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## Keep calm and carry on? Nostalgia and Brexit explored during Northumbria event

The history of British nostalgia and the role it has played in the Brexit process will be explored during an event at Northumbria University.

The *In Conversation with Alexander Menden* event will see Northumbria's [Tanja Bueltmann](#), Professor of History and Faculty Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor, discuss the topic with Alexander Menden, culture correspondent of *Sueddeutsche Zeitung*, one of the largest daily newspapers in Germany.

They will examine the roots of nostalgic British sentiments such as ‘keep calm and carry on’, the ‘stiff upper lip’ and the ‘spirit of the Blitz’, and explore the impact these have had on national identity, and what it means in the context of Brexit.

Professor Bueltmann said: “Alexander and I will be looking at the cultural and historical background to these mottos and the extent to which the established myths that have potentially put Britain on a collision course with the reality of life as a small island nation in the 21st century.

“Sayings such as ‘keep calm and carry on’ date back to times of war – the slogan was designed in 1939 by the Ministry of Information as part of a campaign intended to boost morale. However, it was rarely used publicly at the time.

“Instead, the role now associated with the slogan dates back to its re-discovery in 2000 and subsequent use during more recent times of crisis, such as the financial crash of 2008-9. ‘Keep calm and carry on’ invoked a key moment of the British past, a point of crisis that was overcome. Therein lies its appeal, but with that appeal also came a sense of nostalgia for a past that never quite existed like that in the first place.

“This nostalgia, the myths created with it by some media outlets and politicians, has played its part not only in delivering the EU referendum’s leave result, but also in Brexit discussions since then.”

The event takes place at from 6pm to 7pm on Friday 11 May at Northumbria University’s Business and Law Building, City Campus East.

For more information, and to book a place, please visit

<https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/about-us/news-events/events/2018/05/in-conversation-with-alexander-menden/>

Professor Bueltmann is an EU national whose work focuses on diaspora and migration history. She has written a number of articles around this issue for a variety of national publications including [Times Higher Education](#) and [The Guardian](#). She has also recently been involved in a Podcast produced by The Guardian around the subject of Brexit in the context of the Windrush scandal – listen [here](#).

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