

Part One

1924 to 1941

The founder of the Rampant Lions Press, Will Carter (1912–2001), was the youngest of four children of an architect turned parson, Thomas Buchanan Carter (1871–1934), who came from a line of Eton schoolmasters and clerics (with no traceable family connection with Harry Carter, printing historian and archivist at Oxford University Press, and his son Matthew, the type designer). Thomas Buchanan had married Margaret Stone, from an equally large family with a similar background. Her brothers included Christopher Stone, one of the founders of *The Gramophone* magazine with his brother-in-law Montague Compton Mackenzie (of *Whisky Galore* fame), and Ned, father of the wood engraver Reynolds Stone.

Will's elder brother John was born in 1905, and went to Eton and King's College, Cambridge, where he achieved a double first in classics. From Cambridge, he joined the New York firm of Scribner's, in their London antiquarian department. In 1934, in collaboration with Graham Pollard, he published the innocuously titled *An Enquiry into the Nature of certain Nineteenth-century Pamphlets*, which exposed the fraudulently manufactured 'pre-first-editions' of works by Elizabeth Barrett Browning and a number of other notable nineteenth-century writers. Although Carter and Pollard stopped short of directly accusing the culprit in the book, their fingers pointed firmly at T J Wise, one of the most eminent bibliographers of the day, and a previously unassailable figure in the field. Their later publications on the subject confirmed this accusation. The affair aroused a considerable degree of interest at the time.

John married an American, Ernestine Fantl, in 1936, and after the war spent time as an advisor to the British Ambassador in Washington. On his return to London, he joined Sotheby's as their bibliographical consultant. He published a number of books on bibliography, including the classic *ABC for Book-collectors* (1952). Ernestine was a distinguished fashion writer, and became an associate editor of *The Sunday Times*. John died in 1975, and Ernestine in 1983.

Two sisters, Mary and Elisabeth, were born next, and William Nicholas arrived on 24 September

1912. His father had by now taken holy orders and was vicar of St Laurence's church in Upton, across the river from Eton in what is now part of the urban sprawl of Slough. The family later moved to a living in Little Faringdon, near Kelmscott Manor on the upper reaches of the Thames, and then, for most of Will's teenage years, to Chalvey Park, back in Slough.

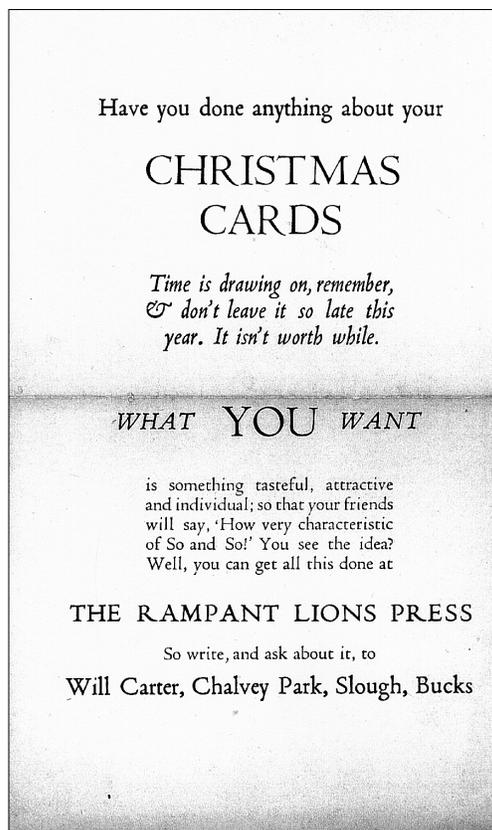
After a preparatory school in Sunningdale, Will went to Radley, but was not academically inclined: his interests were always manual and practical. Shortly before his twelfth birthday, with a school friend whose guardian was Professor of Greek at Oxford, he was taken on a tour of Oxford University Press, where he was able to set and proof a visiting card in Fell roman, one assumes with a good deal of guidance. He must have shown an intelligent interest, since a few days later, on 8 September, John Johnson, who became University Printer the following year, sent him a packet, with a covering letter:

'Dear Carter, I am sending you quite a lot of type in a separate parcel. It will make you, I hope, an amusing and useful hobby. Yours sincerely, J. de M. Johnson.'

A family friend donated a flatbed Adana press. John, now an undergraduate at King's, suggested the Press name, after the family coat of arms (although in fact it had been poached from a grander but defunct Carter family some generations back by a dynastically ambitious forebear), and the Rampant Lions Press was born.

A surprising amount of early ephemera survives from the Chalvey period, mostly letterheadings for family and friends, but including some more ambitious leaflets. Will was obviously able to draw on quite a large range of typefaces. There are variations in quality, of course, but the range is impressive.

Will left school at 18. He got a general apprenticeship with the printing firm of Unwin's at Woking, but must have gone on printing at home at weekends, as a lot of printing survives from around 1931, and has Chalvey in the imprint. The house where he lodged in Woking was called Byfield: there are some rather distressing pieces of stationery set in Cheltenham, with the first and last letters of each word set much larger than the rest. It looks as if Will cannot have read any Stanley Morison at this point, although it is possible he was printing for the people with whom he was lodging, and yielding to their taste.



After Unwin's, Will worked, I remember him telling me, at the advertising agent J Walter Thompson, though I have no further information about this. He then worked briefly for James Shand at the Shenval Press in Hertford, and lodged in Shand's house, but apart from hearing that he found Shand difficult and abrasive, I never found out much about this period either.

In 1934, the year of his father's death, and his brother's sudden notoriety because of the Wise affair, Will moved to Cambridge to work at Heffer's printing works, which was then by the roundabout at the end of Station Road, on the edge of the Botanic Gardens. At that time the Heffer family had a printing and publishing business, a bookshop in Petty Cury ('the bookshop which is known all over the world'), and a large stationery shop. Will's job was in the print order department, and involved designing anything that needed designing so that the estimators could estimate for it. As his calligraphic skills developed, there was quite a bit of scope for this activity as well, including a rather magnificent German-inspired large envelope design. (After the war he designed a calligraphic Heffer's bookmark that went in every

book sold by the shop: tens of thousands must have been printed.) Later he was made assistant works manager.

He found a small flat in Jordan's Yard, at that time a medieval alleyway off Bridge Street. The alley is still there, but now, after you go through the half-timbered building which has been preserved on the Bridge Street frontage, all that remains on the left is a wall with some nineteenth-century buildings housing a restaurant, and on the right a new building with a café. The Yard now leads down to a multi-storey car park which covers the site of the building where Will lived.

In this tiny flat he printed his early books, although the first title, *A Preface*, appeared in July 1934, when he was still using the Chalvey address. Two years later came his first book of any serious ambition, a book of poems by Robert Nichols called *A Spanish Triptych* (cat 3). For this he needed a larger press; he borrowed money from relatives, and bought an Albion hand-press, though he was rather defensive about this making him seem arty-crafty. Will sent a copy of *A Spanish Triptych* to Bernard Newdigate, who gave it a favourable mention in one of the 'Book Production Notes' he wrote for the literary magazine *The London Mercury*, in the March 1937 number. This led to one of Will's most important epistolary friendships, with the American calligrapher Paul Standard (1896–1992). Standard quickly enlisted Will's participation in one of the most attractive of the early Typophile publications, *Left to their own Devices*, a collection of Typophile logos from a variety of hands, including his cousin Reynolds Stone's, another of Standard's protégés. Will's contribution was a simply drawn calligraphic TP.

Up until this point Will's typographical style was very much in the English tradition, and might be described as Newdigate-and-water. It underwent a considerable change when he bought some Goudy Text. This was spurred on by his admiration for the work of Rudolf Koch, and he admitted that the choice of Goudy's blackletter was a second best. The more Germanic blackletters, even Monotype ones, were too difficult to obtain, and although later in 1941 he negotiated with Monotype over Berthold Wolpe's Sachsenwald, his call-up intervened. The first major book in the new type was the ambitious large quarto, *The Song of Solomon* (cat 6).

The next book, *Memorandums by James Martin* (cat 5), led to a friendship with its editor, Charles Blount, a young graduate of Pembroke College, who

THIS IS

SET UP AND PRINTED BY
Will Carter at the Rampant
Lions Press, 4 Jordans Yard,
Cambridge, on May 20th 1958
to commemorate the install-
ation of the new press. Those
present were the Printer and
Charles Blount.



A POSSE AD ESSE

Will Carter.

for a few years became a kind of unpaid Sydney Cockerell to the Rampant Lions Press, with his name appearing on one of the many versions of the Press letterheading Will printed during this period. He shared the flat in Jordan's Yard for a while, and accompanied Will to Frankfurt the following year. The two men shared a punt moored on the river, called after the actress Judy Campbell, mother of Jane Birkin, who was then based at the Festival Theatre in Cambridge, and whom they both pursued.

In April 1938, Will started a manuscript record book of Rampant Lions activities in a sumptuous quarto volume of 1912 Whatman paper, bound in full dark red morocco, blind stamped on the front with a pair of rampant lions within an abstract border. There is no binder's name, but it is a fine piece of work, and may well have been done by Gray's, the old-established Cambridge binders in Green Street. On the opening page Will wrote an introductory note, ending with the familiar quotation from 'that genius among women,' Beatrice Warde, 'Friend, you stand on sacred ground.' The next page recorded the arrival of a new press, a big Adana platen, on 14 May 1938; six days

later a keepsake was printed to celebrate the new arrival. This is unfortunately the last diary entry in the book, although there are lists of buyers and accounts for several early books.

Will's interest in the work of Rudolf Koch began early on: some of his first jobbing printing had been in Koch Antiqua, and he collected the beautiful type specimens produced by the Klingspor foundry. This interest led to an important visit in the summer of 1938. Through a family friend he made contact with Koch's son Paul, who was running a craft workshop in an historic building in the old town in Frankfurt, the Haus zum Fürsteneck. Paul invited him to visit during his holiday in July, and he and Charles Blount duly arrived.

As Will later described it in an essay in a festschrift celebrating Hermann Zapf's seventieth birthday (Will's essay was printed in English): 'The workshop of the "Haus zum Fürsteneck" was in a large room of a big historic house which had been built by Bürgermeister Johann von Holzhausen in 1362. The walls were of rich oak panelling, and there was a wonderful great spread of plaster ceiling, and all was brightly lit by tall windows. Just to the left of the door stood a giant tiled stove standing on five crouching lions and reaching almost to the ceiling. Scattered around the room were the expected pieces of equipment for a printing workshop – two hand-presses, type cases, paper racks, drawing tables, a punch-cutting bench, and hanging racks for drying damped printed sheets. There must have been four or five people working there, one of them a very young-looking, fair-haired man sitting by the west window, busy with his calligraphy. His name was Hermann Zapf. He was writing a book of songs in blackletter, with music. From this meeting, fifty years ago, grew a very warm friendship, and I find it marvellous to think of what Hermann has achieved during that time.'

Will's friendship with Hermann continued until the end of Will's life. The Rampant Lions Press has made extensive use of a number of Zapf's typefaces (see Appendix 2), and his influence can be seen in many of the Press's calligraphic title pages.

A correspondent of the local newspaper, the *Frankfurter General-Anzeiger*, published an article on Friday 22 July, the last day of Will's visit, about 'Mr Carter von der "Presse der schreitenden Löwen" in Cambridge': 'The man I saw in the Fahrgasse in the afternoon was wearing green corduroy trousers [*grüne Rippelsamthosen*]. Undeniably vicious green corduroy trousers without creases.



Will Carter cutting a punch at the Haus zum Fürsteneck. Photograph by Hermann Zapf.

Together with a pink shirt, and a blue handkerchief in the breast pocket. It was Mr Will Carter from Cambridge. How do I know this? A quarter of an hour later I was introduced to him at the Haus zum Fürsteneck.' The writer went on to describe Will's work in Cambridge, and to praise his good sense in coming to the world centre for the crafts, Frankfurt, together with his friend Charles Blount, incorrectly described as 'a lecturer in the history of art at Cambridge University'. He then accompanied Will to visit a silversmith, where Will had ordered a ring. The correspondent continued: 'Finally, as he bathed his ring finger in soapy water to get the silver masterpiece off, the Cambridge printer blushingly confessed – and the pink went wonderfully with the green corduroy trousers – that in Frankfurt he had indulged a passion for good cigars. "My friend Charles, on the other hand, loves German wine, and a wine he has discovered which beats all the others is Hochheimer!" In the snug corners of the Altstadt they have smoked and drunk, the two Englishmen from famous Cambridge.' (My translation.)

The following year, some significant changes took place in Will's domestic life. On 3 April 1939 he married Barbara Ruth Digby, the daughter of a local journalist who was also a colonel in the Territorial Army, and in June the young couple moved to a large house in Chesterton Road by the river,

rented from Magdalene College, which was to be the home of the Rampant Lions Press for the next half century. The move coincided with a visit from Paul Koch, who was enchanted with the madrigal singing on the river, a traditional May Week event. This was the last time they saw him. It was the eve of the Second World War: during it he fought in the German army in the terrible Russian campaign, and was killed in Poland during the retreat towards Berlin in 1945.

During the early part of the war Will was kept busy doing air raid watching in such spare time as he had, which explains the delay in production of *Ecclesiastes* (cat 10), the last ambitious book published by the Press before Will's naval service. It appeared in March 1941, the month after my own arrival in this world. Will was helped in the composition of the text by John Dreyfus, who had been an undergraduate at Trinity, and then a graduate trainee at Cambridge University Press. In early 1940, while waiting for his call up to the army, Dreyfus had helped Brooke Crutchley, Walter Lewis's second-in-command at the Press, in mounting the Gutenberg exhibition at the Fitzwilliam Museum, in which Will's brother John also played a leading part. For it, Will had drawn a large map showing the early spread of printing, and also a plan of the galleries.

The prospectus for *Ecclesiastes* contained an announcement of future plans ('Weather, &c., permitting'). These consisted of a book on chancery italics, printed from the original types, which would include Jan van Krimpen's Lutetia and Cancelleresca Bastarda, the two Bembo italics, Blado, and the two Frederic Warde versions, cut by hand and by Monotype, of Arrighi's *Coryciana* italic. This shows that even before the war Will was planning to get the Plumet hand cut version of Arrighi into the workshop, a plan which did not come to fruition until the 1960s. An *Ecclesiastes* blank dummy survives with some layouts for this projected book, and he wrote about it at length to Paul Standard, but nothing came of it. He joined the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve at the end of 1941, and all printing went on hold for the next five years.

Part One

Unless stated otherwise:

- Title pages are centred.
- Display setting is in larger sizes of the text face.
- Papers are white or off-white.
- Printing is in black.
- Spine lettering runs down the spine.

Dimensions are given in centimetres, height before width.

‘Untrimmed’ means top edge trimmed, others not.

For pressmarks see Appendix 1.

Numbering: copies that are described as numbered were numbered by hand. Editions were sometimes numbered in both arabic and roman numerals. The Press followed the convention that the main edition was numbered with arabic numerals and the specials with roman. Lettered copies were lettered A–Z, or sometimes fewer.

Entries do not normally state when part of the edition was not for sale.

Binding details: ‘wrappers’ have flaps, ‘covers’ do not. Books stated as ‘bound at the Press’ are thread sewn pamphlets, or occasionally bound adhesively. Two-wire stitching was always outsourced. In other cases, the binder is given if known.

Prices are given in the currency at the time of publication. The absence of a price means either that it is not known or that the book was *hors commerce*.

The printer/designer is given in square brackets. The title page and other hand lettering or drawing are by the designer unless otherwise stated. In joint productions the draughtsman is designated [w] or [s].

1934

1 A Preface

A PREFACE [line in red] | being that written by | JOHN BASKERVILLE | for his 1758 edition of Milton's | *Paradise Lost* | RAMPANT · LIONS · PRESS | 1934

Colophon page, pressmark A in red.

[12pp.] 12.5 × 9.5 cm, untrimmed.

Text: 12pt Monotype Centaur, hand set.

Paper: laid mould made.

50 copies bound at the Press in unprinted overlapping pale blue card covers. The printer's copy is in a vellum wrapper, hand lettered on the front ‘Preface’.

[Will Carter]

¶ The colophon stated, ‘This pamphlet was printed at the Rampant Lions Press, Chalvey Park, Slough, in July of 1934: the whole being designed, set up and printed by Will Carter. 50 copies only have been printed, & these are for private distribution only.’ Baskerville's text was itself prefaced with a short note by the printer extolling the work of the Rampant Lions Press and soliciting orders for jobbing work, and adding: ‘this pamphlet may be said to be the first work of any importance issued by the Press. Small though it is, it nevertheless foreshadows greater things.’

Laid into Will's own copy is a photocopy made for him by Herman Cohen of the Chiswick Book Shop. In a covering note to a copy sent to F W Goudy Will had written: ‘This was printed on a little wooden press 8 × 5 ins and was the first effort of more than one page! The pathetic part about it is that I copied the text from Updike and, beyond noticing a certain abruptness in the ending, didn't realise that it wasn't complete!’ Will's copy of Updike's ‘Printing Types’, in the third printing of 1927, had been a twenty-first birthday present from his brother John the previous year. Updike's text reprinting Baskerville's preface ends half way through the third paragraph from the end, but Will included the italicisation of key words, which Updike's transcription did not; and although Updike did reproduce a part of Baskerville's original with the italicisation, it showed an even shorter extract of the text. How Will achieved the correct italicisation in the later part of his version without realising the text was incomplete is a mystery.

1935

2 Tea, a Mild Dissertation

TEA | A MILD DISSERTATION | [ornament] | Rampant Lions Press

Wood engraved headpiece in red and tailpiece printed from the wood blocks.

Colophon page, pressmark A in red.

[6 pp.] 14.5 × 10.5 cm, deckle edges at foot.

Text: 12pt Monotype Bembo, hand set. Display: Centaur.

Paper: pink Basingwerk Parchment.

Bound at the Press in overlapping red card covers printed on the front in gold ‘[engraving] | Christmas | 1935 [2 lines in Caslon]’.

[Will Carter]

¶ The two wood engravings were by Will: the headpiece was a group of three trees taken from a design by Philip Haggren (repeated on the cover), and the tailpiece a small apple, in black. Both blocks are still in the Rampant Lions collection. Will here used the Jordan's Yard address for the first time.

1936

3 A Spanish Triptych

A SPANISH | TRIPTYCH [2 lines in red] | *Being three poems of compassion* | by Robert Nichols | Rampant Lions Press | 1936

Colophon page, pressmark A in red.

[vi], 22pp. 24 × 15 cm, untrimmed.

Text: 16pt Monotype Arrighi italic, hand set. Display: Centaur

Paper: Millbourn laid hand made.

106 numbered copies bound in overlapping wrappers of toned textured paper with on the front a panel printed in red within a double rule border 'A SPANISH | TRIPTYCH | BY ROBERT NICHOLS'.

5s.

10 numbered *hors commerce* copies bound in boards covered with parchment paper blocked up the spine in brown 'A SPANISH | TRIPTYCH', on the front a scarlet flames device.

Prospectus: a single leaf, format and paper as the book, printed on one side only in red and black, with the title, sub-title and author, a short blurb and details of the edition.

[Will Carter]

¶ Robert Nichols (1893–1944) was a poet and essayist on music who edited the complete works of Delius and wrote about Peter Warlock. Although little remembered now, he was briefly a friend of Robert Graves, and apparently saw himself as one of a group of three war poets with Graves and Sassoon, although his own war service was less than heroic. In a letter of December 1917 to Wilfred Owen, Graves wrote, 'Robert is a ripping fellow really, but any stupid person would mistake him for an insufferable bounder.' There is no record of how Will and he made contact, though it may have been through Will's brother John.

Will sent a copy to Bernard Newdigate, who wrote him a letter of thanks, with suggestions about choice of paper and layout, illustrated with some Shakespeare Head Press setting pasted on to squared paper. Newdigate mentioned the book favourably the following March in one of the 'Book Production Notes' that he contributed regularly to the monthly literary magazine 'The London Mercury', where it was described as out of print.

1937

4 A Prayer

A Prayer.

[8pp.] 15 × 12.5 cm, untrimmed.

The text rubricated by hand by the printer, with a large opening initial and smaller ones throughout.

Text: 24pt Monotype Goudy Text, hand set.

Paper: JE hand made.

Bound at the Press in flush card covers lettered by hand on the front 'A Prayer | [cross]'.

[Will Carter]

¶ This little book was imposed as two inserted French folds: there is an error in the imposition of the outer one, so that the colophon and the title are transposed.

Rubricated and folded spare sheets exist on different papers, so there may have been no consistency of text paper. It is likely this was a very limited edition, although there is no statement of limitation.

Although, or maybe because, Will was a 'preacher's kid', he was a determined agnostic, and often vehemently anti-clerical. Nevertheless, he was surprisingly prone to printing rather sententious prayers on any occasion, and he reset the type of this one on a wider measure and printed it as a folio broadside the following year, with a big hand drawn opening initial. This was displayed in the Fitzwilliam Museum Gutenberg exhibition in 1940 as an example of modern textura, next to the Forty-two line 'Gutenberg' Bible. Will reprinted it yet again in 'The Rampant Lions Press Miscellany' in 1988 (cat 215).

5 Memorandums by James Martin

Memorandums by | JAMES MARTIN | [shaded rule] | Edited by | CHARLES BLOUNT | [engraving] | THE RAMPANT LIONS PRESS

11 small wood engravings, mostly on text pages, printed from the wood blocks. A fold-out calligraphic map, drawn by the printer, tipped in at the back.

xvi, 46pp. 16 × 12 cm, untrimmed.

Text: 12pt Monotype Caslon, machine set.

Paper: Byronic Book wove.

150 numbered copies bound in full natural cloth, blocked up the spine in gilt 'MEMORANDOMS BY JAMES MARTIN' and on the front in gilt an extra engraving made as a blocking brass.

6s.

Prospectus: 4pp., printed as a French fold, 24 × 16 cm, paper as the book. P.1, title page as the book in expanded form; pp.2 and 4, blurb and details of the edition; p.3, a sample spread from the book, turned through 90 degrees. The prospectus then opens up to