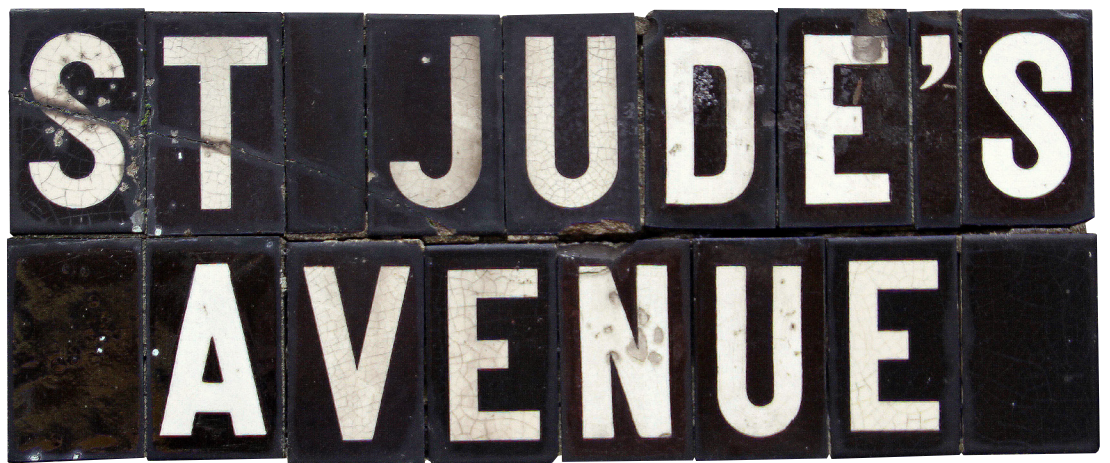

A reconstruction
of the traditional
lettering used for
Belfast's historic
street signage

Farset
Feirste

A reconstruction of the tiled lettering used for Belfast's historic street signage in Latin and Gaelic scripts



Belfast's traditional street signage is an immediately familiar signifier of the city's unique character. Originally hand-made with poured clays as cream-white capitals on black tiles in the late 19th century, the tiled signs were commissioned by the Belfast Corporation for use on major thoroughfares, probably in order to allow passengers to navigate the city's tram system.

John McMillan (1947-2022) Emeritus Professor of Graphic Design at Ulster University, and a Belfast resident, realised that the idiosyncratic lettering of the city's traditional street signs offered an opportunity to not only be developed into a latin type but also to be transcribed into a corresponding gaelic typeface. Bilingual usage might promote a harmonious and equitable ownership by Belfast's communities.

Working from original photographs of the Victorian street signs, in 2015, McMillan drafted the beginnings of a proportionally spaced latin alphabet along with a rough set of corresponding prototypes for gaelic letterforms, following the advice of Irish language expert Dr Art Hughes.

In 2018, McMillan asked MuirMcNeil to develop his sketches into fully-functioning digital type families. In addition to redefining contours and creating the positive character sets in upper and lower case, MuirMcNeil added new cameo type families for both scripts. The appearance of the original tiles was carefully reinterpreted in capitals and small caps along with several alternate characters found in the original tiles.

The two new typefaces have been named in their respective languages to reflect their individual identity. The gaelic version, Feirste, honours Belfast's Irish name, Béal Feirste, (Béal meaning 'rivermouth' and 'feirste', a sandbar), while the Latin version, Farset, adopts the name of the river that flows from the hills above the city to where Belfast was founded on a sandbar.

Farset

300pt

A E

38pt

**SHANKILL ROAD
BURREN WAY
BROOMHILL PARK
FALLS ROAD
STRANMILLIS
CASTLEREACH
LEGONIEL
SKEGONEIL
MALONE**

Ae

**Shankill Road
Burren Way
Broomhill Park
Falls Road
Stranmillis
Castlereagh
Legoniel
Skegoneil
Malone**

Latin 1 standard character set in OTF, TTF, WOFF and WOFF 2 encoding.

For licensing options and terms, please go to:
www.muirmcneil.com/about/licensing-and-usage/

A B C D E F G H H I J K L M M

N O P Q R R S T T U V W W X Y Z

a b c d e f g g h i j k l m

n o p q r s t u v w x y z

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Farset Feirste Sú e

300pt

Ae

38pt

BÓTHAR NA SEANCHILLE
BEALACH NA BOIRNE
PÁIRC CHNOC NA SCUAB
BÓTHAR NA BHFÁL
AN SRUTHÁN MILIS
AN CAISLEÁN RIABHACH
LAŚ AN AOIL
SCEACHÓŚ AN IARLA
MAŚH LÓIN

Feirste A
Character Set

Latin 8 Celtic character set in OTF, TTF, WOFF and WOFF 2 encoding.

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A B C D E F G H I J K L M
N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
A B C D E F G H I J K L M N
O P Q R R P S r T U V W X Y Z

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

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Furniture/spacing



Ae

**Bóthar na Seanchille
Bealach na Boirne
Páirc Chnoc na Scuab
Bóthar na bhFál
An Spuathán Milis
An Caisleán Riabhach
Laz an Aoil
Sceachós an Iapla
Mazh Lóin**

