

Custom Font Paths to Layers

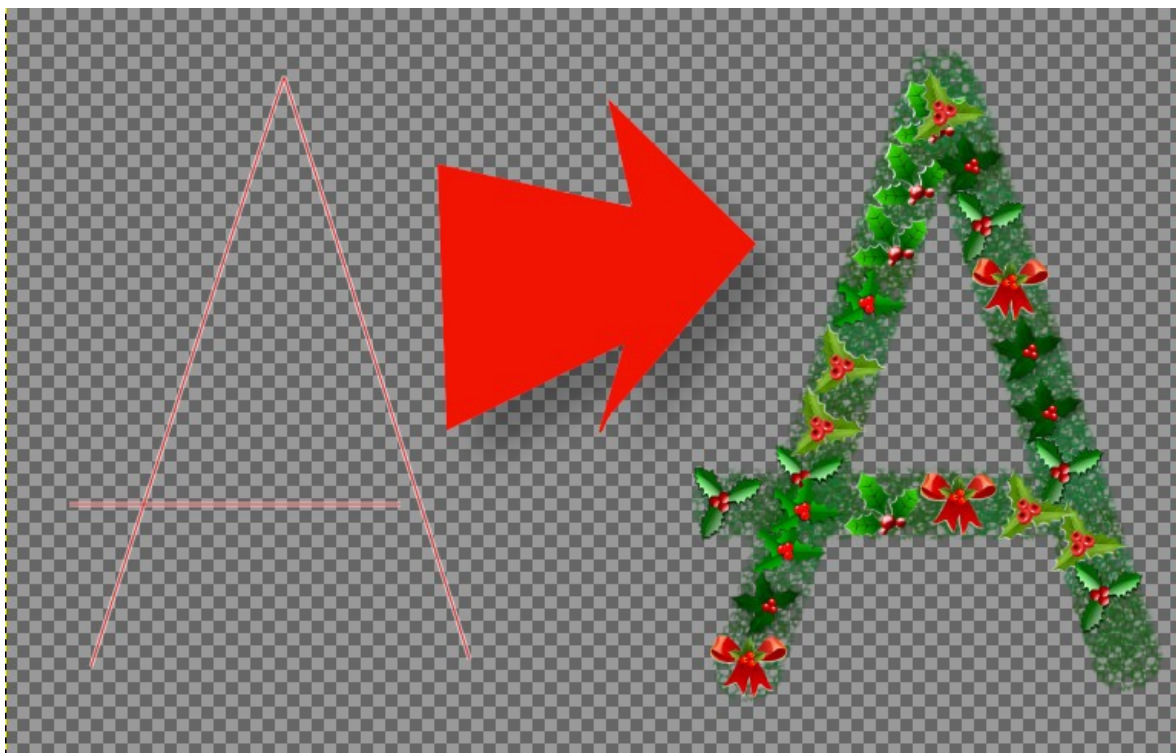
Current version: 0.15b Tabbed

If you are new to the wonderful world of custom paths the plug-in allows you to create a set of character layers (i.e. custom fonts) from appropriately named paths using the brush tool or the line tool.

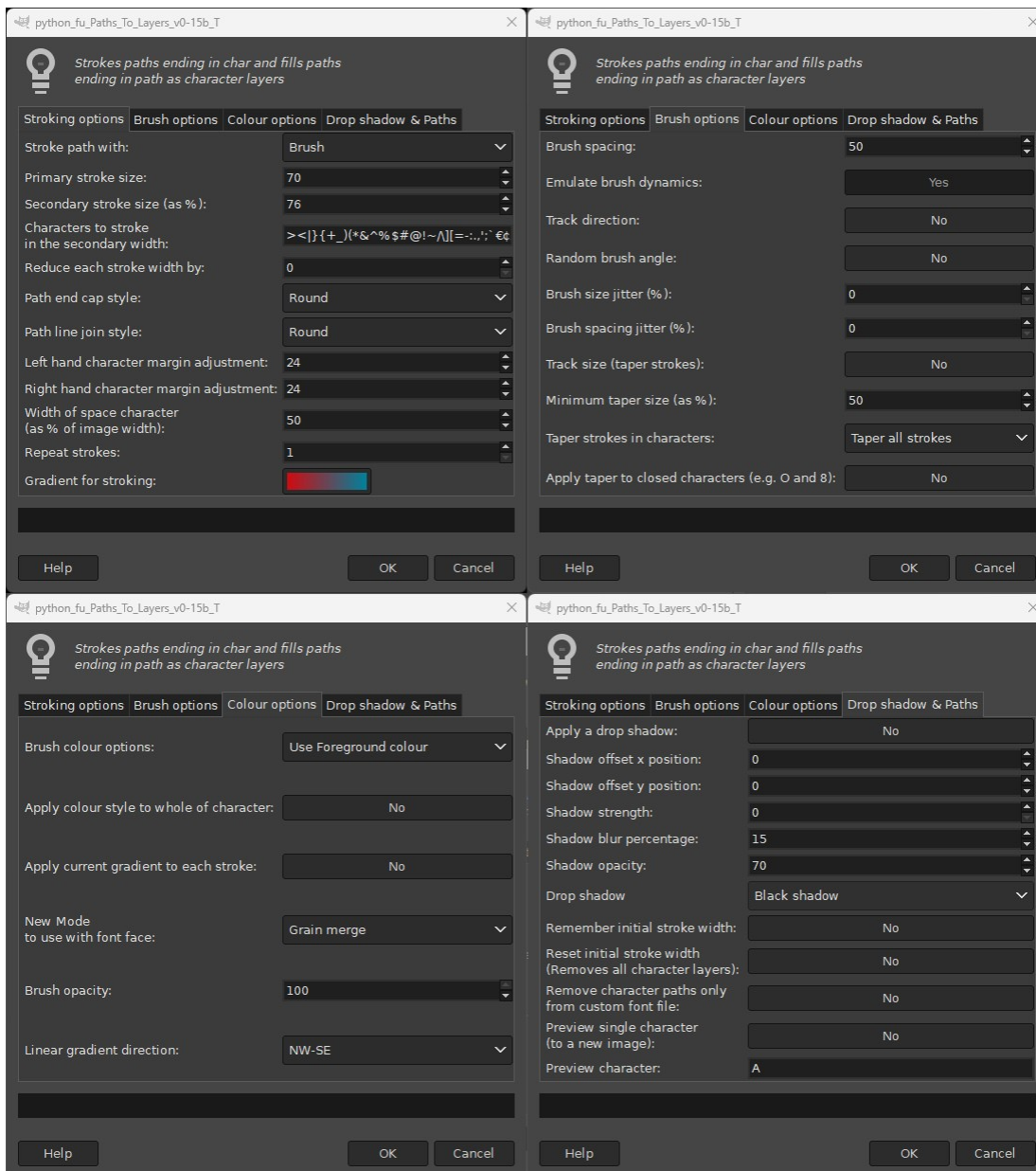
The filter can be used to create a base custom font for modifying with other custom font tools...



...or for making characters with a more natural, open look, such as those that use plant based images using animated (or pipe) brushes.



The filter dialog tabs for version 0.15b with default values:



Both brush and line use the current foreground colour to paint character paths.

Using the line options:

‘Stroke path with’ should be set to Line.

Set the Primary stroke size to the value required to adjust the width of the characters and set the end cap and join styles as required.

Set ‘Repeat strokes’ to 1.

Use the preview option on the fourth dialog tab to view the settings before committing to the full set of characters.

This offers a useful way of adjusting the width or weight of a custom font – but testing is always recommended.

Using the brush options:

Stroking a path with an ordinary brush can be used to add italic strokes to custom path characters; use any angled solid rectangle brush.

Reduce the brush spacing to 1 to paint with a continuous stroke.



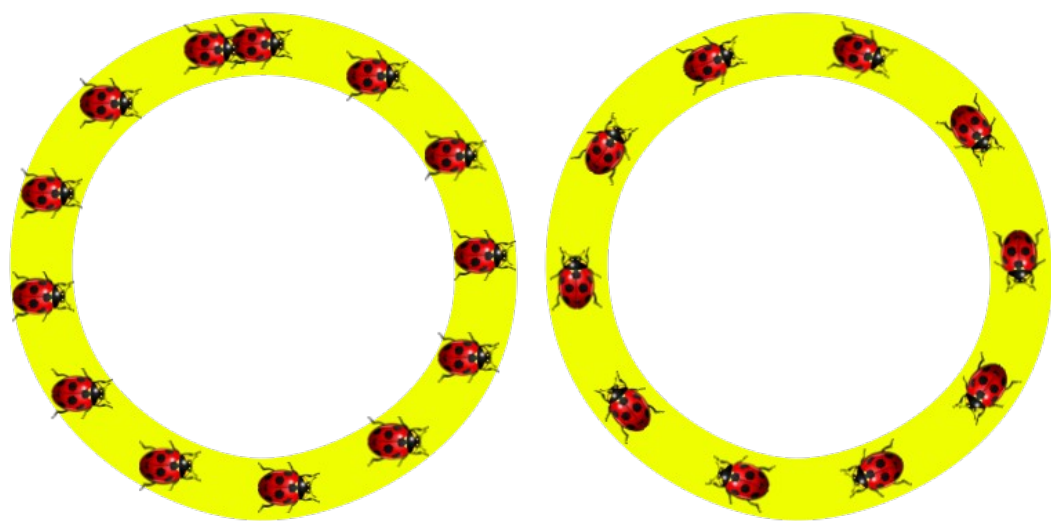
The real fun starts when using pipe brushes with the filter. You can use brush dynamics options from the paintbrush tool dock to add variety and interest when stroking a character path but I have added some effects to the second tab of the filter dialog.

To use these effects make sure that you set 'Emulate brush dynamics' to 'Yes' and of course you will need to have chosen a pipe brush from the brush tool dock.



Brush Option Examples (Without and with the option):

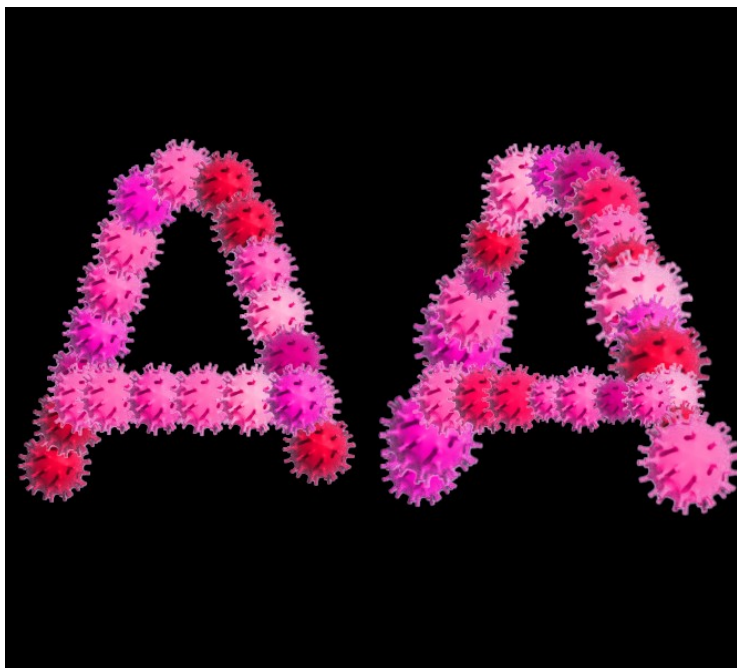
Track Direction:



Random brush angle:



Brush Size Jitter:



Brush Spacing Jitter:



Track Size (Taper strokes):

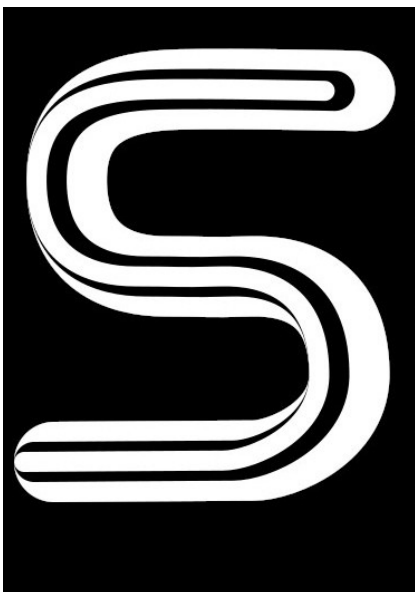


These options can be combined to add a random element to the appearance of the characters.

The initial stroke option (requested by Krikor)

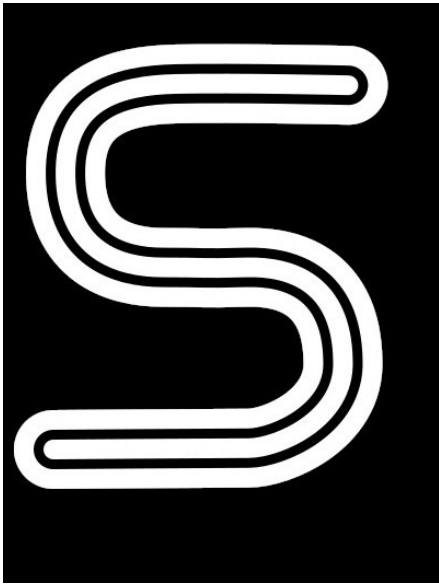
This option allows the user to use different sized brushes, correctly positioned over the character path. If absolute accuracy is required ensure that the original brush/line size is a multiple of the final brush size.

The example below shows what happens when three different sized strokes are used without using the initial stroke. The position of the character, with its three different widths (80, 40 and 20), are all fixed to the left-hand margin.

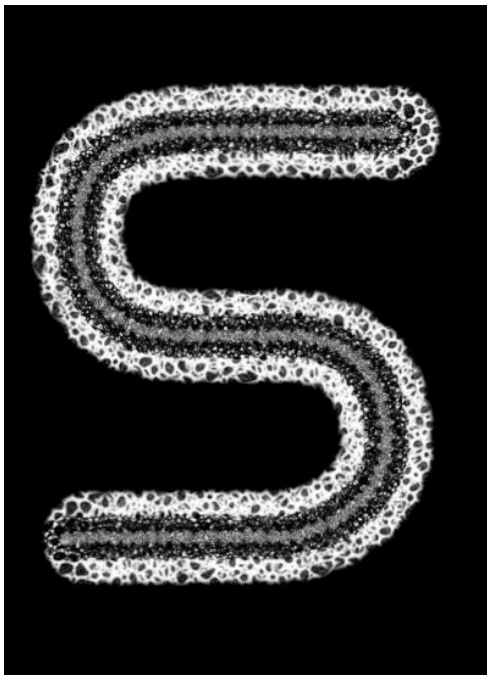


initial stroke option set to 'Yes':

Using the same stroke widths the three differently sized characters are now evenly spaced.



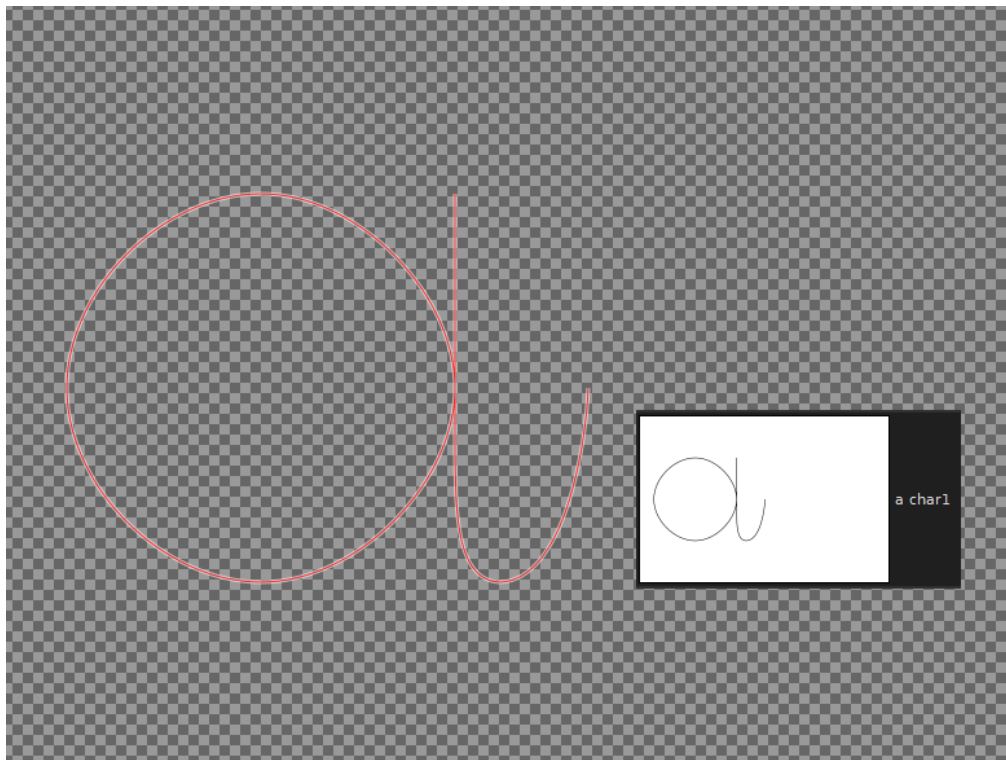
Another example using the paintbrush with the random brush angle also applied:



If you want to start from the very beginning again with different initial stroke sizes or without using the initial width option, use the reset option at the bottom of the filter dialog together with the initial stroke width option.

Alternative character paths

To generate an alternative character use the same convention and then add number 1; if you need more alternatives increase this number (up to a maximum of 9).



Should you wish to preview an alternative character enter the character, followed by the number, into the preview character text box on the last tab of the filter dialog. (The example above would require you to enter 'a1'.

It is possible to use another name, i.e. ' path', for the character suffix but this is really intended for use with the line tool when stroking paths (i.e. for creating custom font base character sets for decorating with other custom font tools). Some characters, such as punctuation marks, often simply look better this way.

Using a gradient to stroke characters

This is not the same as applying the current gradient to colour a character after it has been generated. It uses the currently selected brush to colour each section of the stroke in a colour taken from the currently selected gradient.

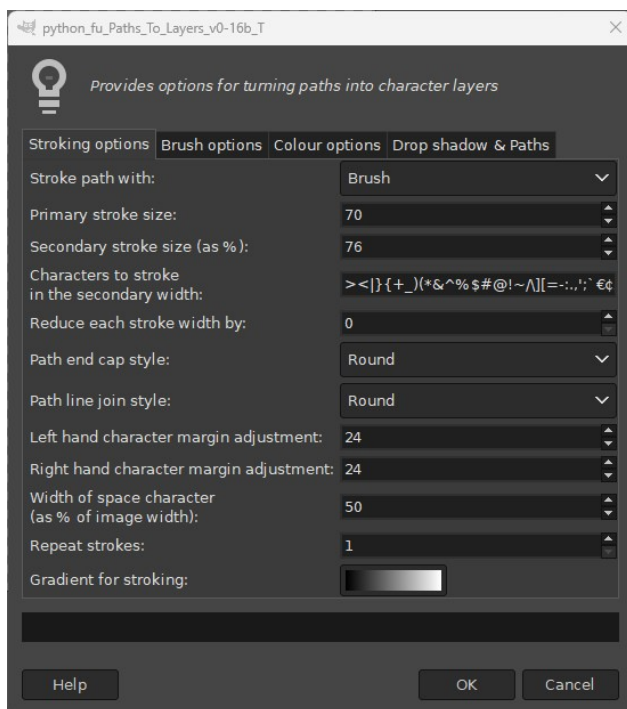
Select a suitable greyscale brush (usually shown in black or shades of grey in your Gimp Brushes) and set the foreground and background colours if you want to use a custom gradient. I used a brush called 'spoke' (also in the resource folder).

Open a custom font character paths file. (This guide uses the cursivity file.)

Call up the filter:

Filters>>Custom Fonts>>Constructing Tools>>Custom Font Paths to Layers v0.15b Tabbed...

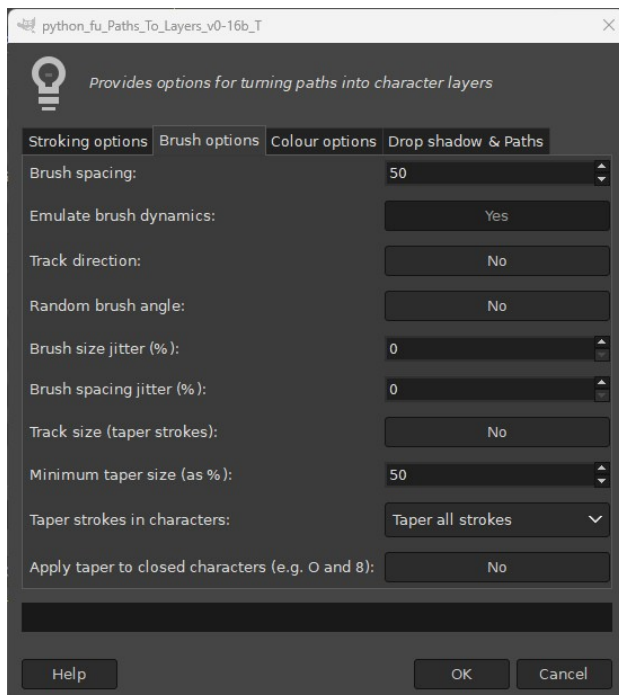
Dialog Tab 1:



Set the 'Primary stroke size' to value of between 40 and 50.
Set the 'Secondary stroke size' to 100.

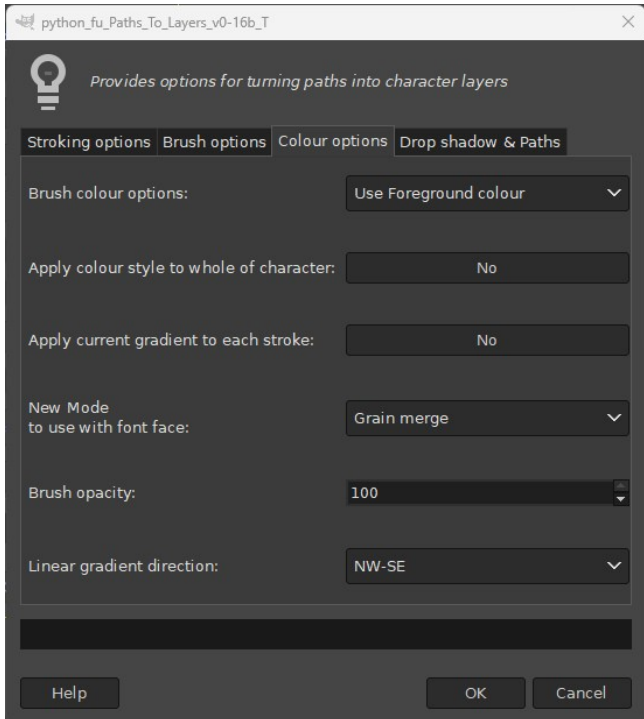
Click on the 'Gradient for stroking' icon to activate the Gimp gradient selector dialog. Use this to select a gradient. (I used a gradient with rainbow colours.)

Dialog Tab 2:



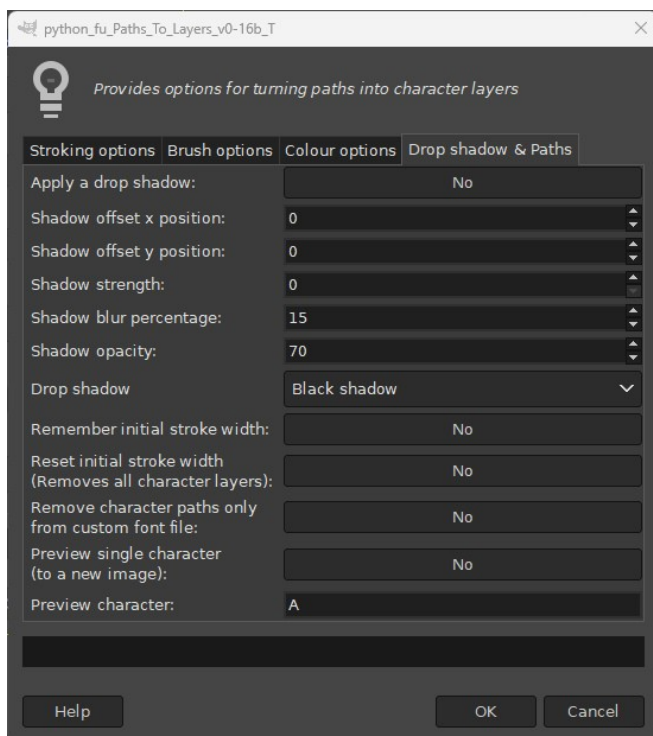
Set the 'Brush spacing' value to 20.
Set the 'Track direction' option to 'Yes'.

Dialog Tab 3:



Set 'Apply current gradient to each stroke' to 'Yes'.

Dialog Tab 4:



Set 'Preview single character' to 'Yes'.
Enter the character you want to preview in the text box.

Click on 'OK'.

My outcome...



The preview image gives you an opportunity to re-adjust the various option settings before committing your choices to all the characters in the file. So if you want to you can discard the preview image and alter the brush, the spacing value and the choice of gradient before trying again.

When you are happy with your choices, set the 'Preview single character' option to 'No' to apply the filter to all the characters. A word of caution: If you set the 'Brush spacing' to a value of 1 it will take a fair amount of time to stroke all of the characters - so it may be a good idea to take the dog for a walk while your machine is busy and remember...

Gimp is fun.