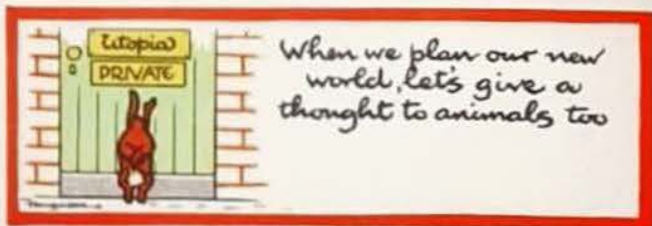
*War Weapons Week*



THIS REALLY  
DOES  
NEED YOUR SUPPORT

KENSINGTON WARSHIP WEEK  
March 21 - 28

*Warship Week*



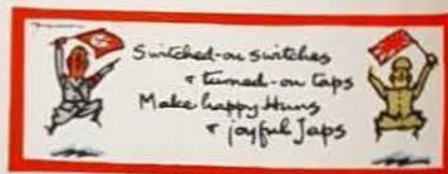
Animal Welfare Label

demand entirely separate and distinct qualities ; at the same time it is evident that A is not much use without B, and B is not much use without C, while B and C are obviously no use at all without A.

To comment briefly on each of them in turn :—

A. To attract the attention of the passer-by, naturally the first requisite is that the poster should stand out from its surroundings—if it appears merely as a part of the familiar fruit-salad of advertisements covering the walls of our stations, etc., it will inevitably waste whatever sweetness it may possess. (Too often, of course, posters seem to have been judged in the quiet and comfortable concentration of the sponsors' office—and if every poster-producing authority possessed a special testing-room, where new designs could be tried out under natural conditions, with gaudy competitors all round them and every form of distraction laid on, the standard might improve.)

The first suggestion, then, is that *the design should be such as to isolate*

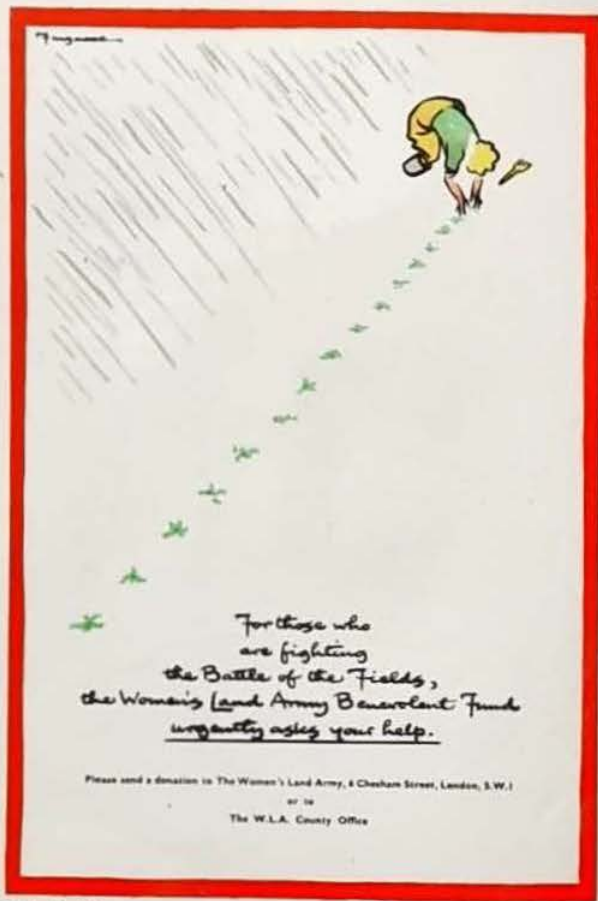


Fuel Economy Label

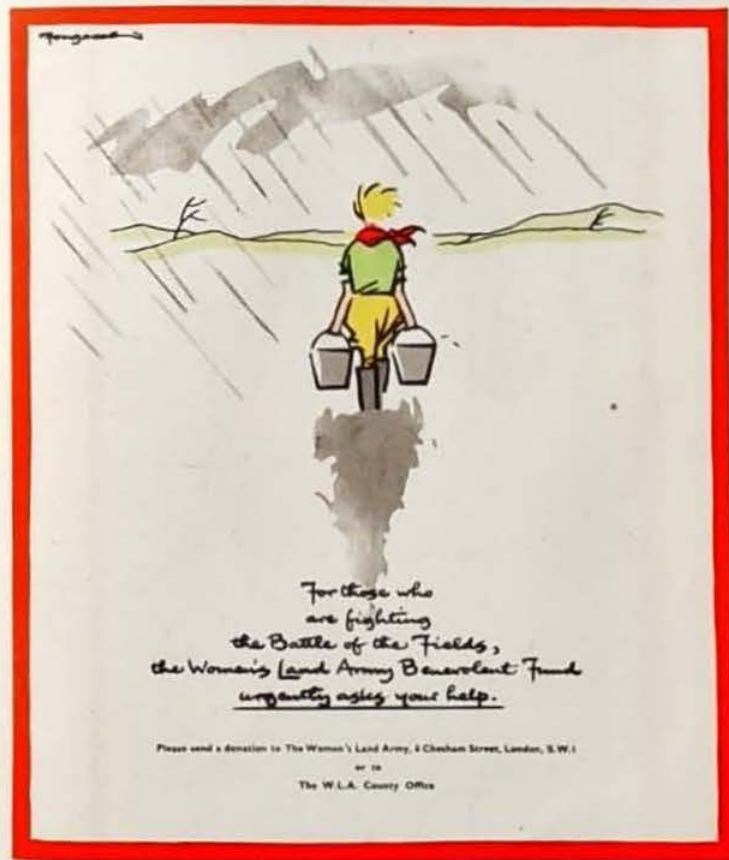


A Travel Request





W.L.A. (1)



W.L.A. (2)



yes, doctor, it's my feet!

**RUBBER**  
IS A MUNITION OF WAR  
TAKE GREAT CARE OF YOUR  
**TYRES**

ISSUED BY THE TYLLING GROUP OF GOODYEAR COMPANIES

Rubber saving

it from its surroundings: it should always be well barricaded in all round. Secondly, and still with the object of attracting—and intriguing—the attention of the passer-by, the general visual message should be a judicious mixture of the obvious and the unobvious; say, generally, 90 per cent. of the former and 10 per cent. of the latter. In other words, the passer-by should always be able to see at a glance what it is about, but not *all* it is about; nine-tenths should catch his eye, and the remaining one-tenth should arouse his curiosity, so that not only is his primary attention caught, and held, but his secondary attention is called into play, too.

The second suggestion, therefore, is that *nine-tenths of the poster should be sufficiently obvious—and interesting—at a distance (both physical and mental) to induce the passer-by to approach near enough both physically and mentally to discover the remaining one-tenth.*

And that, so far as generalities go, more or less "takes care" of A, save for a minor recommendation that, before issuing a poster, it is just as well to examine it to see how easily it can be defaced by small boys of any age from 5 to 50. (A very slight addition with an irreverent pencil is often sufficient to play havoc with the most inspired design.)

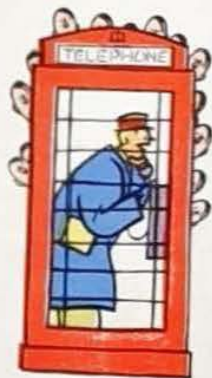
Turning now to B (that is to say, the persuasion of the passer-by, once his attention has been caught):—

Compared to the general question of attention-attracting, this is a complex and specialised problem in which each case must be dealt with more or less on its merits,



**HOW**  
shall I  
feed him?

Health leaflet



"..... but for Heaven's sake  
don't say I told you!"

CARELESS TALK  
COSTS LIVES

*One of the Careless Talk series*



You never know  
who's  
listening!

CARELESS TALK  
COSTS LIVES

*Another of the Careless Talk series*



NOW — give em all you've got!!!

KENSINGTON "SALUTE THE SOLDIER" WEEK — MARCH 25TH TO APRIL 1ST

Savings Drive

but probably the first suggestion to the would-be persuader should be the same in every case, namely—*never attempt too much*.

A poster cannot *prove* anything: it cannot *prove* to you that the safety of the State demands all your own individual savings, and it cannot even prove to you that you ought to keep to the left: the most that it can do comfortably and without strain is to bring to your notice the desirability of a certain course of action, and in many cases the most it can do is to get you to consider the matter. If it attempts to do more, if it tries to prove too much, or to protest too much, it will automatically defeat its own object (quite apart from the fatal over-complication probably involved).

And this leads to the second suggestion under heading B, which is on similar lines to the second suggestion under heading A, namely, that the persuading "argument," like the primary message, should be a judicious



When you scrap  
a job,  
you scrap all the  
labour  
that's gone on it

PLEASE DON'T ADD TO THE HEAP!

Workshop appeal



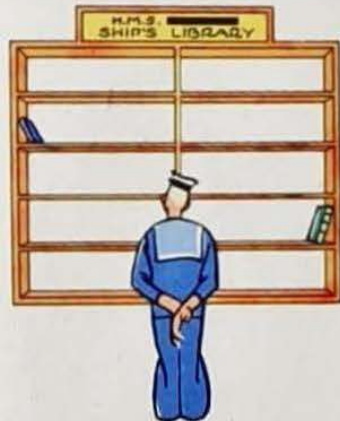
Have  
**YOU**  
got a halfpenny  
with a **SHIP** on it  
?

Then please give it (and any others that come your way) to  
the R.N. War Libraries, 129 St. Paul's St., London, W.C.1.



There's a sailor out East with nothing to read.

Books for the Navy (1)



Have you any books  
that would help to fill this?

If so, please send a p.c. to  
**ROYAL NAVAL WAR LIBRARIES**  
40, William IV St., London, W.C.2.  
or telephone TEMple Bar 2011

Books for the Navy (2)



W.V.S.

mixture of the obvious and the unobvious. The argument of the poster should aim at taking the passer-by (who by now has ceased to be "the passer-by" and has become "the reader") nine-tenths of the way, leaving the final steps to be inferred: in short, the second suggestion is that *the reader should be allowed to reach the final conclusion by himself.*

This type of approach will very often avoid that stubborn resistance-to-persuasion that over-conclusive moral lessons usually evoke. Moreover, the reader is much more likely to absorb and retain a lesson that he has had a hand in himself: present him with a *reductio ad absurdum*, for instance, in which the final steps are left for him to discover for himself in a flash of self-illumination, and he will become a party to his own persuasion.

We now arrive at C (how to keep the reader persuaded long enough to take the necessary action):—

The first requisite in any attempt to induce the reader to carry an idea away with him is clearly that he should not be given too much to carry away: that is to say, the idea of the poster *must be* in simple terms. (It is obvious, in any case, that unless the idea is one that the reader can describe to himself in a few words, he is hardly likely to keep it in his memory for long, even if he wants to.)

For the same reason it is equally important that there should be only *one* idea, too. This may sound easy and self-evident, but it is, in point of fact, strangely difficult to bring about: to ensure that the poster conveys no



Leaflet Cover



Funny — I thought they  
were all green!

Gas is the enemy's only unused weapon; its effectiveness will depend solely on the measure of surprise he is able to achieve

*One of a gas series for the War Office*



You must get a job  
that fits you

... and also one that you're fit to do. That is why you're here, and why you are asked to read carefully the attached notice.

*Army Selection Centres*

more than one idea to the reader, and that one a palatable and appealing idea, is no mean task—and there is always the temptation to add unnecessary material in an endeavour to make the affair more amusing or attractive or noticeable.

The addition that is made may well be successful in this and still be out of place: it may, in fact, help quite a lot with A, and even with B, but at the same time remove any chance of surmounting C, which is, of course, the object of the whole affair.

Thus, the first suggestion under heading C is that *the idea of the poster should be as simple as possible—and never more than one.*



Health leaflet

The second suggestion under this heading is again on similar lines to the second suggestions under A and B, both of which recommend that the reader should be made to do some of the work himself. In this case it is in the actual treatment that the reader's collaboration is suggested—and the suggestion is that, whatever the treatment employed, *something should always be left for the reader to "fill in" for himself.*

This undoubtedly assists him to carry the picture away in his memory, and, in flattering his imagination, it flatters itself: in support of the suggestion, one might quote the fact that readers, describing a favourite drawing, will frequently indulge in superlatives over, say, the superb expression on a certain face, when in actual fact that expression really consisted merely of one dash and

Taking the Plunge ?

If your age is  
between 14 and 18 why not go and see the local Secretary  
of The National Association of Training Corps for Girls at

GO AS SOON AS YOU CAN! YOU'LL FIND IT'S WELL WORTH IT

Training Corps for Girls





I do wish our working-hours were...



staggered!

DESIGNED IN SUPPORT OF THE MINISTRY OF WAR TRANSPORT'S ROAD SAFETY CAMPAIGN BY  
THE TELLING GROUP OF COMPANIES

*Transport appeal*



We don't play games in the road:



— so why do we let our children?

DESIGNED IN SUPPORT OF THE MINISTRY OF WAR TRANSPORT'S ROAD SAFETY CAMPAIGN BY  
THOMAS TELLING LTD.

*Another Transport appeal*



Health poster

a dot. It is not, of course, the drawing that they remember with pleasure, but their own "fill-in."

This provides one of the arguments in favour of the employment of so-called formula-figures—that is, of figures that do not bear any naturalistic resemblance to real people: the features of such formula-figures are easily idealised in the memory and moulded to the reader's own satisfaction; they do not, like naturalistic features, remain obstinately defined and "factual."

Another argument, incidentally, in the same direction is the fact that although a figure drawn with what we loosely describe as photographic accuracy may certainly seem to be "true-to-life" and to "look like a real person," actually it can only truly look like *one* real person, and that one probably not at all like the reader whom it is trying to convince!

If, on the other hand, the figure is drawn in a "formula" style, it is quite evidently a symbol for humanity in general (or some section of it): it can stand for "everyman," for anybody and everybody, and that naturally includes the reader himself.

That brings us to the subject of humour and its employment in propaganda: and, since propaganda usually treats of affairs of deadly seriousness, the advisability of seeming to treat such matters lightly might be called in question.

Actually, of course, humour has nothing whatever to do with being funny at the wrong moment, or on a subject that should not be jested about:



Health leaflet



Aircraft production

defence, and the more efficient the horror-content the tighter and quicker it shuts it.

Humour, on the other hand, aims at opening your mind, and the better the quality of the humour the wider it opens it.

Horror's lesson is a single distasteful shock—it may admittedly have a startling primary effect on the reader, and this primary effect may be twice or even ten times as great as that of humour: all the same, the latter has, I am sure, a thousand times as many chances of getting past A, and through to B and C—that is to say, of *persuading the reader, and of keeping him persuaded.*

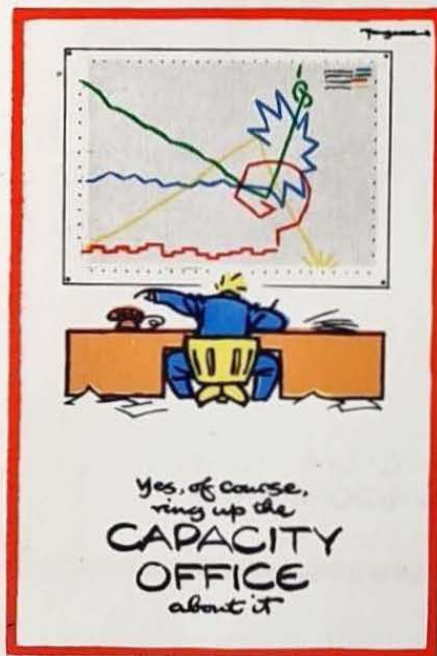
One final argument, and a very simple commonsense one, in favour of the humorous approach:—

The propaganda-poster has to get its message across to as many people as it can; however good it is, it can't do much if it isn't seen. It has therefore got to be displayed as widely as possible.

Now, in a totalitarian state this is presumably easy—a "directive" is issued that the poster is to be displayed everywhere, and displayed it is: in comparatively free democracies, however, this is neither practicable nor desirable.

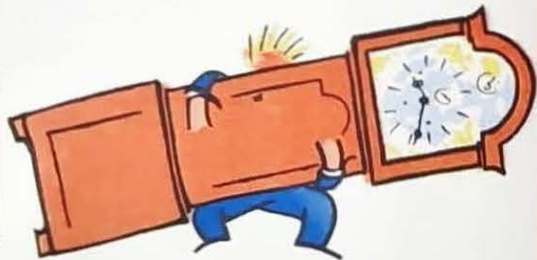
For wide distribution and display, therefore, the success of a propaganda-poster is dependent on the good will of people in general—on the readiness, for instance, of factory-managers, hotel-managers, shop-keepers, etc., to stick it up in their establishments.

Now it is obviously not wise to ask the owners of tea-shops, restaurants or public-houses to put up horror-propa-



For the Ministry of Production

Merely to remind you that .....



TIME  
IS  
PRECIOUS

*Works Urgency appeal*

Merely to remind you that .....



TIME FLIES

*(and especially where urgent repair jobs are concerned)*

*Another Works Urgency appeal*

such is, in fact, the opposite of humour. The function of humour is essentially corrective: it is a corrective, for instance, of incongruity and of faulty proportion—so that it is just as much a corrective of unseemly levity or flippancy as it is of unseemly solemnity. In any case the province of humour must be to help us more in foul weather than in fair; were it only to function among things of small importance we should be in a very bad way.

What, then, is the difference between "humorous" propaganda and "realistic" propaganda? As I see it, the function of realistic propaganda is to stop you putting your hand in a circular saw by shewing you just what happens when you do so: the function of humorous propaganda, on the other hand, is to correct, by implication, the state of mind that prompts you to put your hand there at all.

Realism states a fact, "If you *do* this, it leads to that": humour, with its naturally wider net, says "If you *behave* like this, it leads to that."

Where the realistic necessarily means the horrific, as it very often does, the advantage of humour is considerable—for anything unpleasant naturally causes an automatic closing of the mind against it, since minds, like eyes, are provided with long protective eyelashes. You may possibly, and inadvertently, be tricked into looking at a horror-poster once, but you will stop doing so as soon as you recognise it for what it is: horror shuts your mind in self-



Health leaflet

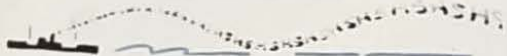


Y.W.C.A.



Letters sometimes go astray:  
Please be careful what you say!

NEVER MENTION SHIPS



Sponsored by the British Ship Adoption Society

Careless Talk about ships . . .



"Heavens, no—I wouldn't  
tell a soul!"

CARELESS TALK  
COSTS LIVES

SPECIALTY BRAND AND PRINTED FOR THE AMERICAN RED CROSS IN GREAT BRITAIN

Careless Talk, for the American Red Cross



PLEASE STAND ON THE RIGHT  
OF THE ESCALATOR

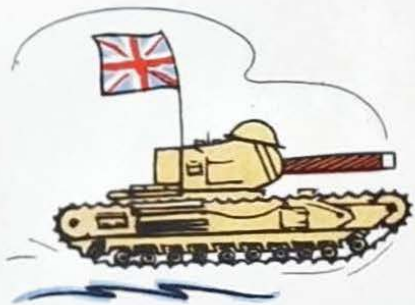
London Transport



*'Isn't it lucky I'm  
not in a hurry?'*

PLEASE HAVE YOUR TICKET  
READY AT THE BARRIER

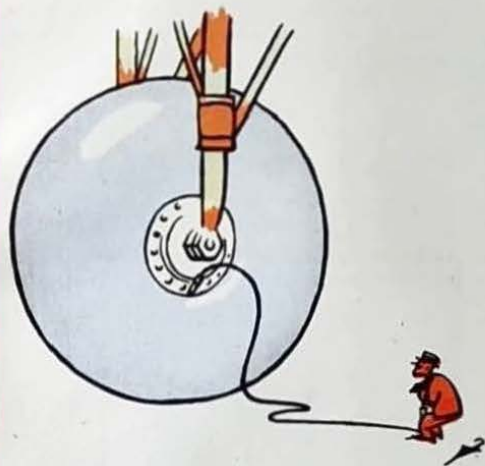
London Transport



SALUTE  
OUR  
SOLDIER

"Salute the Soldier" Week in the  
Prime Minister's Constituency,  
June 10-17.

"Salute the Soldier" Week  
(Mr. Churchill's Constituency)



Every little  
helps a lot!

LEND FOR  
KENSINGTON'S  
WINGS FOR VICTORY  
WEEK

Wings for Victory Week



ganda for their clients' comfort, nor is it much use to ask shopkeepers to entertain their customers with gruesome pictorial warnings—if given the choice between realistic and humorous, they will naturally almost invariably choose the humorous, and, if given a selection of both (which is usually the case), it is the humorous that they will always actually display.

FOUGASSE.



N.S.P.C.C.