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## Blogs - 2020 - April

**2** Streams

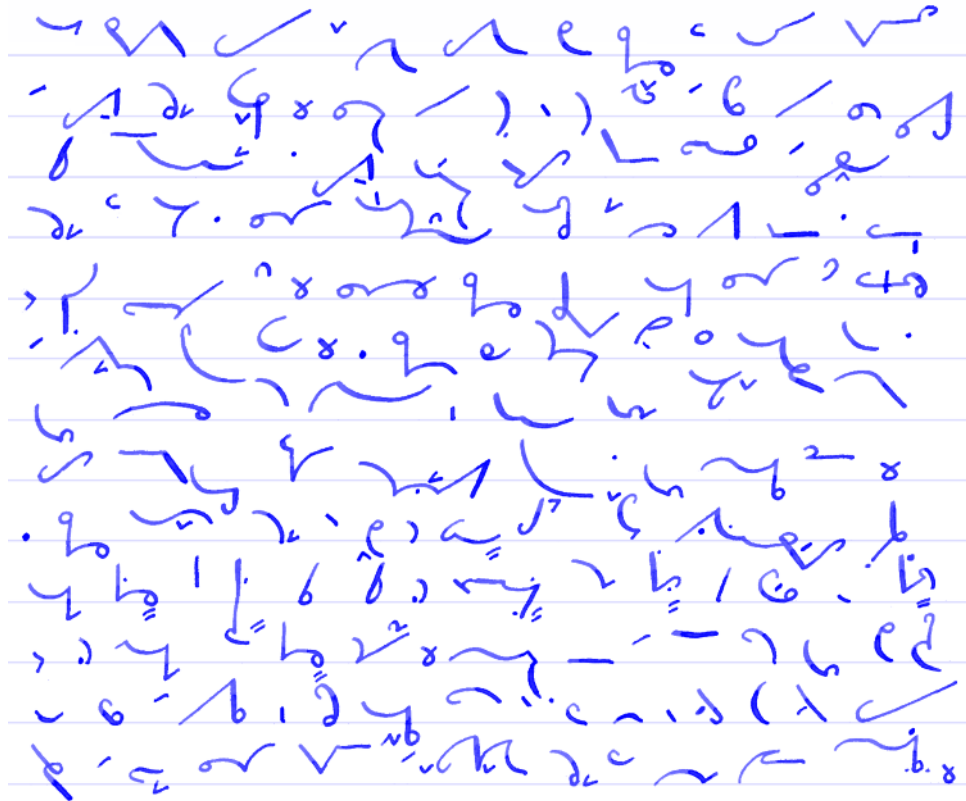
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PDF Date: 23 April 2020



**Streams**

In the suburb where I live, we have several streams with narrow parkland and wooded areas alongside. Some of them\* are easy to see and find, and others are somewhat hidden, just accompanying a wooded footpath between back gardens and housing areas, with only a small unassuming entrance on the main road to give a clue to the shady greenery beyond. Sometimes the streams disappear into small short culverts and reappear further along. The stream is not so much\* lost as invisible for a few metres or longer, but, having viewed the online map, one can be confident that it will re-emerge after a few minutes' walk. The streams in my area of south east London join either the Ravensbourne, discharging into the Thames at Deptford, which is just east of Greenwich, or the Darent\*\* which flows to Dartford to the east and into the Thames estuary.

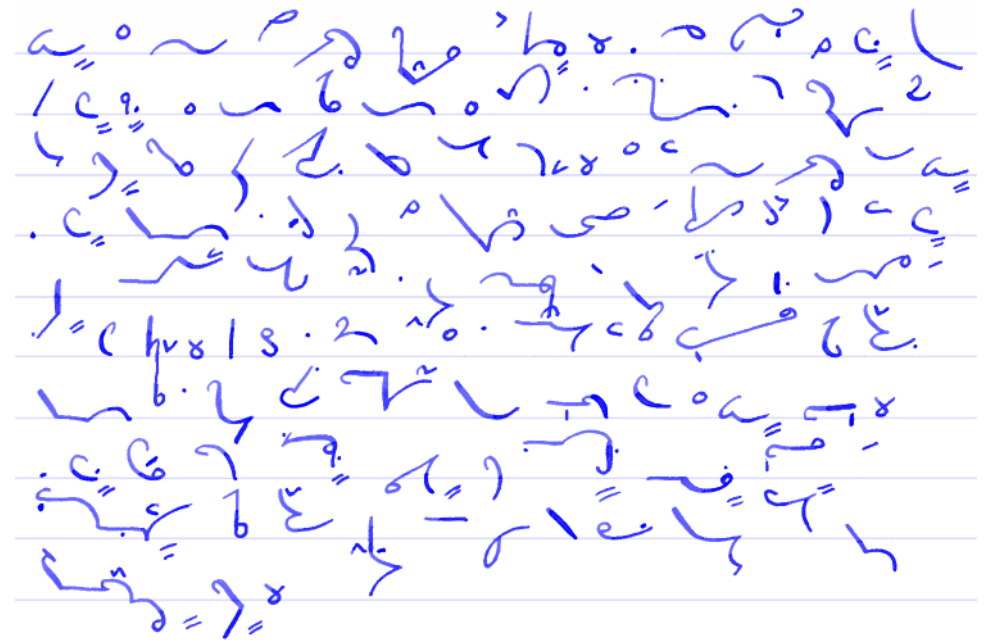
Many of them\* come and go from view, as they travel under buildings and roads, but there is nowadays more of an effort made to open them up where possible and create small park and wildlife areas, in order to\* improve the local amenities.

\* Omission phrases "some (of) them" "in ord(er to)"

\* "so much" Includes the M stroke in order to join the phrase

\* "many of them" Include the "of" to differentiate this from the omission phrase "many oth(er)"

\*\* The river has a different spelling and pronunciation from the village of Darenth through which it flows



**Streams**

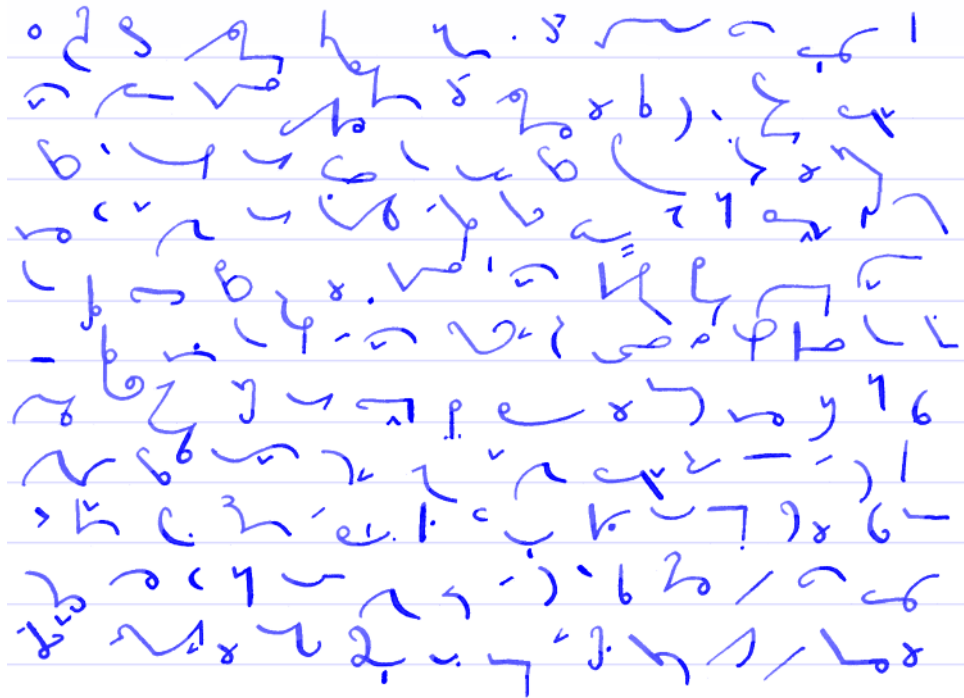
London has many lost rivers, tributaries of the Thames. The most well-known is the Fleet, after which Fleet Street is named, and this name is also a metonym or verbal shorthand for the British press, which was originally based in that area. As with many rivers in London, the Fleet became an open sewer as the population increased and at one point was called Fleet Ditch, carrying in addition a foul mixture of butcher's offal, dead animals and other detritus. It spent a short time\* as a canal with wharves, and then finally became a drainage channel\*, gradually being covered over as London grew. The Fleet flows from Hampstead\*

Heath through Camden, King's Cross and Clerkenwell, and its final outfall can still be seen beneath the north pier of Blackfriars Bridge.

\* Omission phrase "short (t)ime"

\* "channel" Ensure the Chay slopes correctly, compare "tunnel" in para 4 which is similar in meaning

\* "Hampstead" Place names always retain the Imp stroke. Note also the first dot vowel is placed to the left of the Tick Hay.



**Streams**

As travel has been restricted at the present time\*, I have made a point of looking more closely at my local parks, woodlands, ponds and streams\*. It is easy to overlook the nearby places of interest in the quest for new places further afield. I pretended to myself that I lived in the farthest\* opposite part of London and that I had scoured the map for distant green spaces to visit. The parks "on my doorstep" suddenly looked like good destinations\* to aim for and my appreciation of them increased, as the necessity decreased for packed lunches and changes of train in the crowded city centre. I can say to myself, I wish I had this lovely place in my area and if I lived nearby I would go and see it all the time, every warm and sunny day, with no delay in getting there. Then I can remind myself that I do in fact\* live here, and so all its charms are more closely observed and

appreciated. In addition there is no need to get on the train before rush hour begins.

\* Omission phrase "at (the) present time". The verbal phrase "at the present" should not be made into an omission phrase in shorthand, as it would be indistinguishable from the normal phrase "at present".

\* "and streams" Joining the "and" enables the phrase to show the S and R hook in full

\* "farthest" Note that "furthest" has F with R hook

\* "destinations" Keep the Shun Hook clear, so it is not misread as "destiny" which has a similar meaning. Also note "distinction" and the contraction "distinguish" use the Stee Loop.

\* Omission phrase "in (f)act"



**Streams**

My local stream rises from the pond in the park, runs under the roadway for a short distance and then appears from a tunnel\* as a shallow and clear watercourse. It has a bed of pebbles with a few sandy patches and no muddy parts at all, and a fair number of small weirs. These always fascinate me, they are only a foot or so high, but the foaming water curls back on itself, with the result that floating rubbish such as footballs or plastic bottles bob endlessly\* at the base of the step, and never get swept downstream. One can watch for ages hoping that the poor old football gets released from its\* treadmill\*, but that never happens. Very low water may reduce the turbulence to allow the stray items to escape their foam trap and

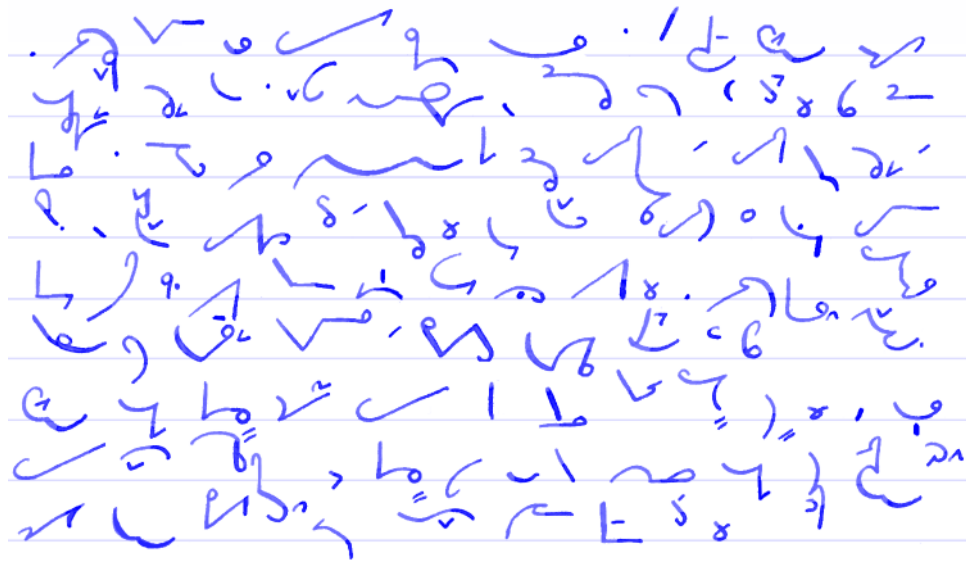
they would end up gathering at some snagging point further along, a calm corner away from the eddies or piling up behind a fallen branch.

\* "tunnel" See note on the similar "channel" above

\* "endlessly" Compare the distinguishing outline "needlessly" which has full N and D strokes

\* "from its" Halving to represent the T of "its"

\* "treadmill" On its own "tread" has full Tr and D strokes



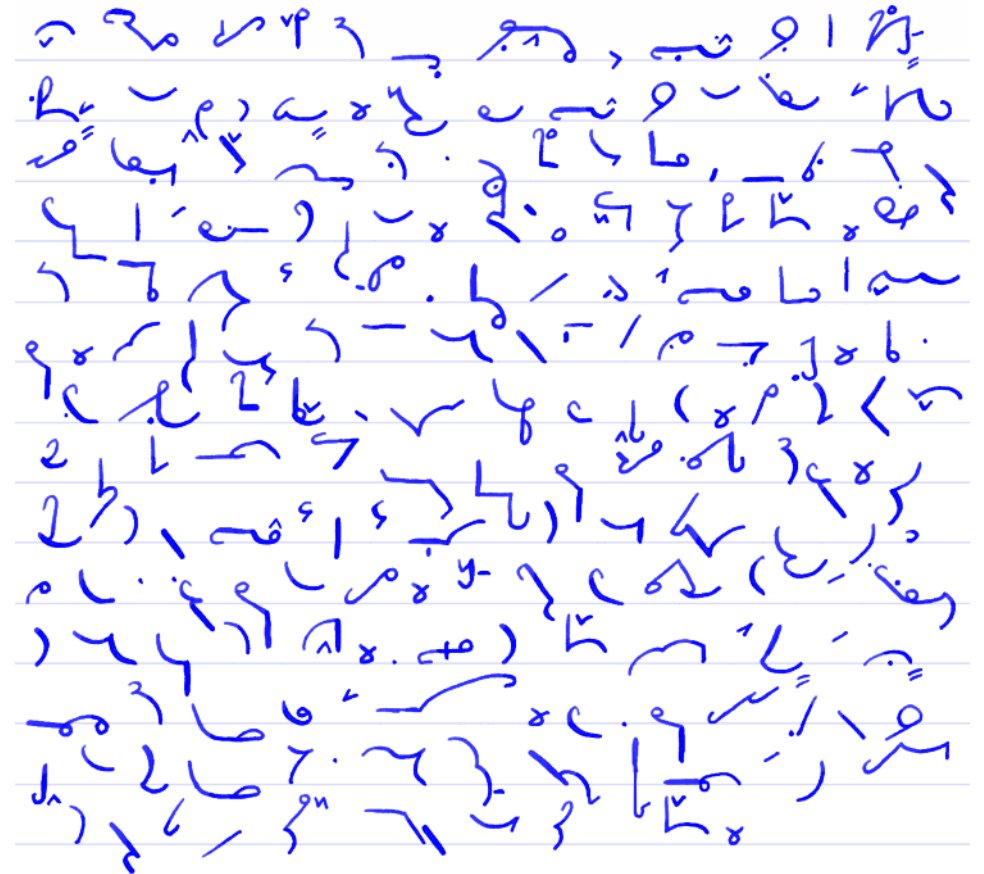
**Streams**

The riverside park ends where the stream enters a large tunnel, flowing between industrial areas for a while and inaccessible to walkers\* from that point. This walk takes a couple of hours, lingering at the weirs, waterfalls and water bird areas, and stopping to identify woodland plants and birds. If the fine weather has faded, we can take the shorter straight route back home along the main road. The river continues northwards, passing through various parks and suburban villages, joining with others,

and finally flowing into the Thames estuary where it becomes part of the North Sea. Who knows where my modest contribution to the Thames will end up, mixed into the seawater and travelling around the world, having started here in my local duck pond. (794 words)

\* "walkers" Being a derivative of "walk" it just adds the R stroke. A base word like "wicker" follows the normal rule and is written with Way and Kr strokes.

Blank lined paper for writing practice.



**Shorthand Greyhound**

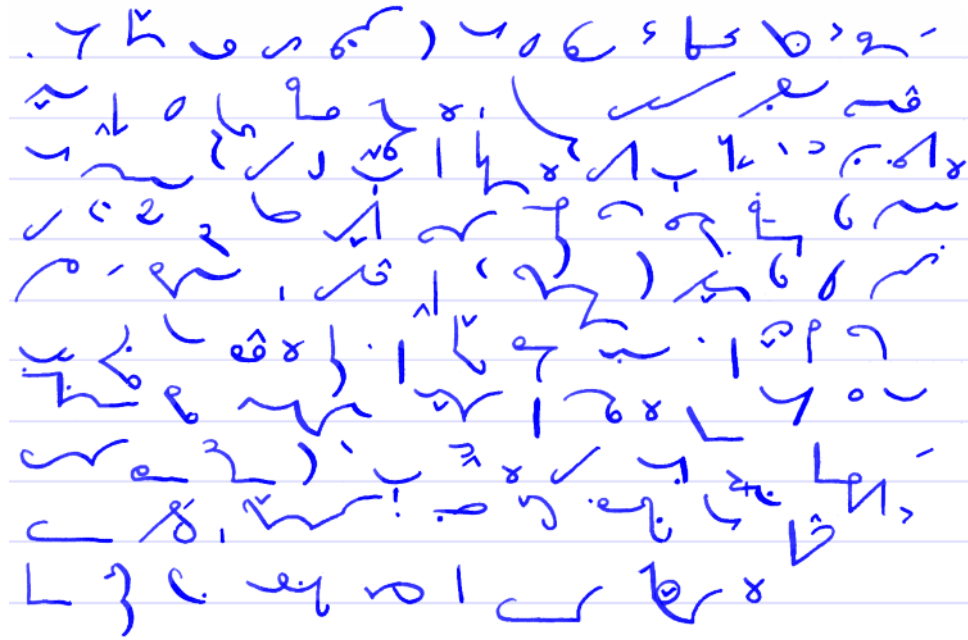
My grandparents on one side were keen race goers to the greyhound races at Charlton Stadium in south east London. I have only seen greyhound races in passing on the television and was fascinated by the mechanical hare, an irresistible target for the dogs who give chase, expecting to be able to overtake it and sink their teeth in. All is quiet until the start time. As soon as the hare gets level with the stalls, the doors are opened and the greyhounds take off\* at lightning speed. Little do they know that the hare can never be caught, much less killed and eaten. It is an ever\* receding target designed to pull the fastest effort out of them. Such was the job of my shorthand teacher at the commercial college, to keep the dictation speed always ahead of what was comfortable. She was training us to be greyhounds, with the

difference that the goal was indeed achievable, if only she would let us have a comfortable speed for once. I don't remember that ever happening though and complacency was never fed or allowed. The course was time limited and the January and May exams were fixed\* events on the calendar. However, the speed we would each put ourselves down for was not fixed\* until a month or so before the date of the exam and she wanted us to be able to achieve our highest capability in the shortest time.

\* "take off" F Hook to represent "off"

\* "an ever" This needs extra care, as it could be heard as "a never", and vice versa, depending on the precision of the speaker's pronunciation

\* "fixed" "focussed" Insert the vowel in "focussed" as these are similar in meaning



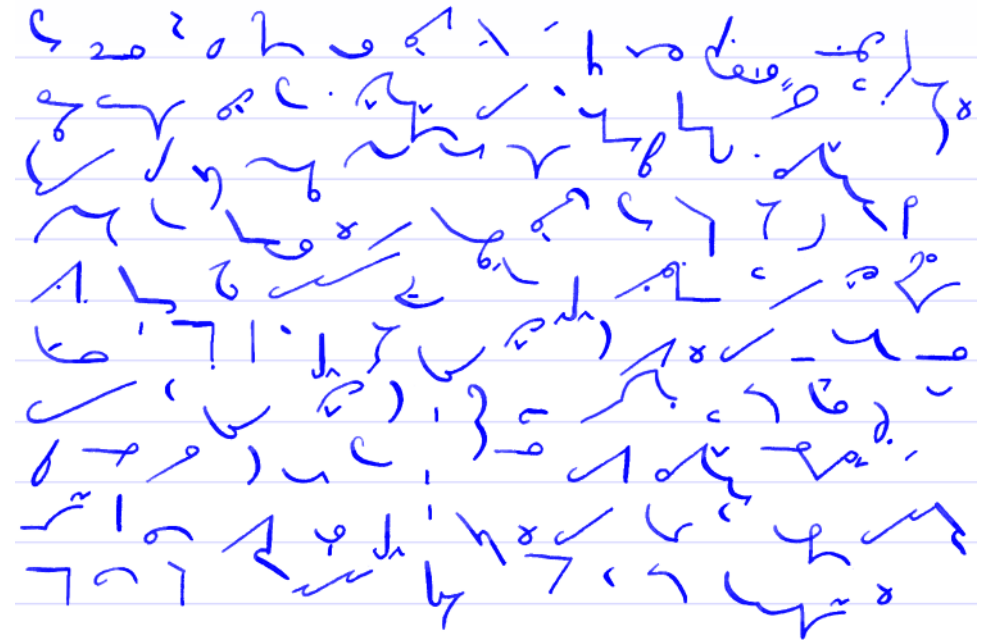
**Shorthand Greyhound**

The only time things went slowly was in the first lesson, with the description of the basis of the system and writing out the first few strokes and vowels. But after that we were racing greyhounds in the making, although we did not know it at the time. We had no idea of what lay ahead. We thought shorthand would be fast to write merely because it was more simply constructed than longhand letters and spelling but we found out that very much more\* was required than just learning new shapes for sounds. It was a different type of skill needing a different mindset\* from academic subjects, and involved entirely

different methods. Book knowledge, as in normal school work, was of no account. We needed to cultivate dexterity and quick responses but primarily a cast iron concentration for the duration of the take and there was every incentive to master it quickly and decisively.

\* Omission phrase "very much m(ore)" Full stroke M in order to join the phrase

\* "mindset" Not in dictionary, this could equally well be written with all full strokes in order to make one outline



**Shorthand Greyhound**

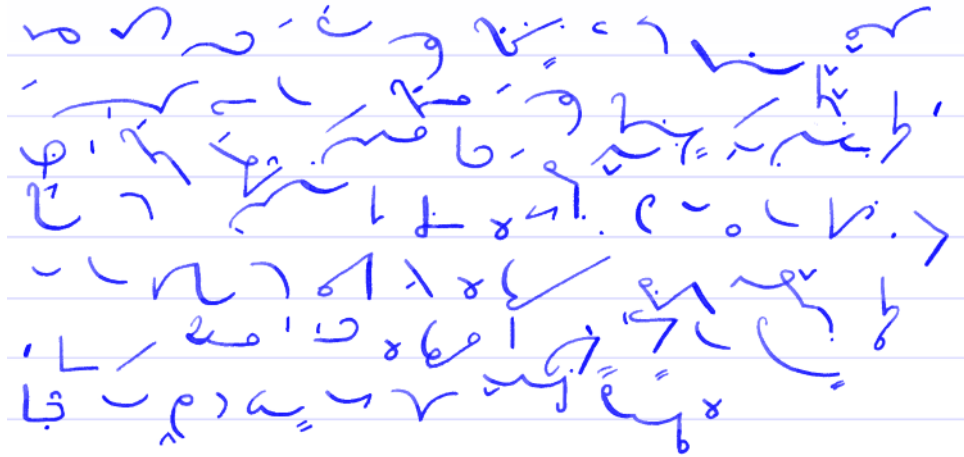
Over the weeks of that first term things hotted up and due to Miss Jefferson's excellent teaching skills, clearly honed over a lifetime, we all undertook the dictation races with enthusiasm. They were generally two or three\* minutes long in the early stages, a survivable length for beginners. Our pencils hovered over the pad until she said, "Ready, begin" and then we were shooting off down the racetrack with our minds sharply focussed\* on getting it all down, until the finish line was reached. We could\* never guess where that finish line was, but there was great relief when her voice ceased, not just because the race was

now over but because we had survived the experience and actually had some readable notes down on paper. We felt that next time\* we would be able to get more of it and we would definitely catch that hare eventually.

\* Omission phrases "two (or) three" "ne(k)s(t) time"

\* "focussed" "fixed" Insert the vowel in "focussed" as these are similar in meaning

\* "we could" Not phrased, so it is not misread as "we can"



**Shorthand Greyhound**

I must also mention and honour Mrs Bravery with her beaming smile and motherly care for our progress and Mrs Trimnell, our typewriting teacher, who insisted on proper\* posture, alertness, attention and speedy writing, not languid drawing or lolling at the desk. "The other hand is for turning the\* page, not for holding your head up." They were superb and inspiring teachers who took our shorthand class on occasion. This was at

Woolwich College for Further Education in south east London in the early nineteen seventies.

\* "proper" Always insert the vowel, and the diphone in "appropriate", as they are similar in outline and meaning

\* "turning the" Dot The used, rather than Tick The, so that the parts are written in the order spoken

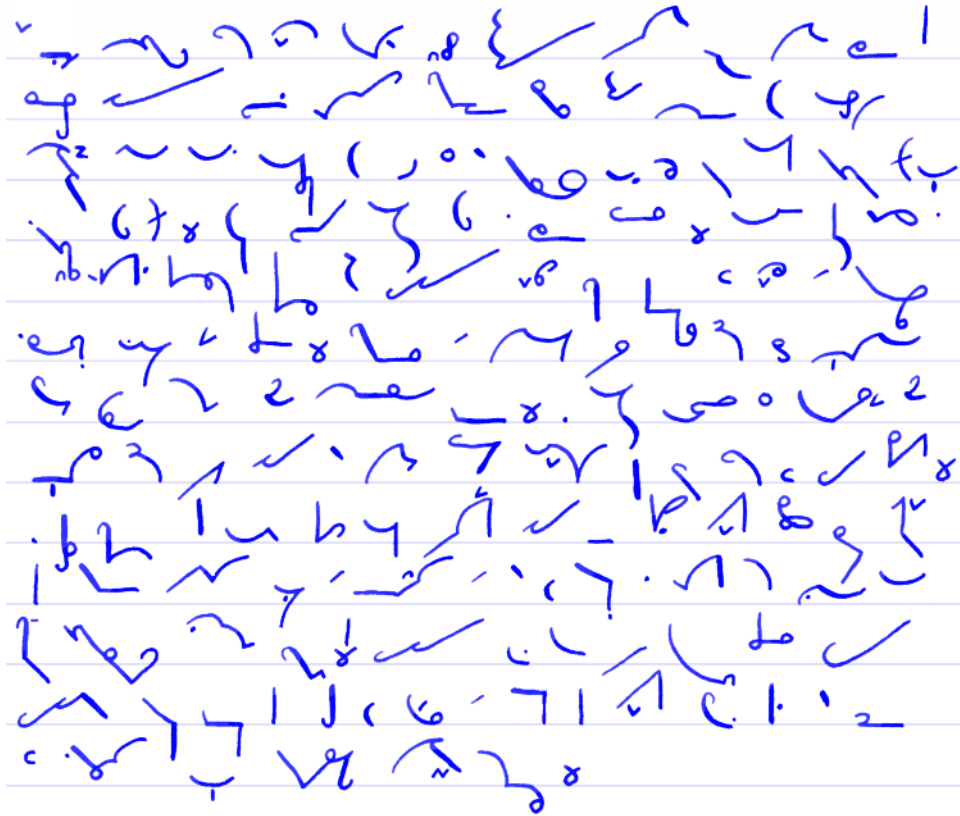


**Shorthand Greyhound**

Miss Jefferson would have to deal with a whole range of speeds, often giving the faster dictation at the beginning, so the faster students could be reading their notes whilst others took slower dictations. Just listening to the fast speaking makes a slower passage seem much more\* reasonable and easier. She had to juggle all our different abilities and provide what we needed to stretch us on to further gains. If someone said they felt such and such

speed was a bit beyond them, she would gently say, why don't you just give it a try, it is really short you might surprise yourself. They would do so and be delighted that they got something down, even if only a few snatches. These small victories built up towards the greater goal, and impossible sounding speed figures began to seem a little more reachable.

\* Omission phrase "much m(ore)



**Shorthand Greyhound**

I gained the impression from my fellow students that they were relieved to have left school at 16 and were eager to learn practical subjects that would make them instantly employable, and in any\* industry they wished, as all businesses need words put onto paper (no computers then). They had greater enthusiasm than a school class. In fact\* it was almost a holiday atmosphere at times, although we were silent during dictations, with minds and pencils concentrating intently on the task. Breaks and lunch hours were spent mulling over the lesson or the shorthand magazine together. The enthusiasm increased as various shorthand goals were reached and we all left the college entirely different people from when we started. The distant dream had now turned into reality and we could\* at last\* write as fast as speech and

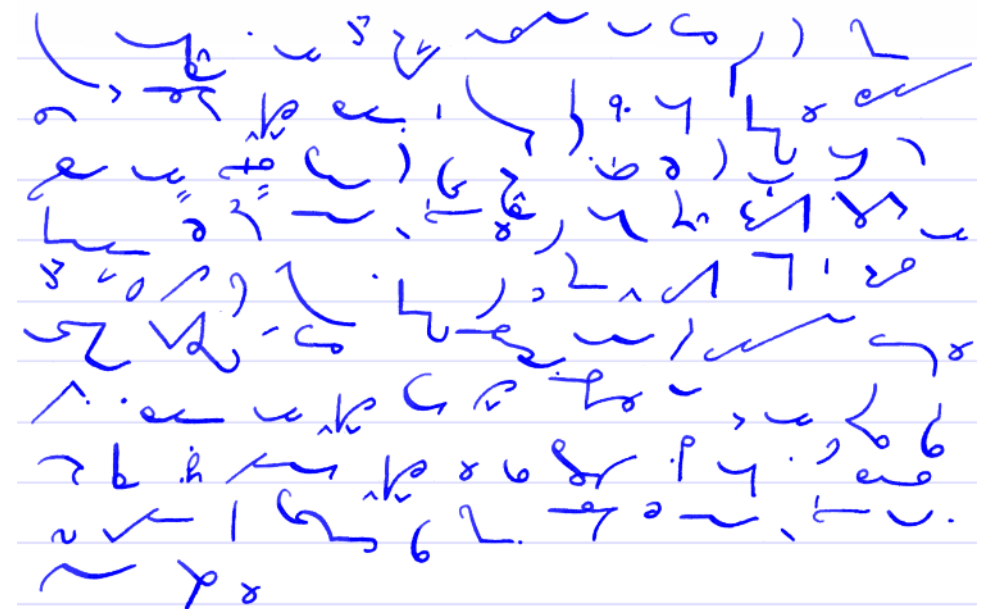
type it back rapidly, neatly and accurately, and all without batting an eyelid or letting any drop of perspiration mar the brow! We were fit for our future tasks, where we would be paid to get it done without fuss and get it right, every day, all week, with absolutely no "percentage of allowable errors".

\* "in any " Helpful to insert the final vowel in "any" when these two are adjacent

\* Omission phrase "in (f)act"

\* "we could" Not phrased, so it is not misread as "we can"

\* "at last" "at least" Always insert the vowel



**Shorthand Greyhound**

After introducing a new point of theory and answering any questions\*, she had us practise some of the example outlines singly, but after that it was straight into dictation. As we were using New Course, everything was within the two thousand commonest words, so no unusual or technical words were going to occur. She never assumed that we had absorbed the new point on the first run through and, after a dictation, she would ask how we had got on, always encouraging participation and questions\*, explaining anything on which we were not clear.

Repeating a single new outline along the line accustoms the hand to the new shapes, but this method does not constitute recalling the outlines. If it is subsequently set into a short sentence, you have to recall it over and over again\*, thus practising exactly what is going to occur in a longer passage.

\* "question" Optional contraction

\* Omission phrase "over (and) over again" The second "over" is reversed in order to make the join

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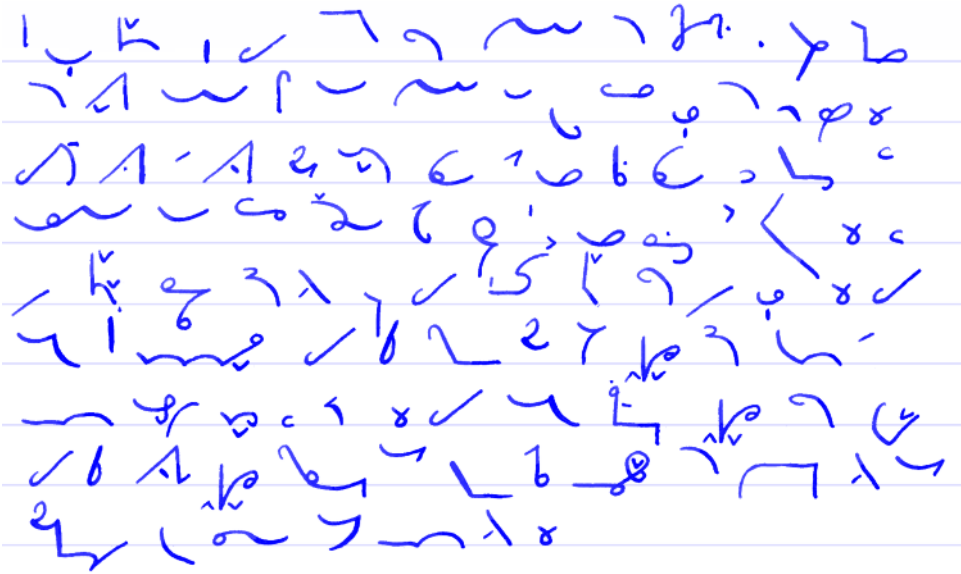
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**Shorthand Greyhound**

At no time\* did we copy from longhand or transliterate a passage of text, or write anything at all in longhand, not even class notes or word lists. We saw, read and wrote shorthand the entire lesson and the next day's lesson would begin with answering any questions\* arising, and then swiftly on to the next section of the chapter. When our typewriting skills were up to it we occasionally typed from our notes. We never had to memorise, we just practised shorthand until outlines were familiar and

came instantly to mind when heard. We never constructed outlines from theory, we just wrote the outlines presented in the book and its exercises, or looked up in the shorthand dictionary if something unusual came up.

\* "at no time" If you phrased this, it would need the vowel inserted, to differentiate from "at any time"

\* "question" Optional contraction

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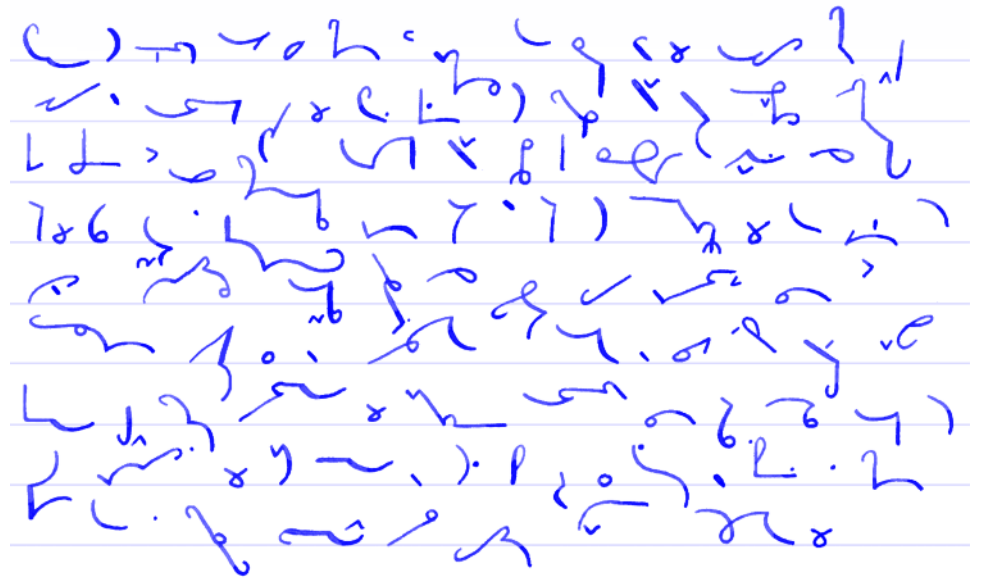
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**Shorthand Greyhound**

Everything was covered in the first term, with two terms for speed building. No-one dropped out and we all encouraged each other. Every take was preceded by both excitement and trepidation at the task of the next three minutes, followed by satisfaction at successfully writing most of it. This fuelled a determination to improve until all of it was captured. For home or lone learners nowadays possibly the most useful way to recreate some of the classroom urgency\* is to resolve never to

hit the stop button whilst taking down from your recording. I hope\* you can incorporate some of these methods into your schedule of learning. I was going to say "study" but that is far too static a term for a prospective greyhound race winner like yourself. (1364 words)

\* "urgency" Omits the N

\* Omission phrase "I (h)ope"

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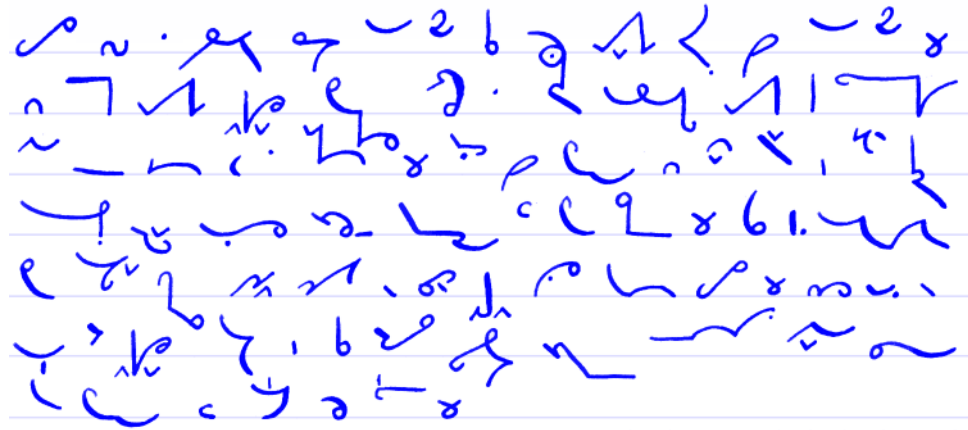
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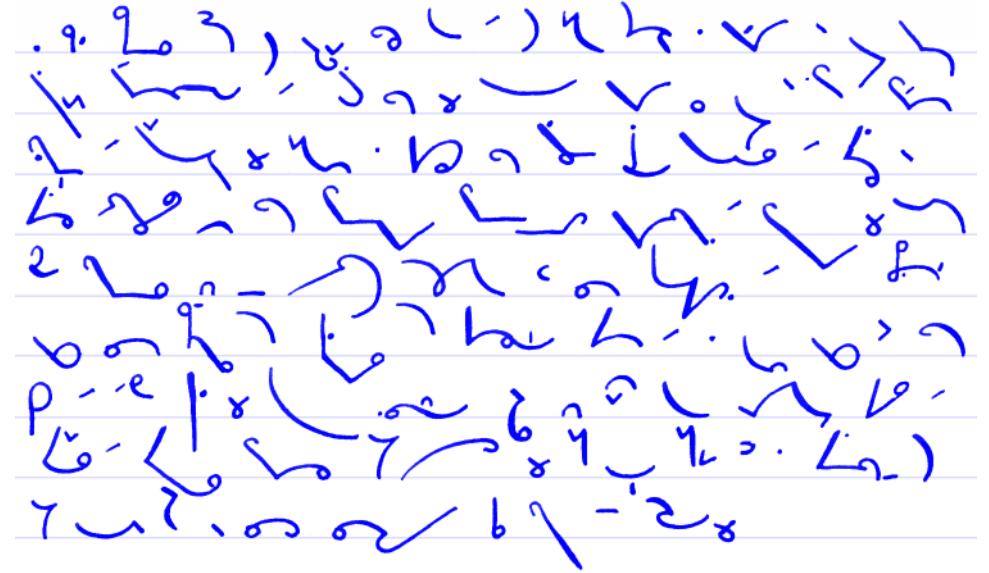




**Fruits**

Once you have a reasonable skill in shorthand, it is irresistible to write the shopping list in shorthand. You get to read the outlines several times and there is an incentive to read it correctly and not come home without an item. I can't list everything you might buy but I thought it would be interesting to find names of fruits

Horizontal lines for writing practice.



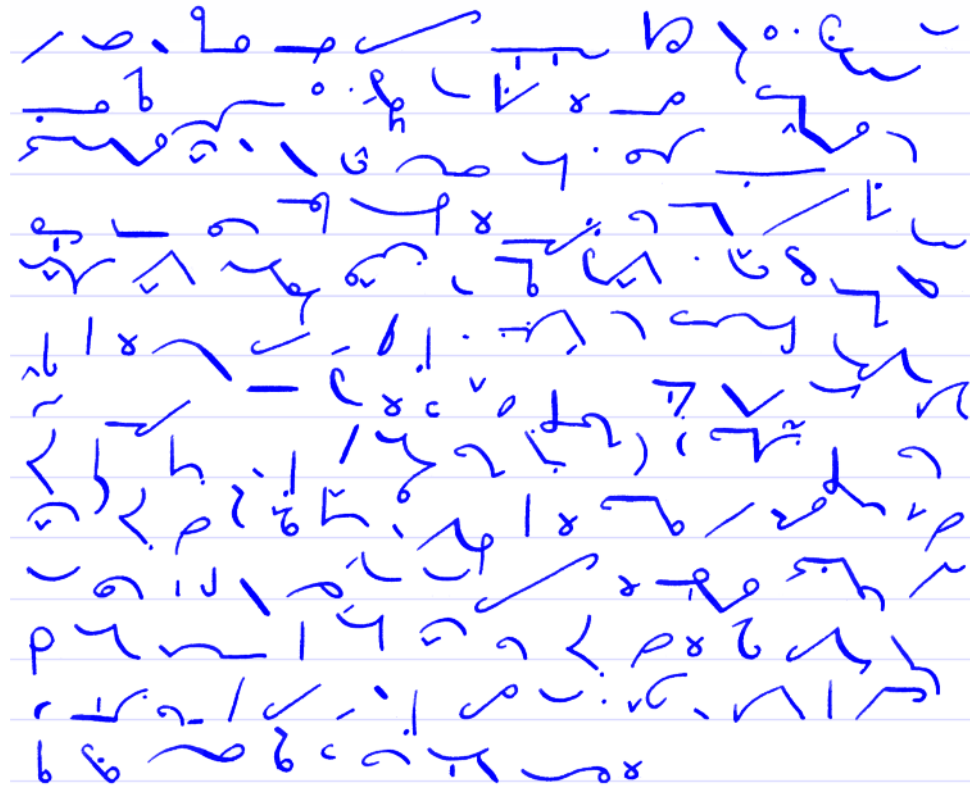
**Fruits**

The straight strokes were easy to find fruits for, and so I have assembled a bowl of peach, pear, papaya, pomegranate and passion fruit. Another bowl is full of apple, plum, apricot and pineapple. I have made a delicious fruit basket containing bananas and jars of jams and preserves made from blackberry, blackcurrant, bilberry and blueberry. In your shorthand breaks, you could\* refresh yourself with some tangerine and satsuma pieces, some strawberries or tayberries, or damson jam and a few pieces

Horizontal lines for writing practice.

of the very sweet and soft date. After consuming all these you might\* have to leave the cherries and Chinese and Japanese plums until later on. I had no idea what a jackfruit was until now, although to someone somewhere it is probably quite ordinary.

\* "you could" "you might" Not phrased, so they are not misread as "you can" "you may"



**Fruits**

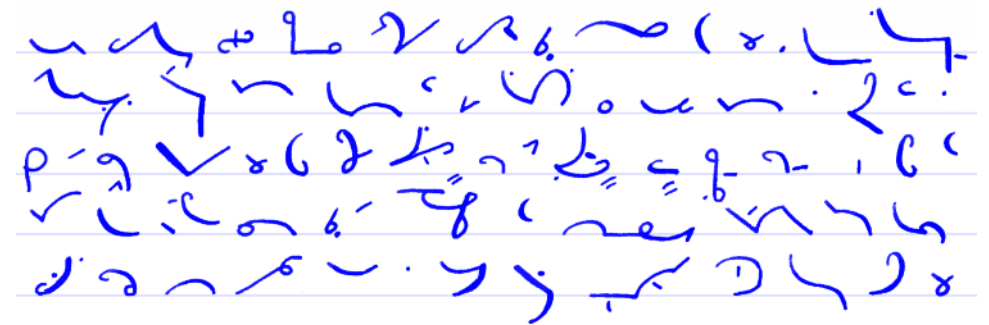
Our next two strokes give us the wonderful coconut, delicious both as a flavouring in cakes\* and its milk as a substitute\* for dairy. Currants, cloudberrries and cranberries might all be found mixed into a small cake or scone\*, to give some extra interest. Kiwi fruit can be rather tart if not entirely ripe, and unpleasantly slimy if it gets overripe, a fine balance to get the best out of it. Maybe we should just eat a cantaloupe or clementine if we have let the kiwi go over. When I first discovered the goji berry in the health shop, it was tempting to eat large handfuls from the packet, so that gradually disappeared from

my shopping list, although I think it is time to revisit it. Grapes are always on the list in summer, but tend to be missed off in winter. Gooseberries and grapefruit are not sweet enough to make it onto my fruit shopping list. And then we have the poor old ugly fruit, which we should all eat once in a while to help it regain its place amongst all those with more noble names.

\* "cakes" "cookies" Always insert the vowel

\* "substitute" Omits the first T sound

\* "scone" Can also be pronounced "sconn"



**Fruits**

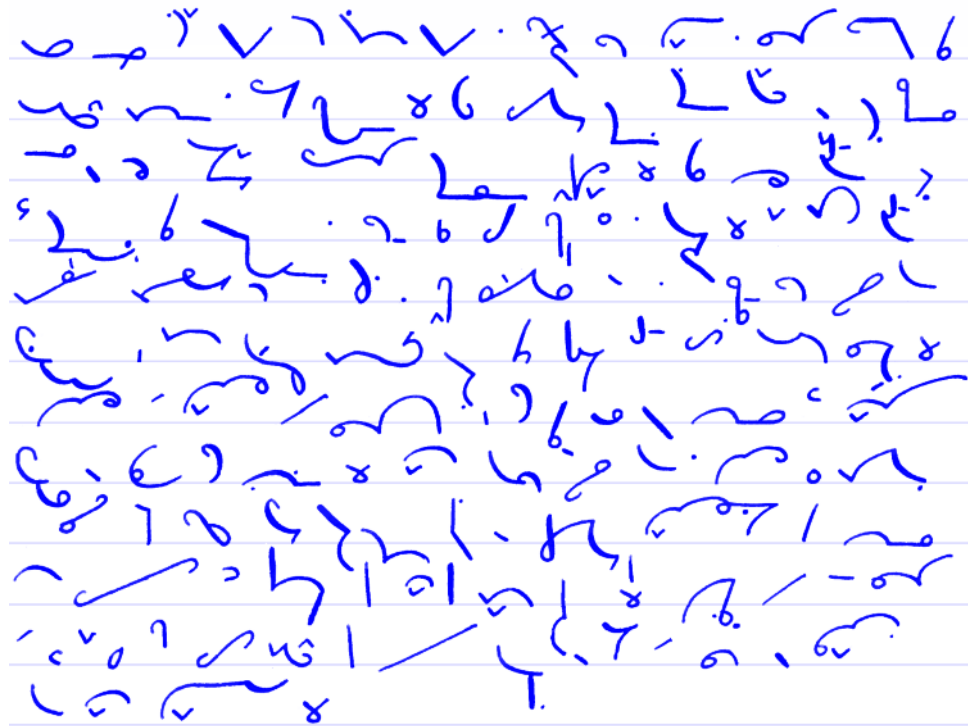
Now we have the curved strokes and there are one or two\* cheats amongst them. The fig, avocado and vanilla pod I am familiar with, but the falsa is new to me, a shrub with a sweet and sour berry. Then there is the Sharon fruit and the Shonan Gold citrus fruit, but other than that I will have to offer some cheats and can only suggest that

mixing the pulp of your favourite Asian fruits may result in an unusual beige coloured mush, for your pleasure.

\* Omission phrase "one (or) two"

\* "falsa" Also spelled "phalsa"

Blank lined area for notes, consisting of ten horizontal lines.

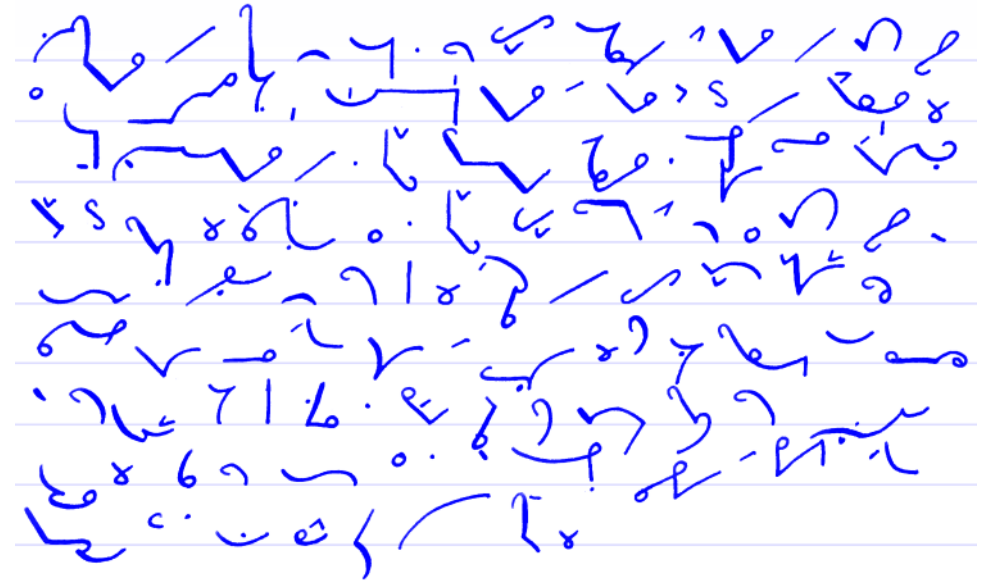


**Fruits**

Next comes the açai berry or palm berry, a purple fruit like a small grape, which is infused to make an energy drink. Then we have the zig zag vine, two zee strokes because two words, unlike the normal zigzag outline. This means I don't have to cheat with the zucchini, which is botanically a fruit but is generally treated as a vegetable. I also don't have to resort to using the word zest, the outer surface of a citrus fruit used for flavouring, but I am forced to mention the pith, which you definitely don't want in your smoothie. Lemons and limes are similar but their juice

needs to be mixed with milder flavours to lessen their impact. My favourite use for a lemon is to leave half of it pressed over the bathroom tap to dissolve the limescale, which makes me wonder what it might do to my teeth! Lychees are quite small, and when I first tried one, I found it rather fiddly to handle and somewhat too slimy for my liking.

\* "açai" Also spelled assai, and you could use a diphone if you preferred the pronunciation "ass-ah-ee"



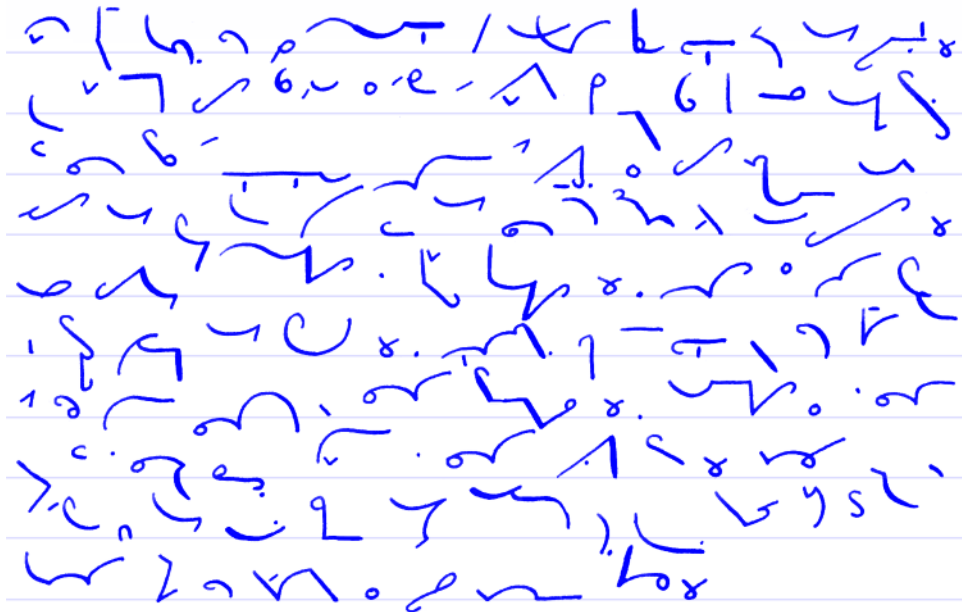
**Fruits**

Elderberries are traditionally made into a fruit wine in this country and the berries are also used as food colourants, but uncooked berries and parts of the plant are poisonous. Loganberries are a type of blackberry and this was an accidental cross pollination by the plant breeder. Sultana is a type of white grape and the word is also used to name the raisin made from it\*. Oranges are one of my ideal fruits, as long as the peel comes off easily and cleanly. They are neatly presented in segments, all very convenient until it ejects a spurt of

juice through too much\* pressure from impatient fingers. This fruit name has an interesting history and started off beginning with an N sound, which was later dropped.

\* "from it" Normally halved to represent the "it", but here that might be confused with "fruit"

\* "too much" Includes the M stroke in order to make the join



**Fruits**

My top favourite\* fruit is the mango, which unfortunately does not grow here in the UK. If I get one that is not as soft and ripe as it could be, then it goes into the blender with some apples and coconut milk, and the routine is, one to drink now and one in the fridge for later, cold in the summer or warmed up in winter. Next we have the mandarin, a type of tangerine. The melon has little flavour but plenty of liquid in the flesh. The mulberry tree can grow to be

very tall and the fruits look similar to small blackberries. The nectarine is a small peach with a smooth skin, like a small red apple. I am sorry to have to offer you, for the Ing stroke, only the angular sea fig, part of the ice plant family, of which the fruit pulp is used to make jams.

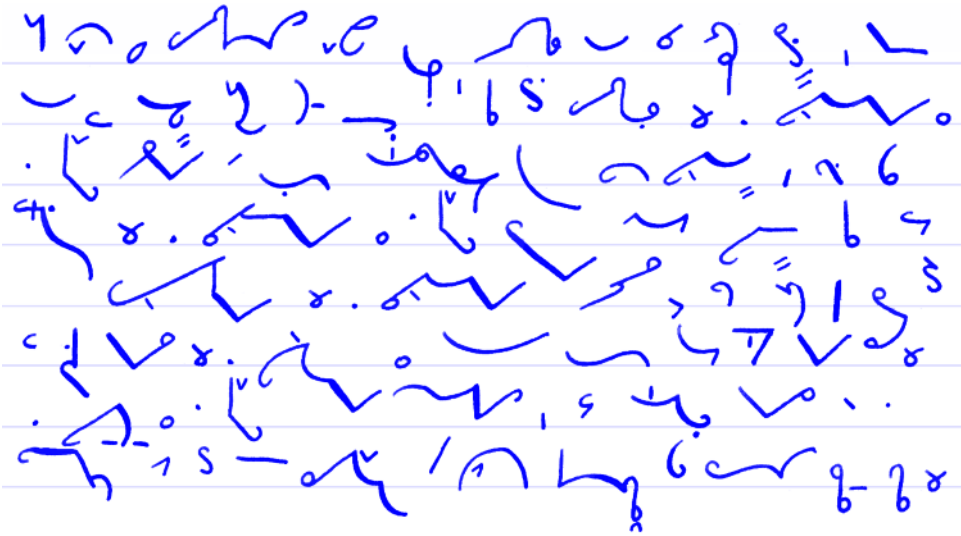
\* "favourite" Note that "favoured" uses the anticlockwise Vr stroke, to differentiate



**Fruits**

Redcurrants and raspberries make excellent preserves and jams. A raisin is a dried grape so it is not really a fruit name in itself. I did grow some rhubarb once when I had a small allotment many years ago, and I planted it next to the water trough at one

end so I was able to soak it regularly, but I don't remember ever eating any of it. If you excuse the Stee Loop, our last one in this section is the star fruit which gets its name from the shape when sliced into flat pieces.

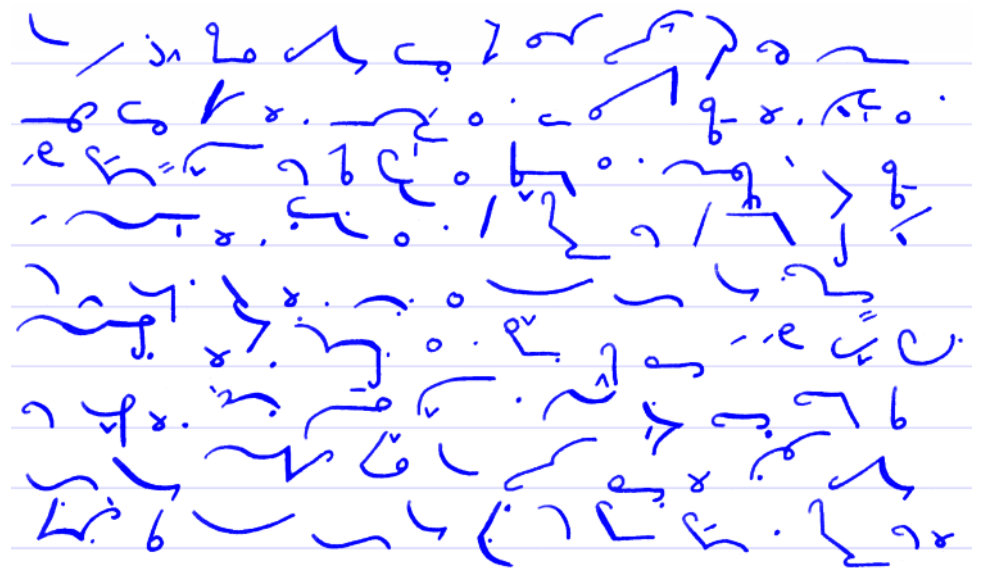


**Fruits**

I had my first watermelon whilst visiting relatives in hot and thirsty Spain but back in cold England I was not so keen on its bland wateriness. The youngberry is a type of raspberry and named unsurprisingly after Mr Young who bred this cultivar. The huckleberry is a type of blueberry, and in the UK it is called the whortleberry. The

honeyberry refers to the fruit of three different species of plant with edible berries. The wolfberry is another name for the goji berry. The yuzu is a type of mandarin but with the uneven appearance of a grapefruit and the plant can survive much lower temperatures than normal citrus trees.

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**Fruits**

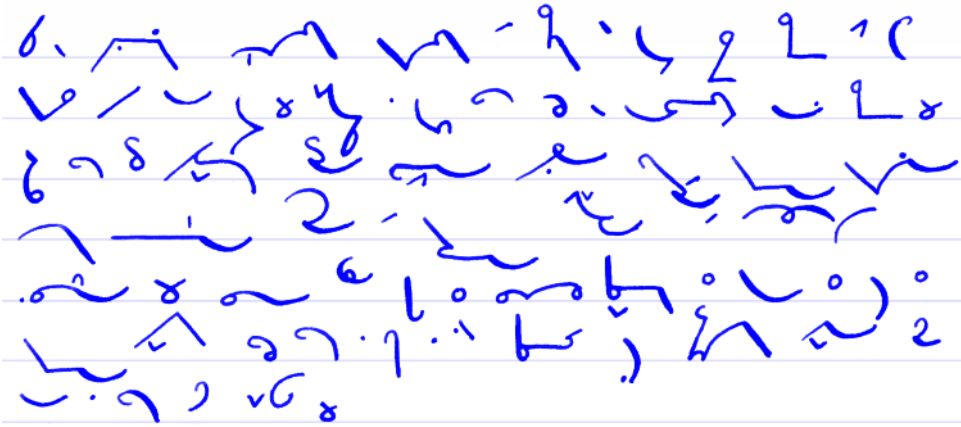
For our compound strokes, we have the quince, of which the small yellowy\* orange fruits make excellent quince jelly. The kumquat is a cold hardy citrus. The loquat is a soft plum-like fruit and its flavour is described as a mixture of peach, citrus and mango. The guava is a large tropical fruit, which can be eaten raw or made into a beverage. The imbe is another name for the African mangosteen. The rambutan has a spiky outer skin and soft white fleshy fruit inside. The wampee looks like a

long oval green grape, its name being the Mandarin Chinese for "yellow skin". Lastly\* we have the jambulan which is another name for the Java or black plum, a tropical fruit.

\* "yellowy" Always insert the last vowel when using colour names in this way, as "yellow green" could also make sense

\* "lastly" Omits the lightly-sounded T

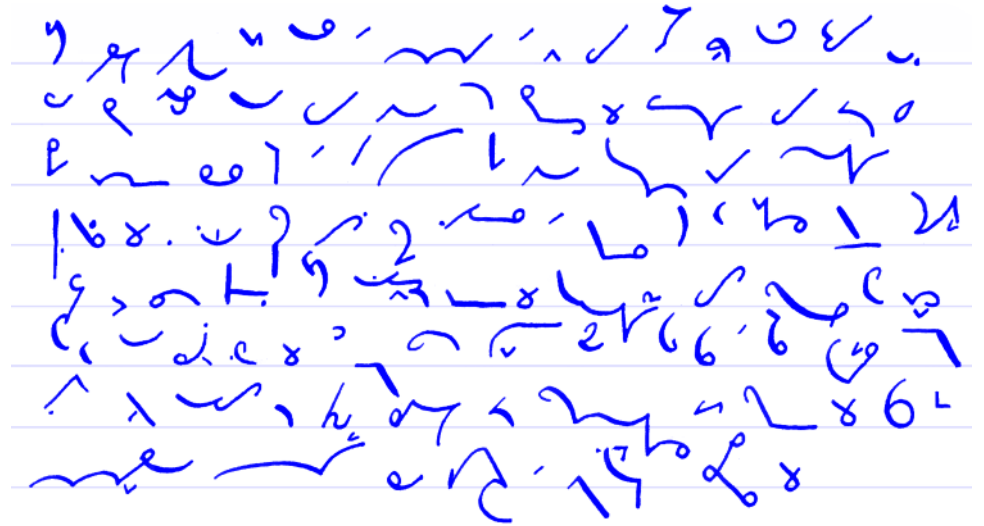
Blank lined writing area for notes.



**Fruits**

Just to recap, mulberry, bilberry and strawberry all have the hooked stroke and the other berries are in full. I have just a few more words to incorporate the Ing stroke. All these fruit plants require planting, growing, raising, pruning, picking, peeling, maybe cooking, mashing and

Blank lined writing area for notes.



**Memory Quotes**

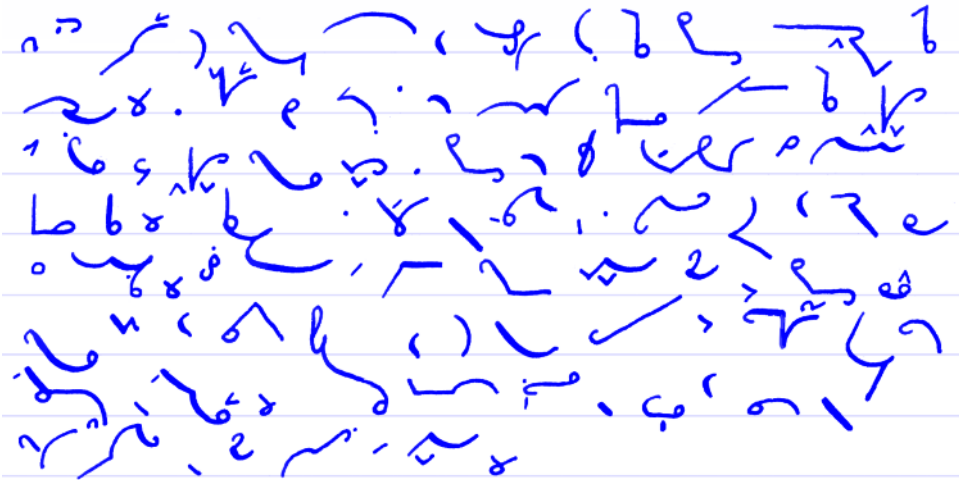
I was recently reading about languages and memory, and how we handle the stored information that we need in order\* speak and understand language, whether written or spoken. Clearly we hear first, start to make sense of it and much later add the written form to our mental database. The common thread running through the articles and books was that items become associated with each other to the same degree that they are encountered together. Eventually one brings the other to mind without any conscious effort. What could be\* more like shorthand than this

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and all those theories can be wrapped up in one word which you have certainly heard very many times: practice. This is why memorising material is not helpful and should be avoided as much as possible\*.

\* Omission phrases "in ord(er to)" "as much as poss(ible)"

\* "could be" Generally "could" is only phrased when it starts the phrase, so it remains in position and is not misread as "can"

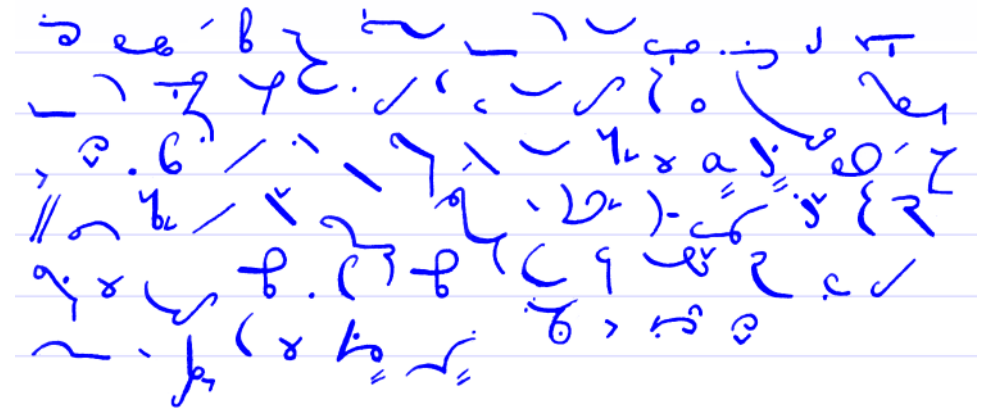


**Memory Quotes**

You can't really see printed matter without instantly thinking of its spoken counterpart and its meaning. The ideal is that hearing a word immediately triggers recall of its outline, and the converse, when the outline brings to mind the spoken word just as forcefully as the longhand text does. It is no longer a puzzle to be solved but a well-known shape that cannot be seen as

anything else. Constant and regular practice of writing shorthand to the spoken sounds brings about that happy state of affairs, without us being aware of the gradual change from obscure to obvious. I came across two quotes that seem to be particularly relevant to shorthand learning and writing.

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**Memory Quotes**

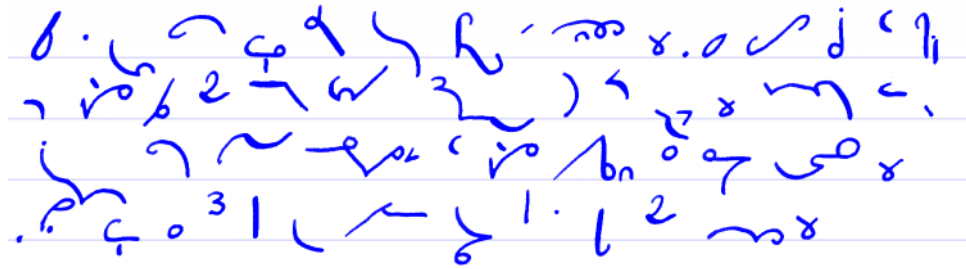
"Actions, sensations and states of feeling, occurring together or in close connection, tend to grow together, or cohere, in such a way that, when any one of them is afterwards presented to the mind, the others are apt to be brought up in idea." A Bain\* (Senses and Intellect) "Some ideas are by frequency and strength of association so closely combined that they cannot be separated; if one exists, the other exists along with it in spite of whatever effort we make to disjoin them." James Mill (Analysis\* of the Human\* Mind)

\* "A Bain" Initials in names are best written as lower case longhand

\* "Analysis" The plural "analyses" would have thick dot in the circle

\* "Human" special outline above the line, following the second vowel, to differentiate from "humane"

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Memory Quotes

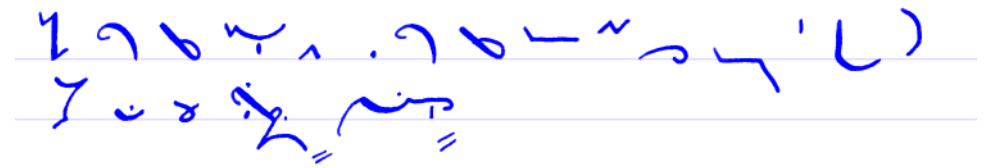
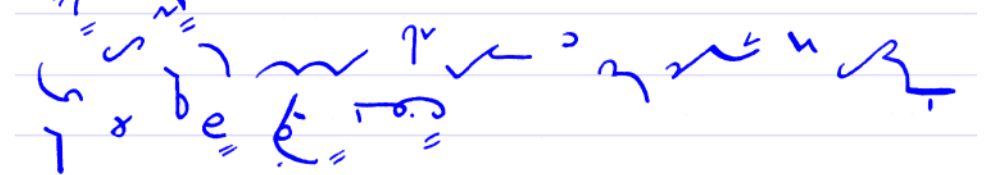
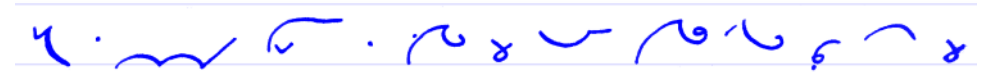
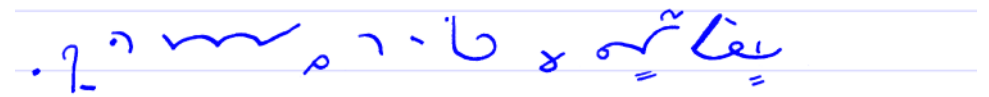
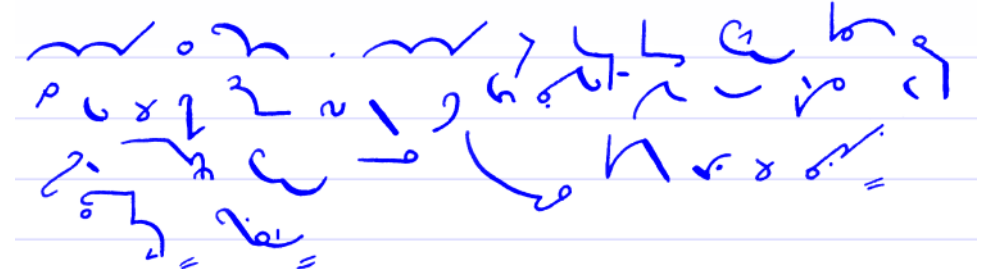
Just a few more quotes on the subject\* for your deliberation and amusement\*. The first one contains that dreaded word "holes" which is the shorthand gap that you are working so hard to avoid. I am very glad to confirm, from long experience, that holes reduce as skill increases. The last quote is

what you do if recall fails at a difficult shorthand moment.

\* Omission phrase "on (the) subject"

\* "amuse" "amaze" and derivatives, always insert the vowel

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Memory Quotes

Memory is very important, the memory of each photo taken, flowing at the same speed as the event. During the work, you have to be sure that you haven't left any holes, that you've captured everything, because afterwards it will be too late. Henri Cartier-Bresson

If you want to test your memory, try to recall what you were\* worrying about one year ago today. E Joseph\* Cossman

I do the very best I know how - the very best I can; and I mean to keep on doing so until the end. Abraham Lincoln (523 words)

The true art of memory is the art of attention. Samuel Johnson

\* Omission phrases "in (f)act" "you (w)ere"

I have a memory like an elephant. In fact\*, elephants often consult me. Noel Coward

\* "E Joseph" Initials in names are best written as lower case longhand

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