



Since opening on 5 July 2002, IWM North has welcomed over 4 million visitors. It is the fifth branch of the national Imperial War Museums and the first outside the South East of England. IWM North is a different kind of museum, showing how war shapes lives. It tackles the themes of war and conflict in innovative ways, using the sound, photography and film archives of IWM to great effect. It aims to explain the way that conflict has affected all of our lives. IWM North has been named as one of the top four large visitor attractions in the country on four separate occasions at the Enjoy England Awards for Excellence.

Brief history

- 1880s – Work on the construction of Manchester Ship Canal commenced
- 1890s – Queen Victoria opens the Canal for traffic to Manchester. The Industrial Estate opened, with its provision of gas, steam and electric tramcars.
- 1914-19 – The First World War produced a greatly increased demand for warehousing as bales of raw wool for Yorkshire's mills were diverted from London to Trafford Park.
- 1939-45 – During the Second World War employment rises in Trafford Park within a year from 50,000 to 75,000 and boosted the export of textiles, machinery and cars. 34,000 Merlin aircraft engines built for use in both the Spitfire and the Lancaster. Damage to factories and warehouses was extensive in the Manchester Blitz.
- 1970s – The advent of containerisation impacted on the Manchester docklands, while industrial decline and changing patterns of trade meant that by the end of the decade the glory days were over.
- 1990s – A multiplex cinema, water sports centre, restaurants, bars and smart waterside residences built at Salford Quays.
- 1996 - Local authorities in the North invited to submit sites for IWM North.
- 1997 - Studio Daniel Libeskind was appointed as architect.
- 1999 - IWM North project was formally launched by the Rt. Hon. Chris Smith MP, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media & Sport.
- 2000 - The Lowry Arts Centre and footbridge opened. Construction commenced on IWM North
- 2001 - The Lowry Designer Outlet mixed retail, leisure, residential development opened.
- 2002 - IWM North opened on 5 July. Commonwealth Games held in Manchester.
- 2011 - MediaCityUK opened, with the relocation of 5 BBC departments and numerous associated media businesses to The Quays.
- 2017 – IWM North commemorates its 15th anniversary

Did you know?

- The building is the first in the UK to be designed by Libeskind, who has since designed the masterplan for the rebuilding of Ground Zero in New York. With The Lowry and the arrival of MediaCityUK, IWM North has led the regeneration of The Quays, creating a major visitor destination for the twenty-first century.
- IWM North's form was conceived as a series of fragments of a shattered globe that have been reassembled, with three interlocking shards signifying conflict on land, water and in the air. Achieved on a budget of £28.5 million and covering an area of 6,500 square metres, the museum was built from steel frames and aluminium cladding.
- IWM North has won almost 40 awards and held over 60 special exhibitions and displays.
- Displayed over 1,400 documents, objects and artworks in the Main Exhibition Space at any one time
- Run over 5,500 TimeStack object handling sessions for visitors and built up a collection of over 1,200 objects in the Handling Collection.
- Sold over 150,000 guidebooks and 14,000 bouncy balls containing mini-aircraft. Current bestsellers include our *Keep Calm And Carry On* range and spying specs, which enable you to view what's happening behind you!

Things to look out for

- **Field Gun which fired the first British shell of the First World War** – One of IWM North's large objects, which can be seen on display in the Main Exhibition Space. This gun fired the British Army's first shell of the First World War on 22 August 1914 near Binche in Belgium. The gun remained in action until the end of the war.
- **9/11 steel** – the 9/11 attacks killed nearly 3,000 people, including the loss of 67 British lives. The vast majority of the dead were civilians, including nationals of over 70 countries. On display at IWM North is a huge section of steel - 7 metres in height and weighing more than a ton - recovered from the wreckage of the World Trade Center. The steel, distorted and twisted, is evidence of the massive force and impact of the collapse of the towers. It offers visitors a chance to reflect on the 9/11 attacks and their human cost, as well as the wider impact of modern conflict on people's lives.
- **JRR Tolkien's First World War revolver** – author of *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit*, endured life in the front line trenches of the Somme throughout the summer and autumn of 1916. At the end of October, weighed down by weeks of tension and wretched conditions, Tolkien contracted trench fever and remained unfit for the rest of the war. It was at this time that he began to write early versions of his 'Middle Earth' stories. Debate continues regarding the extent to which Tolkien's war experiences influenced his literary work. The revolver he carried during the Battle of the Somme is on display in IWM North's Main Exhibition Space.
- **Manchester Blitz Fire Fighting Trailer Pump** – trailer pumps were widely used during the Second World War. Unlike fire engines, the pumps could be easily manoeuvred around the piles of rubble and deep craters caused by enemy bombing. This pump, on display in IWM North's Main Exhibition Space, was supplied by the Home Office to the Ferranti factory in Hollinwood, Oldham in 1941 for firefighting duties.
- **Personal stories** - Every object on display at IWM North tells a remarkable personal story. They include the possessions of the famous nurse Edith Cavell, who was executed for helping Allied soldiers to escape from German-occupied Belgium in the First World War. Also on display is the Conspicuous Gallantry Cross of Simon Cupples, a British platoon commander in Afghanistan who crawled to within 15 metres of heavy Taliban machine gun fire to save the lives of several men. From 1914 to the present day, hundreds of objects from IWM's collections reveal how war has shaped people's lives.
- **The Big Picture Show** - as the lights fade down, giant screens and powerful surround sound immerse you in the heart of the action, creating a complete sensory experience that is totally involving and often very moving. The award-winning Big Picture Show is a unique 360° audio-visual experience, showcasing IWM's world-renowned collections of photography, art and sound.
- **Oliver Philpot's Compass** – in 1943, Oliver Philpot made a famous 'Wooden Horse' escape from Stalag Luft III prisoner of war camp in Sagan, aided by a compass that was secretly crafted from parts of a gramophone, two halves of a razor blade, cardboard and phosphorous from broken watches. Philpot and two fellow officers used a wooden vaulting horse as a disguise for a tunnel constructed underneath. Gradually, he collected together an escape kit, including adapted clothes, forged papers and a compass and maps made in the camp. After escaping through the tunnel on 29 October, Philpot, with the aid of his compass, made his way to neutral Sweden by 4 November.

- **Art** – works by artists such as John Keane, official war artist during the First Gulf War; Linda Kitson, official war artist during the Falklands War; and Gilbert Rogers, whose famous painting *Mud* depicts a British soldier in the First World War. A huge 7 metre high sculpture by artist Gerry Judah as a response to global conflict is one of many contemporary artworks specially commissioned by IWM North as part of the Artists Reactions series.

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Notes to Editors

For more information about IWM North and for image or interview requests, please contact: Angela Kirk in the IWM Press Office on akirk@iwm.org.uk or on 0161 836 4040

IWM North

The multi award winning IWM North brings the national collection to northern audiences. Designed by world-renowned architect Daniel Libeskind to represent a globe shattered by conflict, the iconic building, innovative and dynamic exhibitions, use of digital media through hourly Big Picture Shows and public events explore how war shapes lives and inspires and encourages debate.

Open Daily: 10am – 5pm. Last entry 30 minutes before closing. (Closed 24 – 26 December). Free Admission.

IWM North, The Quays, Trafford Wharf Road, Manchester M17 1TZ (close to MediaCityUK Metrolink and Junction 9 of the M60).

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IWM

IWM (Imperial War Museums) **tells the story of people who have lived, fought and died in conflicts involving Britain and the Commonwealth since the First World War.**

Our unique Collections, made up of the everyday and the exceptional, reveal stories of people, places, ideas and events. Using these, we tell vivid personal stories and create powerful physical experiences across our five museums that reflect the realities of war as both a destructive and creative force. We challenge people to look at conflict from different perspectives, enriching their understanding of the causes, course and consequences of war and its impact on people's lives.

IWM's five branches which attract over 2 million visitors each year are **IWM London**, IWM's flagship branch that recently transformed with new, permanent and free First World War Galleries alongside new displays across the iconic Atrium to mark the Centenary of the First World War; **IWM North**, housed in an iconic award-winning building designed by Daniel Libeskind; **IWM Duxford**, a world renowned aviation museum and Britain's best preserved wartime airfield; **Churchill War Rooms**, housed in Churchill's secret headquarters below Whitehall; and the Second World War cruiser **HMS Belfast**.

First World War Centenary

2014 - 2018 marks the centenary of the First World War, a landmark anniversary for Britain and the world. IWM is marking the centenary by leading a vibrant, four year programme of cultural activities across the world. For more information visit www.1914.org

