GILL SANS

The British Helvetica

SOURCES

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eric_Gill
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gill_Sans
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johnston_(typeface)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sans-serif#Humanist
http://thinkingwithtype.com/letter/#type-classification
http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-35916807
http://idsgn.org/posts/know-your-type-gill-sans/
https://www.typotheque.com/articles/re-evaluation_of_gill_sans
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/03/13/font-history_n_4942922.html

Gill Sans was designed in 1928 by English sculptor and typographer Eric Gill. It was published by the British branch of Monotype in response to a series of sans-serif fonts released in recent years in Germany, including Futura.

Eric Gill was apprenticed to Edward Johnston, who designed the Johnston typeface for the London Underground Railways in 1916.

Gill Sans is a derivative of Johnston, which was not available for commercial use at the time.

GILL

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SANS

Aa	Pp
Bb	Qq
Cc	Rr
Dd	Ss
Ee	Tt
Ff	Uu
Gg	Vv
Hh	Ww
Ii	Xx
Jj	Yy
Kk	Zz
Ll	123
Mm	456
Nn	789
Oo	0&

A D G
B E H
C F IJ
K N Q
L O R
M P S

U W Z
V X &
V Y 0

1 4 7
2 5 8
3 6 9

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In spite of its quirks, Gill Sans became immensely popular in the UK. Starting with its adoption as a standard typeface by the London and North Eastern Railway in 1929, it appeared everywhere from railway engines to station signage, timetables, restaurant menus and advertising posters. Notable uses include the distinctive covers of Penguin books, since the 1930s, the BBC logo and visual identity since 1997 and the British Government since 2003. The ubiquity of Gill Sans in the UK earned it the sobriquet of "Helvetica of England".

Gill Sans, which is very similar to Johnston, belongs to the Humanist Sans-serif family that Johnston initiated. Both typefaces share capitals of classical proportions inspired by Roman inscriptions, and very legible lower case letters with large x-heights. The O and the Q have a tilted axis. Miniscule letters show variations in line weight reminding of calligraphy, particularly visible in lower case a and r. The a, e and the double storey g have small counters. Eric Gill stated in *An Essay on Typography* that he introduced simplifications required to make the reproduction of letters "fool-proof": "The first notable attempt to work out the norm for plain letters was made by Mr Edward Johnston when he designed the sans-serif letter for the London Underground Railways. Some of these letters are not entirely satisfactory, especially when it is remembered that, for such a purpose, an alphabet should be as near as possible 'fool-proof'... as the philosophers would say—nothing should be left to the imagination of the sign-writer or enamel-plate maker." Comparing Johnston and Gill Sans shows that major differences include actual simplifications. For example, round dots on the i and j replace the tilted squares found in Johnston. Also, the shape of the bottom counter of the lower case g is more regular. The arms of the capital E and F have equal lengths. The descender of the lower case y is straight instead of curved. But Eric Gill also introduced some complications, contrary to his claim: he added a decorative terminal to the lower case a, dramatically increased the variation in line width in the arm of the lowercase r, and changed the straight tail of the Q into a calligraphic stroke Furthermore, he removed the distinction between upper case I (i), lower case l (L) and numeral l(one), all identical in Gill Sans, which makes it less suitable for signage.

https://www.coursera.org/learn/typography/lecture/MtbGW/scala-sans-typographic-remix

MEGG'S HISTORY OF GRAPHIC DESIGN (5TH EDITION)
p. 339, Typeface design in the first half of the twentieth century

Graphic Design Specialization by CalArts on Coursera (2017)

Gill Sans Poster for the course
Introduction to Typography