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## Blogs - 2021 - March

**2 Roundhouses**

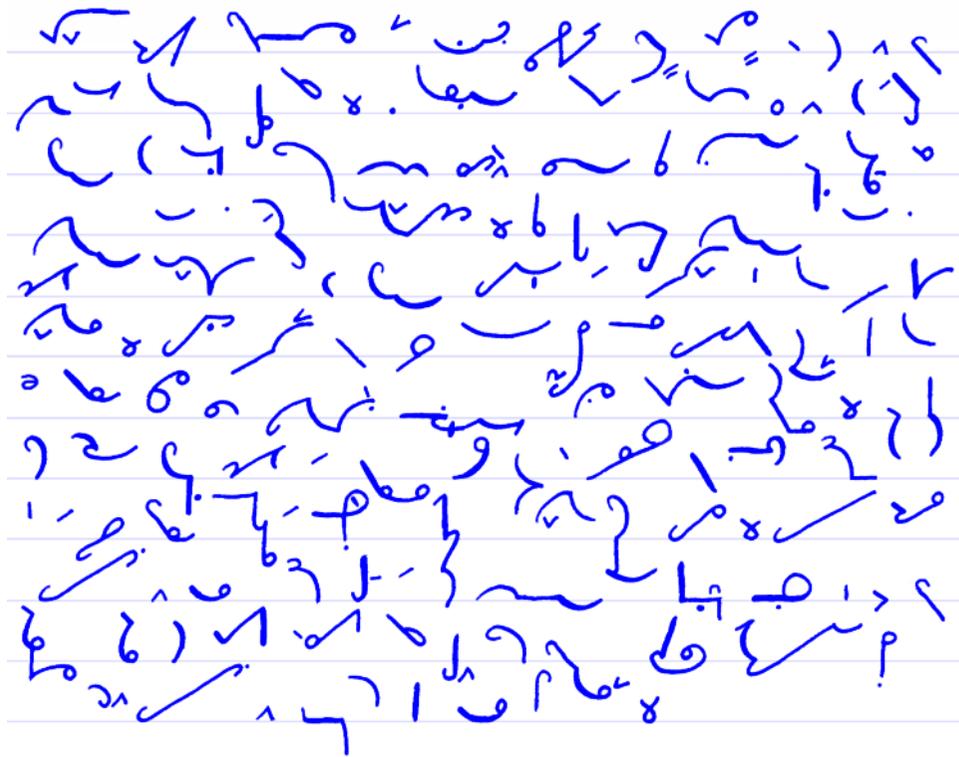
**4 Pins And Tins**

**7 Daffodil Contest**

**10 Same Sounds 1**

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PDF Date: 2 March 2024



**Roundhouses**

I like to watch programmes on the ancient history of the British Isles, to see how people lived in the far distant past. The fascinating part for me is how they obtained everything they needed from their\* immediate surroundings, something which is lacking today for those of us living in an urban environment. It is difficult to imagine living in a world entirely without everything we know and rely on for our daily lives. We can't\* really put ourselves in their situation, because we would be seeing it for what is absent, as well as somewhat willfully ignoring the less appealing\* aspects. To them it was their ordinary everyday world and business as usual, full of resources to be gathered, worked on and

used, pleasant activities, and exhausting and dangerous life-threatening ones. We are always wondering how things were done and making educated guesses, but to the people of those times, all this was already sorted, passed down from previous generations, and they were not sitting around wondering how to get or do things at all.

- \* "from their" Doubling to represent "their"
- \* "can't" Apostrophied forms should always have the vowel written in
- \* "appealing" "appalling" Always insert the vowel



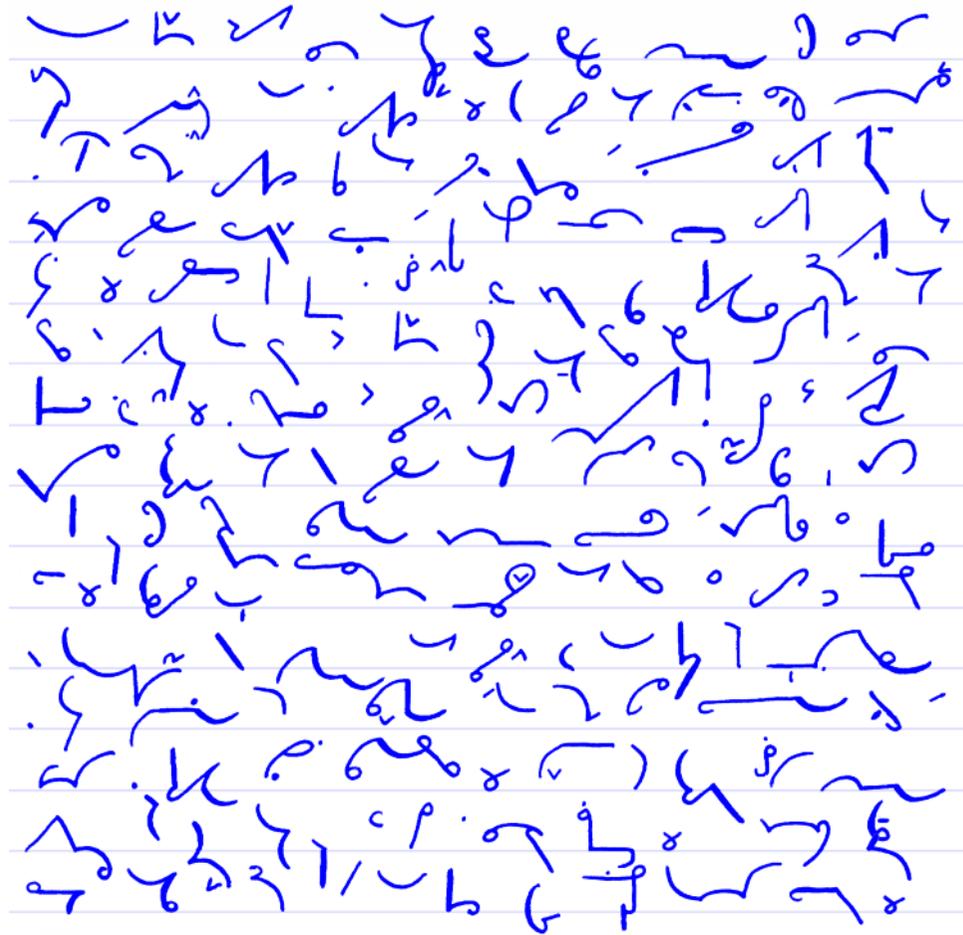
**Roundhouses**

Lately I have seen several items on ancient roundhouses\*. The first was a tour of a reconstruction of a fairly large iron age thatched roundhouse\*, filled with the items that the occupants would most likely\* have had. There were narrow plank shelves held up on sets of rough poles, clay pots and wooden utensils, loom, woven wall hangings, fur coverings on the beds and stools, and a large fire pit in the centre. It looked like a wonderful playhouse for youngsters to camp out in during the summer, but I had to remind myself that this type of dwelling was a practical home for probably quite a crowd of people of all

ages. They would have been outside during the day occupied with all their tasks, only going inside after dark. It would have been\* dusty, gloomy and draughty, and the fire would be the centre of attention and interest, for its warmth, glowing light and the cooking pot over or in it.

\* "roundhouse" Written thus as it is one word (the accent is on the first syllable). A "round house" (adjective and noun) would be normal outlines for the two words.

\* Omission phrases "mos(t) likely" "it would (have been)"

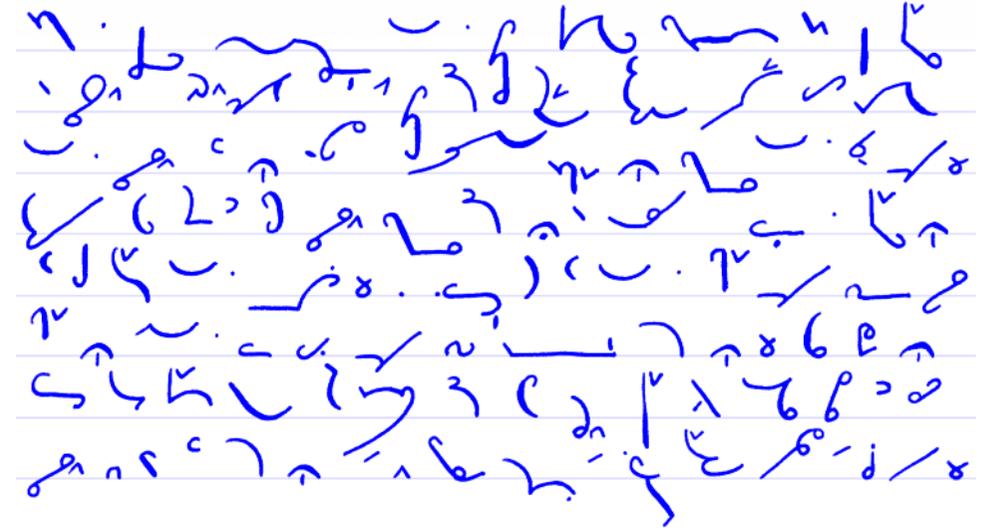


**Roundhouses**

Another time I watched some enthusiasts spending several months making their own small iron age roundhouse in a woodland. They used only locally sourced materials, the majority from the woodland itself, for the roof beams and rafters, wattle and daub hurdles using nearby clay, and, out of necessity, commercially grown water reed for the thatch. Once again\* it took a constant effort to remember these dwellings were the only place of refuge for people of the time, there was no other\* place of safety, shelter and some degree of comfort. The progress of the house also mirrored the situation with the original builders, that they would not only be using

knowledge learned from others, but also had to do their own problem solving to make corrections and alterations, as difficulties occurred. This was no classroom exercise in the past, as one would expect to eventually be living in the house without any danger of it collapsing, the thatch leaking or sliding off, or the walls cracking open, and ultimately the dwelling lasting as long as possible. Like us, they would be constantly making repairs, although easier for them to do with such a simple construction. I am sure those who were skilled in this were much in demand within the extended family group.

\* Omission phrases "wu(n)s again" "no oth(er)"



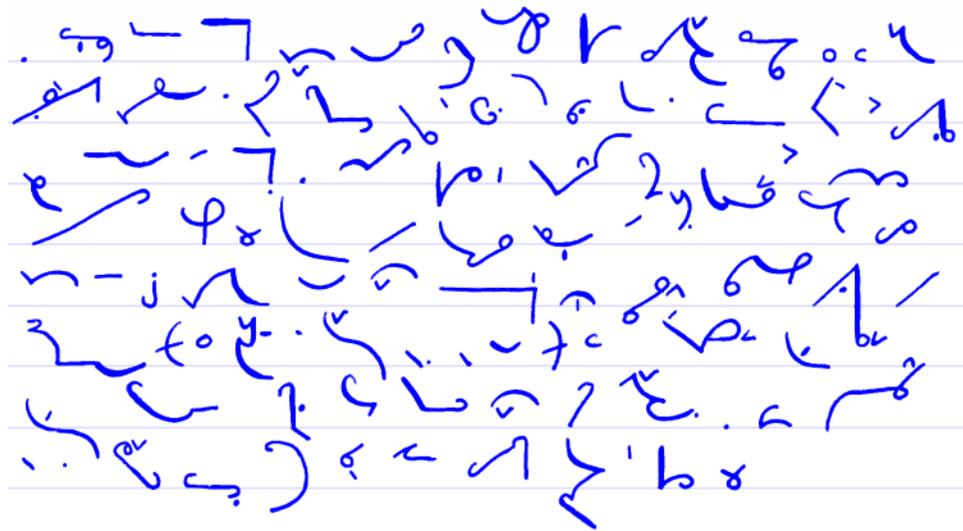
**Roundhouses**

I remember a discussion many years ago in a children's television programme about different types of houses around the world, and the children were saying that they would not really want to live in a house with mud walls, referring to dried mud bricks in a hot country. They were then asked what their own house bricks were made of, answer clay, a type of mud that had been fired in a kiln. The conclusion was that in a dry country you can use dried

mud and in a cold wet country you have to cook your mud. This settled the mud question\* for the time being, although I am sure there were\* other issues tied up in this, such as what sort of house you build with your mud and how pleasant, roomy and comfortable the final results and contents are.

\* "question" Optional contraction\* "I am sure there" Doubling to represent "there"

Handwritten practice lines for shorthand, consisting of several horizontal lines.



**Roundhouses**

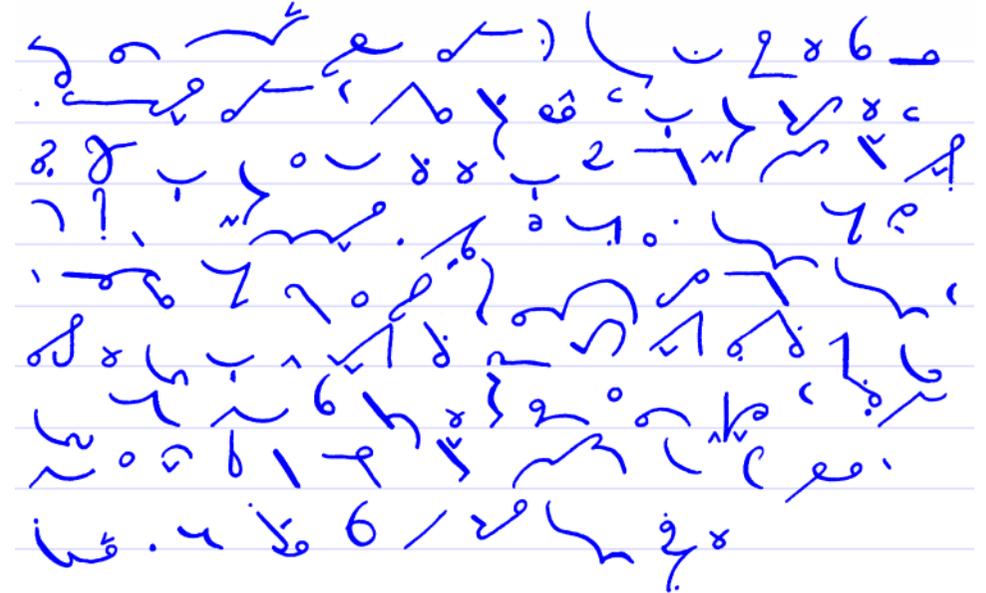
The closest I can get to my ancient British ancestors' daily survival skills is when I have resorted to using a sharp broken piece of flint or slate for a quick chop of the weeds, to save going and getting the modern tools, but purely through the convenience of the moment rather than necessity. After our few weeks\* of snow and icy north winds\*, I am quite content to live in my cooked-mud house, as long as the radiators are working (as I don't have a fire pit to hand) with polyester faux fur

blanket draped over the back of my chair and finally the ultimate luxury of a supply of clean fresh hot and cold water available on demand. (817 words)

\* Omission phrase "few wee(k)s"

\* "icy north winds" If this were "ice winds" you would need to insert the final vowel in "icy" (vs. ice winds), this is often the case when nouns are used as adjectives

Horizontal lines for writing practice.



**Pins And Tins**

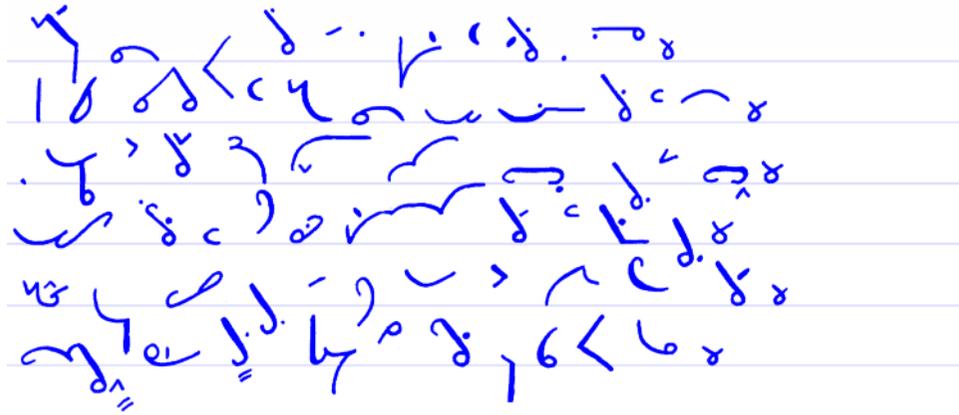
Here is some material using Circle S after the N Hook. This gives a clockwise circle that represents both sounds, with no vowel between. When halved, there is still\* no vowel, as in "paints". No shorthand can be learned by reciting or trying to memorise the rules, what is needed is a firm knowledge of lots\* of examples in which the principle is used, so that similar ones can be formed without hesitation. If you know how to write "pens" you can also write "happens" and "deepens", even if you

have never written those before. Although the system has some outlines that are not written as might at first\* be expected by the learner, for other reasons of convenience, the individual components themselves are always formed consistently.

\* Omission phrases "There is s(t)ill" "at (fir)st"

\* "lots" "masses" Insert the vowel, as these are similar in outline and meaning

Horizontal lines for writing practice.



**Pins And Tins**

I bought some cheap pans and a tool that opens the cans.

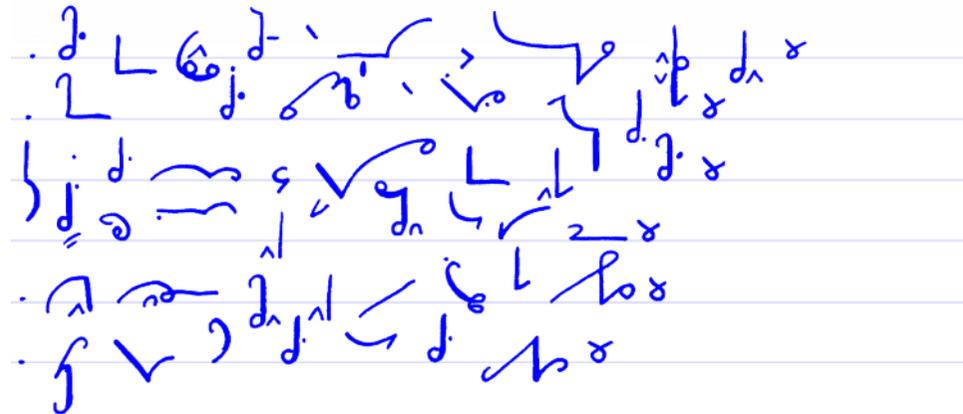
It just happens that I have some new ink pens with me.

The needles of the pines were like little green pins on the ground.

No-one complains when they are served wholemeal buns with baked beans.

I found the food waste bin and threw in all the leftover bones.

Mr Brown's son Ben definitely has the brains to do this job for us.



**Pins And Tins**

The trains took thousands of tons of coal to the factories outside the towns.

The truck contains hundreds of pallets of food tins.

It was a tense moment when the builders dug out the drains.

Dan's friends camped\* out on the sand dunes for the whole week.

The loud music drowns out our conversations at the restaurants.

The children built their dens in the dense woodland.

\* "camped" Outlines with the sound of "-mpt-" omit the lightly sounded P, except in place names



**Pins And Tins**

There is a chance you will find some bike chains in the shed.

Mrs Jones is preparing the luncheons in the hotel kitchens.

John's mother bought some jeans at June's fashion shop.

We hope he joins our team working on the old engines.

Jane's parents worked as surgeons at the hospital.

There was one pigeon on the roof and two pigeons on the lawn.



**Pins And Tins**

Ken's family really enjoyed the ice cream cones.

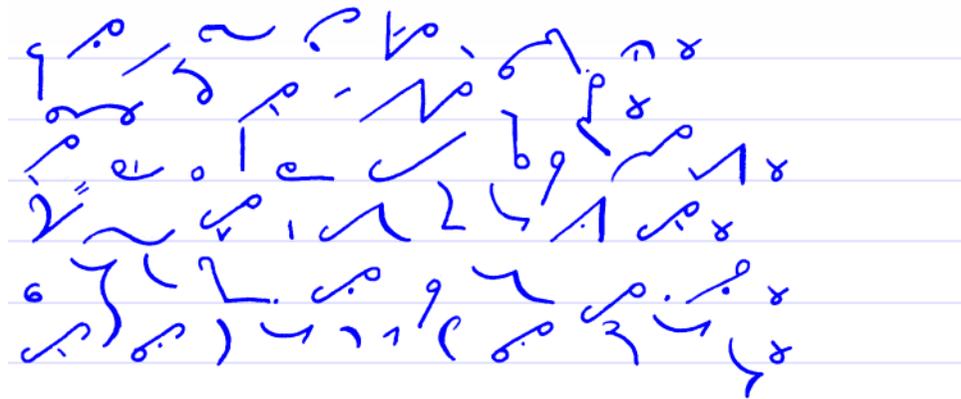
The box contains lace gowns and golden crowns.

I have made some scans of the article on keeping chickens.

Ken reckons there will be heavy rains as the sky darkens.

Glenn's food consists of various grains and fresh greens.

When the music begins to play, John grins but Jane groans.



**Pins And Tins**

When it rains, our garden lawn turns to slippery mud.

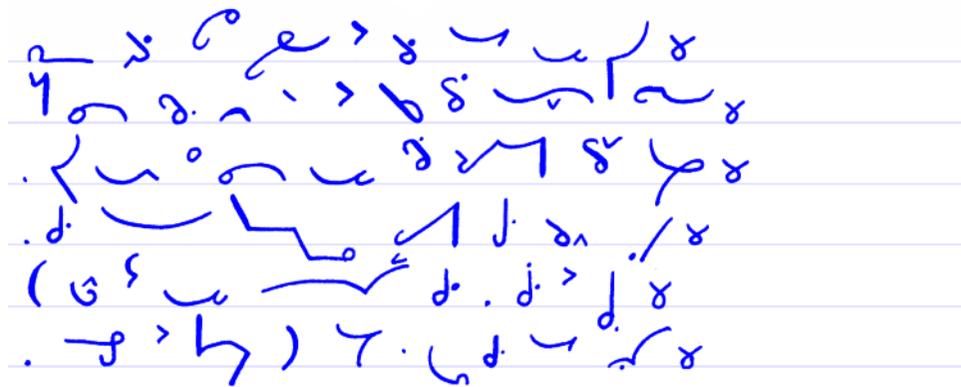
There are many wines but we have asked for the red ones.

Sometimes the horse runs and returns to its stable.

When his enthusiasm for practising wanes, he never wins the race.

Ron's son is at school where he learns to read.

One hen was in the yard and the other hens were in the field.



**Pins And Tins**

You can paint the walls using all the paints in the new shed.

They found that the new material taints the contents of the tins.

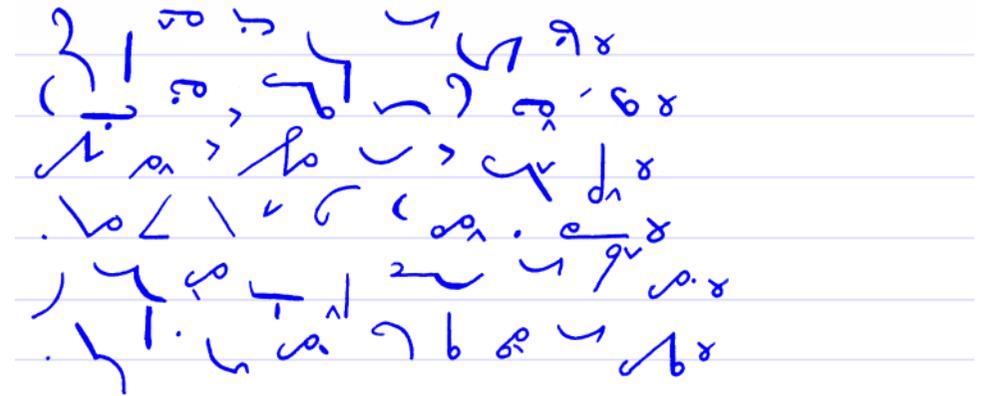
I had some prints made of all the best plants in my garden.

The extent of the damage was only a few dents in the metal.

The shop now has some new brands of window blinds for sale\*.

\* "for sale" Downward L in order to join the phrase

The tents in their backpacks weighed ten pounds each.



**Pins And Tins**

There were\* different kinds of canned food in the village store.

The parents checked up on the wall that surrounds the school.

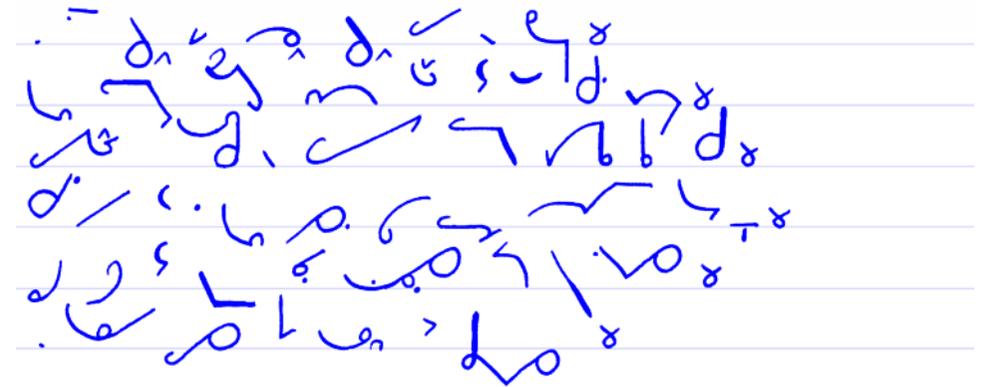
She never wants to go out walking in the high winds.

They gave grants to the clubs to improve their grounds and buildings.

The bear had a few wounds from its hunts in the woods.

We did the rounds of the restaurants in all the nearby towns.

\* Omission phrase "There (w)ere"



**Pins And Tins**

The cat pounces but the mouse bounces away to safety.

The officer winces at the news of the disappearances.

If you grip the shorthand pen you may find that the hand tenses too much\*.

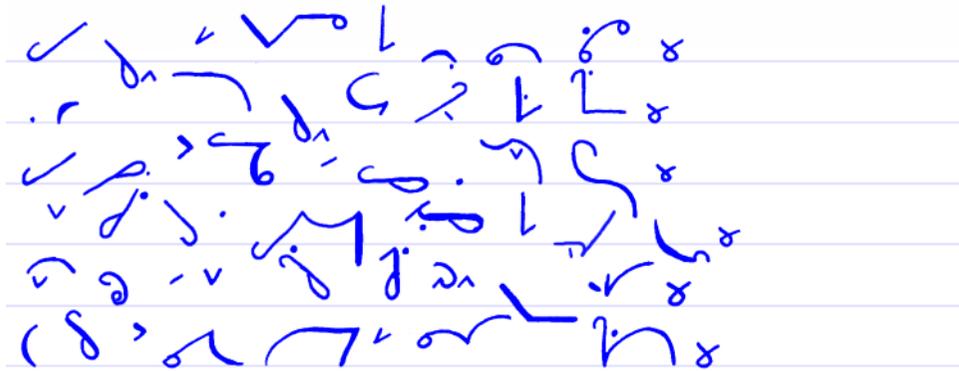
\* "too much" Includes the M stroke in order to join the phrase

We found the entrances to where the club holds its dances.

\* "enhances" Note the clockwise direction of the circle of the Hay stroke, this never changes direction when it is in the middle of an outline. Compare with the outline for "answer" which has normal anticlockwise Circle S.

Chances are that a few rinses will clean the mark off the coat.

She is sure that the big hat enhances\* her public appearances.



**Pins And Tins**

We pounced on the bargains at the mid-summer sales.

The old car bounced along the rough dirt track.

We rinsed\* all the clothes and cleansed the entire floor.

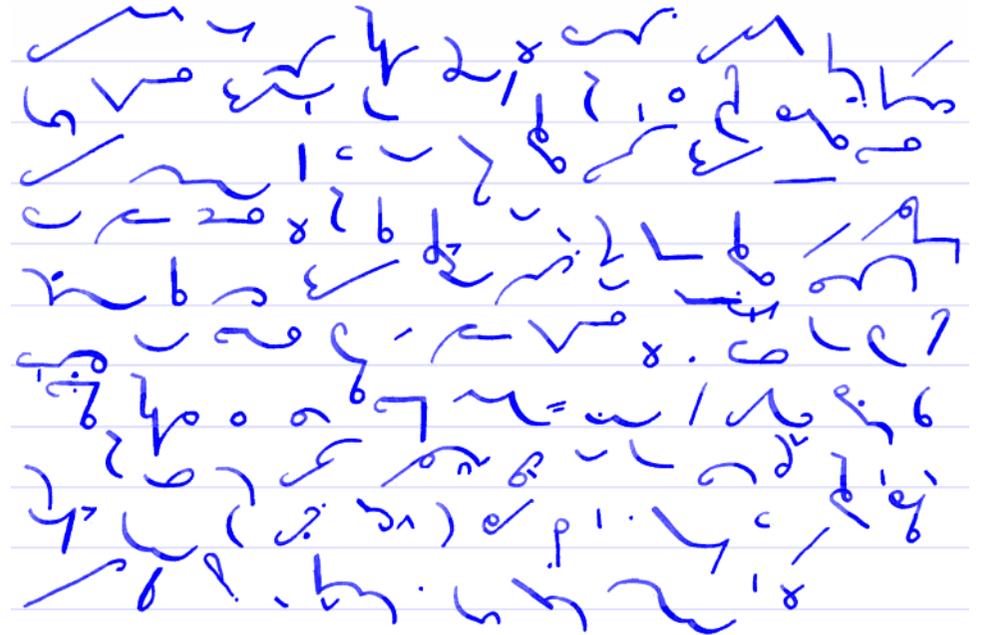
I chanced upon a window and glanced at the country view.

My friends and I pranced and danced around the big hall.

They balanced all the heavy luggage on the small trailer. (726 words)

\* "rinsed" Keep the Ray stroke shallow so it does not look like a Chay, compare with "chanced" in the next line

Blank lined paper for writing practice.



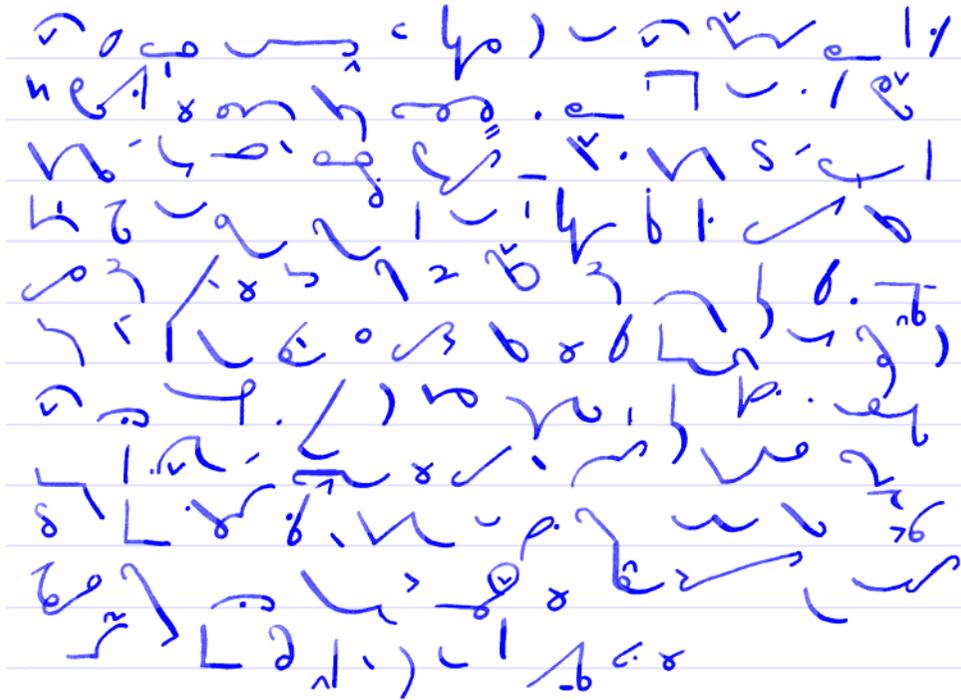
**Daffodil Contest**

We are now in the middle of daffodil season. Normally we would be touring our favourite parks that we know have large displays of them, but as travel is not possible\* at the moment\*, we are making do with any patch of yellow that we come across in our local walks. Although it is disappointing not to see the big displays, our restricted roaming does mean that we are learning not to ignore the smaller clumps in gardens, verges and local parks. The quest for ever

larger acreages of daffodils is somewhat greedy and never-ending which we have been spared this year, although next year we will resume the hunt, not for mere size of display but to enjoy having them waving all around us as we sit on a bench with our sandwiches, rather than just stopping to admire a few before moving on.

\* Omission phrases "it is not poss(ible)" "at (the) moment"

Blank lined paper for writing practice.



**Daffodil Contest**

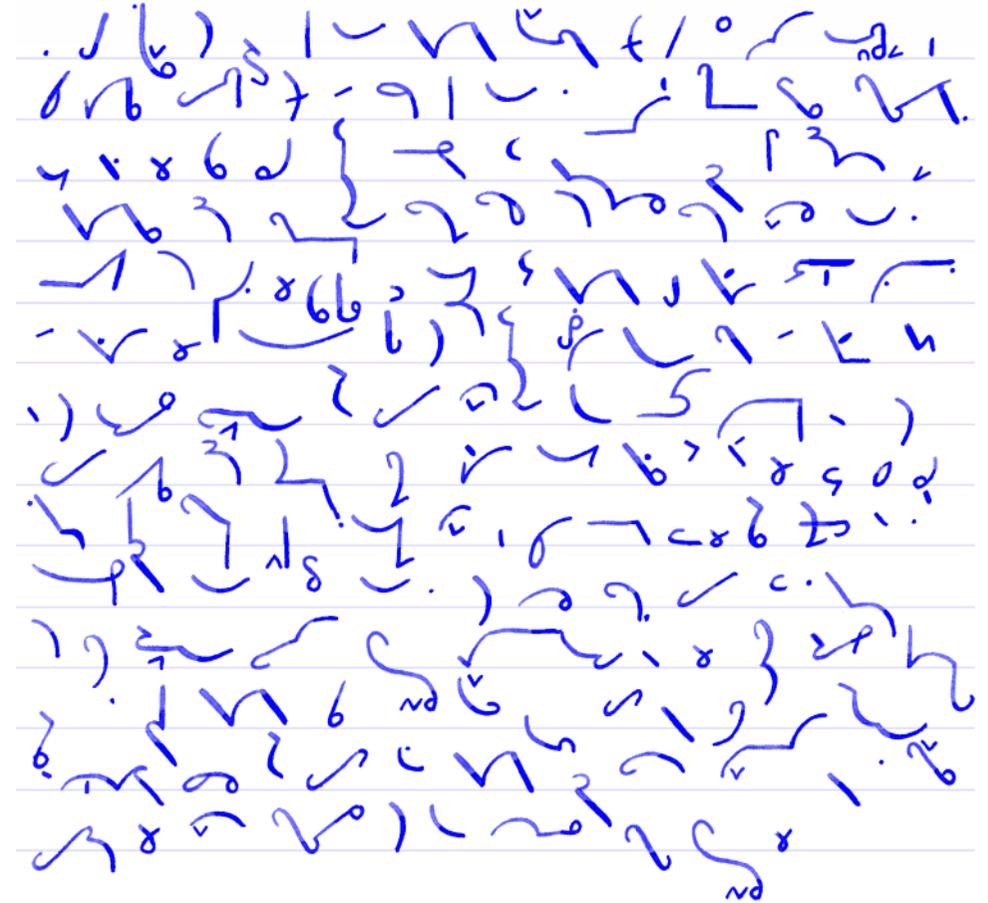
My first close encounter with daffodils was in my primary school, at age about seven or eight\*. Some time before Christmas the school got in a large supply of bulbs and, for the cost of sixpence, everyone could buy a bulb, plant and nurture it at home, and then in spring bring it in on Daffodil Contest day, where the best ones were judged. I cannot remember what the prizes were, maybe it was just the kudos of your pot being chosen as one of the best. Just taking part in the process was my main interest, the judging was almost irrelevant, but it was at least\* an incentive to keep it alive and growing. We all learned patience

from the fact that\* plants take absolutely ages to perform, not least producing anything above soil level, and this was probably the main benefit of the exercise. I wonder if anyone actually dug theirs out to see if it had roots yet.

\* "seven or eight" There are similar phrases for 4 or 5, 6 or 7, 8 or 9, and 9 or 10.

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

\* Omission phrase "from the (f)act that"



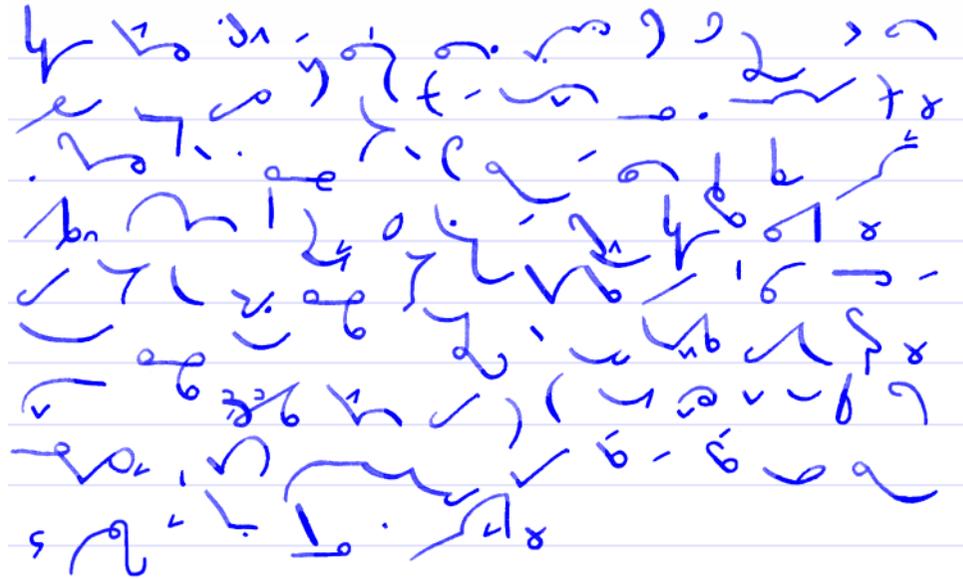
**Daffodil Contest**

The general advice was to plant it in bulb fibre (which has little nutrients but just holds water) and store it in a cool dark place, preferably under the bed. This shows that it was not expected that bedrooms would be at all warm, but the bulbs were protected from the frost, or from mice in a garage or shed. These conditions would ensure that the bulb did not bolt and grow leggy and pale. Another advantage was that it was not constantly being remembered and poked about to see if it was growing, although we might have occasionally looked to see whether roots were escaping through the hole in the base

of the pot. When the first shoots appeared, it would be brought out into the light, but still kept cold. All this was the beginning of an interest in plants, in an easy mess free way, with a pair or three of glowing yellow flowers to look forward\* to. There was always the temptation to choose a double bulb, which is fine if you want to be sure of having multiple stems, although one fat bulb would be more likely to be a prize winner. My preference was for maximum number of flowers.

\* Omission phrase "look fo(r)ward to"





**Daffodil Contest**

Daffodil poems abound and some of them\* seem to lament their short season, all the more reason to get one's eyes full (and in my case the camera). The promise of a succession of other spring and summer displays does not really reduce the alarm at seeing the first fading and browning daffodil head. We only have to wait six months until the bulbs are on sale again,

and another six months in anticipation of new varieties we have planted. Like Wordsworth's poem, we see them in the mind's eye not just from experiences but also looking forward to our pots and plots next spring, when the illustration on the packet becomes a reality. (882 words)

\* Omission phrase "some (of) them"

Blank lined paper for writing practice.



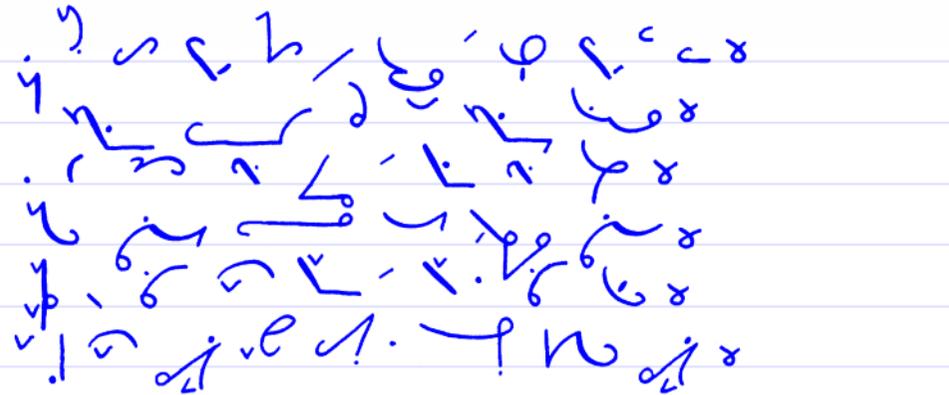
**Same Sounds 1**

Here are some examples of words that have the same sound but different spellings and different meanings. After a lifetime of putting words down on paper, it does take some determination to stop the memory coming up with the normal spelling, which can override the phonetic outline, even though that outline is given in the book. Ignoring the spelling does get easier and is one of the reasons for always practising from the spoken sound, using only the

material given in the book until it is finished and never just transliterating from a printed passage. Some of the older books may say "write the following in shorthand", with the occasional advice to get a friend to read for you, but that was a time before iPhones and now there is no excuse not to record and write from that. You can do this as well with the shorthand passages, to get additional benefit from your reading practice.

Blank lined paper for writing practice.





**Same Sounds 1**

The icy\* wind blew and turned our fingers and noses blue with cold.

I had to brake quickly so as not to break the fence.

The old woman\* bred chickens and baked bread for sale\*.

I have been sealing the cracks in the upstairs ceiling.

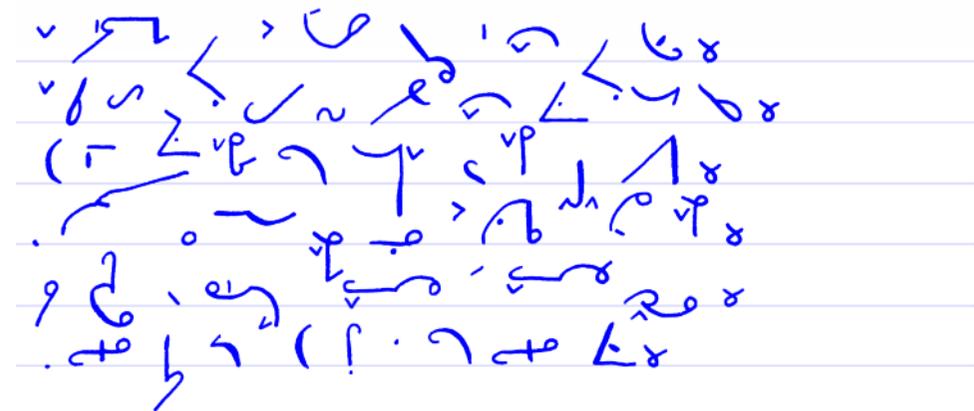
I decided to sell my bike and buy a cell phone.

I eat my cereal whilst watching an interesting television serial.

\* "icy" Insert the final vowel, as "ice wind" could also make sense

\* "woman" Special outline above the line, as per last vowel, compare "women" on the line

\* "for sale" Downward L in order to join the outline



**Same Sounds 1**

I recorded the cheep of the forest birds on my cheap phone.

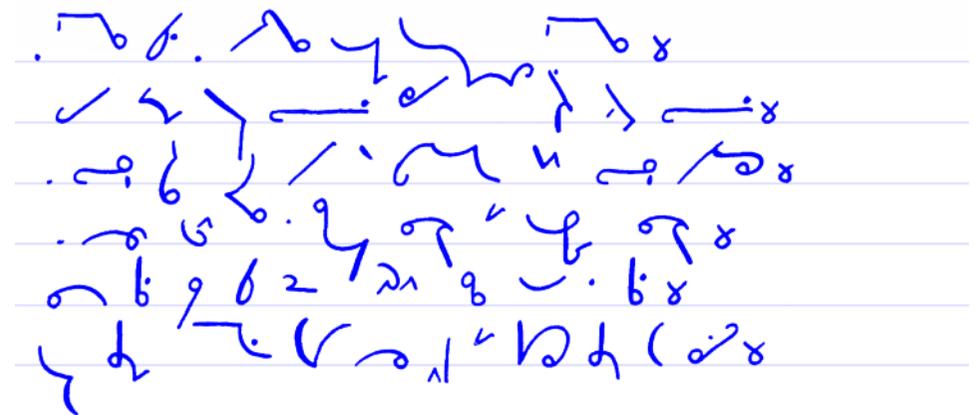
I just want to check whether you have received my cheque in the post.

They caught sight of the very untidy building site down the road.

The lawyer is going to cite the case of the lady's loss of sight.

He travels to sunnier climes and climbs the mountains.

The course teacher heard them telling a very coarse joke.



**Same Sounds 1**

The cops chased the robbers into the farmland copse.

We heard the boat creak as we paddled up the creek.

The crews on these ships are all well informed about cruise regulations.

The musician found a strange symbol on the inside of the cymbal.

Some days he just walked around the streets in a daze.

If they desert the café, they will miss out on the delicious dessert they serve.

