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Blogs - 2015 - October

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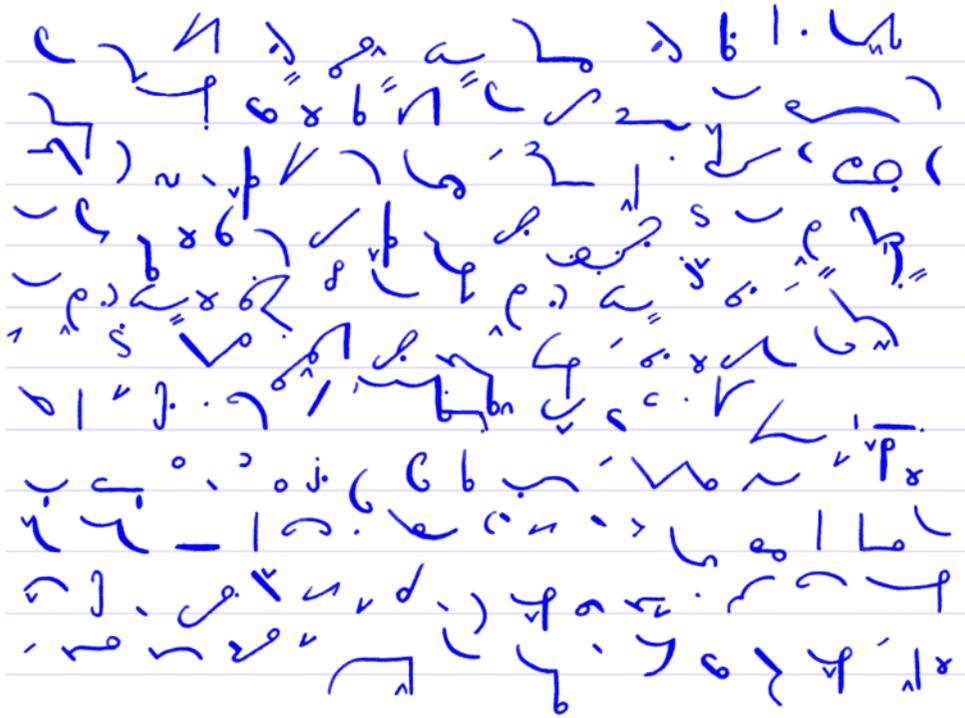
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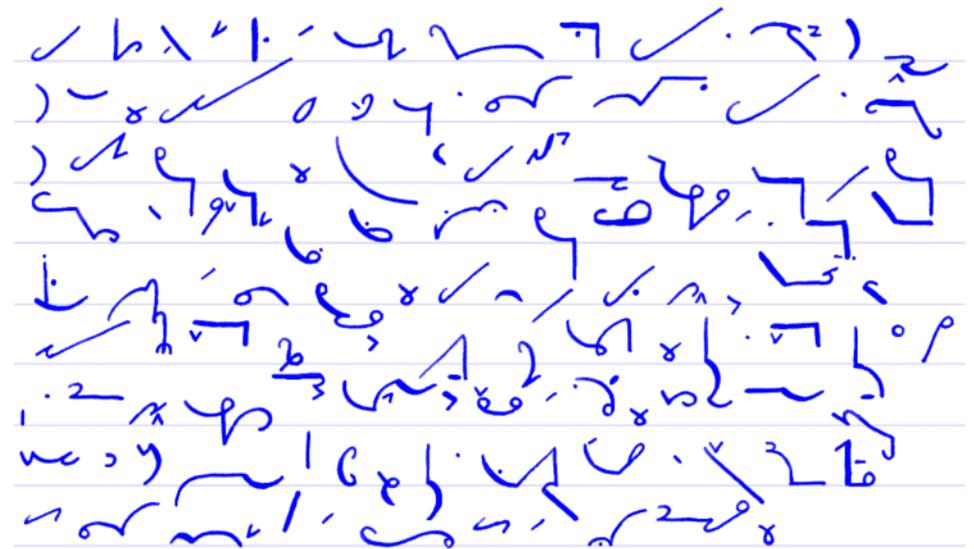
Energy For Waste

Every year the charity Open House London organises* open days at a variety of architecturally interesting buildings. It is held over one weekend in September or October, so you have to decide which are your favourites and work out an itinerary that squeezes them in over the two days. This year we decided to visit the waste incineration plant in South Bermondsey in south east London. SELCHP* stands for South East London Combined Heat and Power and the plant burns household waste to produce electricity and heat. We have often passed it on the train, a very large nondescript white building with a tall

chimney, but giving no clue as to what is contained within, other than its name and purpose written on the side. I have never given it more than a passing thought, all of the few seconds it takes for my train to whizz by, but the chance to see inside seemed to create a little more interest, and of course I am always on the lookout for photos of unusual buildings, both inside and out.

* "organ(ise)s" The short form does not show the first S, so this circle only represents the last S

* Pronounced "sell chip"



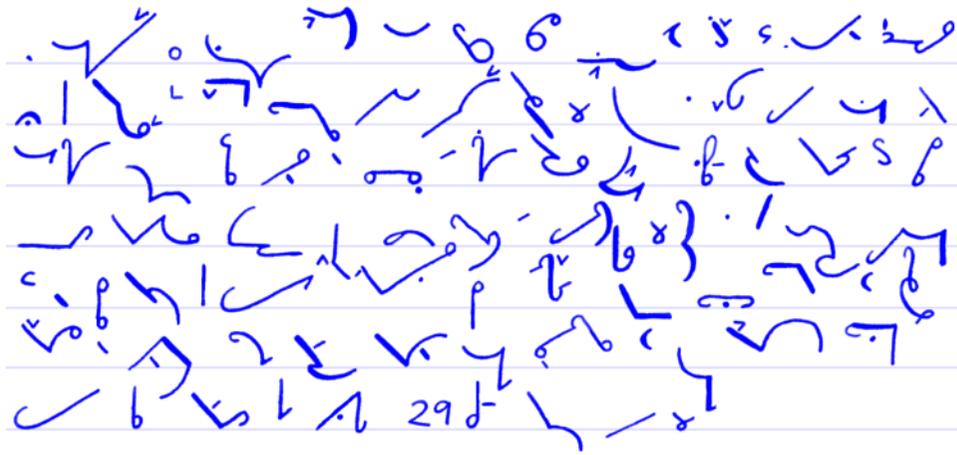
Energy For Waste

We turned up on the day and entered the perimeter gate where an employee was counting us in. We were first ushered into a small marquee where a group of us watched the safety video. After that we joined the queue of visitors to get our safety equipment of high vis vest, helmet, safety glasses, and a goody bag containing literature and some souvenirs. We made our way round to the back of the building and were guided towards the beginning of the* route through the facility. It was not* a guided tour as such, but a walk round the installation following all the signs and arrows. I am

not going to pretend I knew what I was looking at, other than to say that it was a veritable forest of pipe-work and ducts, small medium large and enormous, and metal walkways.

* Omission phrase "towards the (be)gin(ning) of the". Where possible, the Gn for "beginning" should be intersected, e.g. "at the beginning"

* "was not" Full strokes, do not use halving and N hook, as that would be "isn't"



Energy For Waste

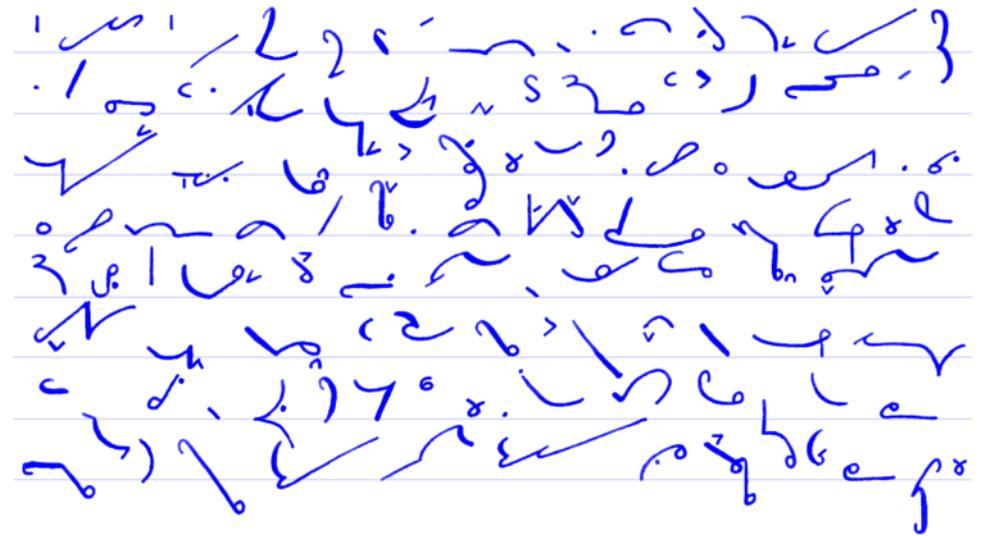
The interior is fairly noisy in places, as well as echoing, and that combined with the narrow walkways made it obvious why guided groups are not* really possible. After a while we ended up in the control room, with its rows of screens and control panels showing the status of every part of the plant, such as current performance, electrical output, steam pressure* and weather conditions. There was a large internal window with two seats before it, where the operators sit and drive the big crane grab that transfers the piles of rubbish from the

bunker below into the hoppers that feed the boiler grate, where it is burned at the rate of 29 tonnes per hour.

* "are not" uses full outlines in the phrase to keep it clearly different from "will not" which can use N hook and halving

* "pressure" can be shortened in a few common phrases, using only the "sure" stroke, as long as the context makes it clear what is meant (high/low/blood pressure)

Horizontal lines for writing practice.



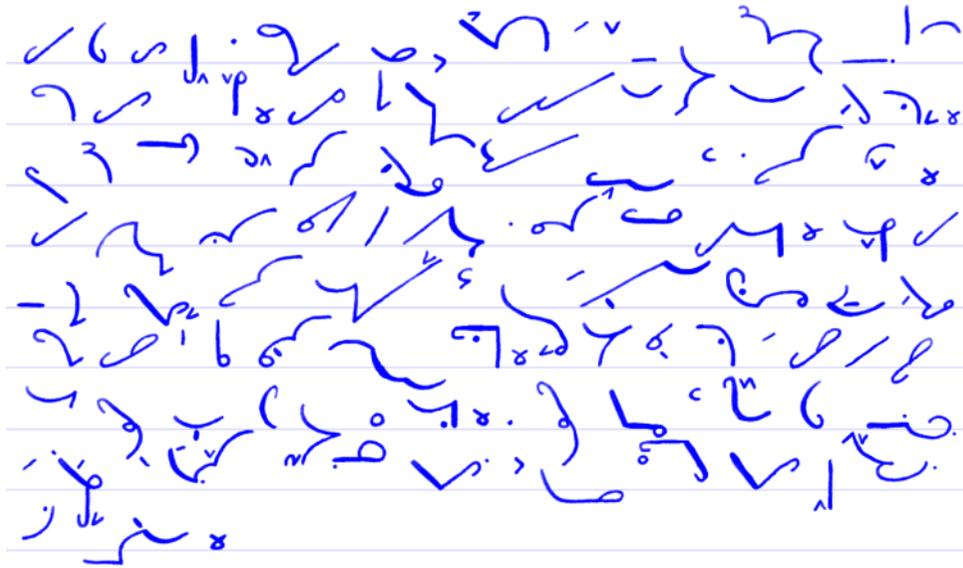
Energy For Waste

On we went on our journey through the building and came to a more open area where there was a large screen with a rolling video showing how the plant works, with all the usual graphics and interior cutaway views of the processes. In short, the waste is incinerated, the heat is used to make steam which drives the steam turbine generators to produce electricity. Staff were stationed at various points, eager and willing to answer

questions*, smiling widely, no doubt bemused that ordinary members of the public might be interested, and clearly glad to have the chance to share their knowledge with us. The company also offers tours for school groups, so perhaps they were relieved that we were less boisterous than the schoolchildren.

* "questions" Optional contraction

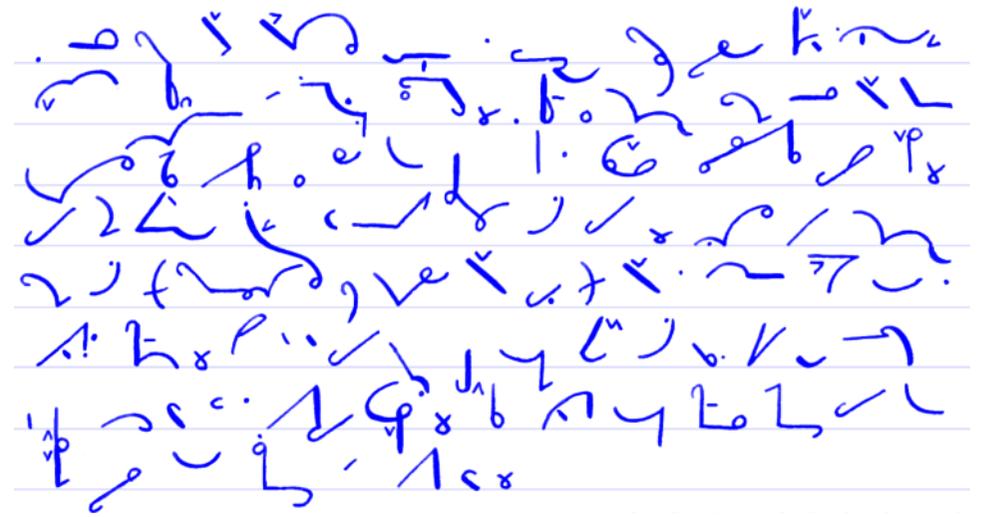
Horizontal lines for writing practice.



Energy For Waste

We then went down a stairway next to the boiler and I could feel the warmth coming at me from one side. Once at the bottom, we were in another open area. People were gathered around little openings that were glowing with a yellow light. We lifted the metal hatch which revealed a small glass window. Inside we could see the brilliant yellow interior with

the fierce and roaring flames shooting upwards from the waste on its slowly moving grate. Only hot air and waste are used in the process, no other fuel is needed. The process begins with drying, then ignition and combustion of volatile gases, burning of the fixed carbon, burn out and finally ash cooling.



Energy For Waste

The gases produced by the boilers undergo* a cleaning process, using dilute ammonia, lime milk and activated carbon. The dust is removed from the gas by bag filters and this residue is sent for disposal at a licensed hazardous waste site. We saw the jogging conveyors that carry the ash away. Metals are removed from the ash (approximately 3%*by weight) by a magnetic coil in a rotating drum. Last of all we peered down into the giant ash

pits, which are under cover but outside the main building, with a roadway alongside. It is loaded into trucks and taken away for use in construction and road building.

* "undergo" uses the short form "under" but stroke and vowel for "go"

* "3%" If you write the numeral then you can write stroke P for %



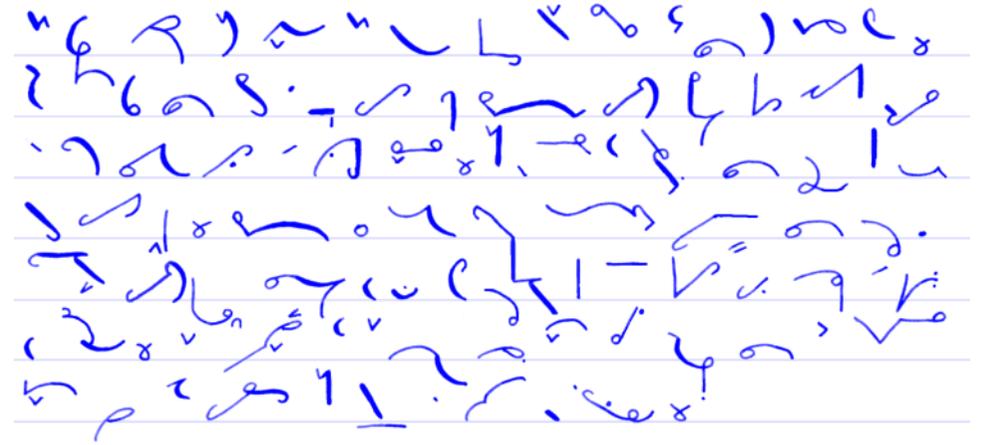
Energy For Waste

As we came out of the ash pit area, the first thing I saw was a large green tree growing by the boundary fence, with a backdrop of blue sky and white clouds. We turned the corner and there were even more trees with a fresh breeze lifting the branches. Visitors were sitting around at an outdoor refreshment area. We handed back our equipment and left the site. On the return journey along the dusty traffic filled road towards the train

station, all I really noticed was the sky, the sunshine, and the fresh green weeds* and long grass of the verges. I am sure those engineers really love their* jobs, but I think for me one visit was enough. (910 words)

* "weeds" Insert the vowel, as "woods" would also make sense

* "love their" Doubling to represent "their"



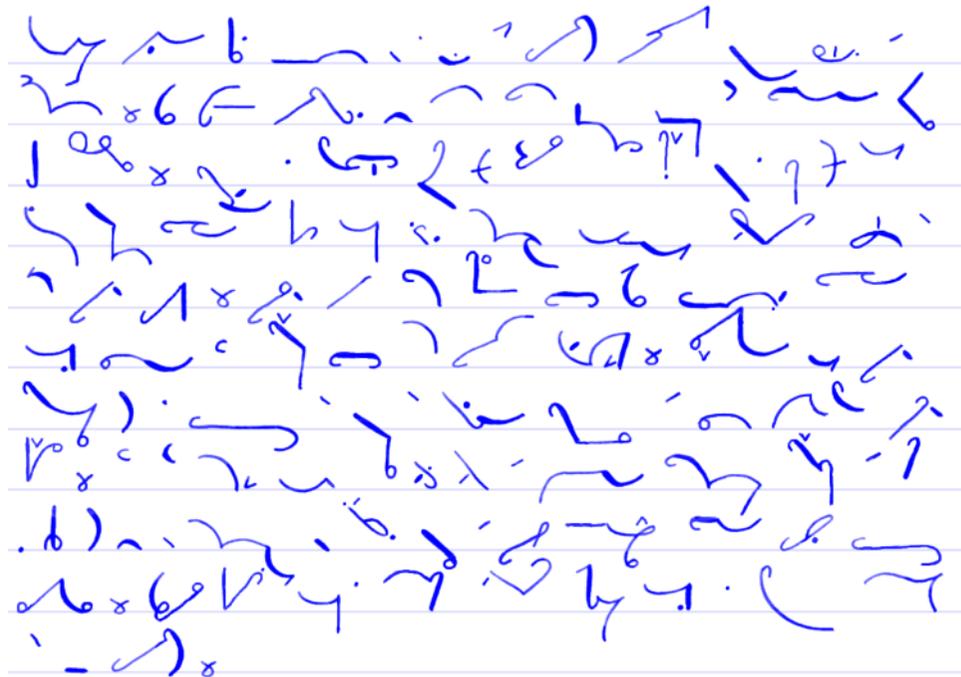
End Of Season

About this time last year I was writing about being taken by surprise that the summer was almost over. Although this summer has been a good one, during September the weather suddenly turned and we had two weeks* of very heavy rain and leaden skies. I had to accept that possibly the summer season had now been washed out. September is never predictable in my part of the* UK, some years the agreeable weather continues, seemingly without end, other years it can turn wet, misty and chilly

without warning. I realised that I may have missed my chance of visiting some of the parks on my list and that once again* I had become a little too complacent.

* Omission phrases "two wee(k)s" "in my part (of) the" "wu(n)s again"

The F/V hook is not added to "part" to signify "of" because that looks too much like "number of"



End Of Season

Fortunately the rainy days came to an end and the weather reverted to being* sunny* and warm. This welcome reprieve made me more determined to get all the gardening jobs done as soon as possible*. Pruning an overgrown* shrub (that was trying to be a tree) in the far bottom corner turned into complete removal, including the stubborn stump of hard yew wood. Yews are very dark green and this gloomy corner needed something with bright green or yellow foliage. Hiding under the yew branches was a collection of bits of paving, bricks and some left-over roof tiles. With that area now opened up and looking very much brighter and larger, the decision was made to remove the two composting bins and use the Council's garden waste

collection service. This was turning into a major operation, and definitely needed a further month of good weather.

* "to being" based on the short form phrase "to be" through the line

* "sunny" Always insert the vowels in "sun/snow, sunny/snowy"

* Omission phrase "as soon as poss(ible)" Here the large circle represents the two S sounds, a convenient departure from the normal rule of SW at beginning and Ses at end

* "overgrown" and "evergreen" Insert the last vowel in these, as they are similar in outline and meaning

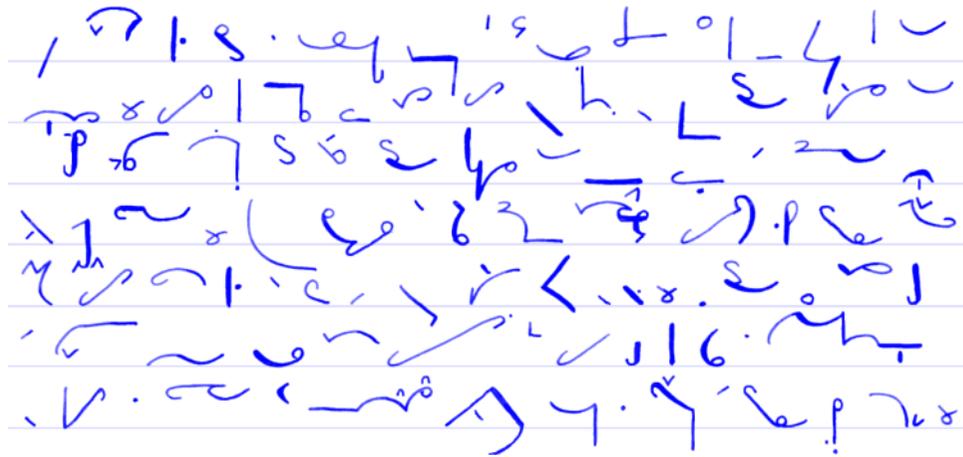


End Of Season

Once the yew bush was out, it was clear that the fences needed some attention. They needed cleaning, repairing and painting. Some of the posts were less than* firm and we had to put in extra posts parallel to them and join the two together with brackets, as well as installing the steel rods of the "Post Buddy" system, which restored their stability. We took the opportunity of using up the old bricks when concreting the posts in and I was delighted not to

have to find a way of disposing of them. Soil had built up along the base of the fence and so that had to be cleared away, to prevent any further rot. The small area of paving was sloping and so we laid the spare paving blocks over the top and increased its size, so that it can be used for a seat and some decorative pots.

* "less than" Downward L in order to make a good join



End Of Season

Each mild day has been an incentive to get on with the next task, as it could change at any moment. Once it gets cold, I will not want to be attempting to dig planting holes in sodden soil, emptying plant pots, planting daffodils in gooey clay and walking mud up and down the garden. After several weeks* of all this work, I am glad to say that the* weather stayed pleasant* and fine, and I think one more day of effort should put the whole job to bed. The planting is almost done and, like many things, I am wondering why we did not do this a long time ago, to turn a corner that

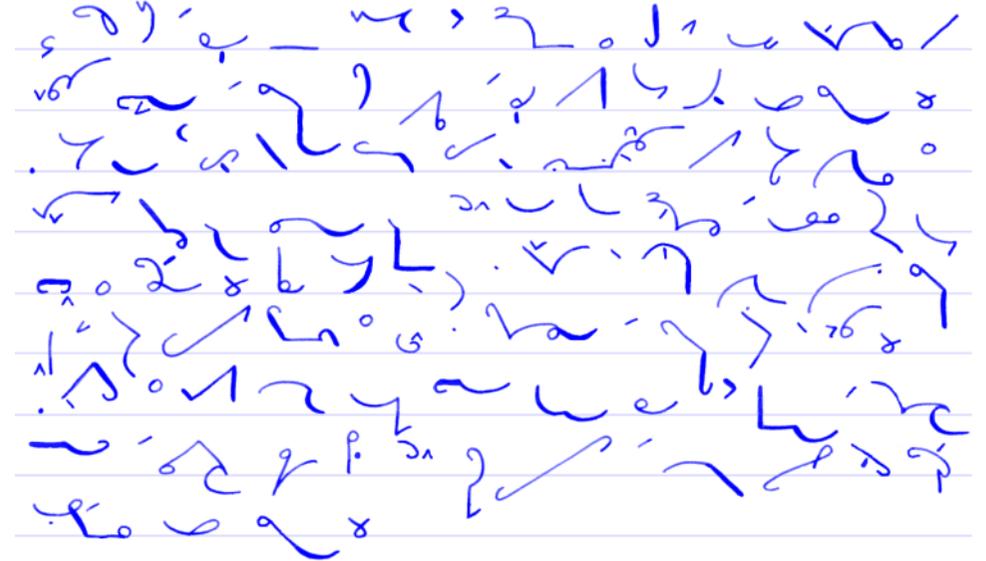
accumulates rubbish into a bright and pleasant* sitting* area.

* Omission phrases "several wee(k)s" "I am glad (to) s(ay) that the"

* "pleasant" "pleasing" Helpful to insert a vowel, as they are similar in outline and meaning

* "sitting" Ensure the dot is small, and for "seating" exaggerate the size of the dot, as context would be unlikely to differentiate these if the vowel signs were absent or unclear

Blank lined writing area for notes.



End Of Season

When the frost, ice and snow come, I know that all the work is done and the new bulbs are silently creating* and spreading their roots and shoots, ready for the show next spring. The only thing that won't be cleared away too meticulously are the fallen leaves, as I like the birds to have something to dig around in for worms and insects, especially if the ground is frozen*. It is not unusual to see a pile of muddy leaf litter spread out on the path where the blackbird has found a promising and productive patch of soil. The robin has already moved into the garden, having

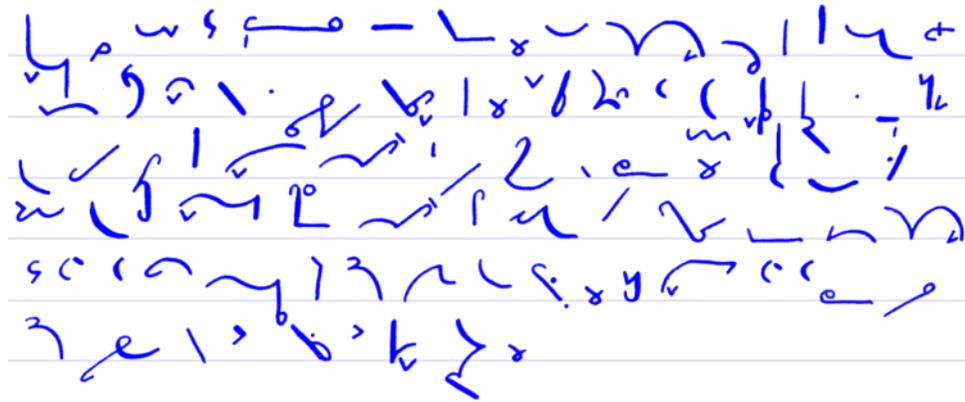
seen all the digging and removal going on, and hopefully he will stay around throughout the winter and maybe use the open fronted nestbox* next spring. (674 words)

* "creating" Insert the diphone, so it does not look like "growing" which would also make sense here

* "frozen" and "freezing" Always insert the vowels

* "nes(t)box" omits the lightly sounded T

Blank lined writing area for notes.



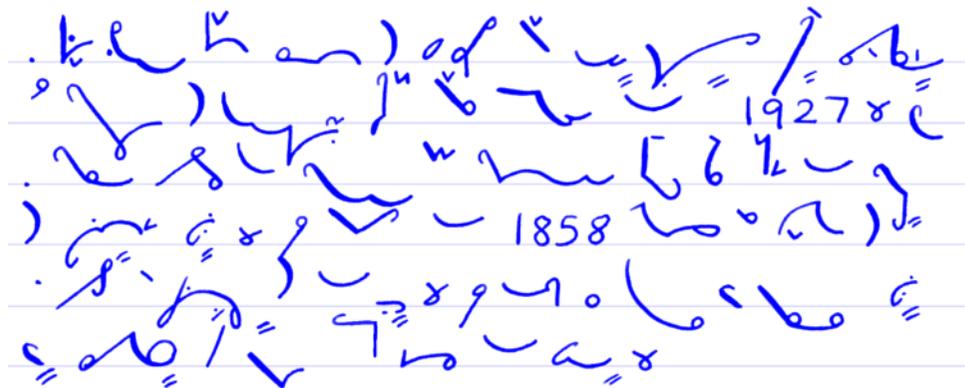
Daylight Saving

Tonight is the night that the clocks go back. In earlier years it had never occurred to me that there might* be a history behind it. I just assumed that "they" decided it would be a good idea if we children had lighter mornings on our journey to school. At that young age I would not have* minded dark mornings at all, and would have much preferred to come home earlier with the thought that more minutes of it were left for playing. I

did not like the thought that school hours were using up all the best of the daylight available.

* "might" Not phrased, so it does not look like "may"

* "I would not have" The have is not joined into the phrase, because that would look too similar to "I will never" If you have already written it, then insert the vowel in "not"



Daylight Saving

The Daylight Saving Time scheme was first suggested by New Zealander George Hudson and his proposal was eventually trialled by his government in 1927. However, the person responsible for bringing about the permanent adoption

of this idea in Britain was William Willett. He was born in 1858 and for most of his life was a resident of Chislehurst in Kent. He entered his father's building business, Willett Building Services, which built quality homes in London.



Daylight Saving

Willett liked to go out horse riding at an early hour and although it was full daylight he noticed that the houses mostly* had their curtains and blinds drawn. It occurred to him that they were wasting the daylight hours and therefore spending money and resources on artificial lighting at the end of the day, a good proportion of which could be avoided*. In 1909 he began and personally funded a campaign to have daylight saving measures adopted* by the Government and published* his own leaflet called "The Waste of Daylight". He proposed that the changes should occur in 20-minute increments over four

Sundays in April, and likewise reversed in September.

* "mostly" Omits the lightly sounded T

* "avoided" "evaded" and "adopted" "adapted" Insert vowels to help differentiate

* "published" The contraction should be avoided and written in all full strokes (P+B+L+UpIsh+T) when used as an adjective, to avoid clashing with "public" e.g. "This is a copy of the published/public report"

Handwritten Pitman shorthand notes in blue ink on lined paper, including the date 17.1916 and the year 1915.

Daylight Saving

There was much opposition, mainly from farmers*, but with the advent of the First World War it became a priority to save on coal and fuel costs. Daylight Saving Time (also known as British Summer Time) became law on 17 May 1916 but unfortunately* Willett died of influenza in 1915 so he did not live to see this happen. As we know, the change was not in increments but just one whole hour

forward in March and one hour back in October. This idea subsequently spread to many other parts of the world*.

* "farmers" See www.long-live-pitmans-shorthand.org.uk/distinguishing-outlines-2-rule.htm "former farmer"

* "unfortunately" Optional contraction

* Omission phrase "to many oth(er) parts (of the) world"

Handwritten Pitman shorthand notes in blue ink on lined paper, continuing the text from the previous page.

Daylight Saving

William Willett is honoured by a granite obelisk sundial in Petts Wood woodland (owned by the National Trust) marking British Summer Time. Many sundials have the Latin inscription "I only count the bright hours"* but Willett's sundial reads "I only count the summer hours"* referring to the Roman numerals on

which the gnomon shadow falls, with the central lower numeral being a one instead of a twelve. In Petts Wood village centre is a pub called The Daylight Inn, and nearby is Willett Recreation Ground and a road called Willett Way.

* "Horas non numero nisi serenas"
** "Horas non numero nisi aestivas"

Handwritten Pitman shorthand notes in blue ink on lined paper, including the phrase "correct" time.

Daylight Saving

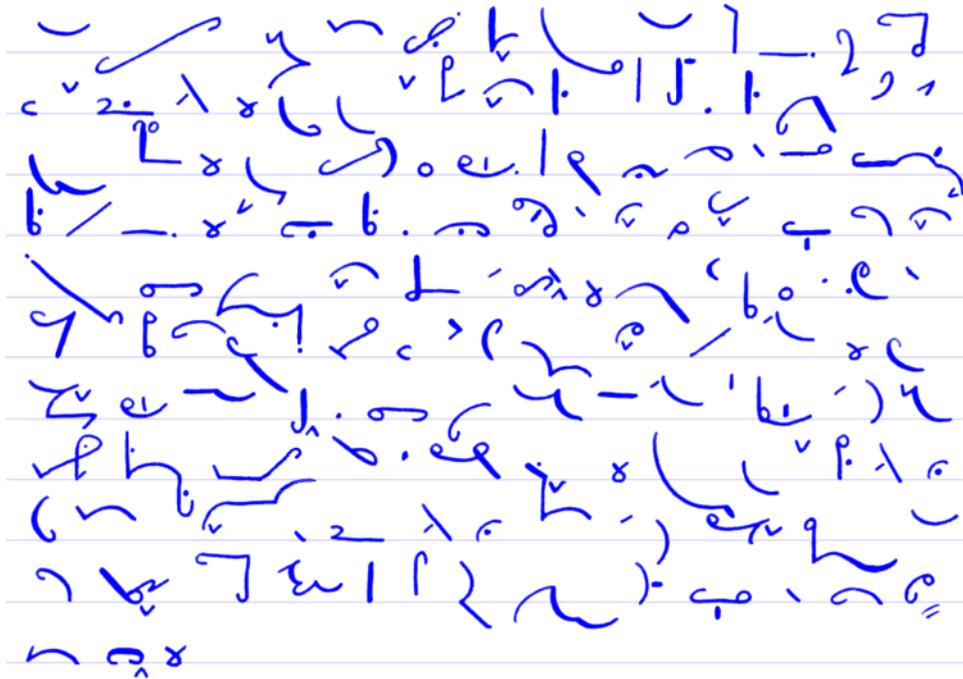
As a former* resident of Greenwich, I always felt an understandable fondness for Greenwich Mean Time, as shown on the clock outside the Royal Observatory in Greenwich Park. Whenever I visited it, I would stand and ponder the work that went into time measurement and the creation of the magnificent timepieces on display in the museum, all those centuries back when life was so different and knowledge more hard won. Consequently I would always spend half of every year (or at least* the first several weeks* after changing the clock in the spring) trying to remember what the "real" time was, and with a sigh of relief when the clocks went back to the

"correct" time. This did not take into account* the fact that* I had changed my location by walking home about a mile away, and so the time at my house was slightly ahead of the clock in the park, as I lived a few streets east of the Meridian line.

* "former" See note on paragraph 4

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

* Omission phrases "several wee(k)s" "take (into) account". The phrase for "taken (into) account" joins the two outlines.

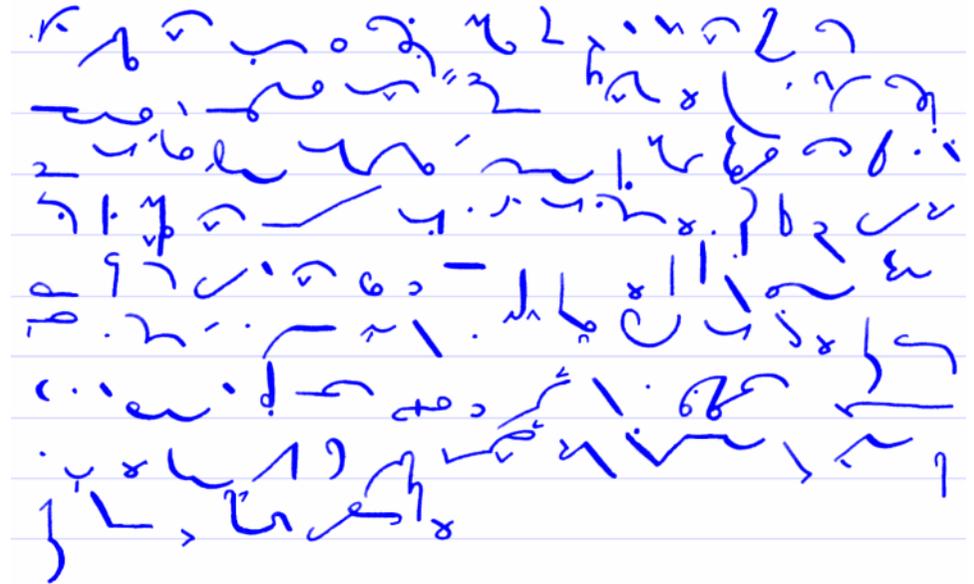


Daylight Saving

In winter I feel I am wasting daylight if there is* any of it coming through the curtains when I wake up. Even if I start my day at dawn, the day will be short and the evening dark. If the weather is sunny, it has to be made the most of, because gloomier days are coming. On the grey days, the main source of light is the white glow from my computer* screen, illuminating my desk and surroundings. Maybe that itself is a saver of energy, as it is more comfortable to use when all the other room lights are off. However, unlike the sun going down, the

screen will never go off on its own and so I have to resist the temptation to carry on past a sensible bed time. After all, if I stay up late, then I am likely to wake up late and see sunlight streaming in from behind the curtain and that would not do at all, especially living so close to Mr Willett's home ground. (811 words)

* "if there is" Note that "if" can be doubled for "there,their", and also halved for "it", but "for" is not doubled or halved for such phrases, in order to differentiate

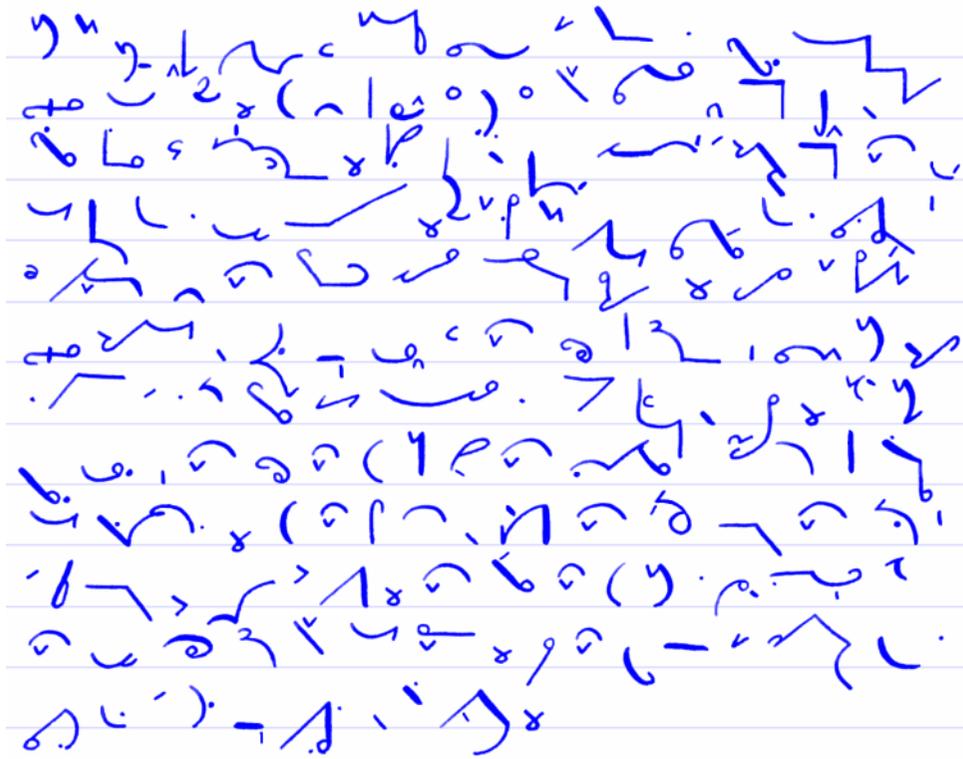


Fraser's Phrases

Hello readers, my name is Fraser and I have been asked to tell you all about my journey from ignorance to excellence in my work life. After a particularly frustrating week in the office, stuffing envelopes and making tea, I felt that this was more than just a bad hair day and I decided my career needed a shot in the arm. The acid test would be whether I would stick with it or whether all my efforts would go down the tubes. It had to be something that would not cost an

arm and a leg, and not be a flash in the pan. It was clear that an all-singing all-dancing commercial course would really be a sledgehammer to crack a nut. Having read their literature, I realised I would be barking up the wrong tree and it was back to the drawing board once again*.

* Omission phrase "wu(n)s again"



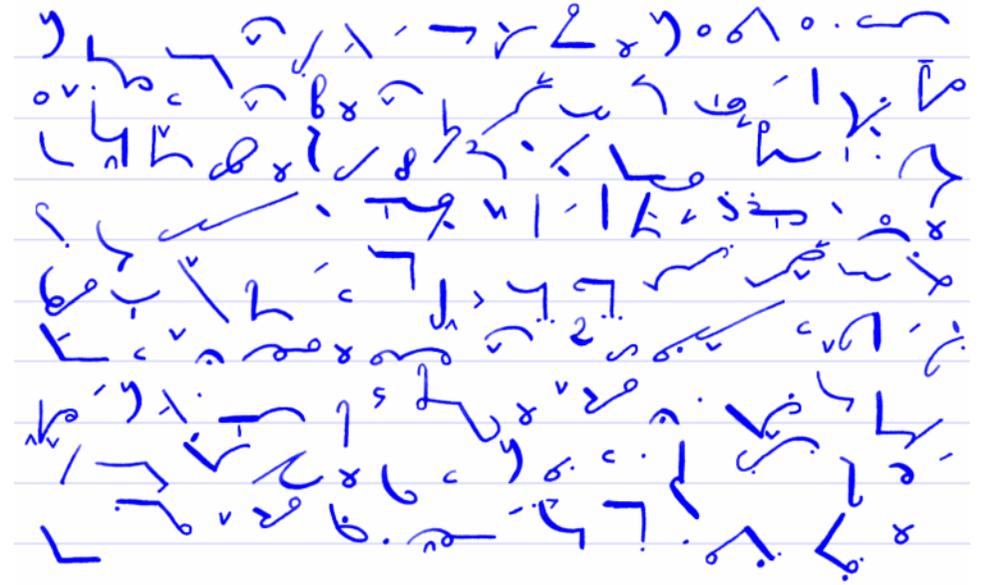
Fraser's Phrases

I was about to throw out the leaflet when I noticed something on the back, a brief* introductory course in shorthand. They made it sound as easy as pie, as long as you get down to brass tacks with the homework. At last* it was not all doom and gloom, and I would be able to get my foot in the door for a new career. I set about reading the syllabus for a heads up on what is required, made my application and was accepted straight away. Once I started the course, I wanted to share the good news with my friends at work but somehow I was between a rock and a hard place, in other words, a Catch 22 situation. I

thought I was the bee's knees but my friends might think I had lost my marbles or had bats in the belfry. They might tell me to hold my horses, keep my hair on and just keep to the middle of the road. My boss might think I was a loose cannon and that my new ambitions were pie in the sky. He might even go on the warpath, have a hissy fit and say good riddance to bad rubbish.

* "brief" Always insert the vowel, to differentiate it from "number of"

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



Fraser's Phrases

I was determined to keep my chin up and go the whole hog. I was as happy as a clam as I continued with my studies. My teacher really knew her onions and had zero tolerance for time wasters. Although we students were all raw beginners starting on a level playing field, we were all gung-ho about it and had jumped on the bandwagon of self-improvement. This was no pipe dream and when I got down to the nitty-gritty of learning, I realised I could not* pass the buck when I made mistakes. Sometimes my shorthand went haywire, with wild and woolly outlines, and I was up a gum tree with the

transcription*. I always made a bee-line for the dictionary which kept the ball rolling. Even when I was hit with a double whammy of difficult words and big gaps, I always faced the music and avoided getting the heebie-jeebies.

* "could" Note that "could" is not joined in phrases, as it might be misread as "can", but "could not" can be phrased safely, as that is entirely different from "cannot"

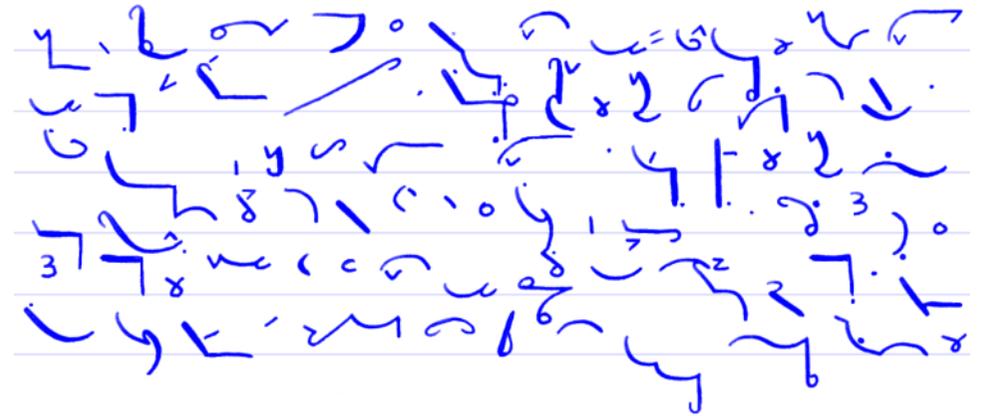
* "transcription" Omits the second R, compare "descriptions"



Fraser's Phrases

At last* I sat my 100 words a minute* exam. As it started at 9 am, I had to rise and shine really early. This was make or break and I could not* pull the wool over the eyes of any examiner, or resort to smoke and mirrors with my transcription*. Off the record* I can say it really turned out to be a piece of cake. I did not peg out and eventually I received my pass slip. This was really a red letter day for me. Shorthand had gone from being a blast from the past to being* flavour of the month. I was no longer limited to a run of the mill job, and so I started looking around. I was now a big fish in a small pond and with my improved* skills I knew I could knock all the other applicants into a cocked hat. With a new career I could paddle my own canoe and paint the town red. I could blaze a trail for shorthand writers* and get a top notch job.

- * "at last" and "at least" Always insert the vowel
- * Omission phrases "words (a) minute" "short(hand) writers"
- * "transcription" Omits the second R, compare "descriptions"
- * "could not " see note in previous paragraph
- * "off the record" Essential to insert the vowel in "off", to differentiate it from "for the record" - opposite meanings with dire consequences if misread!
- * "to being" Through the line, based on "to be"

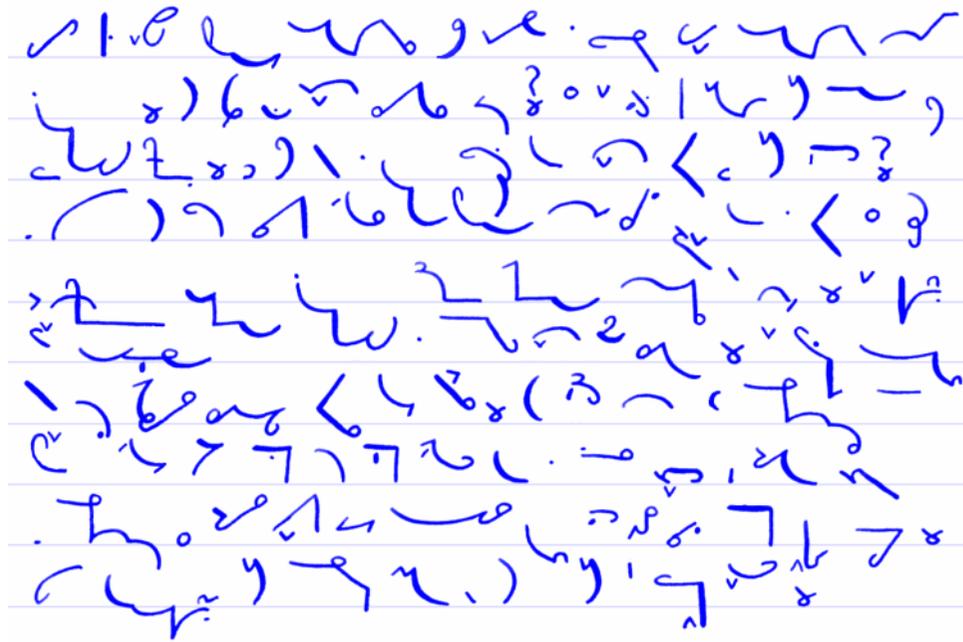


Fraser's Phrases

I took to dressing smart casual as befitted my new-found confidence. I felt like the new kid on the block rather than a back seat driver. I was not well heeled or becoming a fashion victim, but I did not want to look like a fuddy-duddy. I was not aiming to get Brownie points or

be thought of as fancy pants, but, to coin a phrase, what you see is what you get. I knew that with my new skills any employer would be getting a bigger bang for their buck and I wanted more than just my fifteen minutes of fame.

Horizontal lines for writing practice or notes.



Fraser's Phrases

One day, whilst stuffing the envelopes as usual, I received a crisp white envelope marked confidential. Was this the end of my service here? As I opened it, I felt I was going through cold turkey. Would there be a feeding frenzy for my job when I was gone? The letter was from head office, offering me the chance to apply for a job as assistant to the managing director, undertaking confidential work and taking minutes of meetings. I duly applied, enclosing a

copy of my shorthand certificate. I played the interview by ear and this was certainly not jobs for the boys. They warned me that customers can fly off the handle, get your goat and often have an axe to grind, but I would have to remember the customer is always right, in other words, if you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen. Well, eventually I was accepted and I have to say I was on cloud nine.



Fraser's Phrases

With the job in the bag, I decided to bury the hatchet with my boss, who would often get my dander up and behaved like a real Hooray Henry at times. But before I could say anything, he jumped the gun and wished* me good luck and break a leg. He said he had persuaded them to consider* me in the first place* when the job came up for grabs. He was retiring to a cottage out in the sticks, where he could* enjoy an Indian summer of retirement years while he still had good health. He knew I would never spill the beans with confidential information, especially as I had seen a lot of it whilst stuffing envelopes. This really was a turn-up for the books and I thought it really took the biscuit, in the nicest possible way. Well, that's my story in a

nutshell and I hope you will persevere with your own shorthand studies - what's not to like? Yours sincerely, Fraser. (1111 words)

* "wished" With the mention of "gun" before, this might be misread as "shoot/shot" so to clarify you could insert a semicircle W in 3rd place, or even write it in full W + halved Ish.

* Omission phrases "to (con)sider" "first p(l)ace" "Yours (sin)cerely"

* "he could" Not phrased, so it does not look like "he can"

Meanings at www.phrases.org.uk