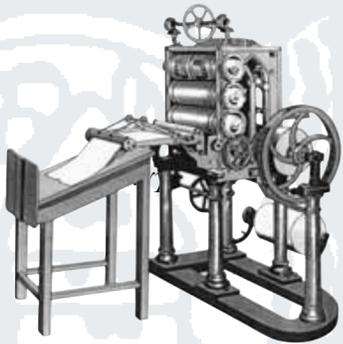


# Printing technology

**C**hange occurred slowly in the printing industry between Gutenberg's initial invention of movable type in the middle of the fifteenth century and the building of the Parkside works for Nelsons at the end of the nineteenth. Technological innovation was for Nelsons the means to the end of promoting 'the democratic intellect' through successful publishing. In the earliest days of the firm, its books had to be inexpensive to be accessible to a new reading public of the skilled working classes and Thomas Nelson employed the still uncommon process of stereotyping, invented by William Ged, another Edinburgh man, to reduce production costs over a large print run.

In 1850 Thomas Nelson II perfected a rotary press, a model of which was demonstrated at the Great Exhibition in the following year. It is no exaggeration to state that this machine was the parent of all newspaper presses until well into the twentieth century.



*Monotype machines*



*Foundry*

## The new technologies

However, it was the opportunity created by the re-equipping of the Parkside works that led to the introduction of the most up-to-date technologies. The company was among the first to introduce Monotype keyboards and casters, using them in its composing room to reset one reprint every two days in addition to other work. Efficiency was gained not only through this introduction of the



*Making cases in the bindery*

latest technology but also through standardisation of the product. The books were grouped into various popular libraries, all to the standard Nelson size. Nelsons patented a casing-in machine which could case, that is place in hard covers, 900 books an hour.



*Type casting*

A failure to invest in technological innovation on a continuing basis in the post-1945 period contributed to the firm's decline and eventual take-over. Whatever was introduced then in the way of new machinery and methods was a case of too little, too late.

