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Blogs - 2016 - September

2 Sky Garden

7 Another September

10 Grubby Victory

13 Instructor Phrases Intro

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PDF Date: 21 January 2021



Sky Garden

Last month* we visited the Sky Garden which is a tropical garden and restaurants on the top floor of a 37-storey building in Central London. I had tried several times to book a place for our visit but found that no slots were available, not surprising as it was the height of summer and London was full of tourists. I had almost given up and thought we might have to wait until winter, when one day it occurred to me again to have a quick peek at the website and just see if there* were a couple of spaces anywhere on their schedule. I was delighted to find what I was looking for and immediately booked our two places for midday three weeks* hence. Although it is free to visitors, the booking scheme is necessary to avoid* overcrowding and to maintain safety and security. I assumed

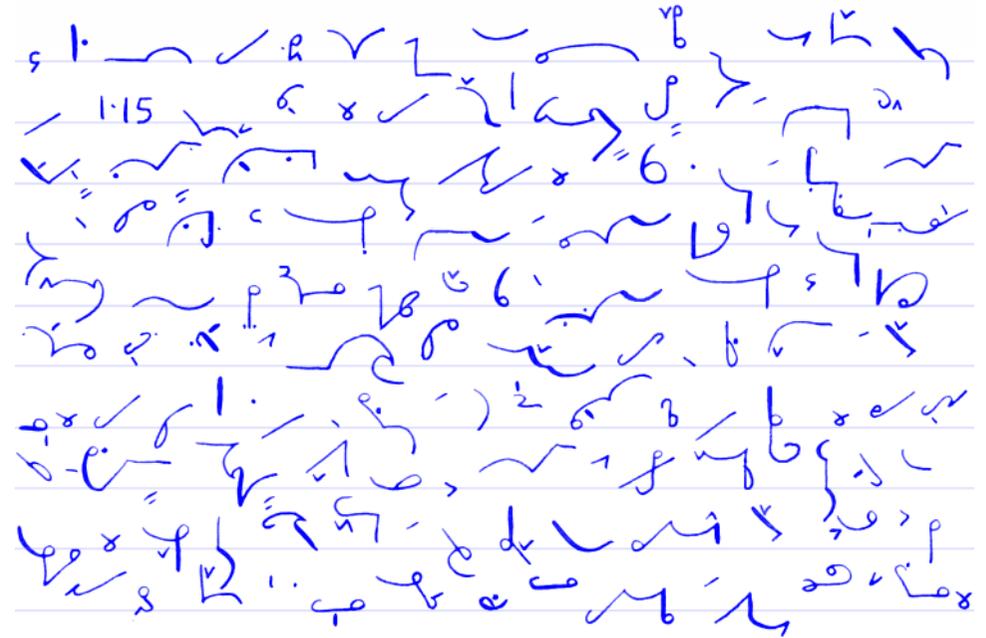
the Sky Garden would be similar to the conservatory that we visited at the Barbican* a short while ago, and thought this would be of equal interest and probably larger. I was about to find out.

* Omission phrases "las(t) month" "three (w)eeks"

* "if there" Doubling for "there"

* "to avoid" Insert the diphthong, to differentiate from "evade", especially in a phrase where it is out of position

* www.long-live-pitmans-shorthand-reading.org.uk/blog-pages/blog-2016-08.htm#Barbican



Sky Garden

When the day came we set out* early and took in some other* sights to fill in the time before our 1.15 pm slot. We arrived at London Bridge Station and looked around Borough Market, located underneath the railway. This is a food and delicatessen market full of stalls laden with interesting looking and smelling dishes* for the food connoisseur, and I am sure many city workers and tourists find this of impelling interest, with the delicious aromas wafting abroad and the colourful stalls inviting one to taste, like and buy the goods. We still had an hour to spare, and so walked slowly towards our destination. As we wandered past Southwark* Cathedral, right next to the market and the railway station, I noticed that it was open for visitors. Inside it was remarkably* quiet and peaceful

despite being surrounded by the noise of the city, and we spent time on a close inspection of the stained glass windows and reading the inscriptions on the plaques.

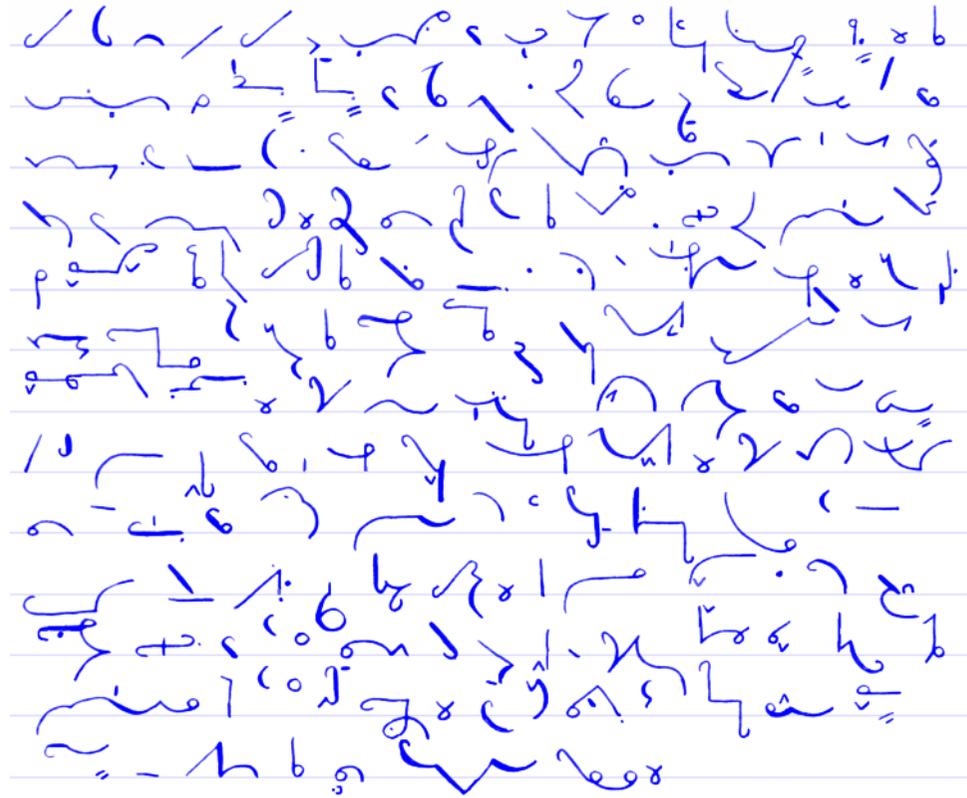
* "set out" Halving for "out"

* "some other" Doubling for "other"

* "dishes" Ish goes up after D and down after T

* "Southwark" pronounced "Suthark"

* "remarkably" The contraction includes the "-ly" version but it is always in order to insert a final dot, or L stroke if necessary, to help with reading back

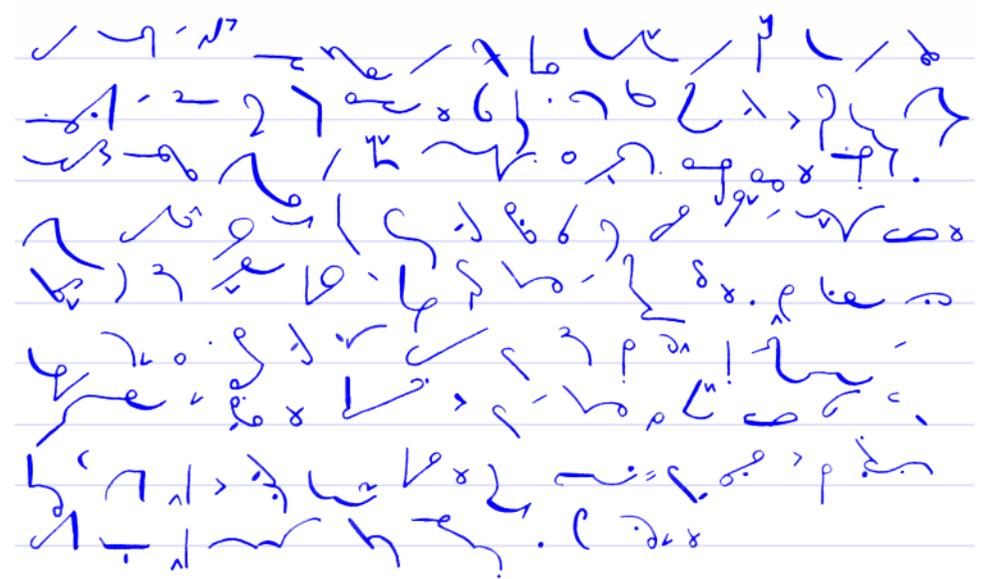


Sky Garden

We then made our way to the nameless building known only as 20 Fenchurch Street. Its nickname is the Walkie Talkie building and this should be a sharp lesson to those planning new large buildings, to make the effort to give them a pleasant and instantly popular name early on in the process before people make up* their own. There has been some controversy over its appearance, the curved shape looming above the city skyline, with its top wider than its base, giving an air of unsettling instability. I have tended to agree with the critics, although I feel that* its graceful qualities would have been better appreciated if it were not in the skyscraper category. There are many innovative lower level buildings in London which do not look out of place but instead provide interest and variety. There are also unfortunately* some quite ugly buildings, messy looking or

with overdone decorative features that can quickly become irritating, but this is definitely not* one of them. It looks like a very beautiful graceful curving building that has somehow been pulled out to three or four times the height it should have been, and it is the loomingness of it that has drawn the criticism. However, I was hoping that the attractive-sounding Sky Garden could redeem its somewhat* overbearing presence.

- * "make up" A phrase. The noun "make-up" would have the P on the line, as the first up or downstroke of the outline.
- * Omission phrase "I fee(l) that"
- * "unfortunately" Optional contraction
- * "definitely not" N Hook and halving for "not"
- * "somewhat" The Dot H and vowel sign are shown for learning purposes, they generally do not need to be inserted

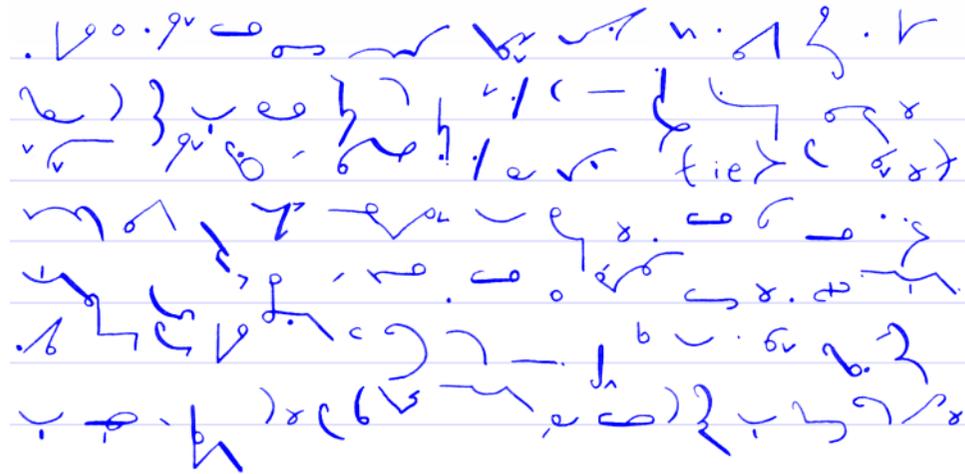


Sky Garden

We entered and joined the queue to present our numbered* tickets, verify our identity, have our possessions X-rayed and walk through the body scanner. Then it was a very fast journey up to the 35th* level in one of the express elevators*, which I timed mentally as roughly 16 seconds. Exiting the elevator, we found ourselves in the top floor open space which is 3 storeys high and entirely glazed. Behind us were rising terraces of densely planted palms and tropical plants. The south-facing main visitor area is a spacious open hall where people were sitting around eating and drinking, and relaxing on the sofas. Dwarfing all the people and palms is the giant glazed wall with two doors that lead out to the open air viewing terrace. Seeing

the greeny-blue haze of the city panorama, we had to go out immediately before exploring the other areas.

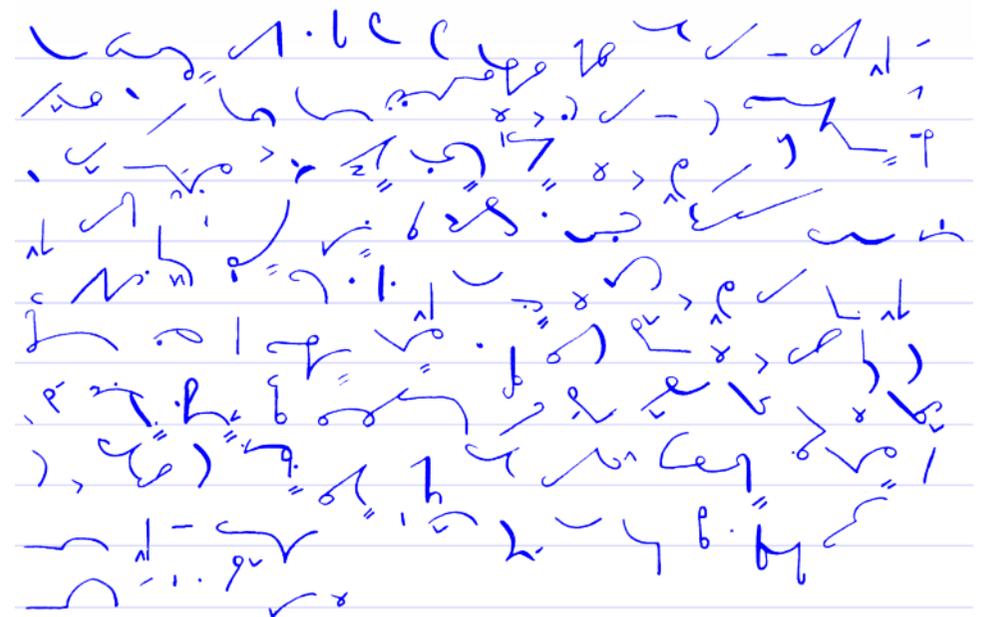
- * "numbered" Both present and past tenses would make sense here, so use the optional short dash through the last stroke, to signify past tense in a short form or contraction that has no other method to show the difference
- * "35th" You cannot write 35 in numerals and then add an Ith stroke, as that would mean "35 thousand"
- * "elevators" Ensure the doubled stroke is clear, as it could look like "lift" which has the same meaning



Sky Garden

The terrace has a high glass screen immediately behind the handrail, about a head higher than a tall person, so there was no sense of danger or teetering on the edge that can adversely affect some people. I like high places and as long as the edge is not too low (i.e. fall over height) I am very happy to be able to enjoy the experience in safety. The glass wall gives a completely

unobstructed view of the cityscape and of course the glass is spotlessly clean. The curved canopy arches over the terrace, with fresh air coming down on us in a slight breeze, and there were no gusts to disturb us. However, this part of the canopy is not glazed so there would be no protection from rain.



Sky Garden

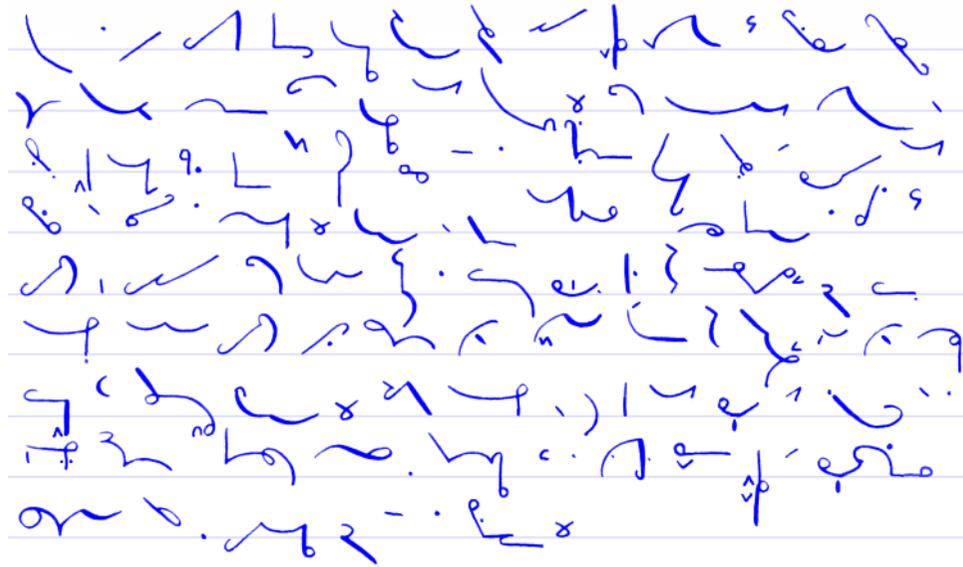
Being Londoners we had an advantage over other visitors and tourists in that we could search out and recognise all our favourite* familiar landmarks*. To the east we could see Greenwich Park and the two white cupolas of the old Royal Naval College. To the south our eyes sought out the water tower on Shooters Hill, which has always been an indication that we were nearing home, when returning from a day out in Kent. Also to the south we picked out the transmitter mast at Crystal Palace, a distant hazy spike. To the west it was easy to spot Wembley Stadium with its semi-circular roof support rising above the pitches. Behind us to the north-west was Hampstead* Heath and due north we found Alexandra Palace, which came out quite

clearly on my zoomed-in photo, as it is a distinctive yellow colour and on a high hill.

* "favourite" Note that "favoured" has the normal anticlockwise Vr stroke

* "landmarks" Alternative dictionary contraction is "land" with M intersected, but this is not a clear outline and would be better written with the M close up rather than through

* "Hampstead" Place names always use the Imp stroke, even though the P is lightly sounded, see this word on www.long-live-pitmans-shorthand.org.uk/theory-16-Imp-Imb.htm#halving



Sky Garden

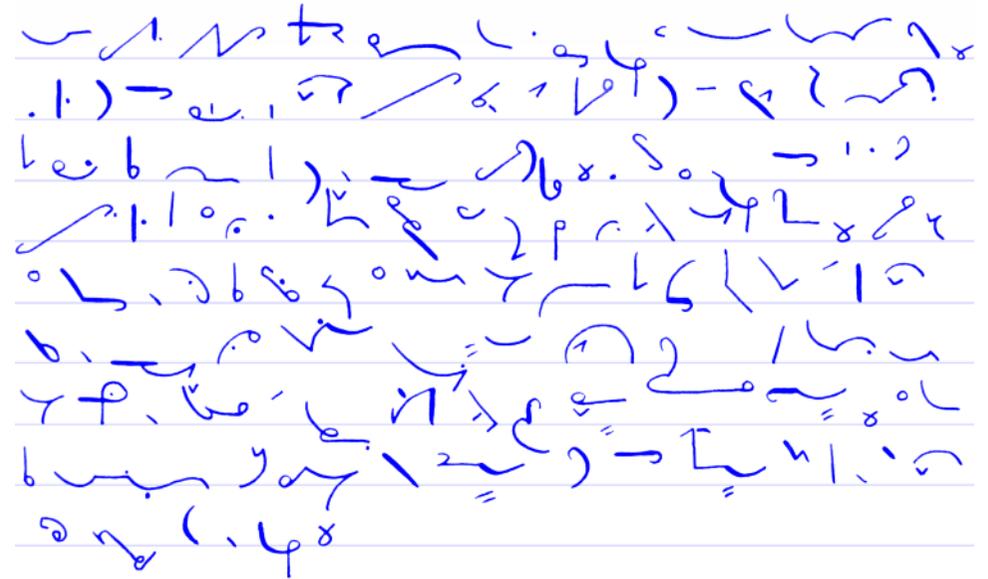
After an hour we had taken photos of everything possible and we decided to leave, with the pleasant* prospect of easily being able to make more visits in the future. From entering the elevator to stepping out into the street took about 30 seconds, quite a dramatic change of position and scenery in the space of half a minute. Having to book in advance means taking a chance with the weather but we were very fortunate that it was a clear sunny* day, although the experience would be equally interesting in any weather, rain, storm, low-lying fog, although obviously not low misty cloud that obscures everything. I would be interested to see it in the snow*,

and the combination of a cossetted warm atmosphere amongst the palm trees with a leaden sky outside and snowflakes* swirling past the windows would be quite a spectacle.

* "pleasant" Helpful to insert the vowel, as "pleasing" is similar in outline and meaning

* "sunny" "snow" Always insert the vowels

* "snowflakes" The FI stroke is the first up or downstroke and so it is the one that determines the position of the outline, not the "snow" part



Sky Garden

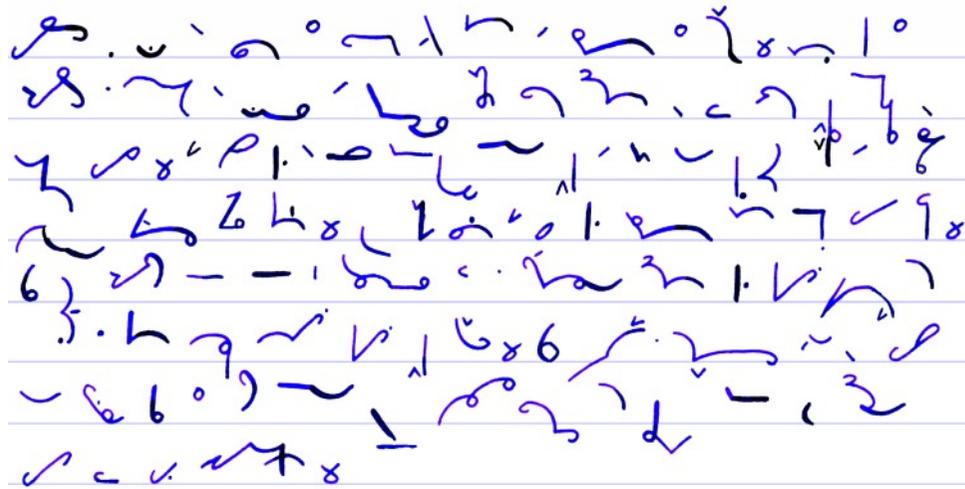
In fact*, we did return at the beginning of* September for a second visit with another family member. The day was again sunny* but mild rather than hot, and the terrace was quite blowy, although marvelling at the scene does make it easy to ignore weather conditions. The plan is to visit again on a short winter day, at as late a time as possible, in order to* see the city lit up in the dark. Yes, I think it has begun to earn its place here, as I now only look at the elegant top part, and do my best to ignore the less appealing pinched-in lower three-quarters* which for me now only

exist to finance and physically hold up the delightful Sky Garden. As for its nickname, I shall certainly be Walking there again and Talking about it to all my friends, to persuade them to visit. (1532 words)

* Omission phrases "in fact" "at the (be)ginn(ing) of" "in ord(er to)"

* "sunny/snowy" Always insert the vowels

* "three-quarters" Optional contraction for "quarters" which omits the middle R sound and uses doubling



Another September

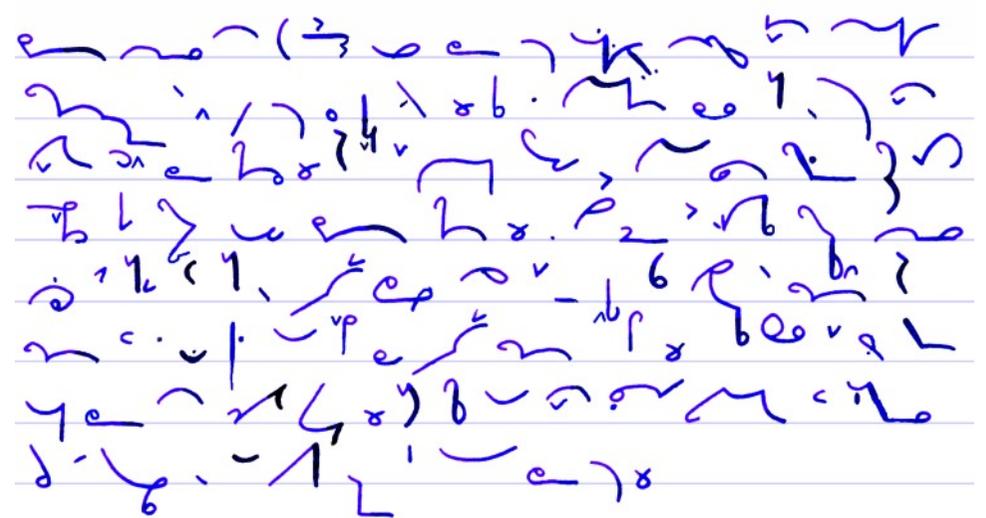
Once again* the end of summer has crept up on me and September has arrived. To me* it has always been a month of endings and beginnings, of transition from warm to cold, and from outside activities to indoor ones. On the last day of August, I can continue going out and about in teeshirt and sandals, leaving jumpers and jackets at home. If I do the same on the first day of September, I am "getting away with it". This see-saw of weather can go on for some weeks*, with a promising warm day turning chillier, or a damp misty morning turning

out fine. This is really a reminder not to waste any pleasant days, as they are going to become* less and less** frequent, or disappear altogether without warning one cold, wet and windy morning.

* Omission phrases "wu(n)s again" "some (w)eeeks" "less (and) less"

* "To me" Insert the vowel, to differentiate from "to him"

* "to become" Based on "to be" through the line



Another September

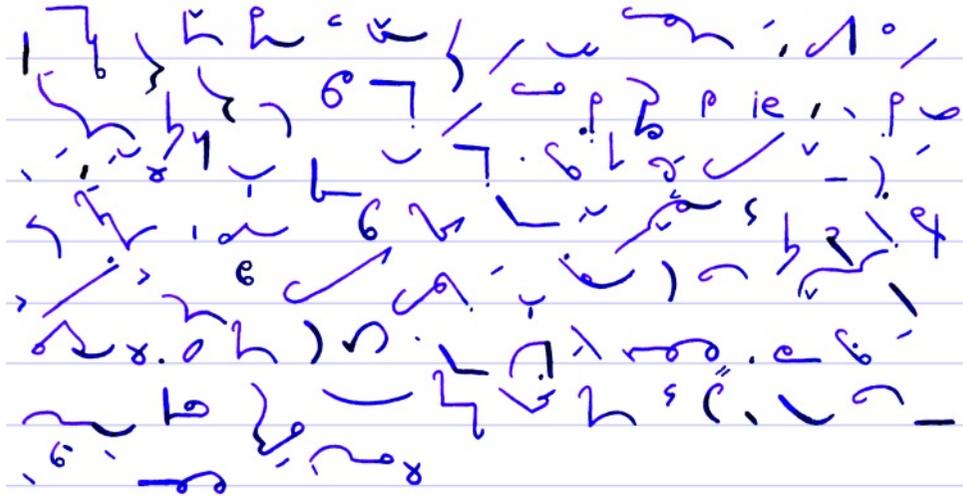
September makes me think of the beginning of the* next school year, indelibly impressed on my mental framework of how each year is divided up.

It is a long time since I had to order my life around school terms. Although I looked forward to the long summer break, there was also excitement at the approach of the new September term. The last week of the holidays produced mixed emotions and the idea that I had to really squeeze the most I could* out of those last few days of freedom, although freedom with an "end

date" in sight is not really freedom at all. As soon as I stepped back into school, my world changed. I was dressed in my smart uniform, with notebooks, pens and pencils to hand, ready to take on another school year.

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

* Omission phrase "of the (be)ginn(ing) of the" The Gn stroke can also be intersected for this word, whichever is most convenient



Another September

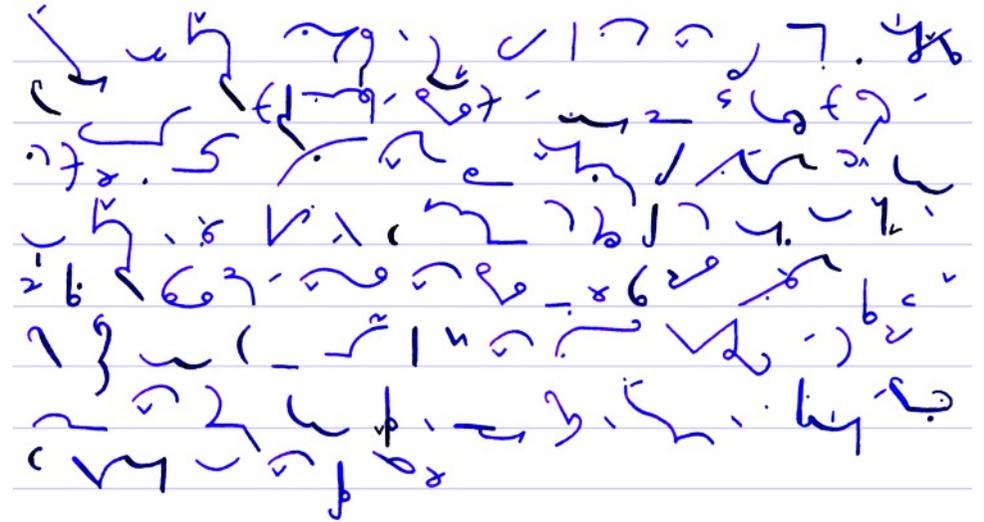
Different activities filled the time, starting with finding which was our new classroom and who we had as our form teacher for that year, as well as getting our class seating arrangements settled i.e. who to sit next to and who not. I had no difficulty in getting a place at the front, where I could* see and hear properly*, but certain others preferred the back, not realising that the teacher would be paying special attention to the rear of the room, as that is where the whispering and note passing was more likely to be happening. The first term was also a big lead up to Christmas, the school

plays, and making decorations, so that was another attractive part of the term, with the other two being more given to thoughts of exams and mocks*.

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

* "properly" Insert the dash vowel, and the diphone in "appropriately" as these two are similar in outline and meaning

* "mocks" These were practice exams using previous years' test papers

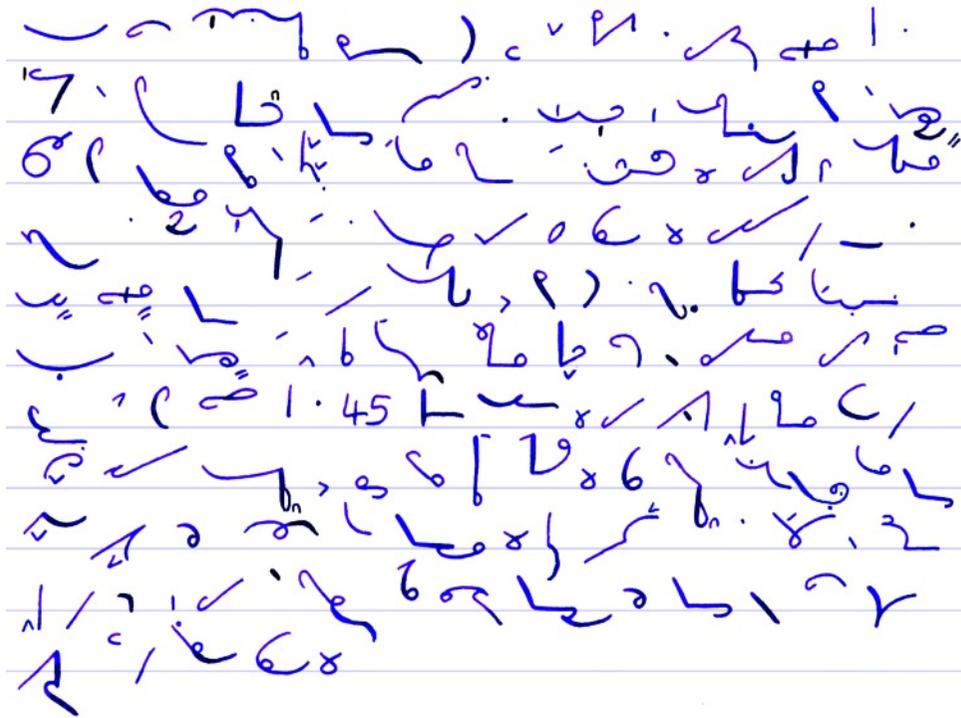


Another September

Pondering the new timetable mainly consisted of seeing whether it matched my wishes, getting the undesirables over quickly (double chemistry and sports) and ending the week with the favourites (French and art). The occasional later life school nightmare generally revolved around having no timetable to consult, turning up without homework or assignments done or indeed any idea of what the day's lessons were, and minus my sports kit. This always

resolved itself when I remembered that there was nothing they could actually do about my lack of participation, and so I would make my escape, having decided to ignore the pressure to conform to a defunct obligation that belonged* in my distant past.

* "belonged" You cannot halve the Ing stroke

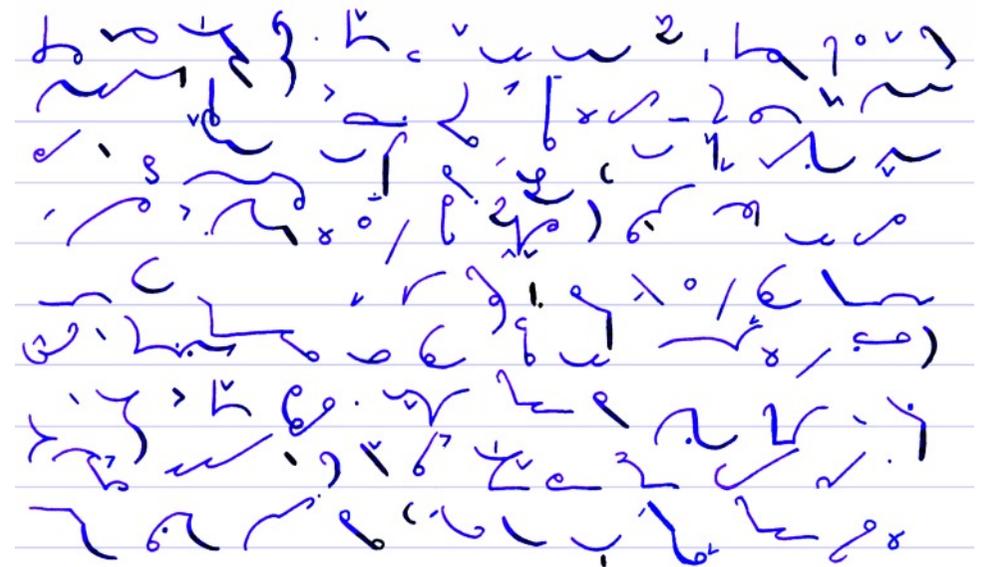


Another September

Another more momentous September was when I started a one-year course at a college of further education, to begin* learning the unknown but intriguing subject of Pitman's Shorthand*, as well as the other business subjects of typewriting*, office practice and communications. We had been told in advance to bring a shorthand notepad and a pencil to our first lesson. We were each given a New Course book and our introduction to the subject was a brief* description of the phonetic nature of Pitman's, and how it is formed of strokes derived from two circles, one crossed vertically and the other crossed at a 45 degree angle. We wrote out the strokes along each line, and were introduced to the second place dots and dashes. This produced enough combinations* for us to begin* writing real words, most important* for beginners. It was really a puzzle to work out each word,

but we all persevered and those simple beginning words began to be more easily readable* with each passing lesson.

- * "to begin" Based on the short form phrase "to be"
- * Omission phrases "Pitman's Sho(r)thand" "mos(t) important"
- * "typewriting" Outlines mostly attempt to preserve the breaks between syllables, to aid legibility, but in this case that is outweighed by having a very convenient outline "ty-priting"
- * "brief" Always insert the vowel, to prevent misreading as "number of"
- * "readable" Keep the R straight and the D vertical, as this could begin to look like "legible" if written carelessly, which has the same meaning

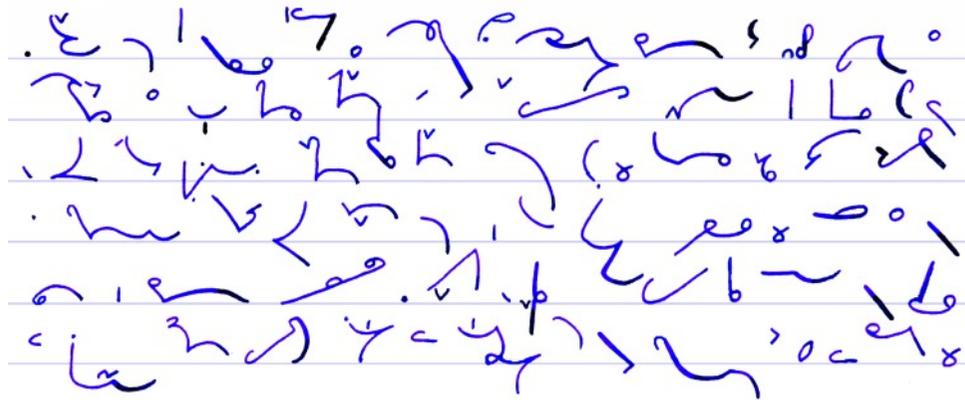


Another September

It seems almost unbelievable* that there was a time when I knew nothing of shorthand, but it must be true, as I remember the long-winded deciphering of the stick shapes and the dots. One could say the same about longhand, as we all spent many years in childhood, speaking and understanding without any idea of reading, writing and letters of the alphabet. As each set of shorthand outlines was slowly mastered, new ones came along to take their* place, but the whole process did speed up, as each lesson became the foundation of assimilating the next lesson with its new material. Our class was full of

enthusiasm all the time, as this was an entirely practical subject, leading directly to paid employment and we were all there by choice, unlike school work where you are the captive* slave, learning subjects that often have no obvious practical use.

- * "unbelievable" Based on the short form "believe"
- * "take their place" Doubling for "their"
- * "captive" Written thus, instead of T with V hook, in order to form derivatives i.e. "captivate" without changing the form



Another September

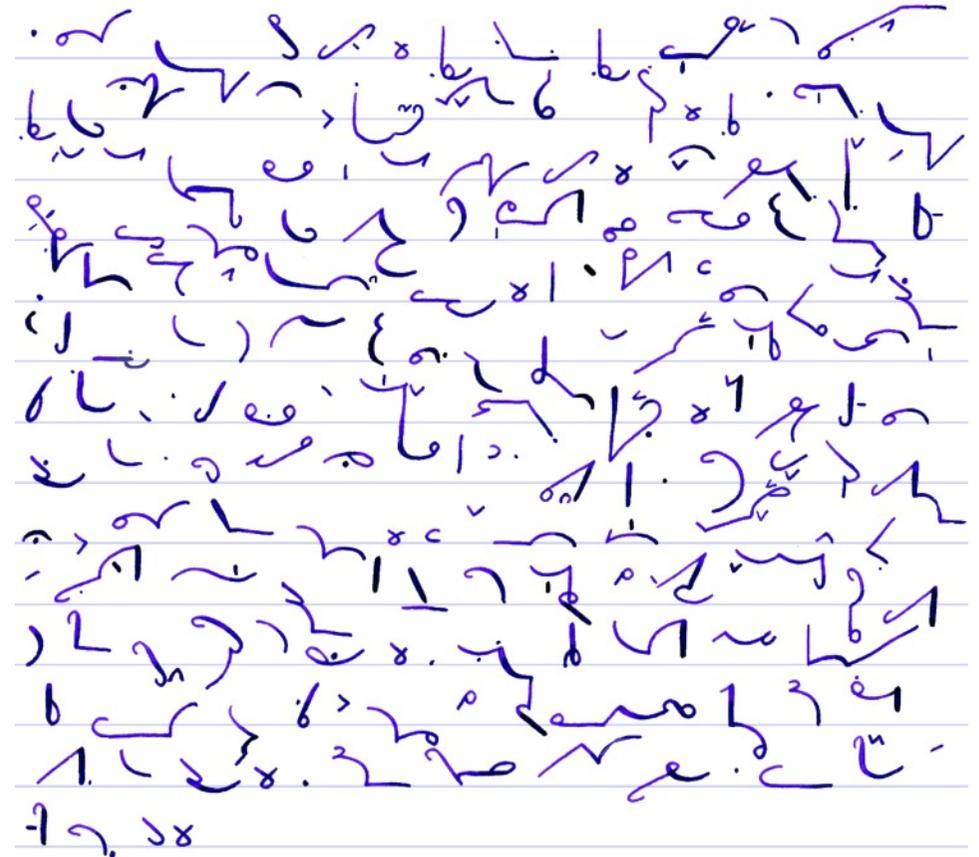
The final* year at business college is most probably* the last meaningful September that the students will have, as employment has no terms and timetables, and I wonder how long it takes other people to shake off the tyranny of term-time from their thinking. For myself, I think it is, and will always be, a permanent* part of the shape of my year, but for changing reasons. August has to be summer, but September reserves the right to decide whether it is going to be generous with continuing warm

weather, commonly called "unseasonal", or be the bringer of the first cold snap. (940 words)

* "final" The F is above the line, so it does not matter where the hooked N stroke sits

* Omission phrase "mos(t) probably"

* "permanent" See www.long-live-pitmans-shorthand.org.uk/distinguishing-outlines-2-rule.htm "prominent permanent pre-eminent"



Grubby Victory

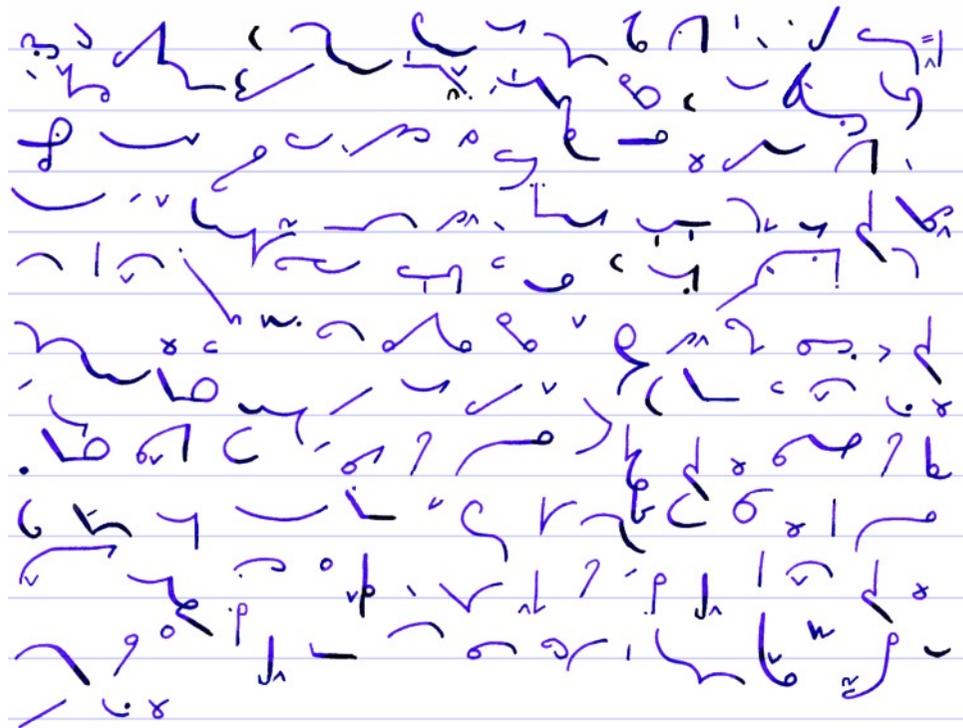
A small victory has been won. It's not epic, it's not glorious or heroic, it's not even majorly important to the continuation of life on this planet. It's a grubby victory, not in the figurative sense but in the literal one. My reasonably tidy and supposedly clean rooms have been revealing their squalid secrets, corners that have escaped the duster, the damp cloth and the vacuum cleaner. It all started with some chips in the paintwork that had been ignored for so long that they seemed to have disappeared, not really noticed any more but just adding to a general sense of untidiness and creeping deterioration. I had recently done some painting for a friend, and was amazed* at what a huge difference the fresh white painted woodwork made to the

small back room. When I came home, I realised how chipped and yellowed my own paintwork had become, very noticeable as the original 1930's wood was dark brown varnish or stain. The inevitable* decision followed, and new temporary dust quickly filled the edges of the rooms as the skirting boards* and doors were sanded ready for painting. The work progressed rapidly, using a quick drying and odour free paint.

* "amazed" and "amused" Always insert the vowel

* "inevitable" Full stroke T, to differentiate from the similar "unavoidable" which uses halving

* "skirting boards" = "base boards"

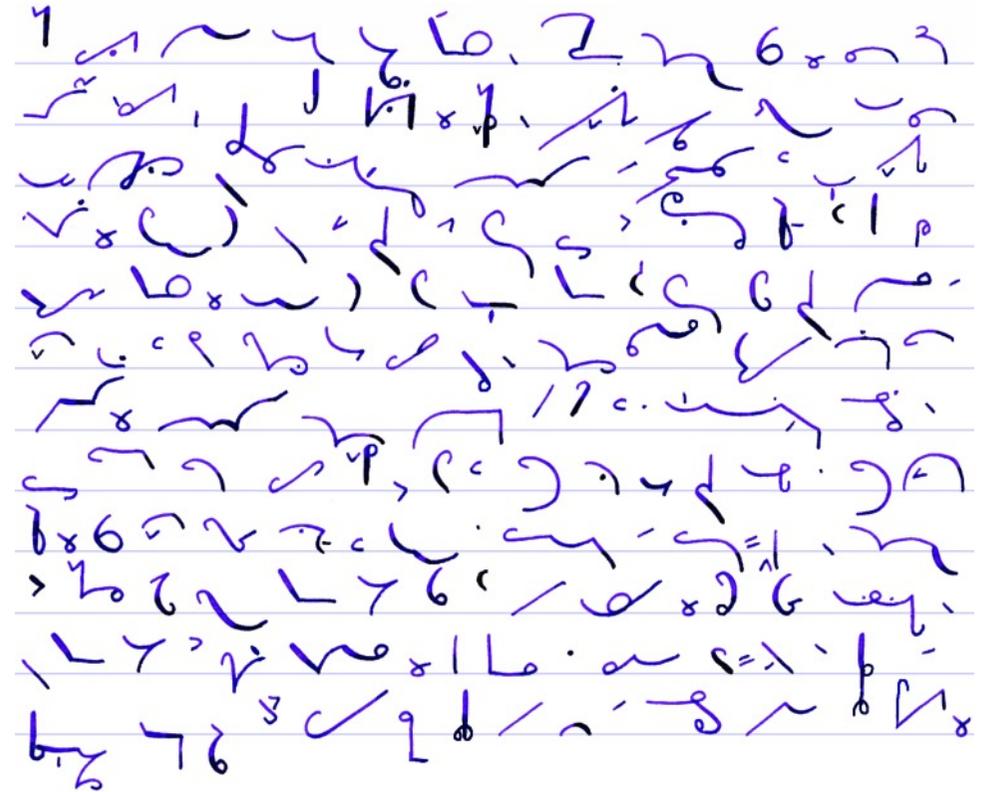


Grubby Victory

You can't* paint woodwork without moving everything in the room and this led on to a general clear-out of items that were occupying unobtrusive spaces, without any justification for their existence, "neither use nor ornament" as the cliché goes. One thing* led to another and I eventually came round to attacking the no-go* area under the table behind me at my computer corner, cluttered with things that needed relocating or removing. When I need more surface space, I swivel round from the screen to the table and if the boxes underneath are in the way, I push them back with my feet. The boxes slide along and hit the chair legs

at the other side of the* table. As long as the chair does not then bump into another bag on the floor, it will move along as well. It looks like the Invisible Man has decided to pull out the chair and sit down at my table. Maybe he has sat down to give me some friendly but firm advice about the situation under our feet.

- * "can't" Must have the vowel, as otherwise it would read "cannot"
- * Omission phrases "wu(n) thing" "on the oth(er) side of the"
- * "no-go" Best in full and vocalised, not attempting to use the short form for "go"



Grubby Victory

I had waited long enough for these* boxes to magically remove themselves. Some were actually sorted but disposal had been delayed. I decided to rewrite the rules and bring in some new legislation, to be enforced immediately and rigorously, with no right of appeal. Everything was put on the table,* and the floor cleaned of the squares of dust that had settled between the boxes. Nothing was ever to go back on that floor, other than table legs and my feet, with special permission* for the waste bins to remain, as long as they were emptied more regularly. Immediately the room looked much larger, with an uninterrupted expanse of clean carpet from one side to the other, with fresh air under the table instead of a fresh layer of dust. This is my preferred method when having a clean-up and clear-out, to remove all the items and then bring back only those that are necessary. There is then the incentive

to put back only what truly belongs. It takes a certain build-up of dissatisfaction* and disgruntlement to get to this point, where strict decisions are made and exceptions are not tolerated.

- * "for these" Insert the vowel, as it could be "these" or "those" when out of position in a phrase
- * "table," This comma is necessary in the longhand, otherwise you might read "put on the table and floor", which would then lead to misreading the rest of the sentence. This can be indicated by an extra space in the shorthand note.
- * "permission" Helpful to insert the vowel in this, and "promotion", to avoid misreading.
- * "dissatisfaction" Has the Circle S, not the Ses Circle, as this is considered readable without having to indicate the two S's. (Words like "mis-spell, mis-spend, mis-state, dis seize" do have the Ses Circle for clarity, to show the slight pause between the syllables)

Handwritten shorthand notes in blue ink on lined paper, corresponding to the text on the left.

Grubby Victory

The unwanted stuff comes in many different categories, or more accurately excuses, and here are some of them. I will think about that but not just yet (completely open-ended time frame). It might be useful at some time* (even though I don't do that activity any more). I don't want the hassle of making a decision (scared I might lose something useless). It needs repairing (even though I have bought a new one and will never touch it again). I may know someone who could use that (no I don't). Maybe think about sending that to the charity shop* (why isn't it downstairs in a bag waiting to go?) I'm not sure if I need it

any more or even if it still fits my devices (I have managed OK without it for the past few years*). All these "apologies for an excuse" fall flat once the items are out of the room, out of sight and out of mind, only leaving the job of disposing of them.

* "at some time" Halving for the T of "time" = "at-sumt-ime"

* "charity shop" = "thrift store" In the UK such shops always support a stated UK registered charity

* Omission phrase "pas(t) few years"

Handwritten shorthand notes in blue ink on lined paper, corresponding to the text on the right.

Grubby Victory

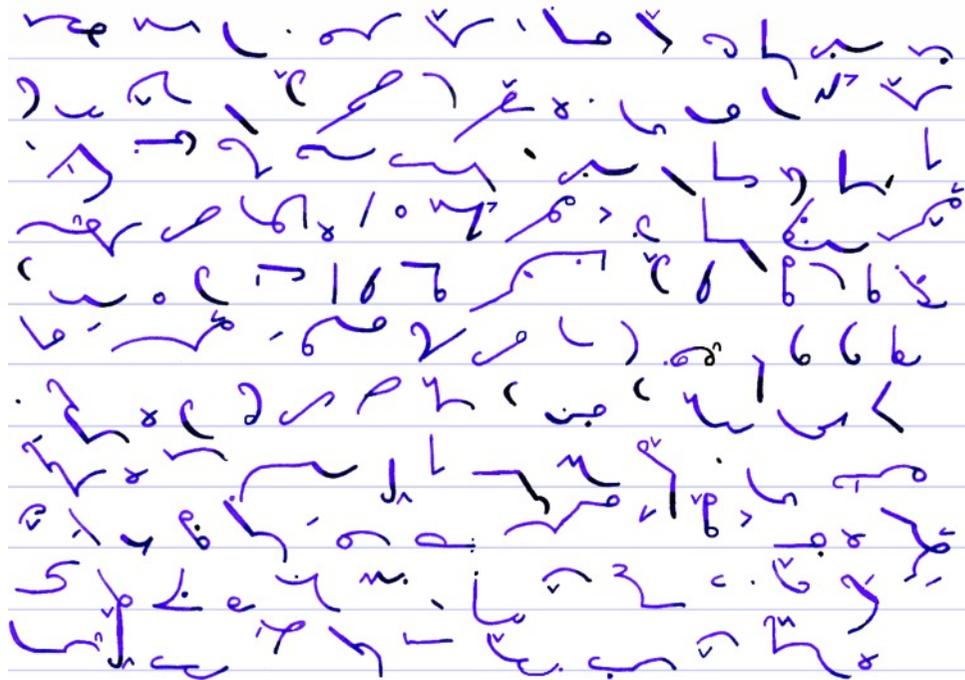
I did once see a television programme about the refuse collectors in the city of New York*. They took part in an event that included a parade of vehicles through the streets and they covered their collection truck in large mirrors, so that the people lining the streets could see who was responsible for all the rubbish. The intention was to be a friendly shock tactic to remind people that they are the producers of the waste, and not to forget their own responsibility* to keep it to a minimum, and dispose of items in the most environmentally friendly way that they can. They were also reminding everyone to be

more tolerant of the bin men who are only "dealing with YOUR stuff" to the best of their ability* and to be grateful that the city does have such a service, which is not universal around the world.

* Omission phrase "N(ew) Y(ork)"

* "responsibility" The short form for this word is the same as the outline for "response", so written in full here for greater clarity

* Omission phrase "bes(t) of their ability" using the disjoined B stroke which normally indicates the suffix "-ability"



Grubby Victory

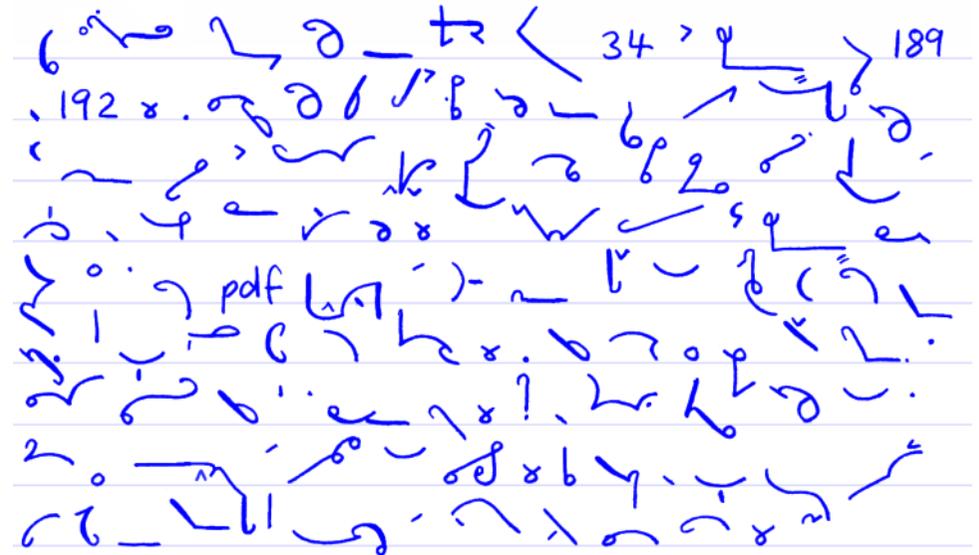
I am glad to say that* I now have a small pile of bags by the front door waiting to meet their new life, to be either re-used or recycled*. A few things have joined the pile of rubbish gathered from the garden clean-up, all waiting to be taken to their doom at the municipal waste facility. Much as I enjoy the results of the effort, it can be chastening to realise that nothing is ever gone, it just gets relocated, either just as it is, or its component parts and materials, and as long as there are ways for us consumers to do this, then it is not a problem. However, there is one last item that indicates that I have not finished the job properly*. I am looking down at the keyboard and I have spied a few crumbs

lined up under the spacebar and some sticky marks on the sides of the keys. Obviously the occasional upside down shake is not enough and I need to continue my work with a fine brush and vacuum cleaner nozzle before I can finally claim my triumph. (1071 words)

* Omission phrase "I am glad (to) s(ay) that"

* "recycled" Ensure the L hook is clearly shown, this means writing the Circle S somewhat elongated

* "properly" Always insert the first vowel, and the diphone in "appropriately", as these are similar in shape and meaning



Instructor Phrases Intro

These paragraphs practise the phrases given at the beginning of chapter 34 of the Instructor, pages 189 to 192. The simplest phrases just join sets of words together, but these are the introduction to phrases that make use of the normal outline shortening methods, such as hooks, halving, doubling and omission, to instead signify whole words. I hope you are* aware that the Instructor is now available as a free PDF download* and so you can dive in and transfer them from book to brain at no cost other than your time and effort*. The best method is to start by practising a small selection based on a single principle. Trying to assimilate large numbers of phrases in a short time* is counter-productive and

results in hesitations. It is better to know fewer really well and then come back at intervals* and "mop up" some more.

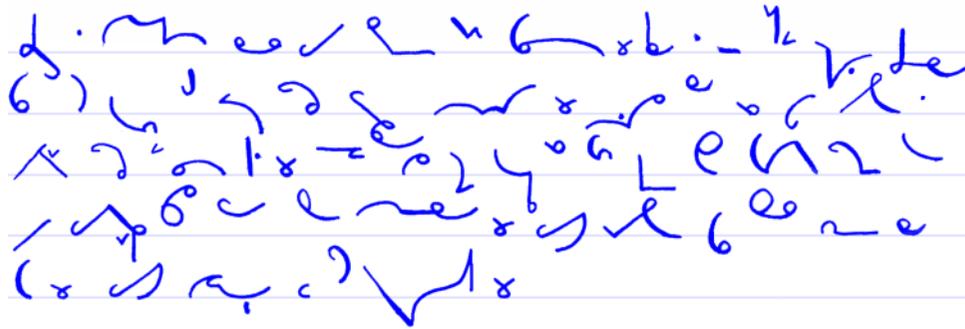
* Omission phrase "I (h)ope you are"

* <https://archive.org/details/pitmansshorthand00pitm>

* Omission phrase "time (and) effort" Other omissions in the phrases are described in the Instructor

* "short time" The halving does duty for both T sounds

* "intervals" The V is through the line, being the first up/down stroke, and the doubled N stroke ending up on the line is incidental



Instructor Phrases 1

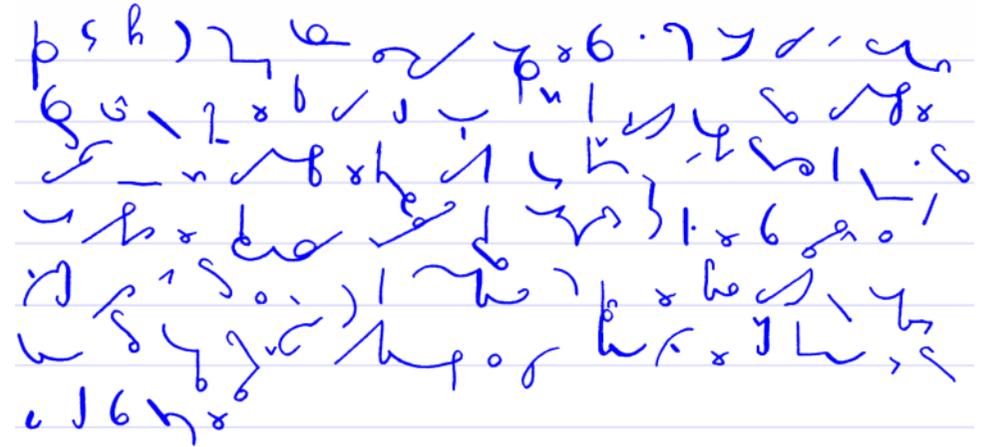
It has been a long time since we spoke about this matter. It is not a good idea to delay discussing this, so if you do not hear from us, please let us know immediately. Emails* sent to us will receive a reply from us on the same day. Can you let us see the photos of us that you took, as we think they will be very good for our website, as well as in our staff magazine. We wish* to receive these as soon as you can send them. We shall* let you know when they are published*.

* "emails" Always insert the first vowel, to prevent misreading as "mail"

* "We wish" "We shall" Note how the Ish is lowered for the first phrase, by lowering the angle of the Way stroke and making the Ish slightly more vertical

* "published" * "published" Avoiding the contraction for the past tense, as it clashes with "public"

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Instructor Phrases 1

It is said that the statue was erected for his sake somewhere in this city. This is a very unusual story and in our view this has been found to be true. At first we did not know* about it but we shall visit the place Wednesday next. We will come to you Wednesday first*. It appears that we do have the time to do so and by all means do book a place in the restaurant. It is only necessary* to reserve tables in the early part of the* day. This house is much older than our own and the plan is to see it Monday afternoon* or Tuesday evening. At all events, we shall put into effect the financial plans for its purchase while the rate of interest is still low. I had been talking to the people who have done this before.

* "we did not" has to be written separately, otherwise it would be the same as "we do not know" or, if vowel inserted, "we didn't know"

* "Wednesday first" Given in Instructor, but this phrase is stilted nowadays

* "it is only necessary" On its own, "only" is written with full N and L strokes

* "in the early part (of) the" An omission phrase. Without the "the", it would be written in full "in the early part + of"

* "Monday afternoon" Keep the final hook clear, so it does not look like an Ing for "evening"

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