



100 YEARS

PRESS RELEASE

Keep Calm and Carry On: The Truth Behind the Poster

Bex Lewis

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£6.99

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'A rallying war cry that will bring out the best in every one of us and put us in an offensive mood at once' – A P Waterfield, 1939, civil servant working for the Ministry of Information, the department who created the 'Keep Calm' poster.

Published this month, *Keep Calm and Carry On: The Truth Behind the Poster* will reveal the truth and history behind the iconic poster, including how it was designed months before the Second World War had officially begun, and the fact that it was never officially sanctioned for display.

IWM's new publication explores the historic context in which the iconic 'Keep Calm' poster was originally conceived. With the prospect of war becoming likely, the poster was designed to bolster morale and ensure the public could bear the sacrifice and burden required of them. Although the phrase 'Keep Calm and Carry On' is now ingrained in public consciousness, the posters were originally meant to read 'Keep Calm. Do Not Panic', intended to allay fears in the event of a German invasion.

As well as examining the origins of this poster, the publication also looks at the resurgence of the iconic slogan in recent years – its message resonating during the economic crisis. The publication highlights why this poster has stood the test of time, and how 'Keep Calm and Carry On' has gone on to become the most successful meme in history.

Bex Lewis, author of *Keep Calm and Carry On: The Truth Behind the Poster*, says, "The design of 'Keep Calm and Carry On' has penetrated into our everyday lives since its rediscovery in 2001. In this new book, the life, death and resurgence of the design is placed into the context of posters in the wartime period, whilst tapping into why the poster has become such a cultural phenomenon."

In addition to this poster specifically, the book also delves into the wider importance and effectiveness of posters as propaganda tools. Featuring a number of other key posters from the period reproduced in full colour, the book also examines the mixed reception to similar posters within the same series, which included slogans such as 'Your Courage, Your Cheerfulness, Your Resolution, Will Bring Us Victory'.

Wherever this story appears, it must be accompanied with the following credit line: 'Keep Calm and Carry On: The Truth Behind the Poster is published by IWM on 26 October and can be pre-ordered here: <http://www.iwmshop.org.uk/>

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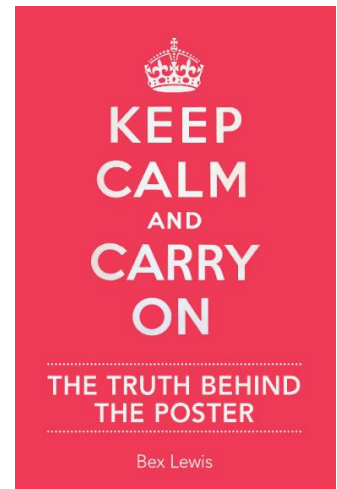
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Notes to editors

Keep Calm and Carry On: The Truth Behind the Poster will be on sale Thursday 26 October; cost £6.99. For further information and to pre-order the book please visit:

http://www.iwmshop.org.uk/product/26268/Keep_Calm_and_Carry_on_The_Truth_Behind_the_Poster



About the Author

Bex Lewis has a background as a cultural communications historian and digital practitioner, with a PhD in Second World War posters, in which she wrote the history of *Keep Calm and Carry On*. She is Senior Lecturer in Digital Marketing at Manchester Metropolitan University and a Visiting Research Fellow at St John's College, Durham University. She is a frequent speaker, writer and facilitator, and is author of the popular *Raising Children in a Digital Age* (2014).

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**.

IWM Centenary

2017 marks Imperial War Museums (IWM) centenary. IWM was established while the First World War was still being fought. Since its establishment people have entrusted IWM with their stories of war from 1917 to the present day, in the knowledge it will continue to share these stories with future generations. IWM will commemorate its 100 years through a centenary of stories from its rich collections across its five branches (IWM London, IWM North, IWM Duxford, Churchill War Rooms and HMS *Belfast*).



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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

