CHEAP

HOLIDAY TICKET

to the

ス 当 と り い

HOLLAND BELGIUM GERMANY VIA HARWICH GRIMSBY OR HULL

1933

Zeeland Day Line London & North Eastern Railway

ABOVE: RE-STYLED L.N.E.R. BOOKLET COVER. BELOW: THE SUPERSEDED DESIGN



Holiday Tickets
for

Still

Holland & Belgium Optional Routes

HARWICH

and for

Hamburg and Antwerp via Grimsby Rotterdam via Hull

erved reak DA' ed r

tur .55 rive rou Cliff .m.

THIS ARTICLE deals with an example of genuine typographic modernity: a reform which is radical (i.e. root-deep in economic fact) and far-reaching in

its effect. It is not an article for typographic artists, because it describes a new phenomenon in typography which to a great extent leaves the artist out of the picture.

There may be, among the readers of this number, certain professional typographers who have from time to time undertaken to "modernize" a piece of printed matter. If they went about it in the most enjoyable way; if by slanted settings, clever photomontage or superposed colour they exercised the finest discrimination, so that the work would look crisp and clean without being dull or vulgar; then they may well be under the false impression that they are dealing with typography in a XXth century fashion. If so, they are deceived by the superficial appearance of the type faces and materials they use.

Exercising nice judgement and good taste in regard to a particular printed job is a very ancient exercise. There is no such great difference between a copper-engraved illustration and a half-tone on celophane as there is between the thought-out, specially designed, job and the one which has

been put together on formula of mass production. Nothing that happens to

AN ACCOUNT OF THE

tion—that highly departmentalized, impersonal machine for producing and distributing goods or services which has in many cases replaced the old idea of a business as trade carried on by one responsible man at his own private risk.

It must be remembered that the large, highly mechanized businesses are not, numerically, in anything like a majority to-day. Neither are the large contract printers typical of most printing offices. If the bulk of printing orders came from vast organizations using many printers; if the average printer dealt with hundred-thousand runs; then the article on "Printers and Experts" on page 21 of this number would be a waste of words. Fortunately for the craft, there is and will always be a chance for the printer to help guide most of his customers in matters of design—and to exercise his creative impulse in doing it. But if there were only half-a-dozen firms in England big enough to be forced to impose standard rules on their printers, a study of one such firm's methods would still be

particularly appropriate to a "Twentieth Century Printing Number".

one booklet, or even to 20 booklets each specially designed by an adroit typographer, can be of much economic and practical significance to the printing craft to-day. But when a vast railway system contrives that 10,000 different booklets, leaflets, and other pieces should be almost automatically designed (or say constructed) well and in a recognizable unity, over many successive years; when basic rules of type logic are thought out by one of the largest print-buying Companies in the Kingdom in order that no time need be spent on special planning to get an efficient and even beautiful result; then the result is extraordinarily significant.

The fact is that to-day the majority of printed pieces are either not specially designed at all, or are laid out by people who have no time to stop and reason about the purpose of a job and what will or will not be perfectly suitable and perfectly in taste, in a decade of changing tastes. And another fact is that most modern businesses give out work to a number of different printers, and find it valuable to make every one of their printed representatives so consistent in style with every other one that the whole collection builds up a concrete image in the consumer's mind.

In short, it is not a particularly "Modern" thing to entrust a piece of printing to a reliable printer designer. It is sensible, but there is nothing new about it. The new thing is as recent as the emergence of the modern business organiza-

TYPE STANDARDIZATION

WHY TYPOGRAPHIC REFORM In the old days, when a printer had one face of type in the various sizes, and very few varieties of printing to do, the tradition of the conventions was strong enough to give any job decency; or at least one could say that a thousand temptations to typographic vulgarity had not appeared. To-day that is not the case. There are very many brandnew ways of doing the wrong thing typographically. There has been a serious and widespread arts and crafts revival, which in its first ten years did more harm than good to machine-produced commercial printing.

Looking at the rows and rows of docile machines in any modern factory, one is reminded of the sombre and

ring. He did not find with it the experience, the unerring judgement, the utter discipline which would alone make such a discovery valuable; no, the least and most casually expressed desire was carried out in the twinkling of an eye. And when one saw, a couple of years ago, a booklet cover photographically printed to imitate the sort of paper that is mechanically made to imitate leather, one saw the sardonic machine—the wishing ring of to-day—up to its old tricks.

Discipline is going to return, because it must. But it is returning in a new guise. This time it is not a matter of doing the best possible with such few materials as hand craftsmanship has slowly created. Nowadays typographic discipline is either undertaken willingly by the master printer on his customer's account, when he throws out vulgar type faces and rejects inconsistent or meaningless conventions; or else it is imposed upon that printer by the representative of a large firm who has little time to suggest what the printer shall do, but who may have devoted a long time to determining what the printer shall not, under any circumstances, be allowed to do.

If we were to scan the whole field of typographic progress during this century for a document which would best illustrate the problems of XXth century typographic design, we could assuredly choose no better instance than that which is the subject of this article.

The London and North Eastern Railway, in 1929, had become what it had taken it nearly a century to become, namely a centralized system of transportation. The green livery on locomotives leaving King's Cross

reminded passengers in Edinburgh that there was such a thing as the L.N.E.R., not such separate things as the Great Northern, North British, and the rest. A series of renowned posters brought out under the direction of Mr. W. M. Teasdale, had brought this group personality of the line into the public conscience to some extent. Mr. Teasdale was called to Westminster, and Mr. C. G. G. Dandridge took his place as advertising manager, after a brilliant success in Manchester which made effective use of direct mail. We cannot speak here of the whole problem that confronts the advertising manager of so vast a system—a system which was later to extend even to a coast-wide network of bus routes; but some idea of the size of Mr. Dandridge's task may be gained from the facts that the yearly expenditure of his department represents about £1000 a day, and that some ninety printers contract for the work, which includes no less than 40,000,000 copies of handbills, leaflets and pamphlets per annum! While maintaining the high standard of the posters, Mr. Dandridge turned his attention to a new field for improvement, namely, typographic reform.

that the adoption of a standard type face can help to give any large firm a "group personality" which it would lose in a collection of printing, however good, which did not make a cumulative impression. But the reasons for considering a standardization were not entirely psychological. The Holiday Handbook, for example, is printed by five or six different printers and the signatures are then bound up. Could each signature be in a different face?

"BEFORE"

AN L.N.E.R.

TIME TABLE

OF 1928

	MONDAYS TO FRIDAYS INCLUSIVE. (For trains on Saturdays see pages 63 to 69.)																											
LIVERPOOL STdep. Bethnal Green	1034 1088 1042	::		1045 1049 1053	1049	::	::	::	a.m. 1110 1114 1118	a.m.	a.m. 1125	a.m. 1130	a.m.	a.m. 1140 1144 1148	a.m. 1145	:::	a.m. 1156	a.m.	:::	1211	12 5	::	1215 1219 1223	::	p.m. 1288 1247 1241			D. 12
FENCHURCH ST. dep Leman Street " Shadwell & St. George's E. Stepney (East) " Burdett Road " Bow Road " Stratford Market arr.	::	1037 1039 1048	<u>::</u>	:::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::	::	:::::	11 5 1110 1112 1115	:::::	:::::	11 8 1110 1112 1115 1117 1121	::::	::::	1143 1145 1146	::	::	::	::	1151 1158 1155 1158 12 0 12 3	::	::	::	12 9 1212 1214 1217	::	:::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::	:::	1236 1240 1242 1245		
Stratford farr. Maryland Point forest Gate flanor Park flord flor	::	1019 1050 1052 1055 1059 11 3 11 7 1110 1112	10058	1057	11 0 11 2 11 5 11 8 1113 1117 1120 1124 1131		:: :: ::	1120 1121 1124 1127 1130 1131 1138 1141 1145 1151 1154	::::	1128 1130 1133 1136 1140	1134 1136 1138 1141 1145	::::::	:::::	:: :: ::	1156 1159 12 2 12 5 1210 1214 1217 1220 1226	:::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::	1206 :: 1213 ::	::		::	1215 1216 1218 1221 1225 1230 1234 1237 1240 1246	:::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::	1227 1228 1234 1234 1287 1241 1245 1245 1251 1257	::::	1245	1250	:::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::	
Harold Wood	:: -:-	::	11 21 11 30 11 30 11 48 11 52	::-	1139	::	:: :: ::		:::	::: Woo	::	1212	:::	:::	::	:::	1231 1236	::	::	::	1249	**	1 1 5 1 12	::	:::	::	::	1

And suppose that it had merely been decided that each different piece of lettering or printing issued by the L.N.E.R. should "look modern", whatever that might mean, and be in the best of taste. That at once demands a skilled designer in every case. Not every "contract printer" keeps a skilled designer on the premises. But if the layout for every handbill, every special or general time table, etc., were devised in the office at Marylebone, the work would take fifteen layout men all their time.

So standardization to a single face, rather than exhortations about a particular "style" or "quality" was revealed as the heart of the reform. Given one distinctive face, above all given a face so simple and free from artiness that it was practically fool proof, the style could to a great extent look after itself. Mr. Dandridge realized what not every advertising manager has the wit to realize, namely that the choice of a good type face is the very heart and soul of a typographic reform. And if that face is good enough, very little additional reformation will be needed as long as the decencies are observed and the indecencies (inappropriate decoration, arbitrary boxing or column shaping, underlined italics, etc.), are strictly ruled out.

After the decision to standardize came a period of experimentation. It was at this point that the large scale buyer of printing could look with particular interest upon Mr. Dandridge's attitude and policy. A great many colleagues and subordinates had either to be dragooned into co-operation—a thing which is impossible in any famous and dignified company—or else had to be told about the idea in such fundamental terms that enthu-

siasm could not help communicating itself. To anticipate for a moment, in order to indicate the success of the latter alternative, we may say that at a staff festivity given a year and a half later the candle shades on the tables were printed with such cryptic reminders as: "Never mind your P's and Q's; watch M's and R's and W's."-a reference to the device of identifying a given fount by "ear marked" letters which had been employed to enable the reader, however little acquainted with type design, to distinguish one face from another.

For, in the meantime, a new type design had been "adopted" by the L.N.E.R.—and in a more literal sense than usual, for at first it was the adoption of an infant.

At the time when the first newspaper advertisements of the L.N.E.R. were being set in "Monotype" Gill Sans for testing purposes, the lower-case existed only in trial proofs, and the great range of bold, extra bold, bold condensed and extra light, etc., in roman and italic, depended to some extent on the success of the magnificent titling capitals which appeared in a limited range of sizes. It is inevitable that with the nation-wide success of Gill Sans its range of sizes and weights should sooner or later become what it is. But it is also true to say that the demand for an almost microscopic 5 point in different weights of roman and italic, for any special signs etc., in fact, for a complete, manifold range in a short time, was fostered by the gigantic L.N.E.R. specification.

WHY A "SANS" WAS CHOSEN But we must return to the original problem faced by the L.N.E.R., namely the choice of a particular kind of type. It took courage at that time to decide upon sans serif for

	MONDAYS TO FRIDAYS INCLUSIVE (For trains on Saturdays see pages 63 to 69)																		
IVERPOOL STREET dep. Sethnal Green —	1034	10 46 10	49		10	1125 //.	30 1137	1142	115	3 1156	120 .		25	1219	1225	R p.m. p.m. 1233 1237 1241		p. m. 242 246	"AFTER
FENCHURCH STREET — dep. Leman Street, Shadwell and St. George's East Stepney (East), Burdett Road — — — Bow Road, Stratford Market — — — arr.	- 1037 - 1039 - 1043	24 7		. 1110 . 1112 -	. 11110	= =		-:		Car : :	-	6	12 9 12 12 12 12 14 12 17				240		FACSIMILI OF A
tratford	1046 1049 1050 1055 1058 11 2	0 10858	57 1059 112 11 0 112 - 11 5 112 - 11 8 113 - 1113 113	0 <u>11</u>	- 1140	136 138 . 141 144 . 149		1152 1153 1155 1158 12 1 12 6		Restauran	12B10 12 12 1217 12	12 1215 13 15 18 — 21 24 —	216 — 218 221 — 225 230 —	1231 1232 1235 1238 1241 1245		_		252 253 255 258 1 6	CURRENT L.N.E.R.
coodmayes	= =	11 13 — 11 17 . 11 21 —	-	14	To Woodford	1153 - 1156 - 1159 - 12 5 - 12 8 -		1213 1216 1222 1225		9	1235		246	1249 1252 1255 1 1 1 5 1 9 1 16				10 13 16 22 26 30 41	TIME TAB
henfield and Hutton — — ,, ngatestone		11 36 -			= =	= =			- 123		1240 -			CONTRACTOR OF THE PERSON	12 C 55	2 — 9 · · ·		47 53	

use on such a vast scale. The decision would have been much easier, and far less justifiable, had the current jargon about "sans serif for a machine age" been given consideration. Fortunately no such poetical arguments arose. What did arise was the mental picture of a passenger being jostled on a crowded platform on a winter evening, and trying with one eye on the station clock to verify the connections of a given train; a picture of another passenger running his eye over fifteen excursion leaflets that are printed perhaps by fifteen different printers; glancing from them to the station announcement, to the destination board of the train, to a 16-sheet poster issued by the company, and being given in every case a sense of continuity and consistency, a sense that something had been said to him with as little fuss and distraction as possible. As we pointed out in our previous issue, it is not ipso facto true to say that the simplest thing will be the most beautiful in every case; but it is obvious that the simpler a thing is, (i.e., the less it is designed for one special effect or for only a few purposes), the more generally applicable is it going to be. There are at least ten ways of treating serifs and strokethickening which will give the same set of letters entirely different personalities. The thin, sharply undercut serif and the heavily stressed down stroke will give one special result, and demand one special kind of paper, treatment in printing, and so on. A sans serif, with no noticeably thickened strokes, will therefore always have a double advantage as a standard type for many different varieties of commercial printing, and many different

paper surfaces. It asks for less personal consideration, less exercise of discrimination. And it is so "stripped for action" that as far as glance reading goes, it is the most efficient conveyor of thought.

Here it may be added that when the "many varieties of commercial printing" Include books, or booklets which have the same continuous "reading interest" as a book, sans serif has to be supplemented by a secondary face which has serifs. In the case of the L.N.E.R., "Monotype" Baskerville is chosen to substitute for Gill Sans in travel booklets, etc.; but the text of the Holiday Handbook is set in Plantin to overcome the ocular handicaps of offset printing, and a number of the new "Rambles"

FROM "RAMBLES IN ESSEX", ONE OF A SERIES OF L.N.E.R. BOOKLETS. THE ORIGINAL IS IN GREEN AND BLACK.

series of booklets (their copy interspersed with pictures) successfully treat Gill 262 as a text face.

WHY GILL SANS A great deal of confused thinking about sans serif has arisen from incomplete definition of the term itself. Strictly speaking, a sans serif is any letter which does not have serifs. Figure I shows what Bodoni and Plantin would look like without serifs.

Printer and Printer and Plantin "SANS". FIG. 1

It will be noted that Plantin 110 survives the test better because there is less contrast between thin and thick stroke. It is the convention in type design to abolish any difference of weight between different parts of the letter when serifs are omitted. Mr. Eric Gill did not consider himself slavishly bound to that convention. Had he designed, for example, a lower-case g which might have been made of copper wire of uniform thickness, the five small curves of the normal shape of that letter would have taken up altogether too much room. Confronted with the same problem, the German designers had airily abandoned the classic shape of lower case g in favour of one which would be better adapted to a uniformly thick stroke. In other words, they were after a "monotone" letter first, and only secondarily after a serif-less roman. That is natural, as we have pointed out before; the Germans have only recently

No 8. UPS AND DOWNS IN ESSEX

HAROLD WOOD to BRENTWOOD

Harold Wood, though it has no pretensions to antiquity or interest, at present forms a very convenient jumping-off point for interesting and hilly country to the north and east.

Stapleford Abbots Church (just south of Wattons Green on the map), although prettily situated, is of no particular interest, but that of Navestock, a mile and a half north of the Common, has several features worthy of note. The tower archway and north doorway are Norman, and the Ironwork on the door is good, while within are to be seen a wooden chancel arch and a low-side window. As is often the case in Essex, where wood is plentiful and stone scarce, its tower is supported by massive beams.

South Weald Park is a fine domain with many old trees and browsing deer. The mansion, which has been much restored, was once the home of Mary Tudor before she ascended the throne. On the southern edge of the Park stands the Church, a fine structure largely rebuilt in the last century. The tower, however, dates from 1505; the south doorway is Norman, and the chancel has a low-side window.

Brentwood, nominally in the parish of South Weald, is a town which has grown up on the Colchester turnpike (in the same way as Epping on the Newmarket Road) at the point where it is crossed by the road from Tilbury to the north. It saw its most prosperous days in the last few years of the coaching era, when forty coaches a day traversed its wide main street. The White Hart, the most important of the coaching inns, is an interesting structure of 1480, with the remains of a galleried courtyard and a low arched entrance. Opposite are the ruins of an old chapel erected in 1221. There are two good

modern churches: St. Thomas the Martyr, and the Cathedral, Brentwood being a Roman Catholic see. The town provided a Protestant martyr in the Marian Persecution when William Hunter, aged 20, was burned at the stake. There is a memorial at the cross-roads.

At the station can be seen the beginnings of the deep cutting through the gravel which extends to Shenfield station, an engineering work which is surely a sufficient refutation of the charge of "flatness" often levelled against the county. As a matter of fact, the G.E. main line is the hardest of all those leading out of the metropolis! And yet Essex, "flat-as-a-pancake Essex," remains an article of wide belief with most of those who have not rambled over it.



NAVESTOCK CHURC

43

taken up "Antiqua" as a more or less exotic form of letter; their normal reading face is a strikingly calligraphic baroque-gothic.

So Mr. Gill, like Mr. Johnston before him, manipulated the letters in order that they should seem to be monotone in weight whilst remaining true roman in form. A comparison of lower case letters, enlarged from photographs of 12 point, was one of the directions along which the L.N.E.R. investigated the various sans serif alphabets. Many students who undertake this comparison have said that the question "Why Gill Sans?" is already sufficiently answered in this way. It must not be forgotten, however, that the railway uses capitals alone in a variety of instances; on station signs, destination boards, etc.; and that the monumental effect of the Gill Sans capitals, with the famous capital R, is peculiarly attractive.

The first practical trials of the letter were in the form of announcements, including small time-tables, for the newspapers. This was in itself a severe test of printing quality and legibility. Next came the gradual standardization of the hundreds of special excursion handbills, cheap return leaflets, etc. There had been a confusing variety of ornamental borders or line-blocks used in these cases, sometimes with a wasteful use of second colour. Graduated rules, cast on the "Monotype" machine, began to replace these irrelevancies, and it was soon seen that Gill Sans capitals would lend a sort of automatic dignity to a handbill as long as they were "left alone," i.e., grouped in words in a logical order without any straining after decorative effect.

It was then time to consider the gigantic task of standardizing all the time-tables (see pp. 8-9). In some cases contracts would not run out for several years, and consideration had to be given to printers whose estimates had counted upon the existence of standing formes. It is never pleasant to insist that a printer put in any new composition series in many sizes; one's only justification is the fact that the new face will be actually necessary to his equipment, in the general public demand, for many years to come. We can now see why so much thought and preparation had to precede the L.N.E.R. standardization. It was a matter of promising ninety or more printers that no chopping and changing would be done for years ahead; a matter of assuring them that a huge public service company had a real conviction, a real enthusiasm, for the face. Once that was made known, it was obvious that other companies and individuals would

follow suit, and that the letter so chosen would go straight out of the "fashion" category and would become a permanent part of the modern printer's type repertory.

With the time-tables standardized in the five local sections of the great net-work it was time to turn, first, to the great mass of smaller pieces that range from dining car menus and hotel stationery to announcements in steamer cabins and company reports. Also there was the difficult matter of educating a generation of letterers to use the Gill Sans alphabet on station signs, hand painted special train posters, etc., and to create bronze or enamel letters in the same design for a thousand outdoor uses. The first step was taken when Mr. Eric Gill himself was commissioned to paint the name plate of the most famous of all crack trains, the Flying Scotsman. We understand that the artist's fee in this case included a ride on the footplate non-stop to Edinburgh!

The work still goes on; even those temperamental brethren, the poster artists, are learning that the neutral Gill Sans is safe to use as lettering with almost any pictorial effect.*

But the main object of Mr. Dandridge's work of typographic reform has been accomplished. The traveller entering King's Cross or any one of the other stations of the line, or boarding the Vienna or the other L.N.E.R. passenger or freight vessels, is able as it were to "hear the Company talking" in one recognizable voice. It is a crisp, unsentimental voice that can be raised or softened by the weight of the letter. But above all it is recurrent. It sets up a rhythm in the mind. One rap of the knuckles on a table may be accidental, two raps are significant; three or more raps with equal intervals between them, or in recognizable groups, do what no confused collection of noises could do; they set up a rhythm. In standardizing its typography, the London and North Eastern Railway has not only made possible a number of economies, but also has given the public at large a visual image of one "group personality" which is even more valuable than the emerald green livery borne Northward by the iron dragons of King's Cross.

^{*} For the benefit of our readers abroad we may say that the yearly exhibition of L.N.E.R. posters at the Burlington Galleries represents one of the liveliest and most vigorous manifestations of modern art, and that a collection of these posters (which rapidly go out of print) would be of the greatest aesthetic interest and decided financial value in the future.