

KEEP CALM

(version 1.01) by Keith Bates - K-Type © 2011 - www.k-type.com - keith@k-type.com

When I first saw the *Keep Calm and Carry On* poster, I wrongly assumed the letters to be Gill Sans. Although that influence is apparent, in the R particularly, the lettering was clearly hand-drawn by a talented designer who, if the M's perfectly pointed vertex is anything to go by, was equally steeped in the signage of the London Underground. The most anomalous character, the C, resembles that found in the Gotham typeface, and given that Gotham's vernacular sources included the handmade, 'basic lettering' of engineers, perhaps that shouldn't be surprising.

I thought about making this font several years ago, but my fascination had to overcome a slight tedium at seeing the poster emblazoned across countless souvenir goods. Although the ubiquity of the image dampened my enthusiasm for a while, I'm now regarding the project less as a novelty and more as an exercise in *extrapolation*; an intriguing challenge to build a whole, high quality font based on the twelve available uppercase letters of the *Keep Calm* poster, and on similar lettering from the other two posters in the original series. I've especially enjoyed trying to create a complementary lowercase that's believably 1939; one that maintains the influence of Gill and Johnston while also hinting at the functional imperative of a wartime drawing office. Here was a draughtsman balancing intuitive, human qualities, and the pure pleasure of drawing elegant contemporary letters, against an underlying geometry of ruled lines, perfect circles and 45° terminals, and a requirement for no-nonsense clarity.

g g

The lowercase g follows the Gill/Johnston eyeglass model, but I've also included an alternative, single-story g at the Alt-G keystroke (Alt-0169 on Windows) normally used for the copyright symbol, which has been relocated elsewhere in the font.

t t

An alternative lowercase t, without the curved wedge cutaway, is provided at the Alt-T (dagger) keystroke (Alt-0134 on Windows).



The crown motif from the top of the *Keep Calm* poster is contained within the font at the ^ keystroke (shift 6). It's also at the ± (plus minus) and § (section) keystrokes. Keep tapping the keys, you'll hit the crown sooner or later!

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