Notes Concerning a Run of *The Monotype Recorder*

Hans Schmoller
The Monotype machine and its system of single-type composition were, as is well known, the invention of an American, Tolbert Lanston. However, thanks to a number of outstanding personalities associated with the British Lanston Monotype Corporation (later renamed Monotype Corporation), the Monotype flourished in Britain as it did nowhere else. These people helped to create, and then skilfully exploit, a favorable climate for typographic excellence. The company's greatest period began in the early 1920s, when Stanley Morison, as typographic adviser, took the stage he was to adorn with such brilliant scholarship for over forty years. An important part in giving Monotype its remarkable dominance in the field of fine typesetting and typecasting was played by The Monotype Recorder, the company's house journal. Since its inauguration in 1902 each issue had usually contained four or eight pages, on the whole nondescript both in content and presentation. Nothing could have prepared its readers for the extraordinary flowering that was heralded by Vol. 21, No. 187, January-February 1922, the first issue in the long run recently acquired by the University of Kentucky. From then onwards, ignoring a few mild throwbacks to the old parochialism, the journal rapidly developed into a vehicle for publishing the results of major typographical research and for keeping its readers informed of the astonishing program of type cutting that the Monotype company had embarked upon under Morison's farsighted guidance and relentless driving force.

Originally published monthly, The Monotype Recorder had settled down to six issues a year. In parentheses it should be mentioned that the numbering of the issues presents the bibliographer with something of a conundrum: up to Vol. 31, No. 248, November-December 1932, the issues were numbered consecutively but divided into annual volumes, irrespective of the
number of issues brought out during the year. From then onwards the principle of a volume per annum was retained but the issues were numbered from 1 to 4 each year, as well as being named “Spring,” “Summer,” “Autumn,” “Winter.” In later years there still were four issues per volume, but the issues appeared at irregular and increasingly infrequent intervals, sometimes as great as a year and during the war even longer. For a few issues in 1933, presumably to mark the change, the words “New Series” were added, but this was soon abandoned. There was at least one numbering error: Vol. 31, No 247, September-October 1932, for some mysterious reason was misnumbered Vol. 21, No. 246.

The issue of January-February 1922, already referred to, was the first with contributions by Stanley Morison. Though most of his articles—some twenty in all—were anonymous, they have been identified and are listed by Tony Appleton in his handlist of The Writings of Stanley Morison (Brighton, Sussex, 1976). That issue was also the first designed by Morison, who had it printed at the Cloister Press, Manchester, with which he was then associated. He thereby revived the long-dormant policy of having each issue printed—and more often than not designed—by one of the leading British book printers. This coincided with the period of the great revival in typographical achievement and awareness. The Monotype Recorder’s visual variety and liveliness for nearly fifty years speaks eloquently of the way in which the suppliers and users of Monotype equipment stimulated each other and how this led to ever fresh endeavor.

Most of Morison’s contributions belonged to the 1920s, and it was through him that Beatrice Warde became editor in 1926. She had burst upon the scene that year under the pseudonym Paul Beaujon with her famous article on the so-called Garamond types in The Fleuron, No. 5. When the Monsieur Paul Beaujon who came for an interview turned out to be a vivacious and attractive young woman, and an American to boot, the Monotype executives were petrified. But she got the job and held it with great distinction for some forty years.

“Almost the first thing I did,” she tells us in The Penrose Annual for 1970, “was to disregard the idea of quarterly publication, saying that a regular house journal was all very well if it were an advertisement; but if it were to be a contribution to scholarship it should come out whenever there was something worth bringing out—once a year, twice a year, or not at all. Consequently most
numbers of *The Monotype Recorder* have become collectors' items and are greatly prized." She herself contributed a dozen major articles, some of which occupied virtually whole issues. With three exceptions she preferred to remain anonymous like her mentor Morison. Fittingly her last brilliant piece, in Vol. 41, No. 3, Autumn 1958, was on "Eric Gill: Master of Lettering." Equally fittingly the final issue of *The Monotype Recorder*, published a year after her death in 1969, was dedicated to her memory and sub-titled with a description she had once given of herself: "I am a communicator." It was her ability to live up to this epithet that gave the journal so unique a flavor. Thus it became a monument to the closing phase of hot-metal composition, before electronics and film more or less swept all this away.

The continuous run of *The Monotype Recorder* acquired by King Library extends from Volume 21, Number 187, January and February 1922, to the final issue, Volume 44, Number 1, Autumn 1970. This periodical is supplemented by a twenty-one years' run of the *Monotype Newsletter*, Number 44, April 1952, to Number 94, June 1973, when it, too, ceased publication. Lastly the acquisition includes a scarce item designed and introduced by Stanley Morison: *Fine Ornament and Decorative Material Available to "Monotype" Users* (The Lanston Monotype Corporation, 1924—Appleton Number 36).

Books and Manuscripts

*Randolph Letter*

The libraries have purchased an important manuscript relating to a segment of early Kentucky history—an autograph letter from Governor Thomas Randolph of Virginia to Governor John Adair of Kentucky, dated 25 December 1821. Governor Randolph writes concerning Kentucky land grants to residents of Virginia under the "separation [sic] agreement between the two states." He complains that grants to people whose industries provided goods and supplies to the Continental Army are treated differently from grants to soldiers who served in that army. All grants, he argues, should be given equally expeditious handling.

*Dutch Printing*

A new addition to the Rare Book Room is Charles Enschedé's historical study, *Typefoundries in the Netherlands from the*