

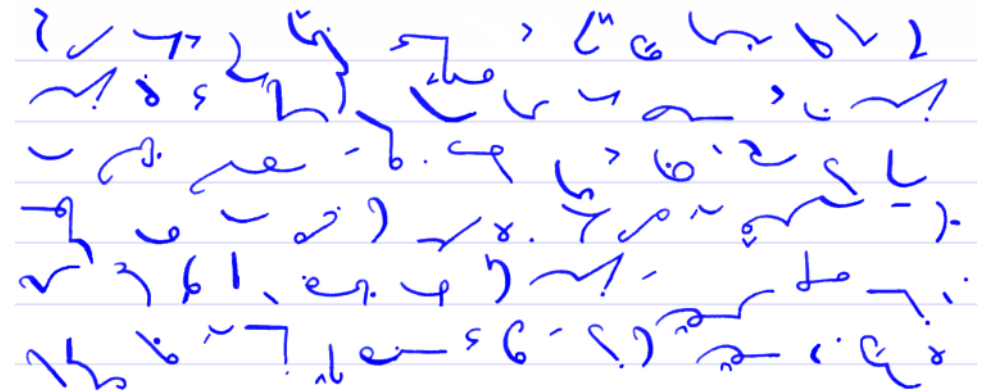
Lord Mayor's Show

The parade participants are a mixture of army, military, troops, regiments and mounted cavalry, with their bands and music, young persons' service groups such as scouts, guides and cadets, and then a wide range of organisations that work and trade in London. They walked, marched, danced and rode on a variety of vehicles, vintage cars, taxis, vans and giant trucks transformed* into novel and colourful floats with the excited participants waving to the crowds. Those who walked were smacking hands in greeting with everyone who held out their hand and endless* smiles

abounded. It was a very happy, positive and cheerful atmosphere, with everyone celebrating their city and enthusiastic about declaring and advertising their particular group's work to all the onlookers, and indeed the world watching by television and internet.

* "transformed" Optional contraction

* "endless" Compare with the distinguishing outline for "needless" which has full N and D strokes



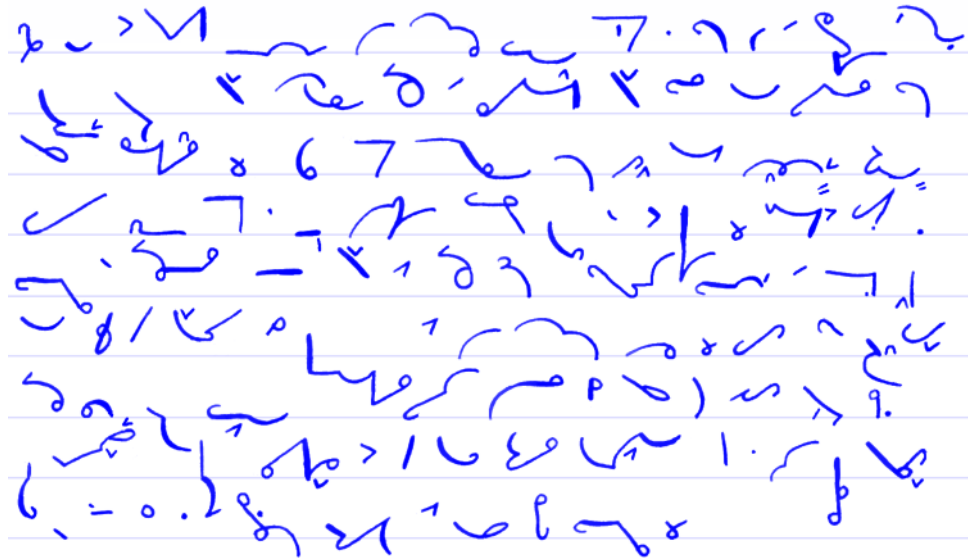
Lord Mayor's Show

Although we enjoyed seeing the vibrancy and creativeness of the giant floats, for me the best part was the marching bands, with the drum beats being felt in the stomach, all the feet marching in well-trained unison, and a close-up view of the faces of ordinary people doing extraordinary* things in serving their country. The only ones not

smiling quite so broadly were those who had to concentrate instead on their marching and musical tasks, keeping to a predetermined pace, not getting out of sync with the others and playing their music without a fluff.

* "extraordinary" Optional contraction

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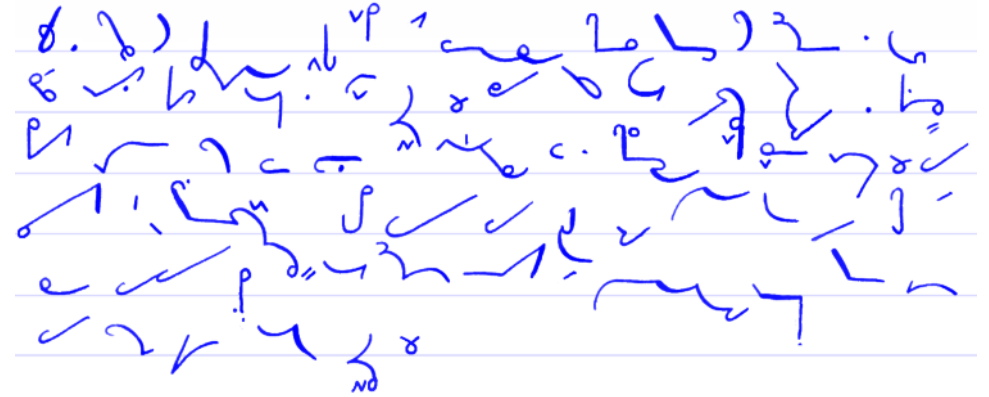
Lord Mayor's Show

Towards the end of the parade came the Lord Mayor's golden coach, a very old and splendidly ornate vehicle, pulled by magnificent horses and surrounded by guards in uniforms from past centuries. This coach can be seen year round in the Museum of London where you can get a good leisurely close-up view of all the detail. I enjoyed watching the groups of Horse Guards go by, and the horses were perfectly groomed and kitted out in just as

much finery as the dignitaries and the Lord Mayor himself. One particular beautiful white horse seemed to have glowing yellow legs as he passed us and went up the street, but then I realised it was the headlights of the large van that was following at a little distance behind to act as a spacer between them* and the next set of groups.

* Omission phrase "betwee(n) them"

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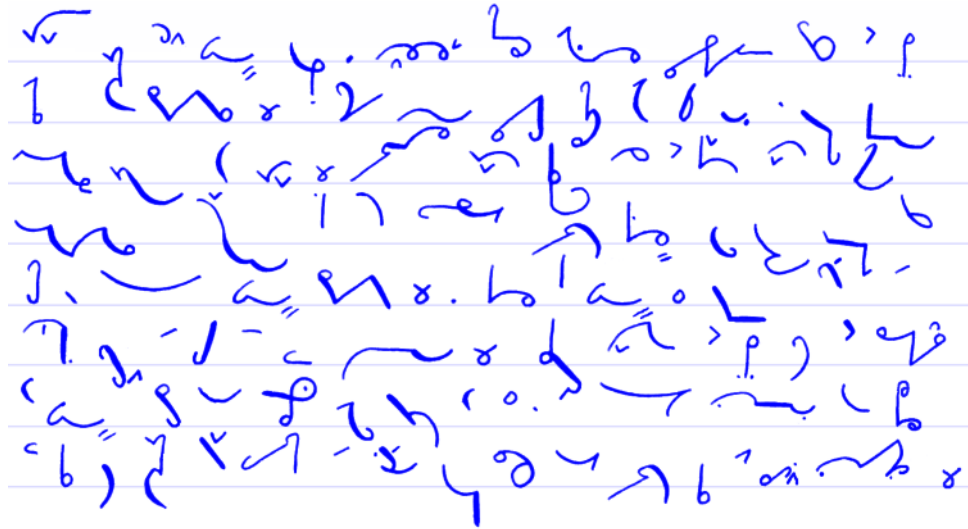
Lord Mayor's Show

Just as the procession was disappearing out of sight and the cleansing trucks began their work, a few spots of rain turned into a light shower. As we passed along the riverside pathway, the Thames started to look very cold, grey and unpleasant, with a darkening sky to match. We hurried on to

Blackfriars Station, where we did not have to wait long for our train and soon we were sitting in the warm carriage and looking forward* to getting back home, away from the chilly November showers. (689 words)

* Omission phrase "looking fo(r)ward"

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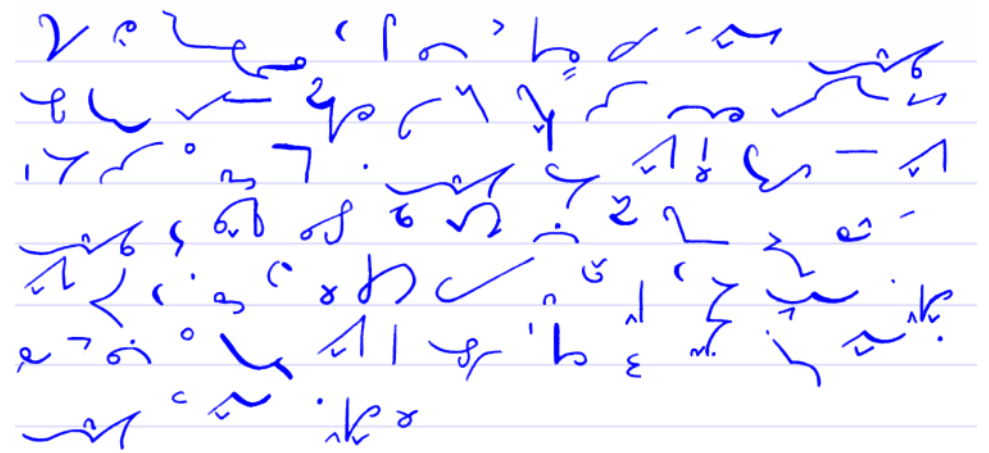
River Thames

I like to travel around London, visiting the museums, attractions and famous historical places of the city and its suburbs. There are many hidden treasures and they just need a bit of digging and investigation to bring them to light. Regardless of my destination, most of the time my journey involves arriving at or crossing the River Thames, even if only to get the fast train to another London suburb. The Thames at London is big, broad and muddy* brown, and

generally quite cold looking. It has been the life of the city through all the centuries that London has been in existence, and even before that as a natural magnet for settlements, with its ease of travel by water and abundant food sources in the river itself and the surrounding marshland.

* "muddy" Helpful to insert the first vowel, as "moody" could also make sense when describing landscape

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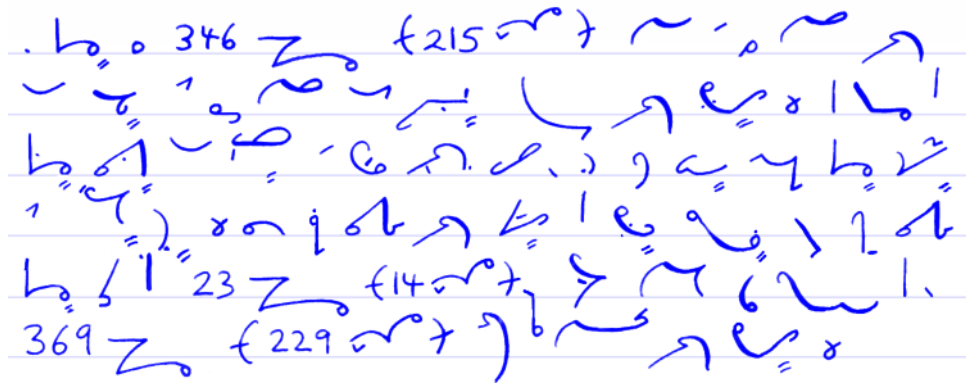
River Thames

There are lots of facts and figures* that tell some of the Thames story, and writing the numerals instead of having to recall shorthand outlines will, I hope*, provide little moments of relief - but only little as you cannot get a numeral "nearly" right! Everyone can write numerals without the slightest hesitation, and that is also the aim of shorthand practice, to hear the sound and write the shape without a second

thought. It is also where you find out that intellectually knowing an outline is not quite the same as being able to write it instantly on demand, when you compare writing a numeral with writing an outline.

* Omission phrase "fac(t)s (and) figures" "I (h)ope" Only use "fac(t)s" in a common phrase, so that it is never misread as "fax". More often it can be phrased as "(f)acts".

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River Thames

The Thames is 346 kilometres (215 miles) long, and is the longest* river in England and the second longest* in the UK, after the River Severn. It begins at Thames Head in Gloucester and flows roughly west to east, through London and into the Thames Estuary and the North Sea. Some consider the head of the River Churn at Seven Springs to be the true* head of the Thames, which would add 23 kilometres (14 miles) to its overall* length, thus bringing it to

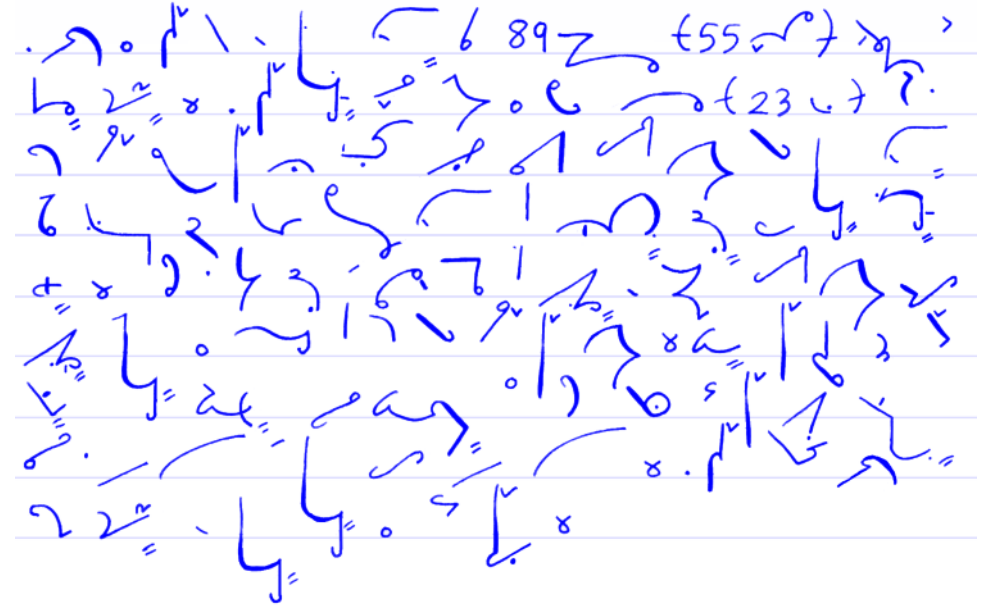
369 kilometres (229 miles) and therefore longer than the River Severn.

* "longest" Alternative outline that omits the G stroke

* "true" Always insert the vowel in this, and in "outer" "utter", to help differentiate

* "overall" Full strokes, not using the short form

Horizontal lines for writing practice.



River Thames

The river is tidal up to Teddington Lock which is 89 kilometres (55 miles) upstream of the Thames Estuary. The tidal rise and fall is 7 metres (23 feet) although a very high spring tide may occasionally raise the head water level above Teddington Lock, and this effect would be felt as far as the lock at Molesey Weir near Hampton* Court. There is an additional weir and sluice gates at Richmond, to ensure the water level

between Richmond and Teddington is maintained at or above half-tide level. London tide tables, issued by the Port of London Authority, use London Bridge as their basis, with the tide reaching Putney half an hour later, and Teddington one hour later. The tidal part of the river from the Estuary to Teddington is called the Tideway. * Hampton" Proper names always use the Imp stroke, necessary for distinction

Horizontal lines for writing practice.



Fraser's Fright

I was really a diamond in the rough in shorthand terms but, armed with my shorthand certificates, I headed for the job agency* to offer my services as a temp* note-taker. I knew I had to play my cards right and so I took to power dressing, consisting of a sharp suit with knife edge crease in the trousers and expensive looking silk tie. I arrived at the agency in the nick of time, just before the heavens opened and it rained cats and dogs*. But every cloud has a silver lining, as no-one else turned up that day and I felt I had the pick of the crop with job offers. After some quality time of questioning over my skills, I proved I was no lame duck*. The cat did not get my tongue and I was without a care in the world* as I proffered my qualifications*.

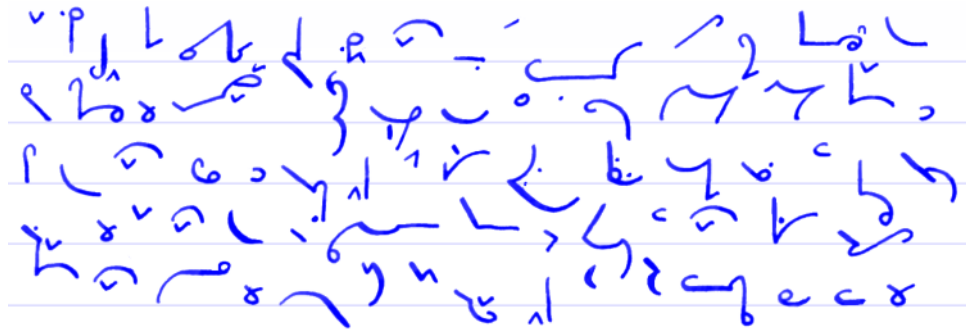


Fraser's Fright

I was given a humble assignment* to take the minutes of a short meeting at a small local business. I felt this would be a no-brainer on which I could cut my teeth, and fit myself to take on board greater things. The company was as old as the hills and I was sure that the ancient board members would be talking through their hats, slowly and hesitatingly, and full of clichés (for which I had many excellent shorthand phrases). The assignment would be the life of Riley for me, a prelude to my career really taking off and heading towards the

high life, and the pleasant* prospect of being a top notch earner. This would be easy money indeed until I was ready to take on the real McCoy, up in the city or in the law courts.

- * "agency" Using stroke N, to help differentiate from "agent" which has N hook and stroke T
- * "temp" A common term for someone who does temporary work, usually through an agency
- "dogs" "duck" Best to insert the vowel
- * Omission phrase "in (the) world"
- * "qualifications" You could use the optional contraction "qualifi(ca)tion" but that is very similar to "cultivation" which could also make sense in some contexts. If you decide to adopt the contraction, ensure you always insert the intervening vowel in "cultivation".
- * "assignment" Contraction therefore on the line
- * "pleasant" Insert the vowel in this and "pleasing", as they are similar in outline and meaning



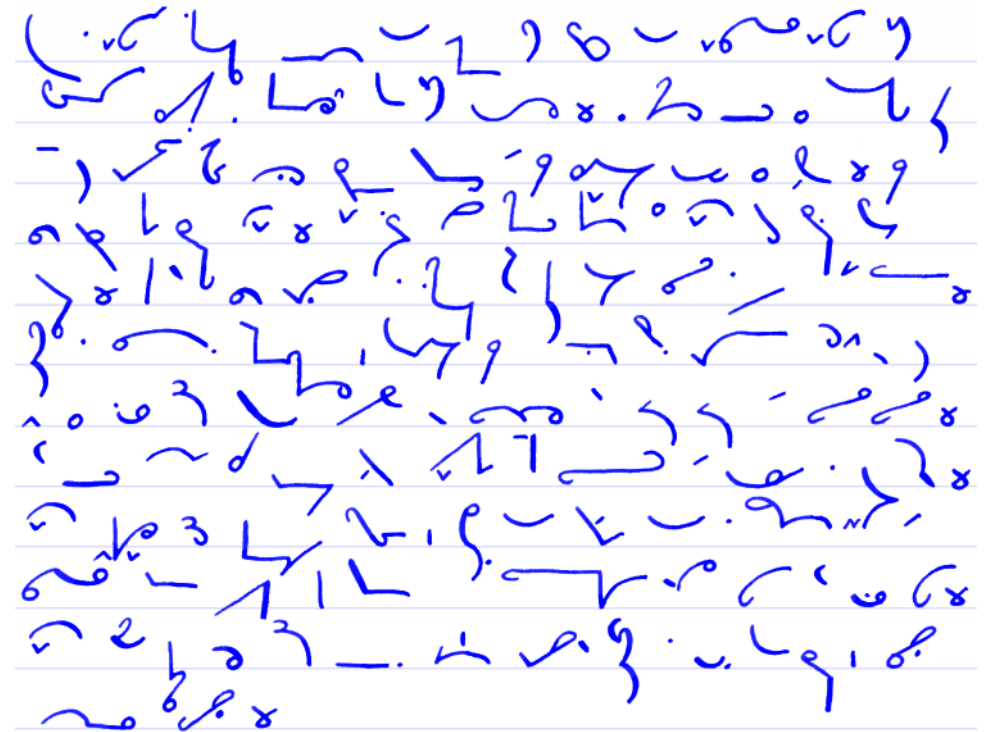
Fraser's Fright

I sat down at the head of the table, set out* my kit, and quickly ran through the documents for special terms. I realised that there was no such thing as a free lunch and only time would tell if my efforts would peter out and the whole shebang descend into the pits, with tears before bedtime. I might have to slink back to the agency with my tail between my legs. Maybe I was about to find out that all that glitters* is not gold.

* "set out" Halving to represent "out", similarly "carried out"

"glitters" This common proverb comes from original quotes that use the archaic word "glisters" (Shakespeare, Merchant of Venice, and last line of the cat/goldfish poem by Thomas Grey)

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Fraser's Fright

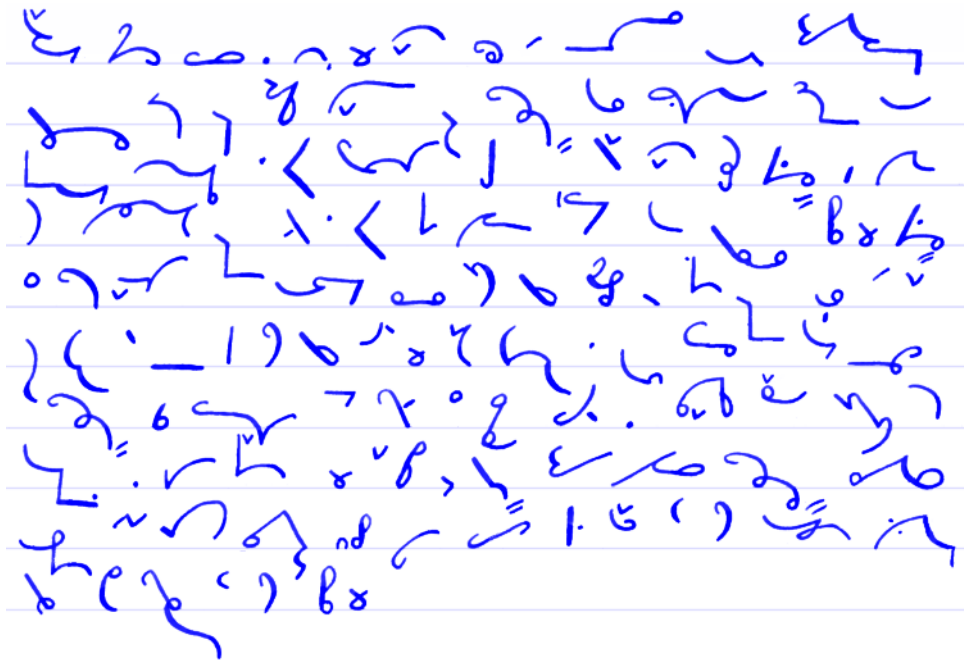
After a while the attendees came in and took their places in silence, while I was frantically searching the documents for all their names. The chairman gave his introduction, which was quite easy to record, and then the main speaker began and he certainly knew his stuff*. He seemed to speak at the speed of light. I completely lost track of time as my pen sped over the pages. It all seemed to last an eternity although it was only half an hour on the clock. There was a smattering of technical terms, but fortunately he kept stopping to look around to see how his comments were being received, to murmurs of "Here, here" and "Yes, yes".

That gave me the chance to catch up, write the odd correction and insert a vowel or two. My outlines were not dictionary perfect but, as they say, any port in a storm and as long as I can read it back correctly, all's well that ends well. My shorthand teacher's words were coming home to roost, that there was a need for speed but haste makes waste.

* "stuff" Insert the vowel, as in this particular context it could be misread as "staff"

* Omission phrase "tech(nical) terms"

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Fraser's Fright

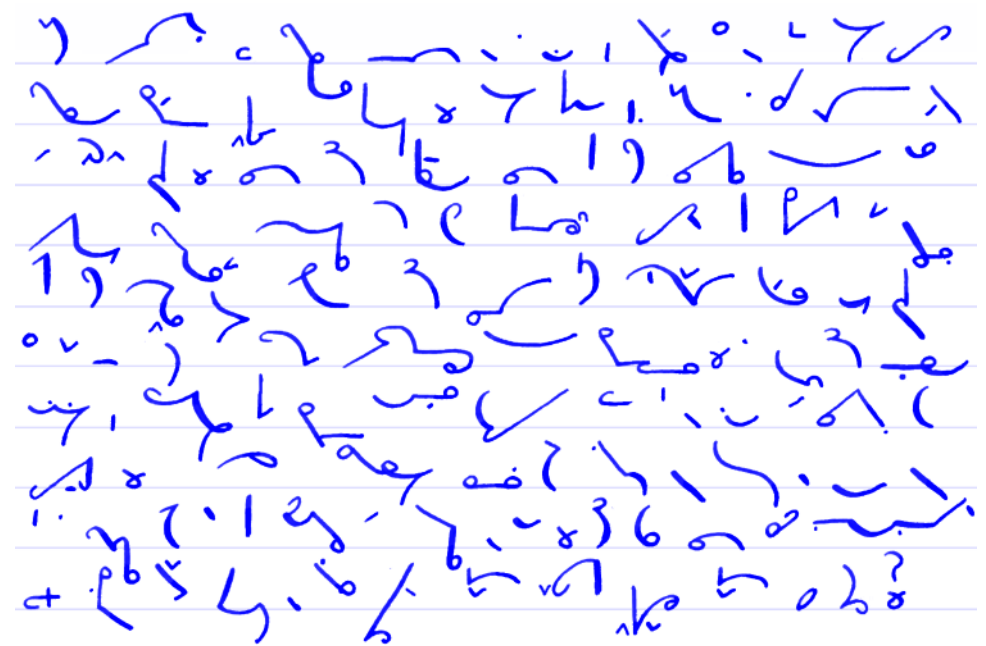
Finally the chairman closed the meeting. My friends and colleagues, now that we have concluded* business matters* here today, I would just like to thank Fraser for his sterling work in taking the minutes, a job formerly done by my assistant James who left us last month to take up a job at the local College for Business Studies. James has very kindly encouraged six of their best shorthand students* to attempt to take notes, and I see that they have all given it their best shot. I think they may have a few questions* for the excellent Fraser who is clearly quite the pro, as he has not shown the slightest sign of pressure or fatigue the whole time. I suggest to the Board that we request Fraser's services next time*, and I also hope that the students will one day find

they are in the same elevated position, as they persevere with their studies.*

* Omission phrase "that we have (con)cluded" "biz(ness) matters" "las(t) month" "ne(k)s(t) time" "shorthand s(t)udents"

* "questions" Optional contraction

* Of course, Fraser is well aware that minutes of meetings are always confidential, so he did first ask the chairman if he could use a paraphrase of part of the closing address before writing this article and, having gained permission, sent him a copy of his draft for approval. Clearly the meeting was of a general nature, or they would not have invited shorthand trainees to be present.



Fraser's Fright

I was relieved when proceedings came to an end but puzzled as to why only one person spoke out of the twenty. Only at the end did I have a chance to look up and around the table. Some were dozing, some had their heads in their hands, reading the previous minutes or other documents, one or two* had started on the biscuits and had their mouths full, and several were secretly on their mobile phones under the table, as I could see from the reflections in their spectacles. A few were gazing intently but nervously at the speaker, in case they were called on to comment and hoping they wouldn't*. Most surprisingly six of them

appeared to be far too young to be on a board of directors*, and they all had shorthand pens and pads to hand. What was this, some sort of kangaroo court, set up by the agency, to pass judgement on my wild outlines, on my first assignment?

* Omission phrase "one (or) two" "board (of) dir(ectors)". You would not use this latter phrase if the subject matter were doctors/medical, in which case you would include the doubled K stroke.

* "wouldn't" Apostrophied versions use full outlines and vocalised, not short forms

