

• Bunyan Pro

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# Bunyan Pro

I GREW UP IN THE AGE OF SPEED READING, meaning that for someone like me the prime maxim has always been that text faces shouldn't call attention to themselves - so you can probably understand why I was always kind of dryly clinical about Eric Gill's work. Gill Sans is sometimes great for what it is. But when it comes to body copy, Gill's stuff was always questionable to my eyes. It's really a tough bandwagon to get onto. With text faces, all the hype in the world can't make up for too much personality. The Gill faces available out there seem like sculptures made by a sculptor. If it weren't for the mostly nameless artists and engineers, Gill's gorgeous letters would have been a bunch of individually praiseworthy gears that just couldn't roll together long enough to tick off their intended intervals.

So eight years ago, when Bill Troop approached me with a choice of two different historic types we could work on together, I selfishly picked Semplicita over Bunyan. Semplicita had been a longtime fascination of mine, and Bunyan — well, it was a Gill text face. I mention this now because the collaborative dynamic on Bunyan Pro turned out to be almost an exact mirror of the work on Semplicita Pro. With the latter, Bill had to stop my passion for the calligraphic aspect of the face from derailing the project into *Metro* city. With Bunyan Pro, I was the one who had to play middleman between passion and envisioned results.

Bill had been pursuing Bunyan for quite a long time. When he was a teen, he read a few Penguin books by Henry Fielding and Robertson Davies, and fell in love with everything about the type they employed. That type was a machine one called *Pilgrim*, the British Linotype incarnation of Gill's Bunyan (refined by Walter Tracy, with an italic added from Gill sketches). Right out the door, *Pilgrim* was tremendously popular in British publishing. It was used in hundreds of thousands of publications from the mid-50s to the end of widespread metal composition in the 1980s, which probably made it the most used of Gill's faces during that time. It fell off the design map when technologies changed. Gill's status in the design world had been going through the roof from when he was still alive, so to the eyes of a young Bill Troop the type that made *Tom Jones* and *Fifth Business* look so amazing must have been a great design by a great designer. I think the sobering reality of things must have been doubly harsh on Bill when he did the inevitable research into Gill's text face body of work. Maybe it's still a sore point with him, since he doesn't really care to talk about it much.

My own research into Gill's text type work wasn't so much a surprise as it was a slap in the face, a real wake-up call. Even with my indifference and kind-of-biased position against his work, it's difficult to deny the level of maturity Gill had reached with Bunyan. His trials and directional progress is evident and very documentable if you know where and how to look. A simple study of the chronology of Gill's prior faces shows a revealing development line, from the very elegant but almost unreadable stiffness of *Perpetua* (1928), on to the deco madness of *Golden Cockerel* (1929), through the purer but still stiff rhythm of *Joanna* (1930) and its shimmery italic, followed by the less dramatic shapes of *Aries* (1932). The latter was close to being a good text face, but it also had decoitis — too many eccentricities in the roman and a mathematically strange italic turn the promise of functionality onto its head. So when Bunyan came around, there were plenty of mistakes and directional miscues for Gill to use as working guidelines.

Bunyan was the last face Gill designed. It was made for use in letterpress in 1934, and by all accounts it wasn't really polished enough to be considered a finished face. It was cut in one size, without an italic, for handset use. From 1934 until his death, Gill used it privately at the shop he ran with his son-in-law in Buckinghamshire. It wasn't until 20 years later that British Linotype picked it up.

The first thing one notices about Bunyan is that it doesn't date itself anywhere as obviously as Gill's other serif faces — which were all really products of their time, heavily influenced by the richly ornamental and constantly changing aesthetic trends of that interwar period. When compared to Gill's previous work, Bunyan seems like a revolution in the way he thought and drew. It's as if he was shrugging off all heavy burden of what was popular, and going back to the basics of older standards. Bunyan has no bells and whistles, doesn't risk functionality with contrasts that are too high or too low, and doesn't venture far outside the comfortable oldstyle rhythm Gill grew up with. By interbellum standards, this was utter austerity, a veritable denial of deco excess. Surprisingly, even without all the cloying trivialities, Bunyan still stands indisputably as an aesthetically pleasing, space saving design that could have been made only by Eric Gill.

So why doesn't the 21<sup>st</sup> century have a digital version of the last and most mature face designed by the most famous English type designer this side of Caslon? There have been some attempts to go from metal to scalable. The first digital adaptation of Pilgrim was done, and later disowned, by Robert Slimbach for Autologic in the mid 1980s. Linotype did make a photo version in the early 1990s, but it was a complete redesign that didn't really look like either Pilgrim or Bunyan, and proved to be of little appeal to layout artists. In the early 2000s, this unfortunate design was transferred directly to digital, and suffered the same fate.

Our Bunyan Pro comes in three weights and their italics. The main font is intended for use between 8 and 14 points. The medium and the bold have pretty good merit in larger sizes, so can make effective display types as well. We tried to keep the best features of the handset (Bunyan) and machine (Pilgrim) versions while building a text face that can function in today's immersive reading media. Deciding on which useful letterpress features to preserve for aesthetic importance was hell on our eyeballs. Complex and painstaking approaches to ironing out irregularities and inconsistencies related to metal technologies, in order to provide something with authenticity, drove us crazy. But we're both happy with the results. It was definitely worth the shouting matches and long arguments that at times sank into abstract cries for help. We both think that we've reached our goal of providing a unique typeface based on a Gill design that, to a greater extent than any of his other faces, works well as a text face. Catch Bill at the right time of day and he may tell you that Bunyan Pro is probably the only Gill face in existence that can be successfully used for entire books and magazines.

It's been quite the adventure. I hope you find the face useful.

Patrick Griffin  
Toronto, May 2016

John Bunyan was born in 1628 to Thomas and Margaret Bunyan at Bunyan's End in the parish of Elstow, Bedfordshire. Bunyan's End is located about half-way between the hamlet of Harrowden (one mile south-east of Bedford) and Elstow High Street. Bunyan's date of birth is not known, but he was baptised on 30 November 1628, the baptismal entry in the parish register reading "John the sonne of Thomas Bunnion Jun., the 30 November". *The name Bunyan was spelt in many different ways (there are 34 variants in Bedfordshire Record Office) and had its origins in the Norman-French name Buignon. There had been Bunyans in north Bedfordshire since at least 1199.*

1928

*Perpetua & its Italic, 10/12*

1929

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*Golden Cockerel & its Italic, 10/12*

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1930

*Joanna & its Italic, 10/12*

1932

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*Aries & its Italic, 10/12*

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1934/1953/2016

*Bunyan Pro & its Italic, 10/12*

OpenType features available in:

- Bunyan Pro
- Bunyan Pro Italic
- Bunyan Pro Medium
- Bunyan Pro Medium Italic
- Bunyan Pro Bold
- Bunyan Pro Bold Italic

• SMALL CAPS & CAPS TO SMALL CAPS

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• LIGATURES

Th fb ff ffi ffl fh fi fj fk ft

• STYLISTIC ALTERNATES

Q Q f ff # \* a o ‘ ’ “ ” , „ † ‡

• OLDSTYLE & LINING FIGURES

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

• SUPERSCRIPT / SUPERIORS & SUBSCRIPT / INFERIORS

H<sup>0123456789</sup> H<sub>0123456789</sub>

• NUMERATORS & DENOMINATORS

H<sup>0123456789</sup> H<sub>0123456789</sub>

• AUTOMATIC FRACTIONS

1 1/2 89/24 7/31 99/100 7893565/323764

• ORDINALS

l a l o l e

• MANICULES



• LANGUAGE SUPPORT

Afrikaans, Albanian, Basque, Bosnian, Breton, Catalan, Chechen, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Esperanto, Estonian, Faroese, Fijian, Finnish, Flemish, French, Frisian, Gaelic, German, Gikuyu, Greenlandic, Hawaiian, Hungarian, Icelandic, Indonesian, Irish, Italian, Latin, Latvian, Lithuanian, Malay, Maltese, Māori, Moldavian, Norwegian, Occitan, Polish, Portuguese, Provençal, Romany, Romanian, Sámi, Serbian, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish, Swahili, Swedish, Tagalog, Tatar, Turkish, Turkmen, Welsh.

Bunyan Pro Regular

- 6 /7.2
- 8 /9.6
- 10 /12
- 12 /14.4
- 14 /16.8
- 18 /21.6
- 24 /28.8
- 30 /32.2
- 130 /156

PORTEZ CE VIEUX WHISKY AU JUGE BLOND QUI FUME.  
portez ce vieux whisky au juge blond qui fume.  
PORTEZ CE VIEUX WHISKY AU JUGE BLOND QUI FUME.

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portez ce vieux whisky au juge blond qui fume.  
PORTEZ CE VIEUX WHISKY AU JUGE BLOND QUI FUME.

PORTEZ CE VIEUX WHISKY AU JUGE BLOND Qu  
portez ce vieux whisky au juge blond qui fume.

PORTEZ CE VIEUX WHISKY AU JUGE BLOND QUI FUME.

PORTEZ CE VIEUX WHISKY AU JUGE  
portez ce vieux whisky au juge blond Qu

PORTEZ CE VIEUX WHISKY AU JUGE BLOND

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Bunyan Pro Italic

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18 /21.6  
24 /28.8  
30 /32.2  
130 /156

WHISKY BUENO: ¡EXCITAD MI FRÁGIL PEQUEÑA VEJEZ!  
whisky bueno: ¡excitad mi frágil pequeña vejez!  
WHISKY BUENO: ¡EXCITAD MI FRÁGIL PEQUEÑA VEJEZ!

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WHISKY BUENO: ¡EXCITAD MI FRÁGIL PEQUEZ

*klmnopqr*

Bunyan Pro Medium

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THE QUICK BROWN FOX JUMPS OVER A LAZY DOG.  
the quick brown fox jumps over a lazy dog.  
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THE QUICK BROWN FOX JUMPS OVER A LAZ

stuvwxyz



Bunyan Pro Medium Italic

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8 /9.6  
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12 /14.4  
14 /16.8  
18 /21.6  
24 /28.8  
30 /32.2  
130 /156

HØVDINGENS KJÆRE SQUAW FÅR LITT PIZZA I MEXICO BY.  
høvdingens kjære squaw får litt pizza i mexico by.  
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HØVDINGENS KJÆRE SQUAW FÅR LITT PIZZA I M  
høvdingens kjære squaw får litt pizza i mexico by.  
HØVDINGENS KJÆRE SQUAW FÅR LITT PIZZA I MEXICO B

HØVDINGENS KJÆRE SQUAW FÅR LITT PIZZA I M  
høvdingens kjære squaw får litt pizza i mexico by.  
HØVDINGENS KJÆRE SQUAW FÅR LITT PIZZA I MEXICO BY  
HØVDINGENS KJÆRE SQUAW FÅR LITT  
høvdingens kjære squaw får litt pizza i m  
HØVDINGENS KJÆRE SQUAW FÅR LITT PIZZA I

**A B C D E F G H**

Bunyan Pro Bold

6 /7.2  
8 /9.6  
10 /12  
12 /14.4  
14 /16.8  
18 /21.6  
24 /28.8  
30 /30.2  
130 /156

ZWEI BOXKÄMPFER JAGTEN EVA QUER DURCH SYLT.  
zwei boxkämpfer jagten eva quer durch sylt.  
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zwei boxkämpfer jagten eva quer durch

ZWEI BOXKÄMPFER JAGTEN EVA QUER DUR

IJKLMNOP

*Bunyan Pro Bold Italic*

6 / 7.2

8 / 9.6

10 / 12

12 / 14.4

14 / 16.8

18 / 21.6

24 / 28.8

30 / 32.2

130 / 156

PA'S WIJZE LYNX BEZAG VROOM HET FIKSE AQUADUCT.

*pa's wijze lynx bezag vroom het fikse aquaduct.*

PA'S WIJZE LYNX BEZAG VROOM HET FIKSE AQUADUCT.

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PA'S WIJZE LYNX BEZAG VROOM HET FIKSE AQUADUCT.

QRSTUVWXYZ

← Bunyan Pro Regular 8/9.5

AS A CHILD BUNYAN LEARNT his father's trade of tinker and was given some rudimentary schooling. In *GRACE ABOUNDING* Bunyan recorded few details of his upbringing, but he did note how he picked up the habit of swearing (from his father), suffered from nightmares, and read the popular stories of the day in cheap chap-books. In the summer of 1644 Bunyan lost both his mother and his sister Margaret. That autumn, shortly before or after his sixteenth birthday, Bunyan enlisted in the Parliamentary army when an edict demanded 225 recruits from the town of Bedford. There are few details available about his military service, which took place during the first stage of the English Civil War. A muster roll for the garrison of Newport Pagnell shows him as private "John Bunnian". In *GRACE ABOUNDING*, he recounted an incident from this time, as evidence of the grace of God.

Bunyan's army service provided him with a knowledge of military language which he then used in his book *THE HOLY WAR*, and also exposed him to the ideas of the various religious sects and radical groups he came across in Newport Pagnell. The garrison town also gave him opportunities to indulge in the sort of behaviour he would later confess to in *GRACE ABOUNDING*: "So that until I came to the state of Marriage, I was the very ringleader of all the Youth that kept me company, in all manner of vice and ungodliness". Bunyan spent nearly three years in the army, leaving in 1647 to return to Elstow and his trade as a tinker. His father had remarried and had more children and Bunyan moved from Bunyan's End to a cottage in Elstow High Street.

Within two years of leaving the army, Bunyan married. The name of his wife and the exact date of his marriage are not known, but Bunyan did recall that his wife, a pious young woman, brought with her into the marriage two books that she had inherited from her father: Arthur Dent's *PLAIN MAN'S PATHWAY TO HEAVEN* and Lewis Bayly's *PRACTICE OF PIETY*. He also recalled that, apart from these two books, the newly-weds possessed little: "not having so much household-stuff as a Dish or a Spoon betwixt us both". The couple's first daughter, Mary, was born in 1650, and it soon became apparent that she was blind. They would have three more children, Elizabeth, Thomas and John.

← Bunyan Pro Regular 9/11

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### ☛ Bunyan Pro Regular 10/12

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