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## **FACILITY DRILL**

Blog - 2019 - September

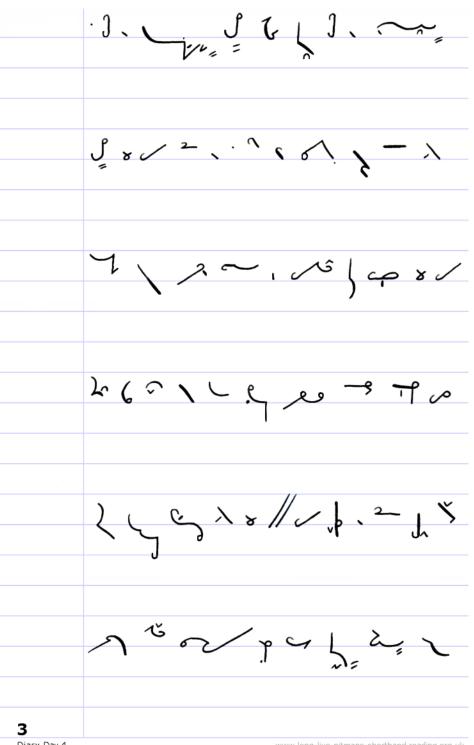
**Diary Day 4 - Tower Bridge** 

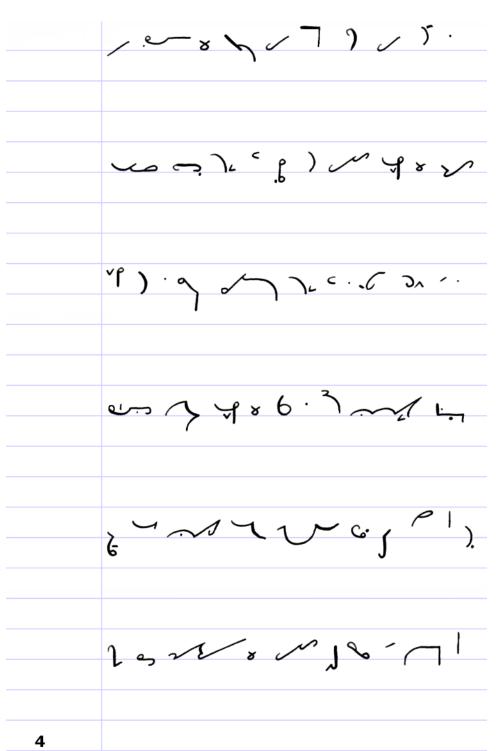
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PDF Date: 30 September 2019


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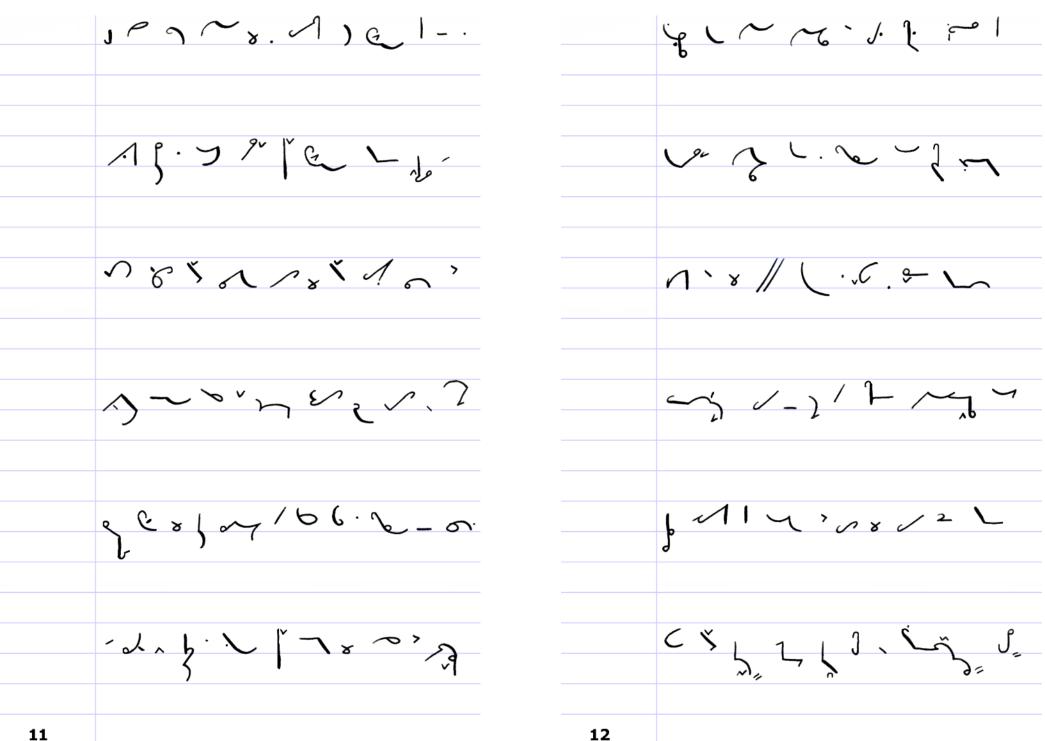
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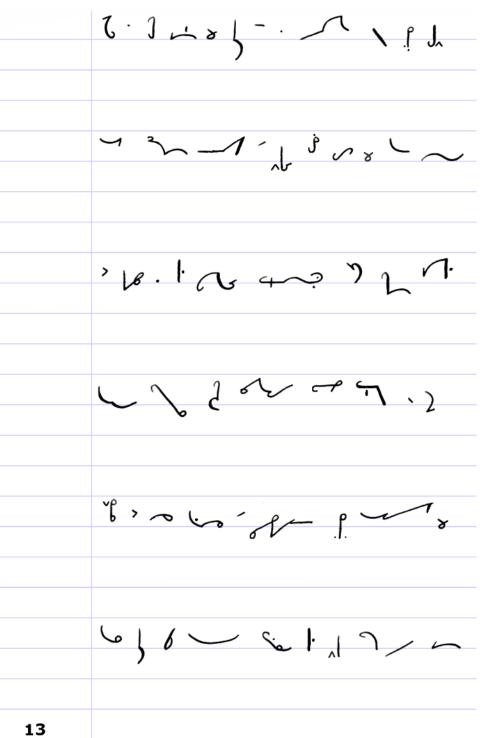
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## **Diary Day 4 - Tower Bridge**

Yesterday we travelled into London, and I hope you enjoy being an armchair tourist for a little while, without leaving your comfortable seat, spending any money, pushing through crowds or having your hair blown sideways. But you will have to leave your comfort zone (very slightly), spend time and effort recognising the outlines, push through and overcome any difficulties and finally have any doubts about your shorthand ability blown sideways, never to return.

After all the wet weather we have had, the day was overcast but dry, with gusty winds which were quite mild, so it was not at all cold. We did not want to stay indoors, especially as next week will be mostly rainy. We decided to go into the city to see the river which is always busy with lots going on. We took a bus to the train station, a train to Victoria Station, and then the tube train to Monument Station. We walked to a particular building hoping to be able to go up onto the public roof garden, but we found it was closed. We assumed this might be for safety reasons because of the gusty winds, especially fifteen floors up.

We decided to walk down by the river and find somewhere to sit near the Tower of London, to have our snack. Before we got there, we saw an enclosed green area with seats, so we went inside. To one side was a separate circular area with a wall around and a sunken level inside. This is a war memorial dedicated to those in the merchant navy and fishing fleets who had been lost at sea during the Second World War. We went down the steps and looked at some of the 24,000 names on the many sections of wall and the figurative carvings between each section. Wavy lines representing water were everywhere on the stonework so this lower level represents being down in the sea, separate from the surrounding activity. It is sheltered, quiet and secluded so that visitors may contemplate the price of freedom.

Afterwards we walked to the Tower of London and the riverside. The area was thick with tourists, and one sometimes has to weave one's way along rather than walking in a straight line, to avoid people who are framing their photo shots. From a little distance away, we could see the river surface gleaming, as it was an especially high tide and all the boats were level with the onlookers on the promenade. The area between the Tower of London and the riverside is cobbled with granite bricks which are quite uneven with gaps between them, so it is slow to walk on, and would be impossible if you had shoes with narrow pointed heels. When the London Marathon is held, this part is covered in rubber mats to make it safe for the runners.

In front of us was the long covered floating pier where people were waiting to board the Thames cruise boats and the river taxis known as Thames Clippers. While the people were queuing inside, the seagulls were queuing on the roof, having a rest after circling the area waiting for tourists to drop bits of their food. A few pigeons and crows were also doing a good clean-up job. As we were leaning on the railings watching the river traffic, we saw a tiny sparrow down in front of us, on the other side of the railings, breaking up a small piece of bread. I was glad when he managed to h

peat all of it, as I did not want the wind to plow any of it into the water each time ne put the remaining piece down.		

## Diary Day 4 - Tower Bridge

We went up onto Tower Bridge and walked to one of the two stone piers. The river traffic was mostly cruises and clippers, and also some of the RIB craft (rigid inflatable boats), which give people very noisy and bumpy high speed rides down the river and back. Each time one of the sight-seeing vessels went under the bridge, we could see the people, who were sitting on the top open deck, all aim their phones upwards to get a picture of the bridge from below. Now and then the sun came out and the river was sparkling beneath us, but those intervals did not last very long. The water was flowing at quite a rate as it was an unusually high tide flowing back outwards and also swollen by the heavy rain. By watching some of the rubbish going past I estimated that one would have to run to match the speed of the flow. It was certainly much faster than a person could swim and shows how dangerous an ebbing tide can be. Most of the riverside facades have long lengths of chain draped across at various levels for a person in trouble to grab hold of.

After a while the sky became gloomier, we could see the much darker rain clouds in the distance and we had had enough of the wind. We walked back along by the Tower and took the tube train to Blackfriars Station and then a train home. It was guite a relief to be sitting down in the warm carriage and out of the constant wind. For many of the tourists, the day will have been the culmination of their dream holiday, having perhaps travelled half way across the globe, to see the sights of the most famous and historical city in the world. For us, it was just another pleasant day out from our home in the suburbs, and I always appreciate having all this interest and history on our doorstep, where we can come back again at any time, to be a "local tourist" for the afternoon. (963 words)

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