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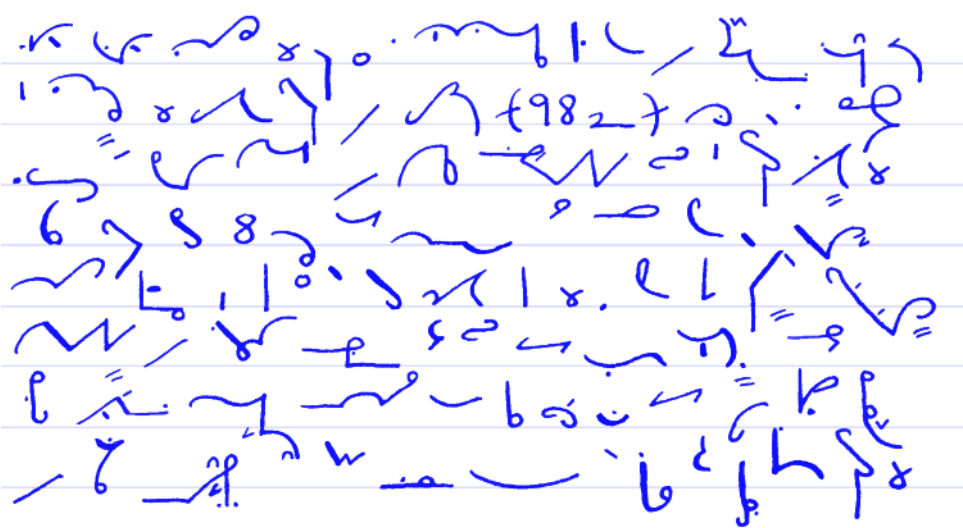
## Blogs - 2012 - August

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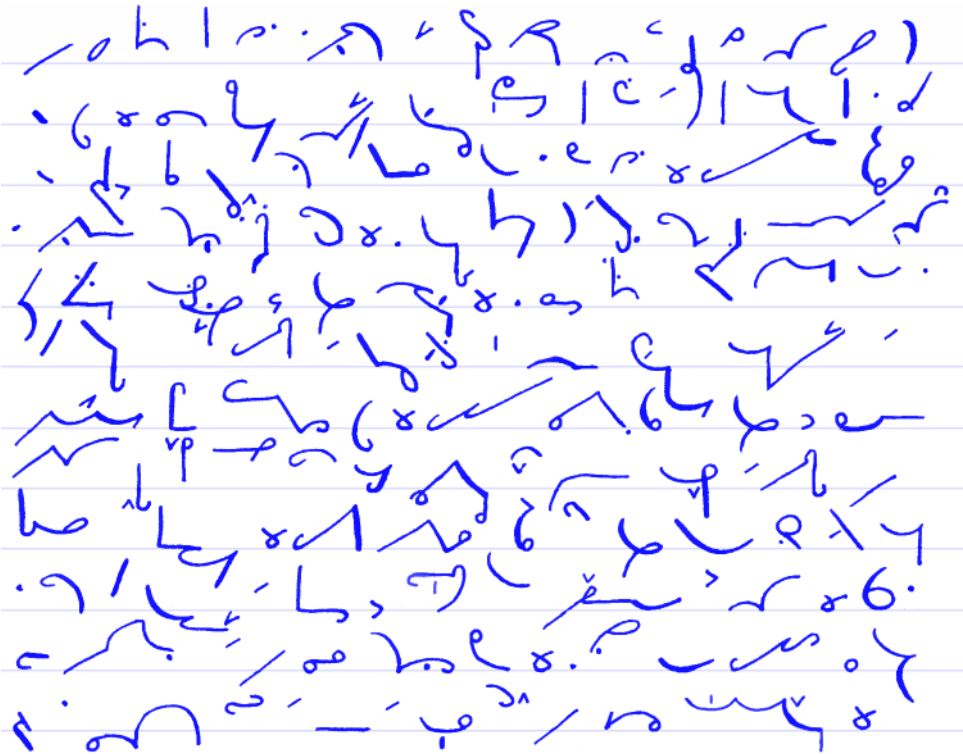


**Martian Rover Landing**

Hello fellow Martians. Today is a momentous day for our scientific community here on Mars. We have brought our one-year (98-week) mission to a successful conclusion and safely landed our latest exploratory craft on planet Earth. This project has been eight years in the making, and has cost over two billion Martian Tokens, but it has all been worth it. The staff at the Jot Propulsion Laboratory

are absolutely ecstatic that the craft, named Nosey (because of the set of robotic miniature cameras in its front end), will at last\* satisfy our endless curiosity about the exact nature of conditions on that distant damp planet.

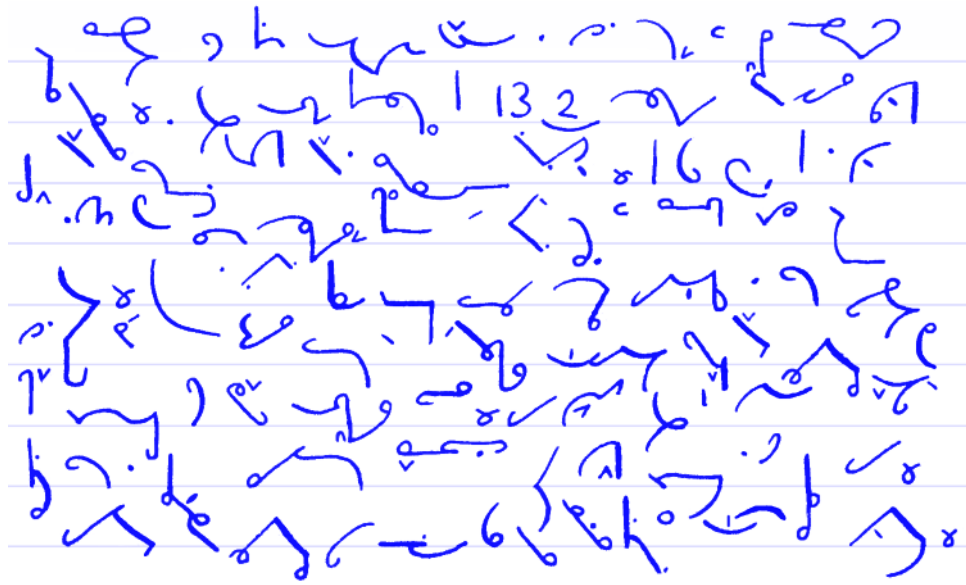
\* "at last" and "at least" Always insert the vowel



**Martian Rover Landing**

Our first attempt at landing a rover on the planet last year met with disaster, as the metal used was too thin. Some strange meteorological force squashed it flat and it never had a chance to deploy its bouncing air bags for a soft landing. We are glad that this was a robotic remote-controlled version. The photo of the damage was obtained from the detachable camera module which was ejected instantaneously when the vessel imploded. The second attempt landed in a large body of water and burst open on impact, flooding the

interior and ruining the delicate equipment within. We were hoping this vessel would sink rapidly out of sight, because the more intelligent inhabitants might look inside and retrieve our advanced technology. We had reports of this particular vessel being swept up into a very large vehicle and taken to the crusher for recycling of the metal. This is a great relief and our secrets remain safe. The last thing we want is for them to build a similar craft, and come and nose around our homes uninvited.



### Martian Rover Landing

Today's successful third attempt involved finding a landing area with suitable exploration possibilities. The vessel entered the atmosphere at 13,200 miles per hour\* and was slowed down by friction, followed by a supersonic parachute. It then flew at a low altitude\* over some mysterious dark and choppy seas with scattered islands of thick vegetation. After a rapid descent to get closer images, we noticed a very useful landing spot that was clear of obstructions, unwittingly provided by the inhabitants as they try to maintain their supply of nutritious grass. We lowered the vessel on long nylon tethers from a disposable circular sky crane which was allowed to

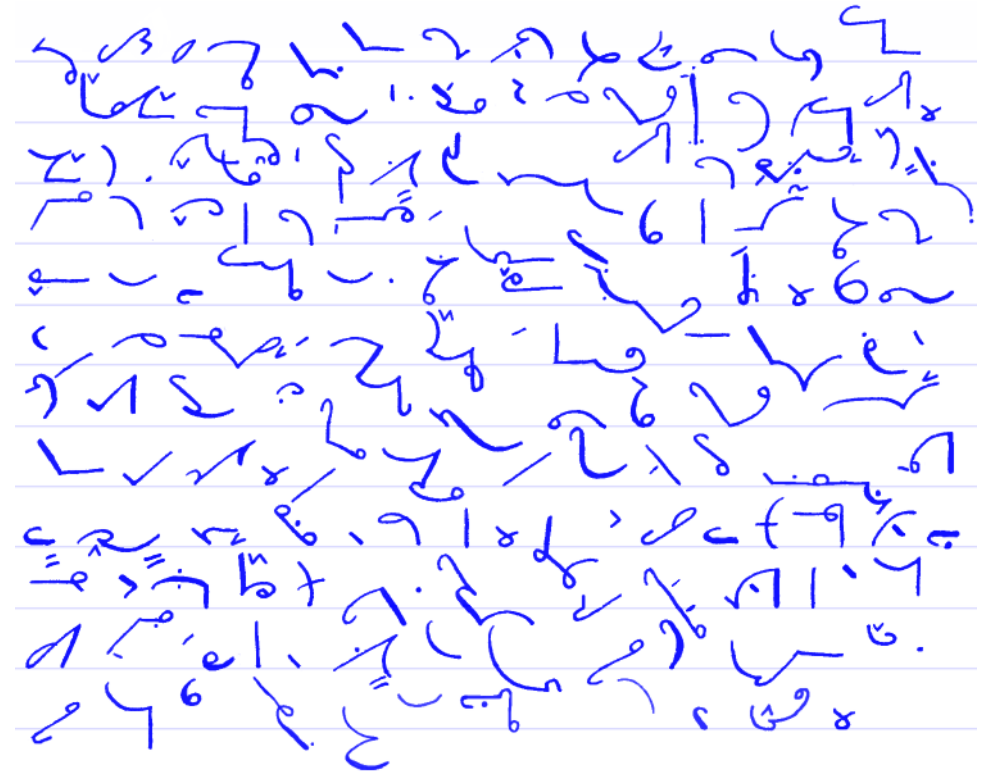
crash a short distance away. We believe the inhabitants will ignore this piece of space debris as unimportant rubbish.

\* "possibilities" Optional contraction

\* "13,200" No need to write anything for the word "thousand" as other figures follow. If the speaker pauses in the middle, and you have already written it, leave it in and then leave a space before the next figure, so the outline or lth does not look like another numeral.

\* Omission phrase "mi(le)s per hour)

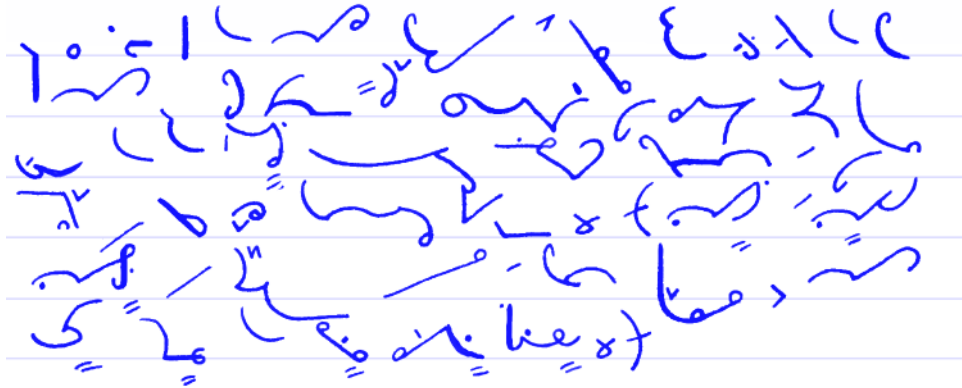
\* "altitude" and "latitude" Always insert the first vowel



### Martian Rover Landing

Here is one of the first images beamed back from the rover vessel, showing some feathered aquatic dinosaur-like creatures swimming on an abundance of that most precious commodity, fresh liquid water. Unlike us, the life forms on planet Earth do not have to manufacture water from subterranean ice-bearing rocks or mine it from comets, and, if you can believe this, it actually falls from the sky in great quantities in an endless cycle of evaporation and condensation. This is something that our most experienced and

imaginative scientists and technicians can barely conceive of, and they are already planning manned trips to bring some of this precious material back to our world. Our engineers are drawing up plans to excavate the solid Gold Mountain to create space to store it. Disposal of the waste gold (extra low-grade because of all the embedded diamonds) will be a problem, but we propose to load it all onto storage rockets and send it to Earth for future use there, if we can find a use for it, that is, possibly filling in craters or building foundations.



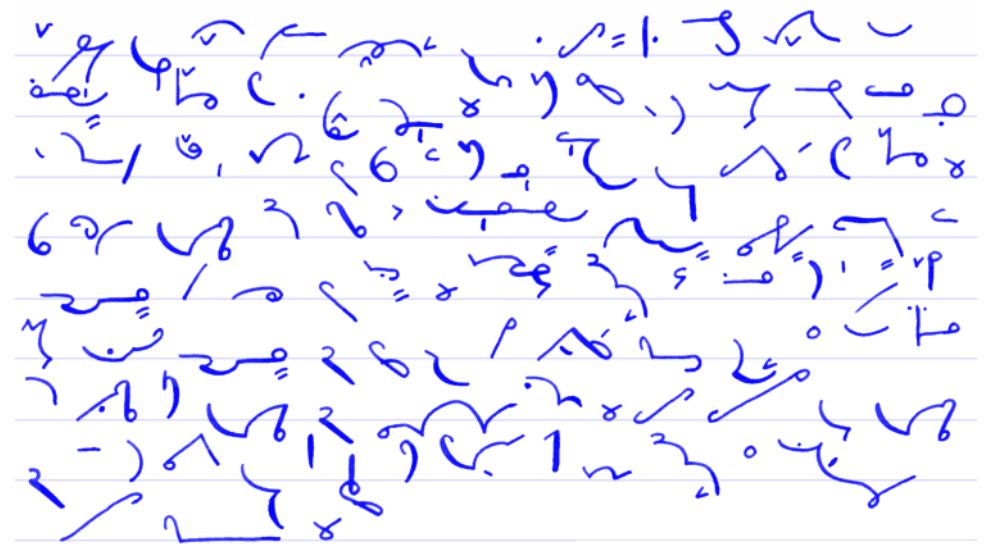
### Martian Rover Landing

Today is a great day for Martians everywhere and the possibilities\* that have opened up for every Martian to have their own Olympic-sized swimming pool will certainly ensure future funding for NOSSA's interplanetary exploration programme and will occupy our best minds for many years to come. (Marsha and Marshall Marsden are scientific writers and former advisers to the

Martian National Organisation for Space Survey Advancement.) (657 words)

\* "possibilities" Optional contraction

*Please note all characters and organisations are fictitious, apart from the feathered dinosaurs on Priory Pond.*



### Anglo-Saxons

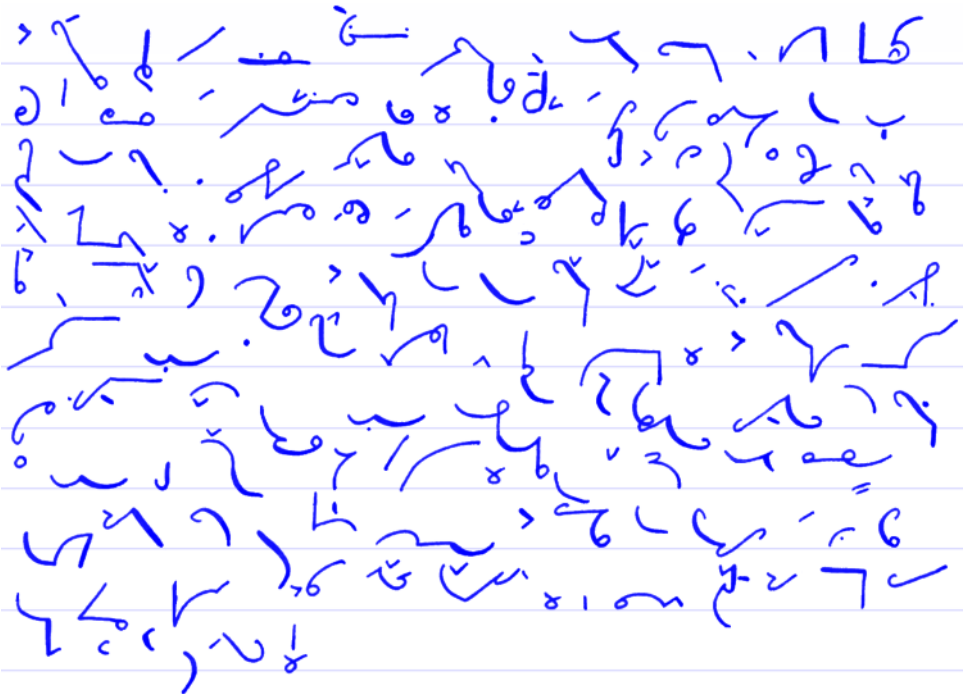
I recently visited my local museum to view a one-day exhibition of life in Saxon times, over a thousand years ago. I was surprised to see not only the expected glass cases of archaeological finds, but also the people themselves with all their goods, clothing, food, weapons and other items. These friendly villagers were members of the Anglo-Saxon Living History Group called Centingas\*, which means People of Kent. I am glad to say that the\* warrior with the axe was on our side, and I think the ancient Centingas would be pleased to have such robust protection, seeing as any

attackers or raiders on their villages would be similarly armed. One wonders if the villagers would be quite so happy if they had displeased their overlord\* and had to meet the warrior as enforcer rather than protector.

\* Pronounced "Kent-ing-gaz"

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

\* "overlord" Does not use the contraction for "lord"

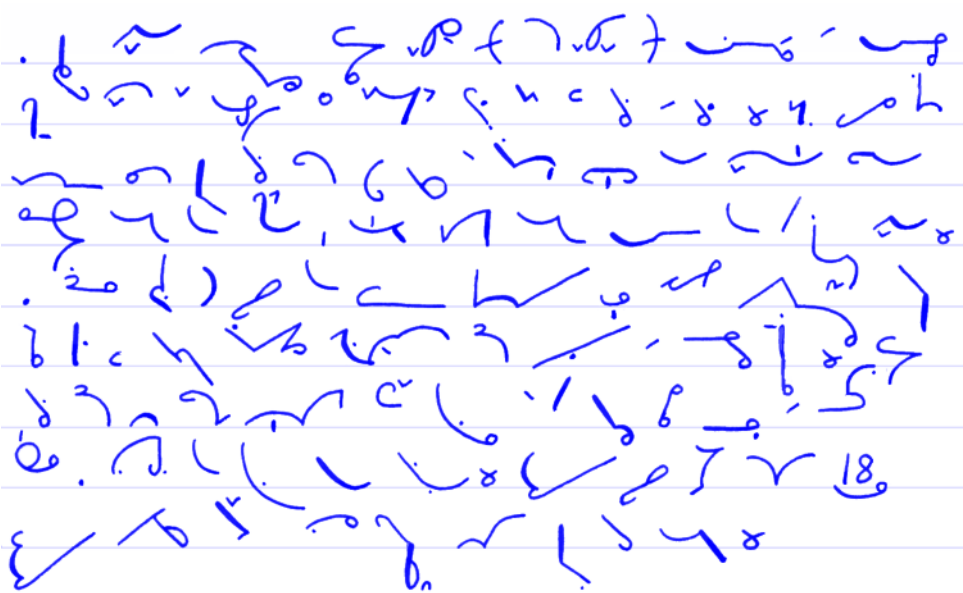


Anglo-Saxons

All the props displayed are exact authentic reproductions to enable the Group to hold educational sessions at schools and re-enactment events. The audiences and children will certainly have no trouble in remembering the history and lives of previous inhabitants of the land, especially as there is the opportunity to dress up and take part. The helmets, swords and shields would delight those who like "boys' toys" to occupy their imaginations, all the better for being bright, shiny and complete, rather than a rusty relic needing a drawing to illustrate how it would have looked. All the brightly coloured wools awoke my fingers'

knitting\* instincts, although this would have been woven or braided, as knitting did not arrive until much later. If I were in that Saxon village, I would be very busy at home making all the clothes for everyone, and let others feed the chickens, till\* the soil and find the firewood. But somehow I don't think I would get away with that easy option!

- \* "knitting, netting, knotting" All these need the vowel inserted
- \* "till" The verb is a full outline, the short form is used only for the adverb till = until

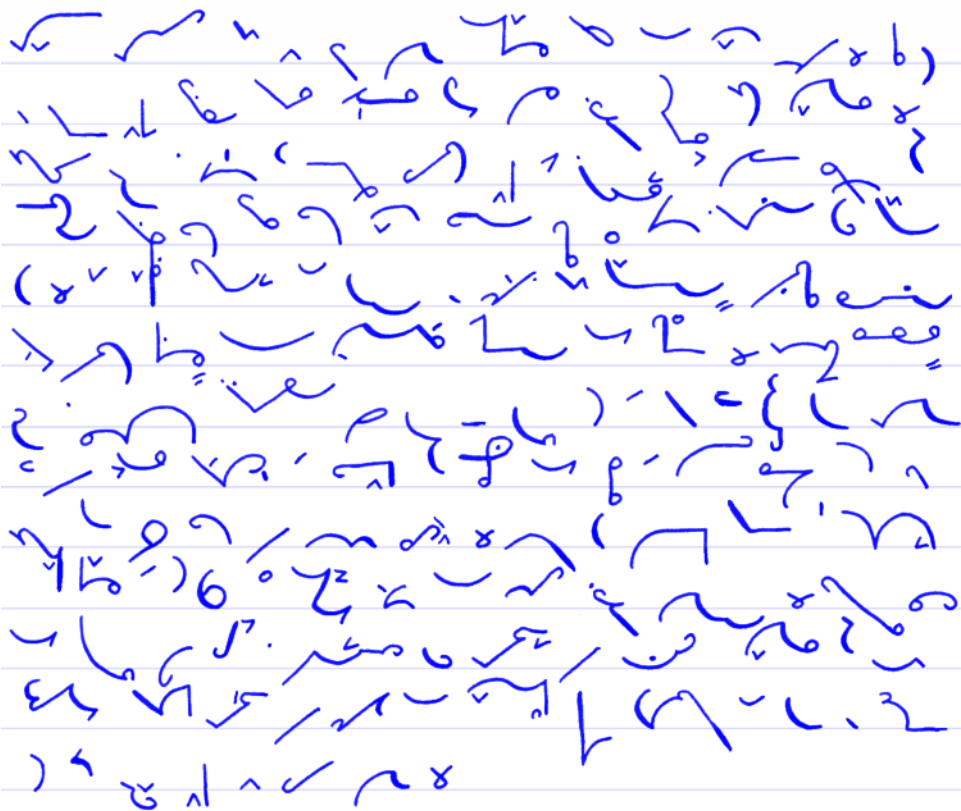


Anglo-Saxons

The display of writing implements, quills, styluses (or styli), inkpots and inkstands, drew my eye instantly, as I enjoy playing about with pens and paints. I did once attempt to make some dip pens from thin pieces of bamboo grown in my own garden, successful enough for drawing but unable to hold enough ink for much continuous writing. The wax tablet\* was used for quick temporary notes, and was the reporter's pad of its day, when paper, parchment and vellum were rare and expensive

commodities. Quill pens were made from the moulted flight feathers of large birds such as geese and occasionally swans, the Latin for feather being "penna". They were used until the early eighteen\* hundreds, when they were replaced by the mass-produced metal dip-pen nib.

- \* "tablet" Helpful to insert the second vowel, so it is not misread as "table"
- \*Always vocalise the outlines for "eighteen" and "ten"



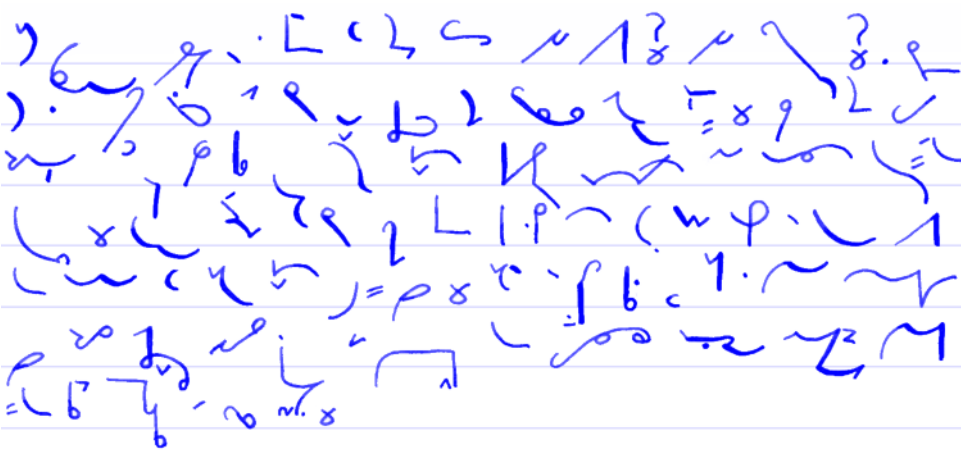
Anglo-Saxons

I like to learn about how people lived in times past in my country. It is easy to pick out the pleasant parts and gloss over the less comfortable aspects of their lives. I prefer to have a home that keeps the weather out, and the convenience of the local supermarket, although gathering pesticide-free apples from my garden trees is much more\* appealing than buying them. I appreciate not having to worry about Viking raiders sneaking\* up the River Thames in their longboats and attacking in the dark. I am sure the Saxons would have a similar comparison list if they could view us, and be glad that they did not have to live with our noise, pollution and crowded existence in the cities, and lack of skill or

opportunity to provide for ourselves from our immediate surroundings. Maybe they looked back on earlier times and saw themselves as enjoying the ultimate in modern comfortable living. Perhaps someone in the future will join a re-enactment event to recreate our "ancient" lives, although now that we have the ability to record our world in minute detail, they will probably not have to work so hard to find out how we lived. (630 words)

\* Omission phrase "much m(ore)"

\* "sneaking" Helpful to insert the vowel, as "snaking" would also make sense



Are You Ready?

I was listening recently to a talk that asked the question "Are you ready? Are you prepared?" The speaker was a church pastor and the subject under discussion was the blessings and favour of God. He asked whether I would know what to do with such advantages if they arrived "on my doorstep" tomorrow morning, and not in some far-off future. Having pondered the subject during the talk, it set me thinking

about the necessity of being ready for anything that I have on my wish-list. I thought of childhood days when I had a long mental list of wants and desires, and was continually on the lookout for ways and means\* of gaining and enjoying the longed-for toys, activities and opportunities.

\* Omission phrase "ways (and) means"

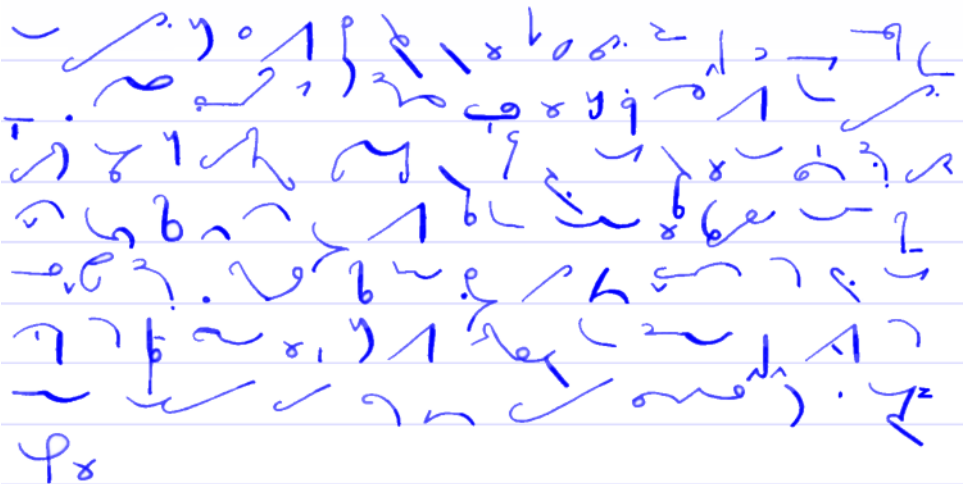




Are You Ready?

When I was at primary school, we went to my grandparents' house most days after school, as they lived nearby, and then later walked home from there. We always went through the park, sometimes staying\* to enjoy the swings and slides in the playground, and then walked past the lido\*. On very hot days enticing shouts and splashing sounds would float over the high brick walls and we would ask if we could\* go into the lido for a while. Unfortunately\* the answer was often, "But we don't have our swimming costumes or towels with us." At that age I would not have minded jumping into the pool in my underwear\* and staying until the sun had dried us, but my Mum did not share this viewpoint. We sometimes went in the large paddling pool on the other side of the\* playground and great fun could be had if we played near the gushing water outlet that filled the pool. I did once try swimming in the eight inches of water but it was no substitute\* for the

- more abundant\* deeper waters of the swimming pool, and not having the wherewithal to enjoy it was firmly etched on my mind as something to avoid.
- \* "staying" No diphone, as the I sound is included in the Dot Ing
- \* "lido" Sometimes pronounced "leedo"
- \* "we could" Not phrased, so it does not look like "we can"
- \* "unfortunately" Optional contraction
- \* "underwear" Insert vowels in "knitwear" and "footwear" which are both similar to this outline
- \* Omission phrase "on the oth(er) side of the"
- \* "subs(t)itute" omits the T sound
- \* "abundant" Always insert the second vowel, and the diphthong in "abounding", as these are similar in shape and meaning



Are You Ready?

In winter I was as ready as it was possible to be. At the first hint of cold, out would come the extra thick coat, the longest\* scarf and the warmest gloves. I did not consider myself ready for winter weather unless I had waterproof Wellington boots with which to play in the puddles. In summer, wearing one of my favourite dresses made me feel ready for anything. This was not in fact\* true, because whilst wearing the precious dress I could not

- safely run, jump, climb or play in the muddy or dusty garden. But I was ready and presentable for walking down the road or going anywhere away from home where smartness was an enjoyable necessity.
- \* "longest" Alternative outline omitting the G stroke, similarly "strongest"
- \* Omission phrase "in (f)act"



Are You Ready?

In my secondary school, I was very zealous to be ready for everything. When I had been accepted for a place there, my Nan got busy knitting lots\* of jumpers in the school colour of bottle green. I followed their progress every time I went to her house, and was delighted with the fitting session for the first one. She used a crimped\* type of yarn, which produced a very stretchy fabric resulting in a perfect clinging and cosy fit. My Mum took me out to buy the uniform of smart skirt, crisp creamy-coloured poplin blouses, socks and shoes, blazer and velours\* hat with its beautiful enamelled school badge.

- \* "lots" and "masses" Always insert the first vowel, as they are similar in shape and meaning
- \* Omits the T sound, as the plain Imp stroke cannot be halved. (It can be halved when hooked.) Helpful to insert the vowel, as it could look like "cream"
- \* "creamy-coloured" Insert last vowel in "creamy", as "cream" would also make sense
- \* "velours" French origin, therefore silent S

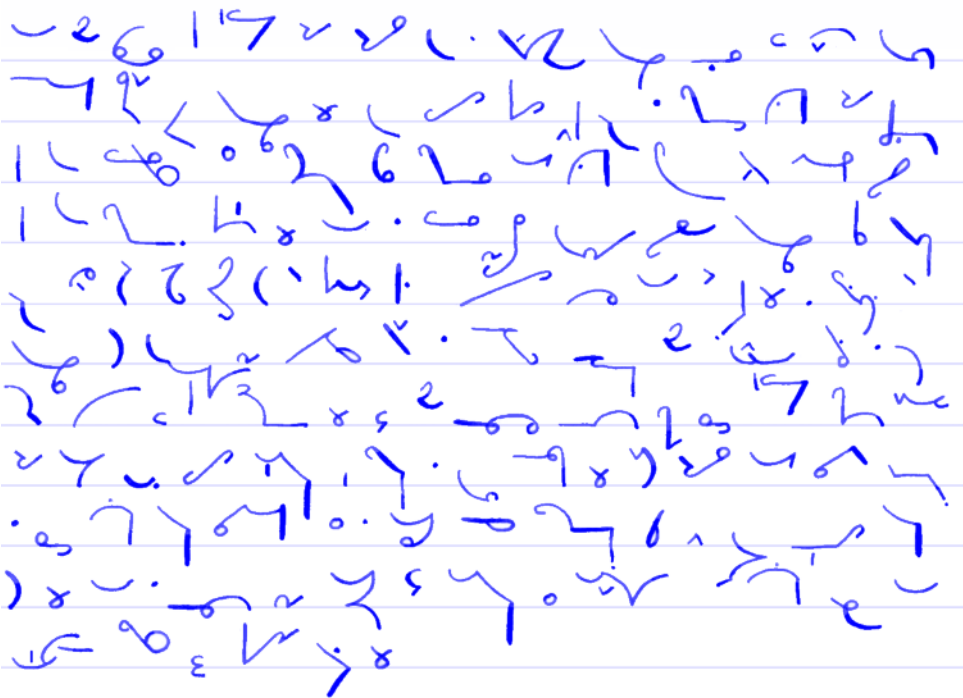


Are You Ready?

When the first day came I was truly ready and was filled with excitement and anticipation. My satchel was stuffed with notebooks, pencil case, pens and pencils. Our first needlework lesson had us all stitching an apron for the cookery lessons, and a wrap-around skirt for gym and games, although I was not too happy with its diminutive size. I did much better making my chemistry apron at home, using a thick denim-type fabric to protect me

from the scary substances that might get splashed in my direction. We had to buy studded hockey boots and thick socks. My hockey socks were thick enough to see me through the most arctic conditions, and my lower legs were the only part of me that was warm on those first cold October days on the school playing field. In my school exams throughout the years I was the one with the most pens, pencils, rubbers, rulers and geometry equipment.



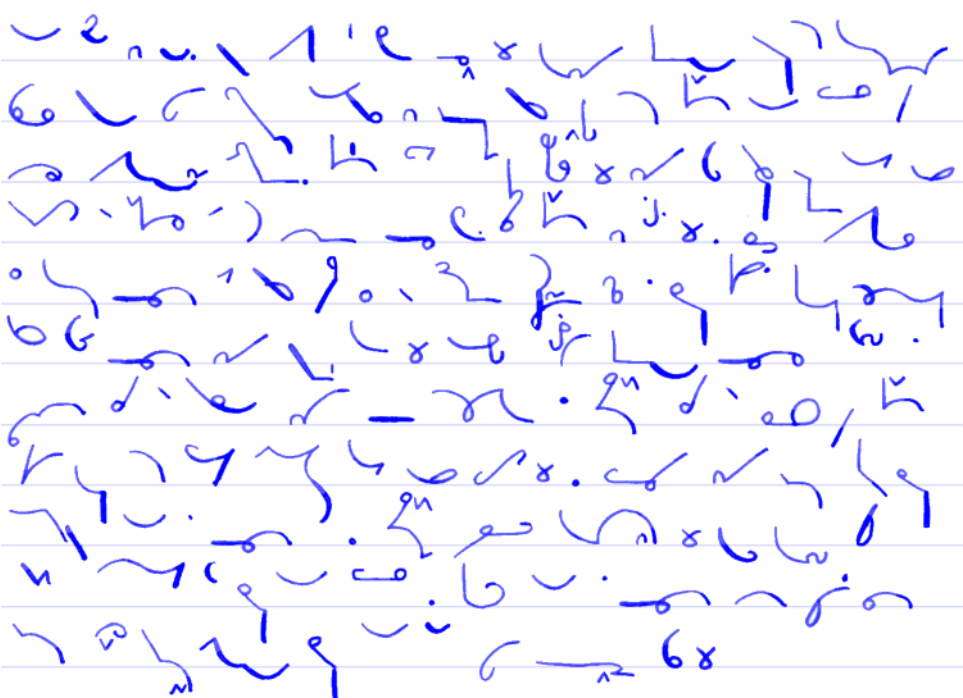


Are You Ready?

In shorthand lessons at college I would always have a bulging pencil case with my favourite\* candy-striped cheap pencils. If one turned out to have a broken lead, I would discard it for class purposes, as there may be other breaks in the lead further up, and instead used it for practising at home\*. In a class situation, if you are using pencils, it is better to have lots of them and then sharpen them all at the end of the day, rather than miss any of the teaching. The plethora of pencils was eventually replaced by a couple of good quality shorthand fountain pens, a year or two later when at work. When the shorthand exams came

during the second college term, I knew I would only need one notepad but brought a few extra. I was always in the habit of keeping a second empty pad handy as an insurance against forgetting just how full the current pad was. In an exam, you should ensure that the notepad is entirely empty, to save any unwelcome surprises when you turn the page.

- \* "favourite" Compared "favoured" which has a left Vr stroke
- \* Omission phrase "at (h)ome"



Are You Ready?

In shorthand you need to be ready on several counts. If you are taking paid or formal lessons, being well-prepared enables you to get the best out of your time in class, which means reviewing and practising at home according to the teacher's instructions. You are then positioned to take in the next portion of items, and so make gains every time you attend. The second readiness is for your exam and the best strategy is to work assiduously towards a speed at least\* 20 words a minute\* faster than the exam you are booked for. Instead of constantly taking exams that you have a slim chance of passing, you will give yourself a higher

chance of success each time which will feed your energy and enthusiasm for the next one. The closer you are to your top speed capability in an exam, the higher the risk of failure. Even if you have just about managed that speed in class, the tension in an exam may steal some of your mind power, and having speed in hand will counteract this.

- \* Omission phrase "accord(ing to) the"
- \* "at least" and "at last" Always insert the vowels
- \* Omission phrase "words (a) minute"



### Are You Ready?

The third is readiness at your place of work, assuming you are using shorthand there. I always filled my pens every morning, so that I knew I had a full supply to start the day with. Lengthy shorthand writing\* sessions were rare, but I had to be ready. Troublesome outlines from previous days were looked up and practised, so that the difficulty did not recur. You will not be comfortable in such employment if you cannot produce a constant supply of correct transcripts\* from people speaking at variable speeds, and sometimes very much faster than you ever tried in class. A failed exam can be taken again, but your employer may not be impressed by less than\* perfect reports or minutes of meetings turned in. You might\* begin to wonder if you were\* somewhat hasty in your claims to shorthand skill at the job

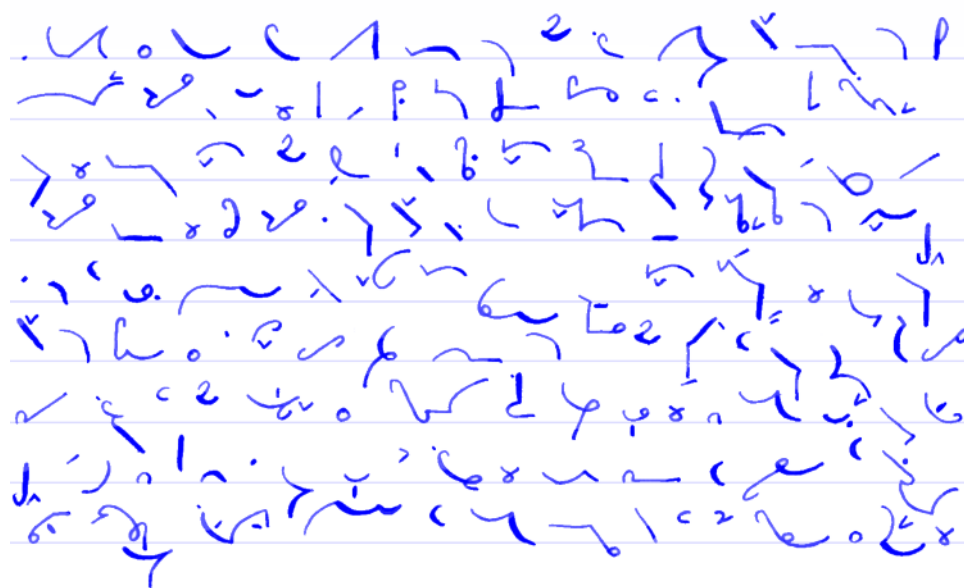
interview. Avoid the sweating brow, red face and perspiration, however well hidden behind your smile, and attack any shorthand speed deficiency as soon as possible.

\* Omission phrases "short(hand) writing" "if you (w)ere"

\* "transcripts" "transcribe" and all its derivatives omit the second R, so they do not look like "describe"

\* "less than" Downward L in order to make this phrase

\* "You might" Not phrased, to provide extra differentiation from "you may". Always write the halved version separately, likewise "know/note, can/could".



### Are You Ready?

The fourth is being ever ready to improve your shorthand comfort level by keeping your study material always to hand. It should stay on your desk at all times\*, with a bookmark at the appropriate\* page. I keep my shorthand stuff on two trays on my work table, so that the bits and pieces are always together. There is always a pad by the bed for night-time good ideas, or writing down a word that needs looking up, while I am listening to talks on my iPod\*. If the pad by your telephone is a lined one, this will\* make your shorthand jottings that bit easier, although once you are comfortable with shorthand, unlined is perfectly adequate for such notes. You need never put the phone down and wish you had made a fuller note of the

conversation. Now you can, without using that painfully slow and frustratingly convoluted longhand that never keeps up with what the person is saying.

\* "at all times" Halving to represent the T of "time"

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

\* "Ipod" and "Ipad" Always insert the second vowel

\* "this will" Downward L in order to join this phrase



Are You Ready?

As your shorthand gets ever faster and easier, your amazed\* and incredulous friends, family, colleagues and bystanders, gawping at your superhuman writing speed, may come to the conclusion\* that it is a special and rare gift of unbelievably\* high intelligence and genius, gained by your superior genes, inherited brainpower and exceedingly supple fingers and wrists, coupled with remarkable feats of memory and recall, all probably out of the reach of everyday ordinary folks and those who cannot afford a special pen, special paper and decades of instruction and practising. Maybe you fit that description, but maybe

also you just did regular persistent work and were always ready with a simple pen and pad at every moment that presented itself. (1521 words)

\* "amazed" and "amused" Always insert the vowels in these and their derivatives

\* Omission phrase "come (to the con)clusion" A similar phrase can be made with "came (to the con)clusion"

\* "unbelievably" The middle part of this outline is the short form "believe"

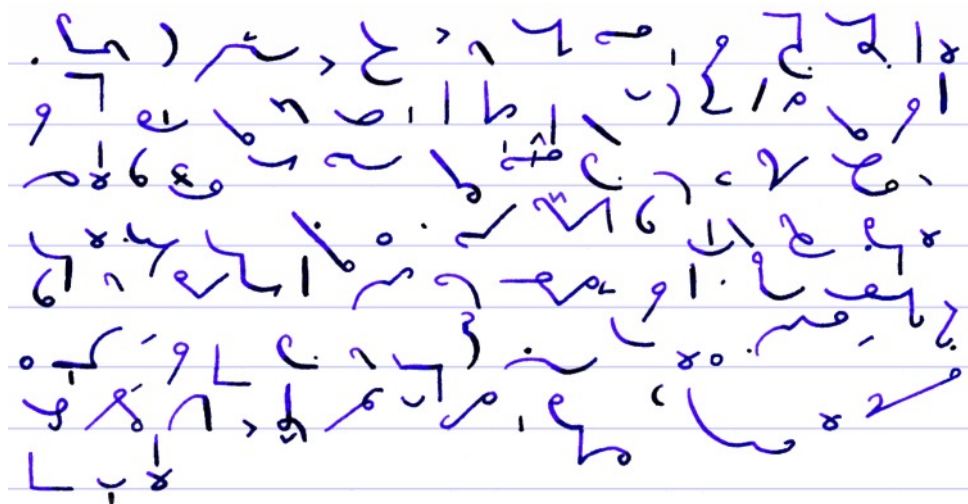


Bold Sparrow

Some time ago I saw a persistent and very alert sparrow, sitting on the greenery outside the kitchen window. He had noticed the open top windows and the movement within, and was well prepared, with his eyes firmly fixed\* on me, just waiting for something to be thrown out of the window. I obliged with a piece of bread. He was leaning forward in an attitude of pre-takeoff

readiness, and swooped down for the bread, narrowly beating a blackbird who dived out of nowhere hoping to get the morsel. He was just that bit readier than the blackbird.

\* "fixed, focused" Always insert the first vowel, as they are similar in outline and meaning



### Bold Sparrow

The blackbird was reacting to the falling of the bread onto the grass, but he was not actively anticipating it. He got his own piece of bread next, but it turned out to be not so large as the piece he had missed! This boldness in the garden birds occurs every year, when there are nestlings to feed. Evidently feeding the babies is a greater priority than one hundred per cent personal safety. This particular sparrow had learned from experience, he had a strong incentive to achieve his goal, and he took

every opportunity to get what he was aiming for. His alertness and instant response led to the desired result, not once but several times that afternoon. Shorthand writers\* take note! (220 words)

\* "response" As this outline is also the contraction for "responsibility" (when unvocalised), it is helpful to always insert the second vowel in "response"

\* Omission phrase "short(hand) writers"

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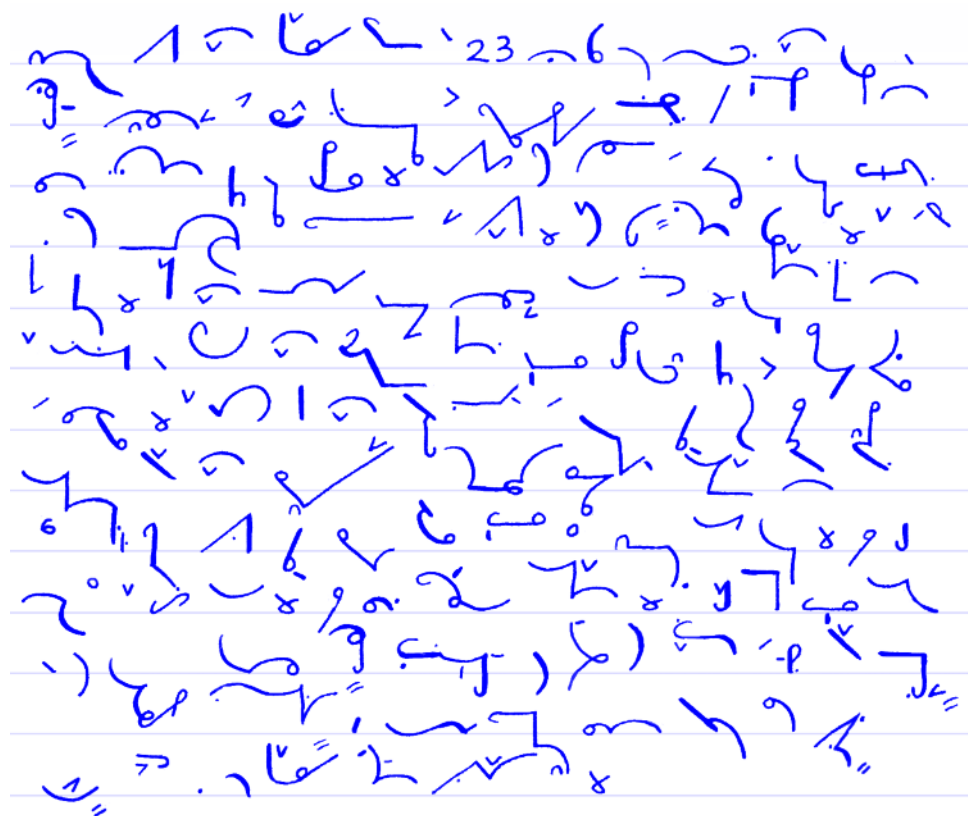
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### Maidstone Dinosaurs

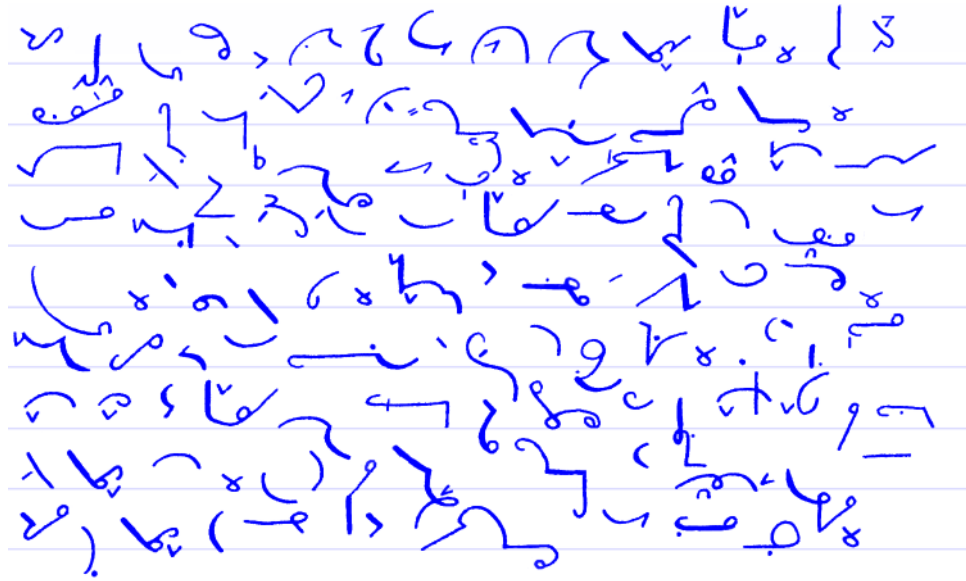
You may have read my Dinosaur blog of 23 May this year mentioning my visit to Maidstone Museum and the sound effects of the prehistory exhibit, which caused me some alarm due to its suddenness. I returned there last week and here is a photo of the culprit, the very colourful character on the right. I was well-armed this time. I stopped at the door. I had my camera to catch the miscreant in action. If he attacked me I intended to flash my shorthand book at him to cause sudden confusion due to the strange shapes and symbols. I also had my bottle of carrot and beetroot juice, so that he would be suitably intimidated by my superior organisational skills, unlike him with his dripping red juice spilt all over his claws, as you can see in

the photo. He did not move as I went in. He seemed frozen in time. I did not get close enough to see if this was the famous Maidstone Iguanodon, whose fossil was acquired and studied by Gideon Mantell, who named the creature some time before Sir Richard\* Owen coined the word dinosaur: awesome reptile. (Continued)

\* Omission phrase "las(t w)EEK"

\* "frozen" and "freezing" Always insert the vowel, as these are similar in outline and meaning

\* The full strokes are used rather than Chay with R Hook, to stop it looking like "Roger"



### Maidstone Dinosaurs

I went down the few stairs to the left and then along the lower level behind the dinos. At that point the sensors tripped into operation and the low-frequency booming growls began. I looked up to check on his movements - none. I recorded the sounds on my camera, in case I needed to warn off any dinosaur causing trouble or nuisance in the future. All seemed to be well. I admired all the exhibits and read the information cards. I never once heard any creaking of

floor or swishing of tail. The thought did cross my mind that the dinosaur may have collected all these specimens in order to\* distract my attention while he crept up behind me. If so, he had obviously forgotten that museum visitors can always see behind them, because of all the reflections in the glass cases.

\* Omission phrase "in ord(er to)"



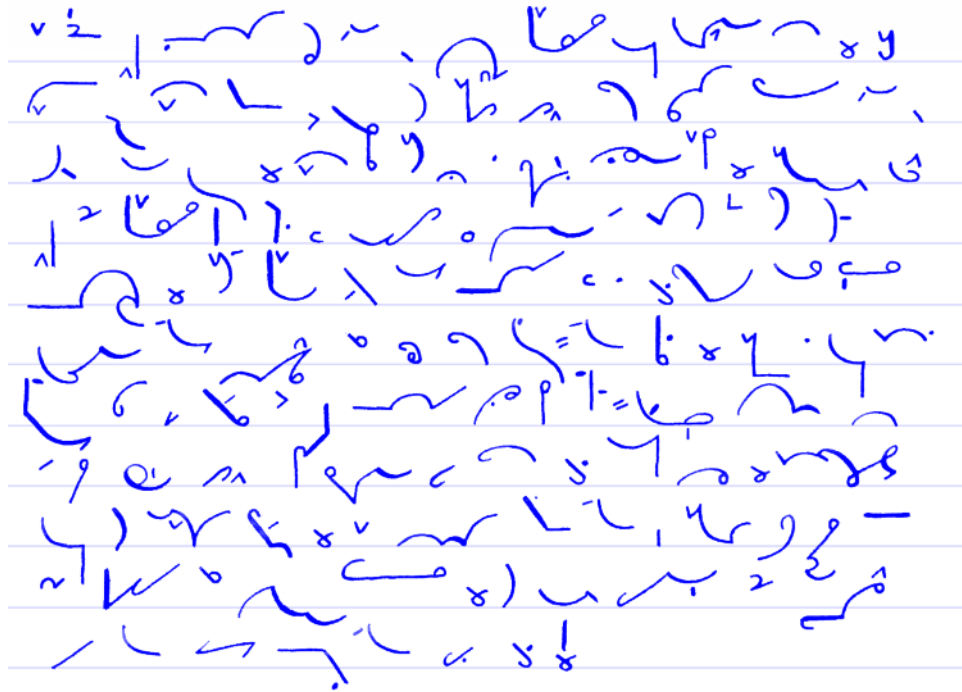
### Maidstone Dinosaurs

I came carefully back up the stairs, with my eyes firmly fixed on the big creature. To the side I saw another small staircase that led to the gallery. It was blocked off by a piece of canvas, but alarmingly there were claws breaking through the fabric. I wandered cautiously round to the side but could not see the owner of the said claws. He was obviously lying low and waiting for

his chance to leap into action. It was now nearly my lunch time\*. It may also have been the dinosaurs' lunch time and, not wishing to take any chances, I decided it was prudent to leave immediately.

\* "lunch time" Halving to represent the T of "time"





### Maidstone Dinosaurs

I walked out calmly so as not to lure the dinosaurs into following me. I did not like to have my back to the beasties, so I turned round very slowly in order not to show any fear. My eyes met a truly amazing\* sight. I have now found out what the dinosaurs do all day when no one is looking, and also why they are so colourful. I saw dino up in the gallery with a paintbrush in his claws, finishing off the murals of his friends from far-off days. I took a photo of him daubing the wall, but the buzz of the digital camera lens as it auto-focused alarmed him and he swung round, spilling yet more paint onto himself.

I am very sorry to say that the\* photo was entirely blurred. I immediately backed off but I felt sure he would not go beyond the doorway of his living quarters\*. So now we know what the growls are for: keep off, wet paint! (610 words)

\* "amazing" and "amusing" Always insert the second vowel, as these are similar in outline and meaning

\* Omission phrase "I am very sorry (to) s(ay) that the"

\* "quarters" Optional contraction



### Martian Update

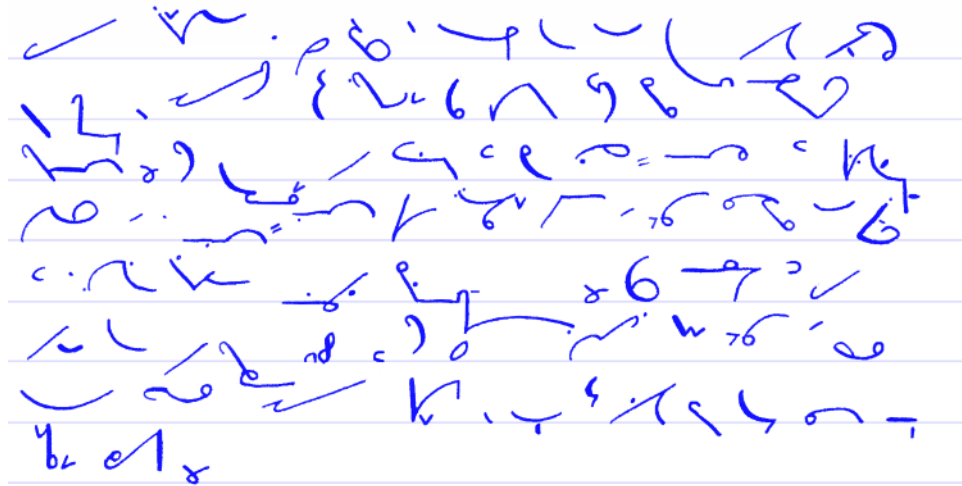
As you will know from the latest news reports, the inhabitants of Earth have sent a very primitive contraption to our world with the intention of taking pictures of the rocky surface. As soon as we detected it coming through space, we finalised our plans to guide it to a landing position somewhere harmless, but interesting enough to keep them occupied for a while. We finally chose the Plain of Yellowknife, near Gale Crater which is located at the base of Mount Sharp. This is our municipal dirt track racing arena, which seemed most appropriate\* for their two Rover vehicles\*, with lots of room for them to travel around and manoeuvre, and plenty of dust and rocks for them to investigate. Municipal Racing Club season

ticket holders have been relocated to another nearby dirt track until further notice. When the Earth Rovers' mission is complete, we will be erasing the track marks, so as not to spoil our scenic countryside for the future.

\* Omission phrase "mos(t) appropriate" Always insert the diphone in "appropriate" and the first vowel in "proper" as the outlines and meanings are similar

\* "vehicles" If you want to indicate the H sound, write the first vowel after the V, and the second vowel before the KL including a Dot Hay above it.



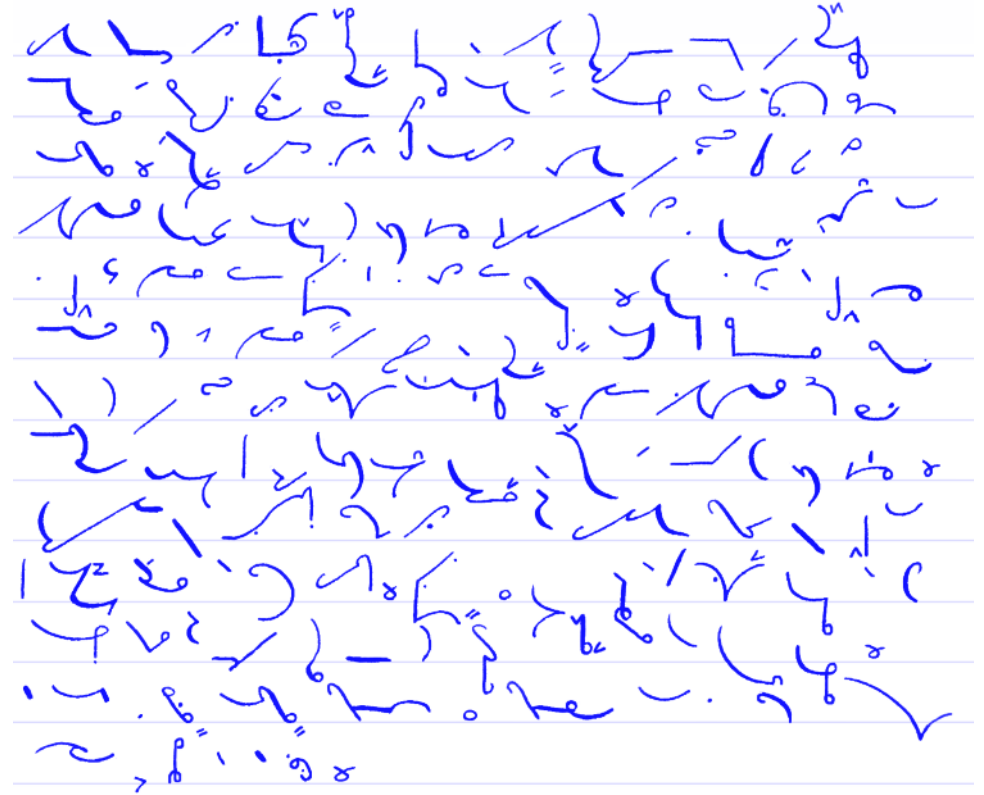


### Martian Update

We are compiling a list of places of interest for any future Earth Rovers to be directed to, and we are sure that they appreciate this help with their space exploration programme. Their vehicles are equipped with several mastcams with telephoto lenses\* and a chemcam which will analyse rock and soil samples, in conjunction with an alpha particle X-ray spectrometer. This is exactly what we recommend for our pre-school students when they are first learning about

the soil and stones in their gardens, and we are delighted to know that the Earth people have the same good ideas as we do.

\* "lenses" Singular "lens" uses N hook and circle S. See further on this at [www.long-live-pitmans-shorthand.org.uk/theory-4-circles.htm#S-versus-Z-sound](http://www.long-live-pitmans-shorthand.org.uk/theory-4-circles.htm#S-versus-Z-sound)



### Martian Update

We have begun running educational\* sight-seeing tours to Earth so that we can keep our scientists, governors and specially\* chosen school children informed and interested in our solar system neighbours. Obviously we cannot allow anyone to leave our craft just yet, as the Earthlings have not yet invited us to their homes, but we were able to land the viewing module in a town that the locals call Chatham on an island called Britain. They have had a lot of town improvements going on there and the locals are used to seeing unusual structures spring up, so our craft went entirely unnoticed. Local Earthlings were seen gathering underneath it to wait for their communal vehicles to arrive and carry them to their homes. They were glad to be sheltering from the rain, although we would have preferred

to be out in it, enjoying the abundance of fresh water. Chatham is full of displays of large aerial photos of other interesting parts of that country so that has given us plenty of ideas for future visits. All in all, the Space Neighbours programme is progressing in a very orderly manner, to the satisfaction of all concerned. (459 words)

\* "educational" The diphthong sign has to go inside the shun hook, as there is nowhere else, but in "education" is goes outside as normal

\* The short form covers "special" and "specially" so to differentiate here it is best to use a full outline