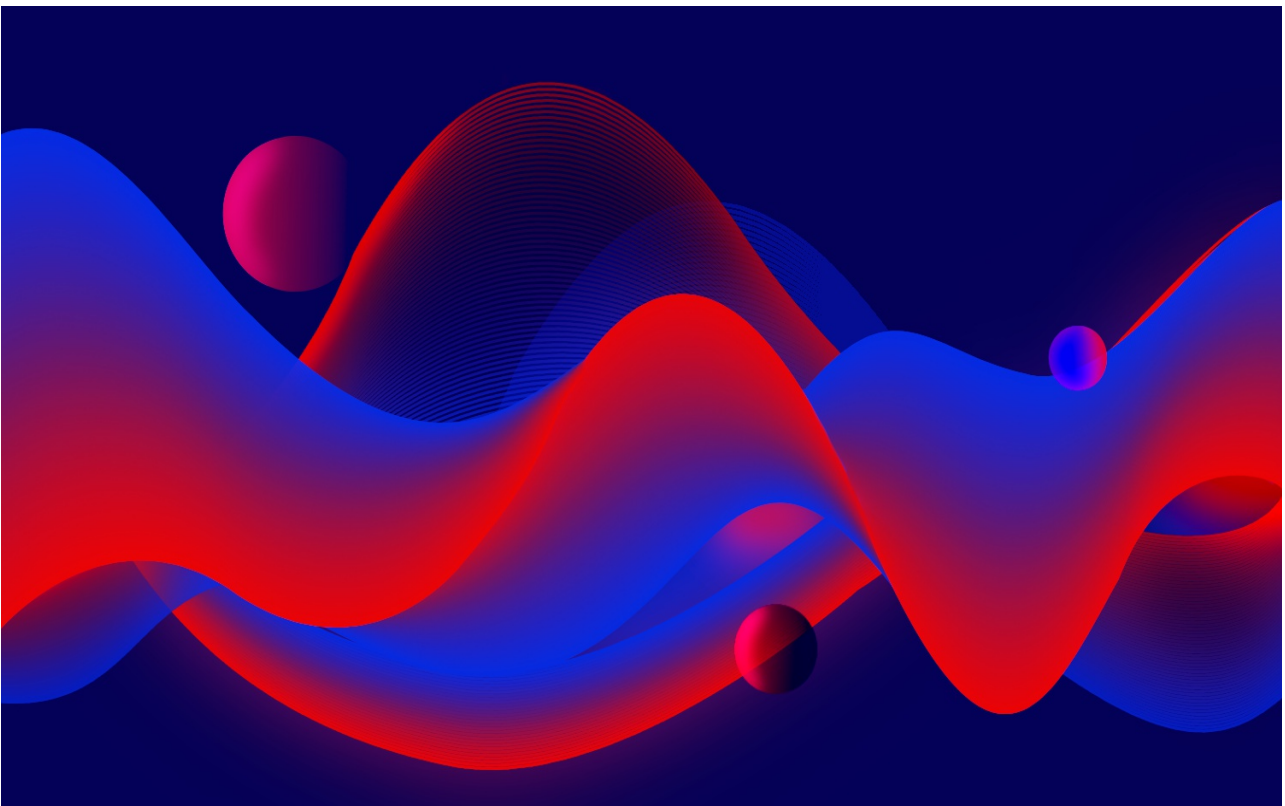


Creating Gradient Blends For Use In Gimp Art

Some ways to achieve results like this image,
which was created in response to a question from
[Gimper66](#) in his Gimp Chat thread
<http://gimpchat.com/viewtopic.php?f=11&t=20207>



This tutorial/helper was created by OldManGrumpy



Creating Gradient Blends For Use In Gimp Art

Introduction

I have created this 'helper' document following a request from a member of the **Gimp Chat** forum, **Sallyanne**, in the thread '**Blend – Gradient Tool**' - <http://gimpchat.com/viewtopic.php?f=11&t=20207> .

In that thread, initiated by **Gimper66**, he asked whether **Gimp** was capable of producing similar results to the **Photoshop** image he had posted. I demonstrated that Gimp was certainly capable of producing similar results (see front cover) and because of that, member **Sallyanne** requested a tutorial on the methods I used.

Objective

So, this document seeks to help both new and more experienced GIMP users create images something like those shown on the title page and the Gimp Chat thread. However, rather than a pure tutorial to create, step by step, the front cover image as shown, I will focus on exploring and exemplifying the toolkit that I used to do the job.

The three tools used are:

1. **RMA Path Blend** script by Rob Antonishen – an old but powerful script which renders the space between two paths with a gradient
2. **Generate Intermediate Paths** (Path-inbetweener) plug-in by Ofnuts– a plug-in which creates multiple paths between two specified paths
3. **Stroke or Fill Visible Paths** plug-in by Ofnuts – a plug-in that strokes all visible paths using either the foreground colour or the current gradient.

I will also address the necessary use of paths to create the required structural shapes in the target outcome, as, combined with these tools, they deliver an enormous degree of flexibility in creating that target image.

In essence tools 2 and 3 are used in combination, as will be shown below, so this helper will comprise two descriptive sections:

1. Using Path Blend
2. Using Generate Intermediate Paths and Stroke Visible paths

Assumptions

For this document I assume, that readers:

- can navigate Gimp
- can create simple paths
- understand layer and path dialogues
- understand plug-in dialogue boxes

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Conventions used in this tutorial

Instructions on accessing and using various GIMP functions and filters are expressed in the following format:

Image>Guides>New Guide (by Percent)...

This means that the user with a mouse, firstly left clicks on **Image** from the main GIMP menu, which then shows a drop down list of **Image** options available.

From this list the user with a mouse then left clicks on **Guides** to show the **Guides** options available. From this list the user then left clicks on **New Guide (by Percent)...** to display the form for completion:

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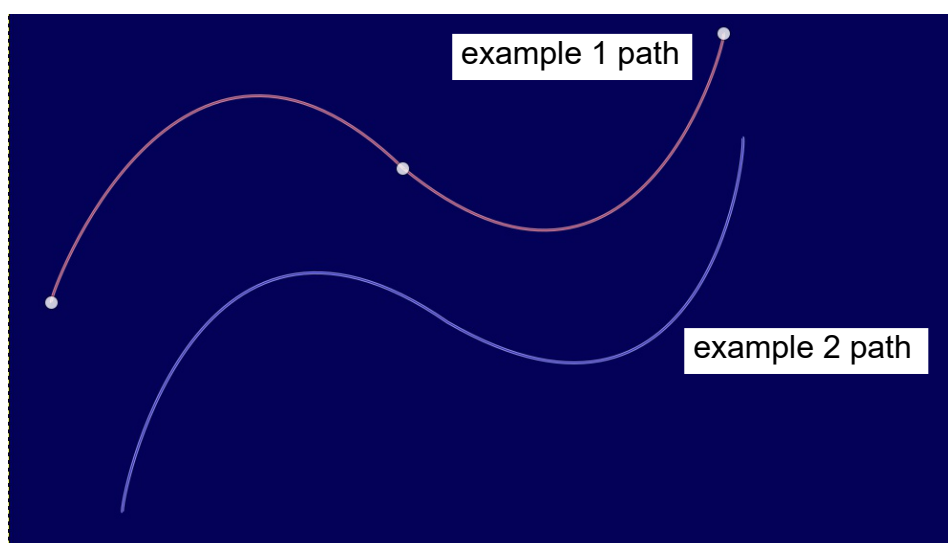
Section 1 - Using Path Blend

In this section we will look at **Path Blend** capability with differing path types/shapes and then recreate the main gradient blends in the centre of the cover page image.

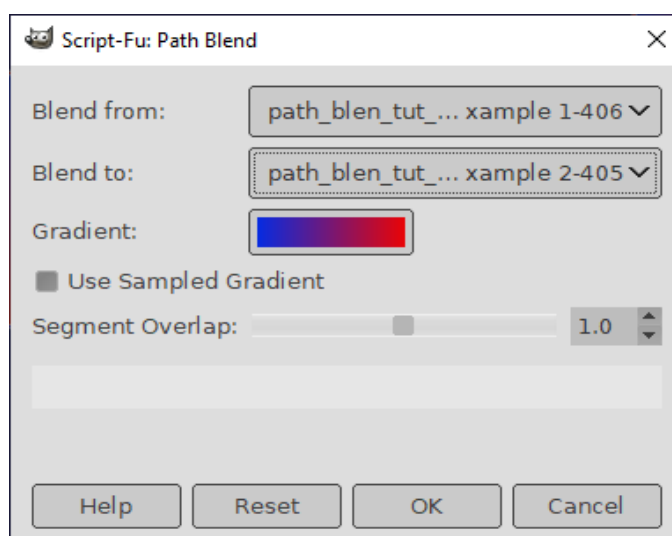
Path Blend is extremely flexible and will function against two defined paths:

- of any shape and size
- with any numbers of anchor points

Example 1 – two paths of similar shape, roughly parallel but with one rotated slightly, against which we process **Path Blend** using the **FG to BG (RGB)** standard gradient – in this case with **FG = 072be1 blue** and **BG = e90407 red**.

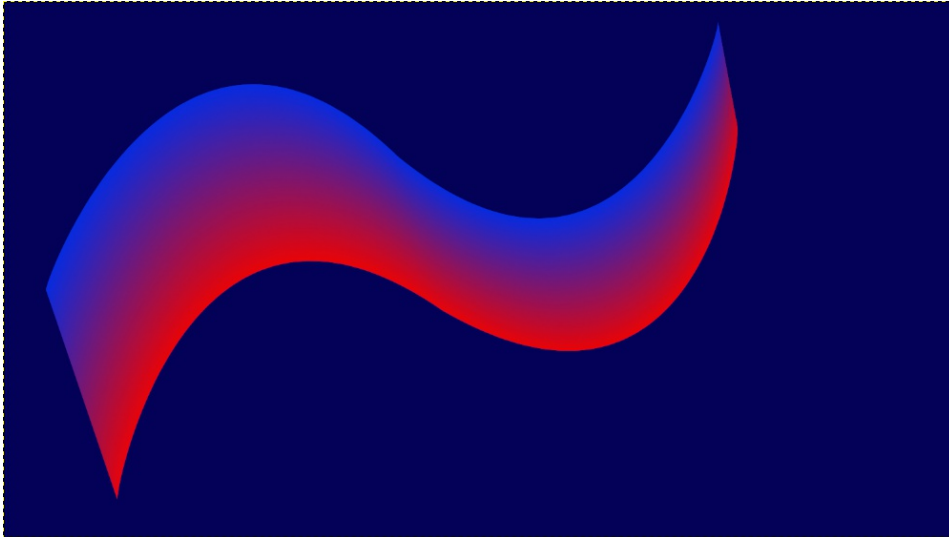


Path Blend can be opened via **Filters>Render>Path Blend**, where the dialogue box allows you to select the from and to paths and also the gradient you wish to use as shown below.

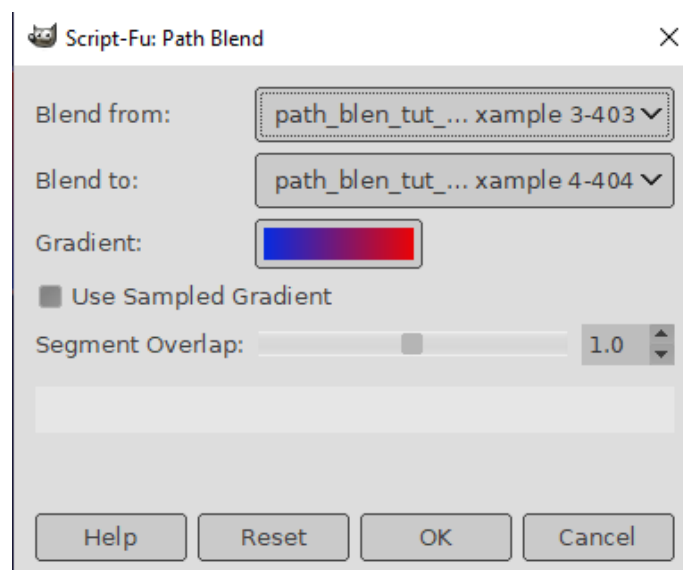
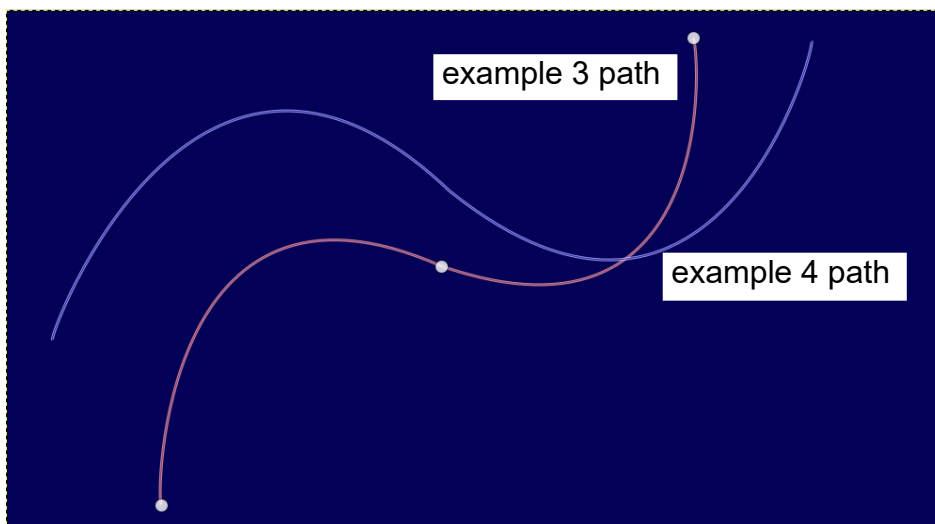


Note that the gradient blend commences at the selected '**Blend from**' path, hence in this case we created a vertical blue to red progression as shown in the completed image hereunder..

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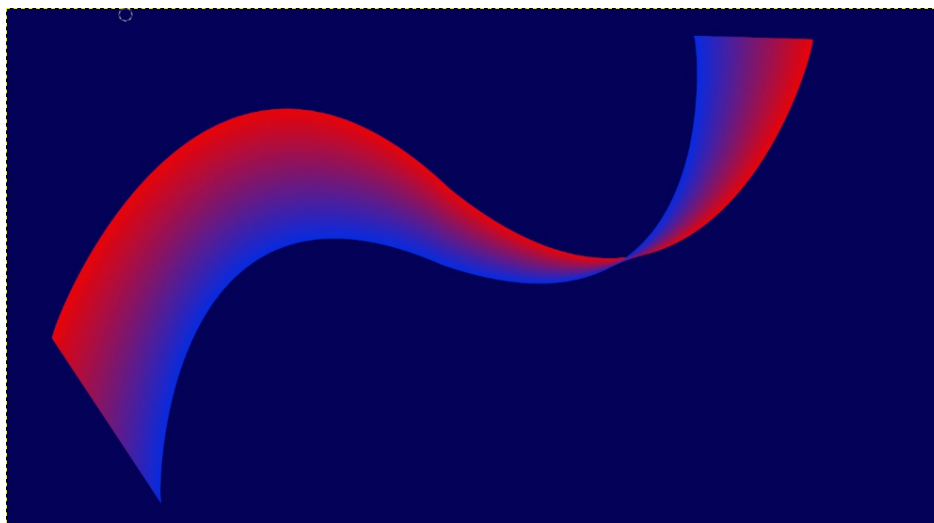


Example 2 – two paths of similar shape, but with one rotated so that it actually crosses the other, against which we again process **Path Blend** using the **FG to BG (RGB)** standard gradient with **FG = 072be1 blue** and **BG = e90407 red**.

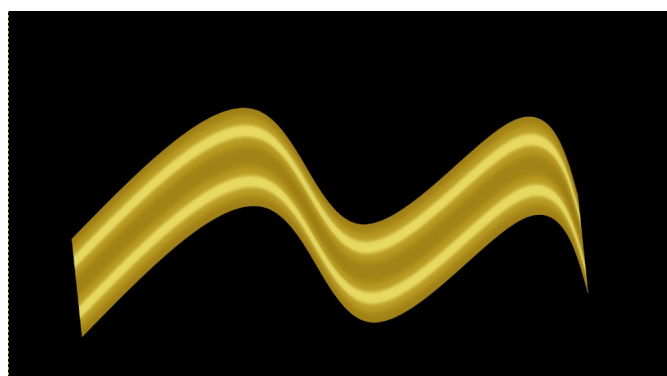
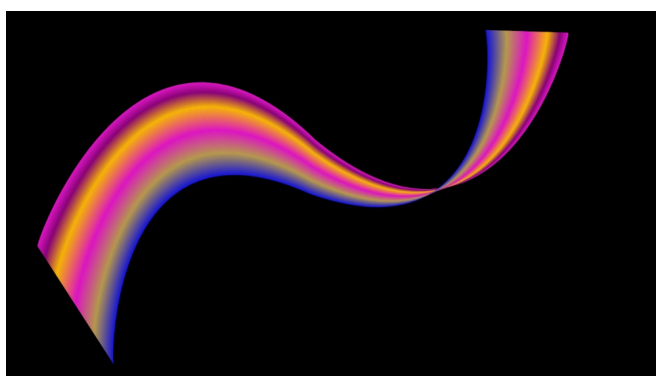


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With the path crossover we can see that **Blend from example 3** path moves above **example 4** path and the gradient blend goes with it, reversing the direction of the blend as shown below.



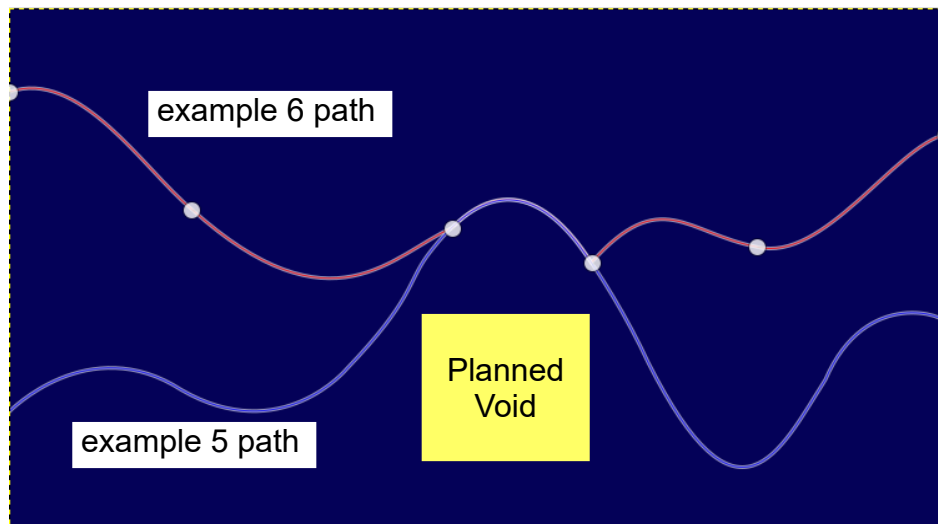
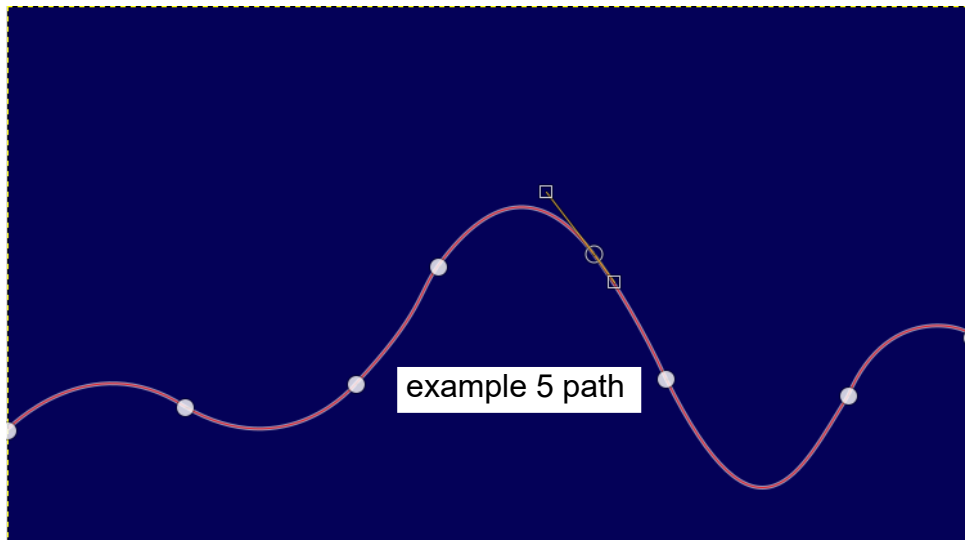
Already from these two examples we can see the power of this gradient tool in shaping our artwork similar to that on the front cover. Simple, dual colour gradients work very well, but there is a place for more exotic (home grown!) gradients too.



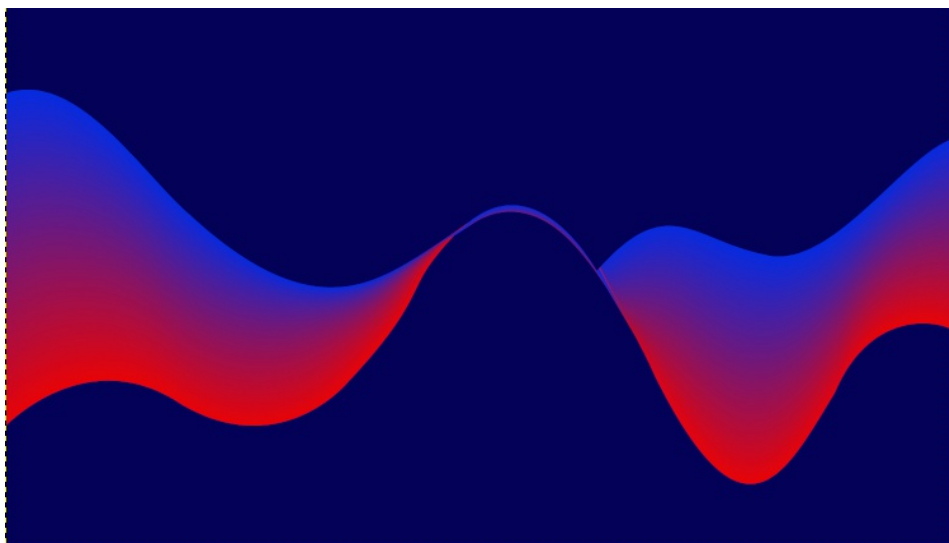
Example 3 – now let's move on to more complex path creation so that we can produce the central blended area of the front cover image. In this case I created four separate paths in two sets and ran **Path Blend** against each set in turn.

The intention of this first set was to create a gradient blend between the two paths, but as you see below, when the second path was drawn, I followed the lines of the first path in the centre of the canvas, in order to have the gradient blend on both sides but a void in the middle; refer annotation below.

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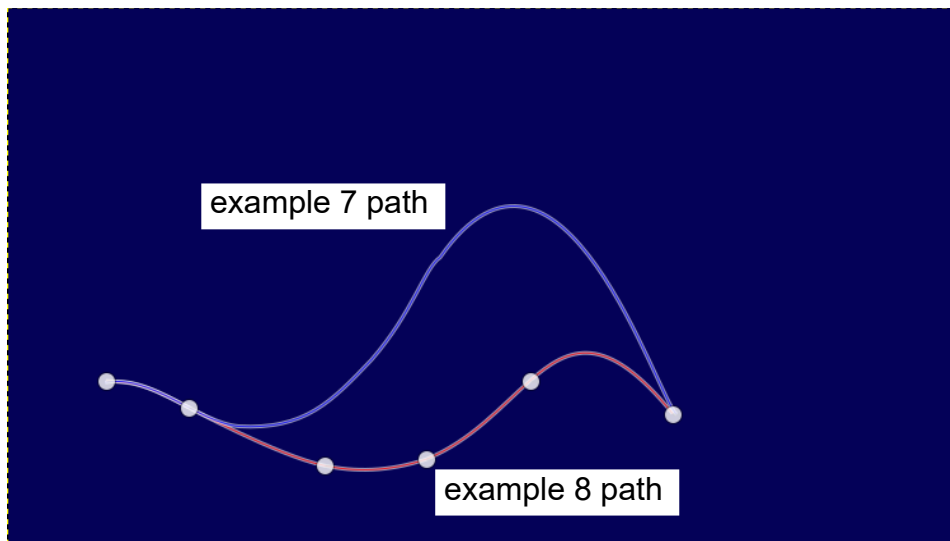
Once again we process **Path Blend** using the **FG to BG (RGB)** standard gradient with **FG = 072be1 blue** and **BG = e90407 red** from **example 6 path** to **example 5 path**, top to bottom.



Now I want to fill that void so that it forms a concave aspect, as though we are looking into a

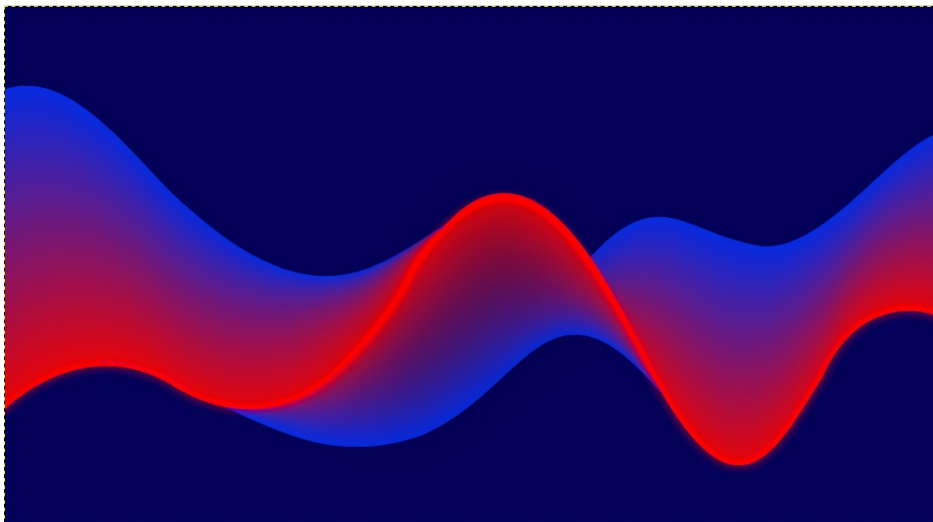
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cave. This is where the second set of paths come in as shown below.



Again we process **Path Blend** using the **FG to BG (RGB)** standard gradient with **FG = 072be1 blue** and **BG = e90407 red** from **example 8 path** to **example 7 path**, bottom to top to fill the void.

Now the blue is at the base of the void shape, red at the top and a subtle dose of black shading helps complete the cavernous effect. Additional red or blue highlights along the paths can also be used and blurred for effect.



Okay, that is the foreground completed; section 2 deals with creating the main background component..

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Section 2 - Using Generate Intermediate Paths & Stroke Visible paths

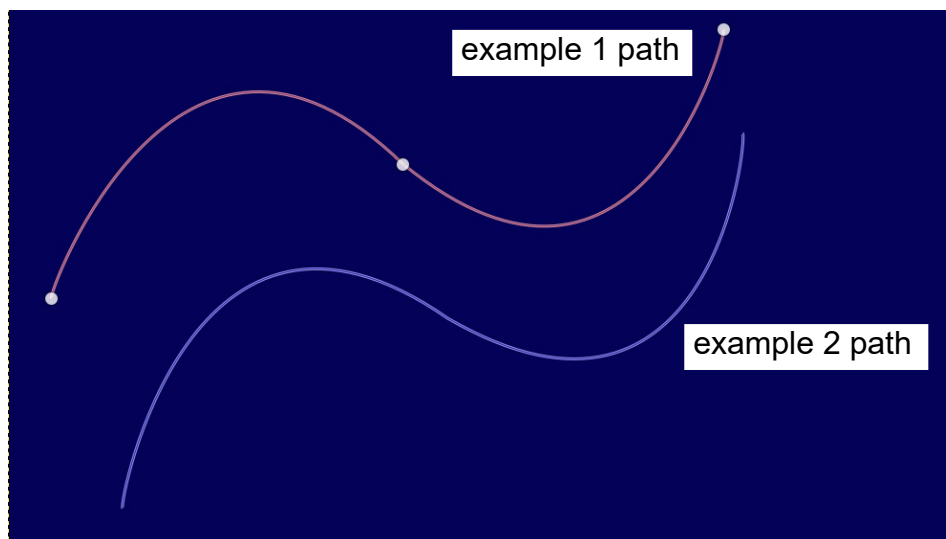
When I first saw Gimper66's Photoshop image, it was clear that whilst the foreground curves were fully opaque, the background curves were made up of individual coloured lines, with transparency between them. I could not utilise **Path Blend** to replicate that type of curve, but there is another tool well suited for this job and that is Ofnuts' plug-in **Generate Intermediate Paths (Path Inbetweener)**.

This plug-in will generate any number of separate paths between two target paths of any shape or size, can produce four different output line styles filling the gap (exemplified below) and can use a third path as a 'shaper' for the auto created paths. One simple rule though does apply here, both the to and from paths must contain the same number of anchor points.

Typically the paths produced by this plug-in will be used for 'stroking' using Ofnuts' **Stroke Visible Paths** plug-in, with your selected brush (including the brush dynamics), choosing either the foreground colour or the current gradient. In effect, we could have used these two Ofnuts plug-ins to create the gradient blend images in Section 1.

So in this section we will look at this extremely flexible **Generate Intermediate Paths** plug-in, its ability to produce different line styles between the paths, and look at what options I used to create those lined background shapes in my response to the Photoshop image.

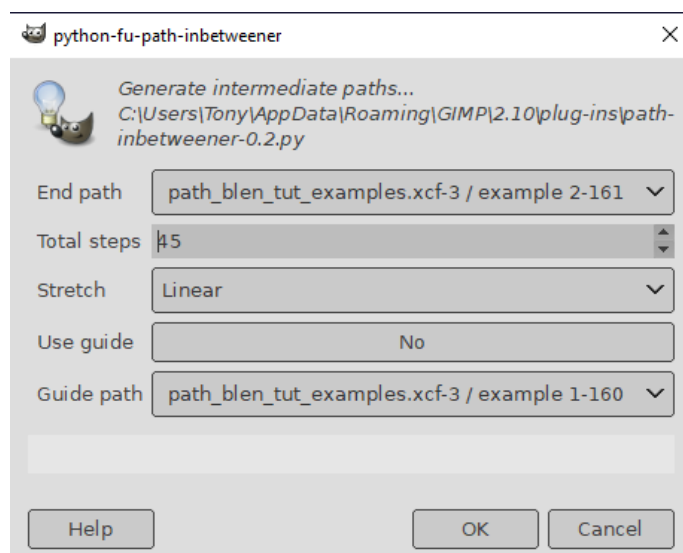
Example 4 – using the two paths of similar shape from Example 1 above, lets check the style of paths coverage available.



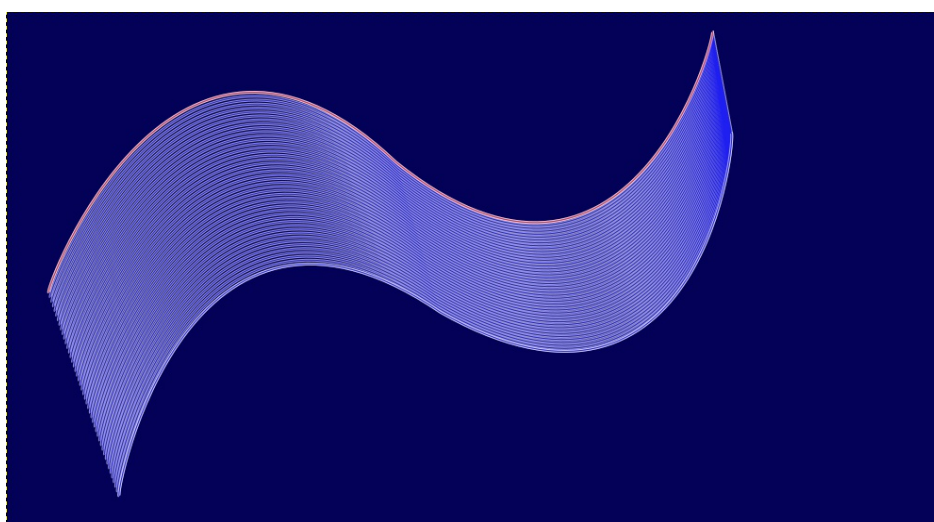
Right click on the **example 1** path in the **Paths Dialogue** to show the available menu options, then select and click **Tools>Generate intermediate paths** to bring up this plug-in's dialogue box.

The active **example 1** path is our assumed start path and we can then choose our end path, **example 2**, from the **End path** drop down. For these example I choose **45 Total steps** from start to end, and lastly selected the default **Stretch** of **Linear** which provides a proportional solution between the paths.

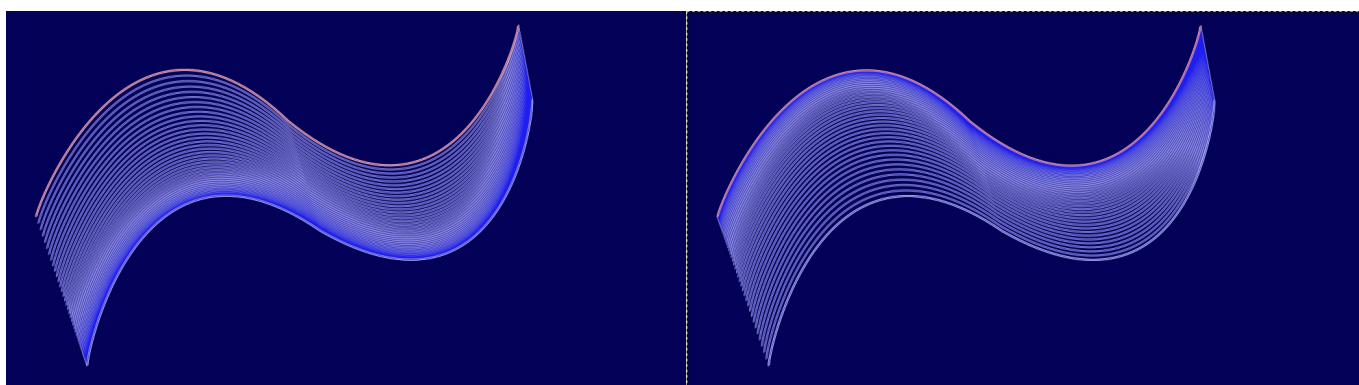
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The result of this action is shown below.



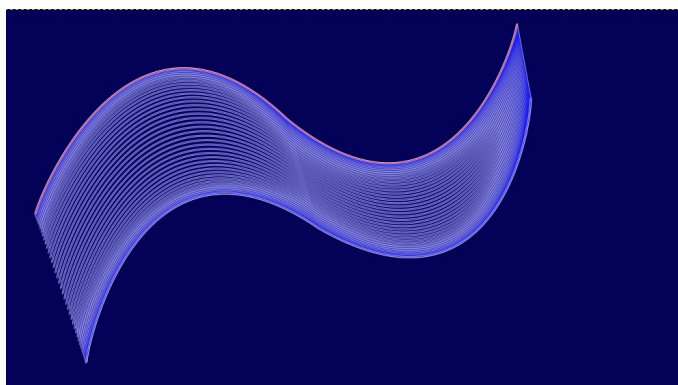
Here are the results for the same start and end paths, still 45 interim steps, but using a **Stretch** of **Acceleration** (left below) and **Deceleration** (right below). Note for the former, the interim step paths progress with continually decreasing intervals. For the latter it is the opposite effect.



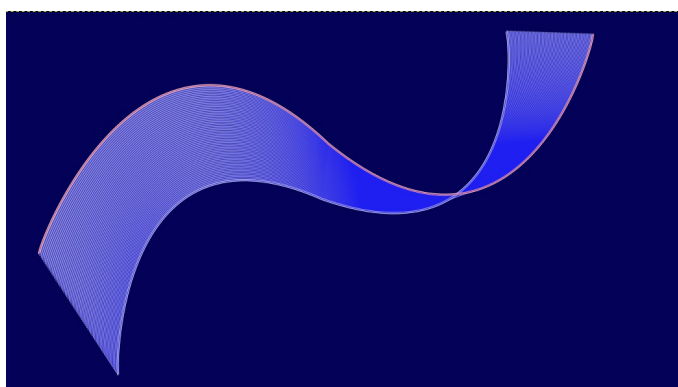
Lastly, for the **Swing** option, we obtain a combination of the above two impacts as shown below with path steps progressively increasing in size towards the centre, then progressively

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decreasing until the end.

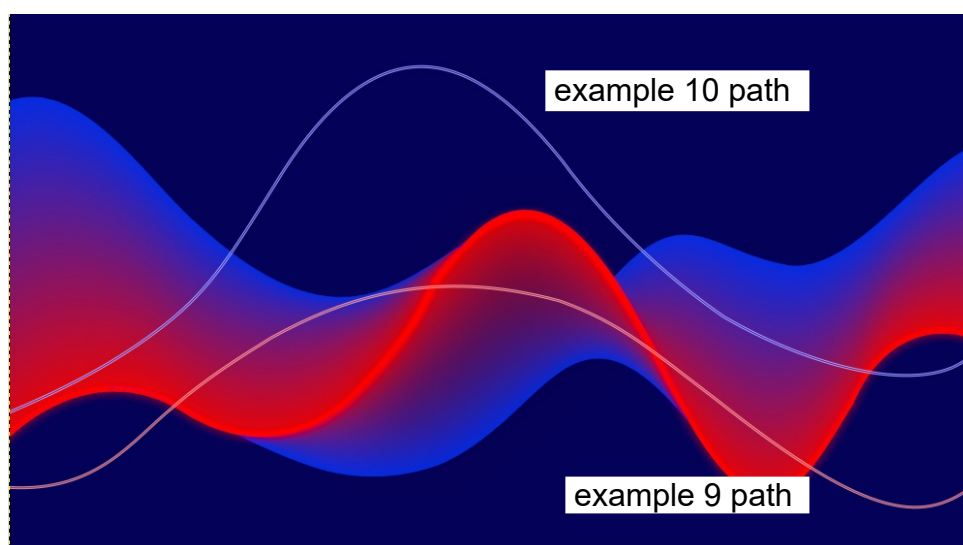


Like Path Blend, this plug-in allows paths to be of any shape and to cross over.



Each of these options has a place in Gimp art works, where they can be stroked for effect. Lets look now at the solution I created for the background curves in the front cover image.

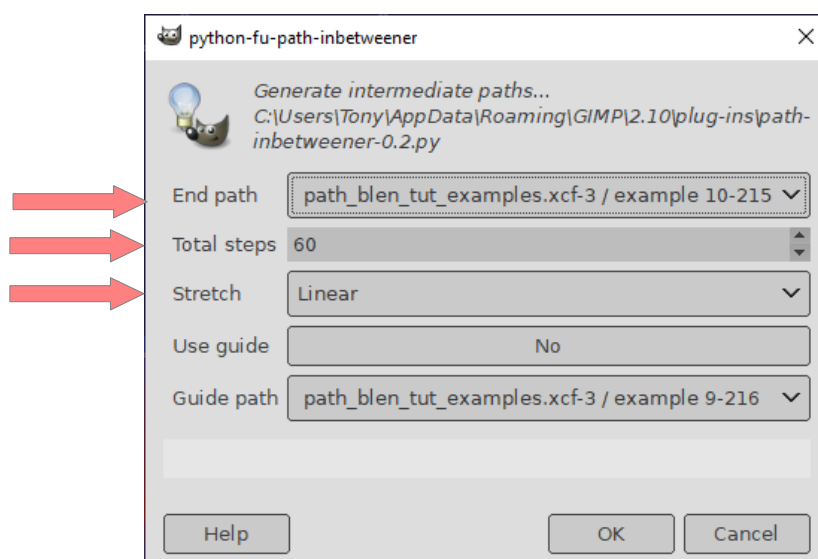
Example 5 – Firstly I drew two paths to represent the background shaped curve as shown below.



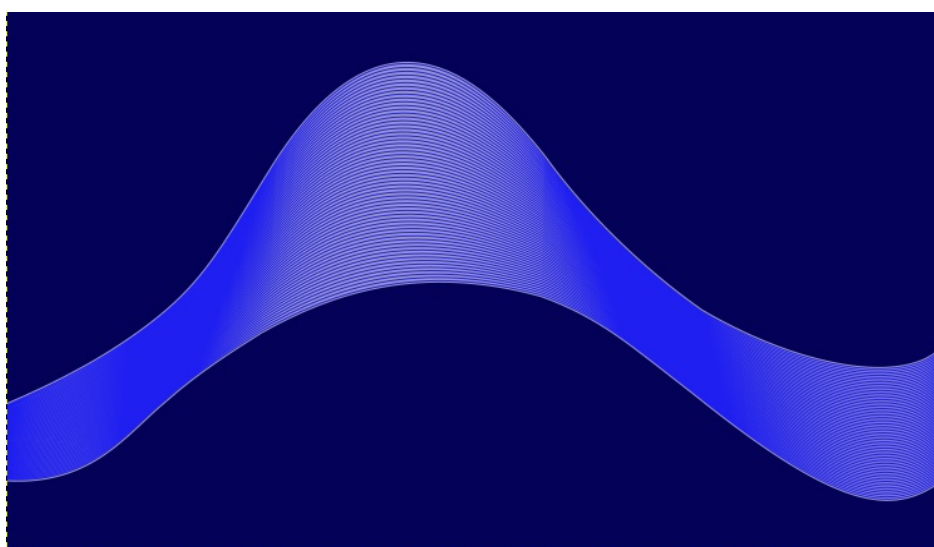
Then with **example 9** path active I called up the **Generate Intermediate Paths** plug-in by right clicking on the active path, selecting **Tools> Generate Intermediate Paths** and made the

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following selections in the dialogue form.



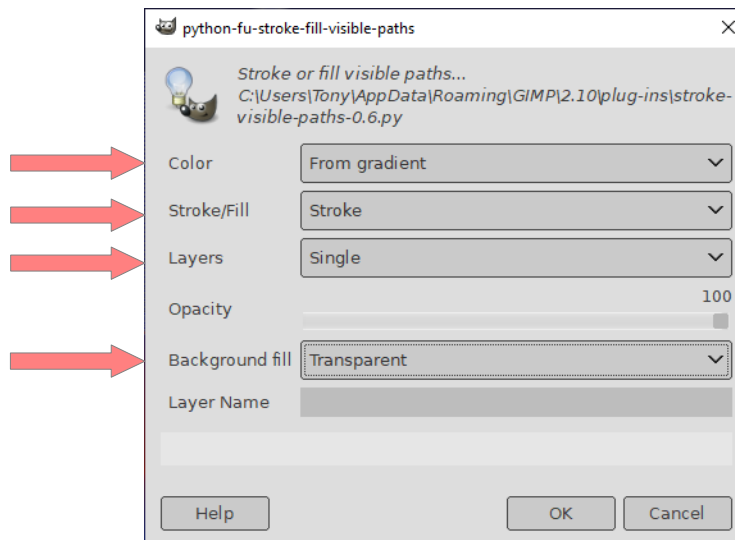
The nomination of 60 path steps was somewhat arbitrary, based on experience I suppose, but I had selected the **2. Hardness 100** Gimp brush at **Size 3 pixels** for stroking purposes and felt that would deliver my target result. The resulting paths looked like this.



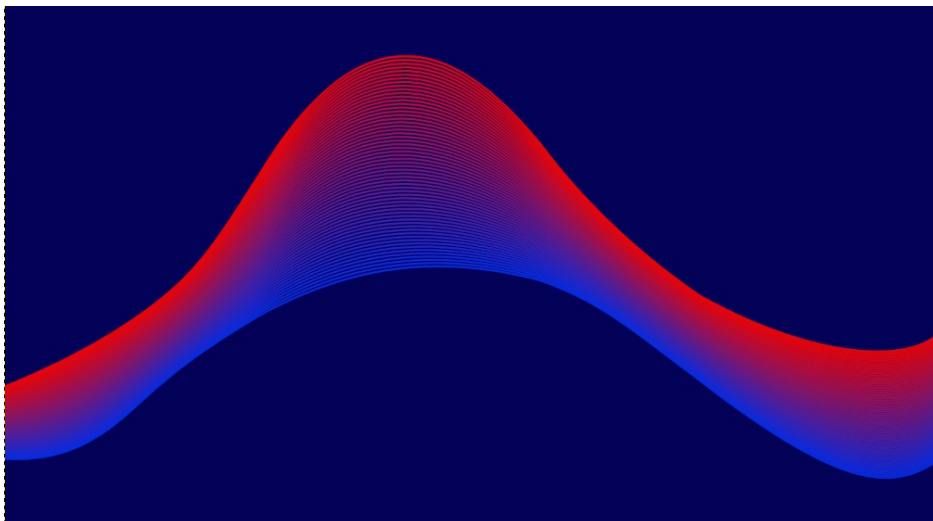
Then with **example 9** path active I called up the next plug-in via **Image>Stroke or fill visible paths** to show the dialogue box hereunder.

Obviously, I selected **From gradient** rather than **Foreground color**, **Stroke** rather than **Fill**, **Single** layer output rather than **Multiple** and lastly **Background fill** of **Transparent**.

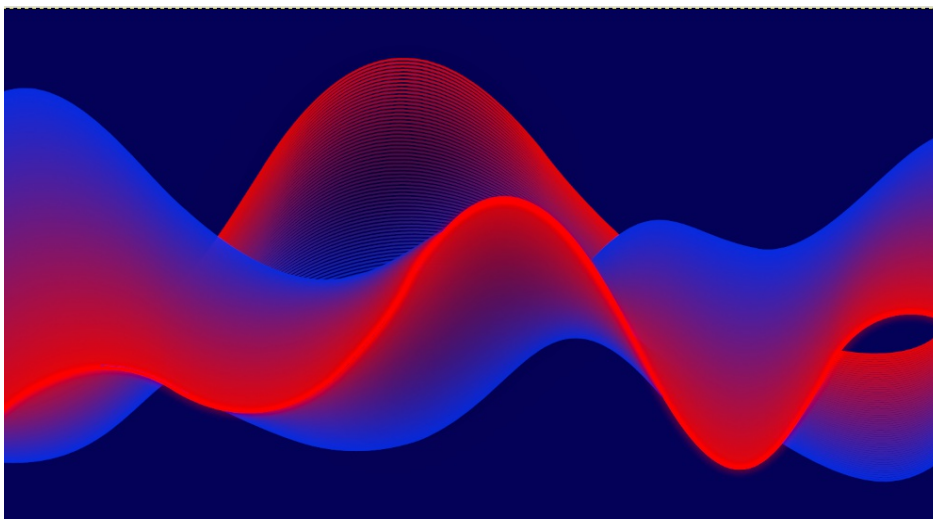
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The result of the stroking with gradient is shown here.



With this new layer moved to the bottom of the stack (above background layer), some slight darkening of the arch for effect and other key layers made visible again, this was the result.



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After this, to complete the job, I did add some further elements that were in the original Photoshop image, including another set of stroked paths.

But for all intents and purposes the above narrative should meet Sallyanne's request (I hope).