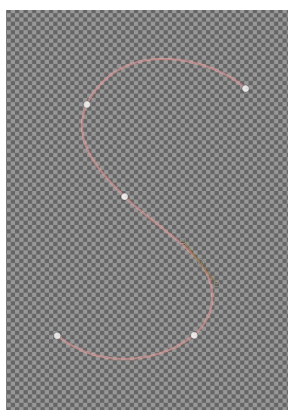


Custom Font Path Wibbler for Gimp 2.10 v0.1g

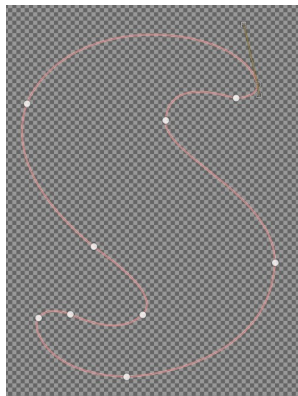
This is my take on the Path Wobbler plug-in that made use of Tim's Wobble 3d plug-in. It does not require Tim's filter to be installed and was intended to be more suitable for making custom fonts from custom paths.

The Path Wibbler filter dialogs are very similar to the Wobbler dialogs since they provide similar options for adding random changes to the appearance of character shapes by altering the positions of the x/y co-ordinates of the anchors and handles that influence the shape of vectors in Gimp.

As with Wobbler the filter can be used to stroke skeleton character paths with the line or brush tool (using the char suffix)



or to fill closed character paths (using the path suffix).

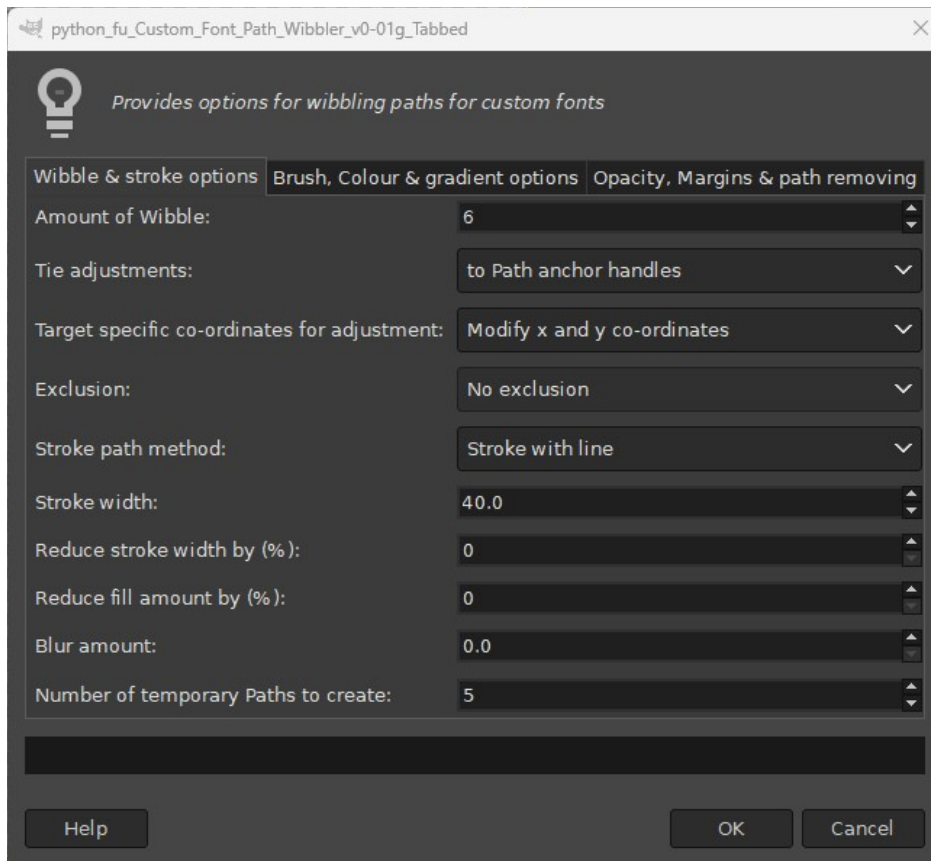


This guide attempts to focus on some of the areas that Wibbler may be of use to making custom fonts.

1. **Stroking character paths in their original form**
2. **Adding variety to character shapes**
3. **Adding textured edges with strokes**
4. **Using brushes**
5. **Taper**
6. **Stroke the last point**
7. **Reduce stroke width and fill**
8. **Combining characters**
9. **Stroke along path**
10. **Stroking non-custom font character paths**

The Filter Dialog Tabs:

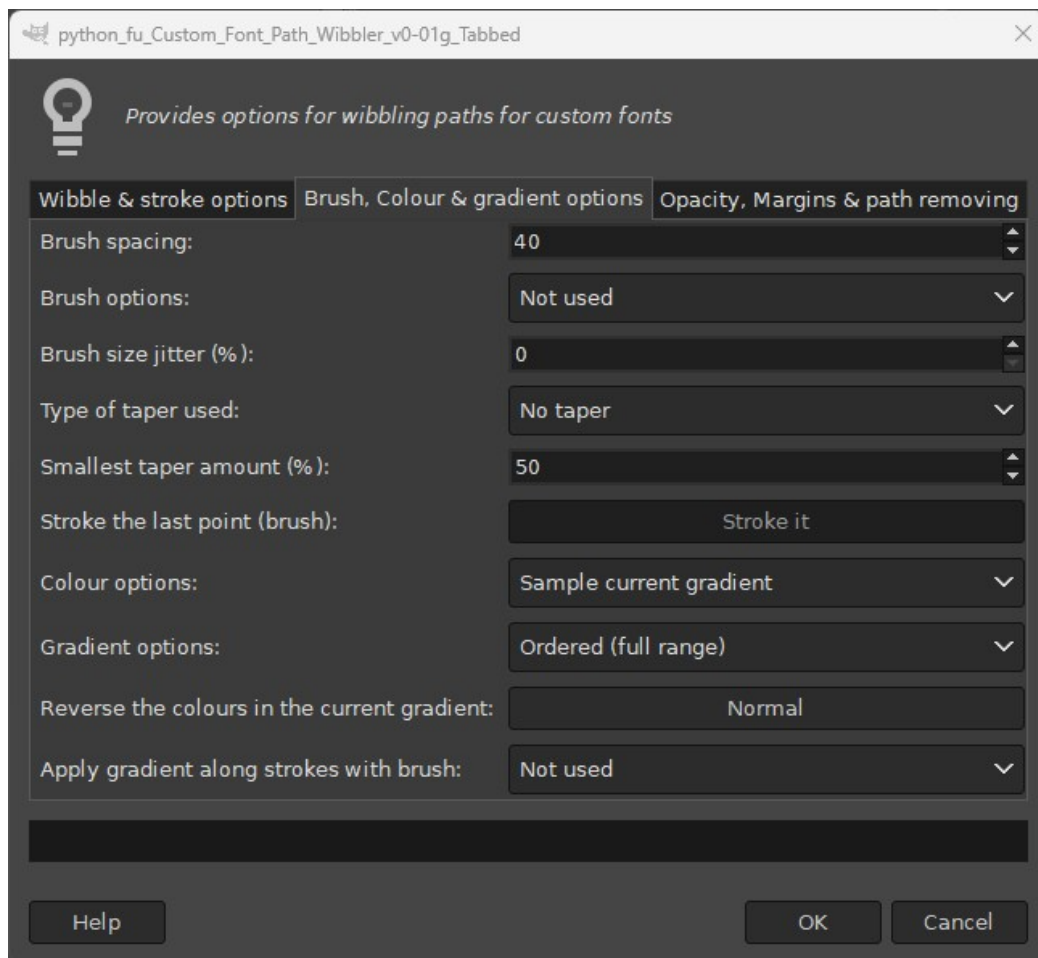
Dialog Tab 1: Wobble and Stroke Options



Dialog options:

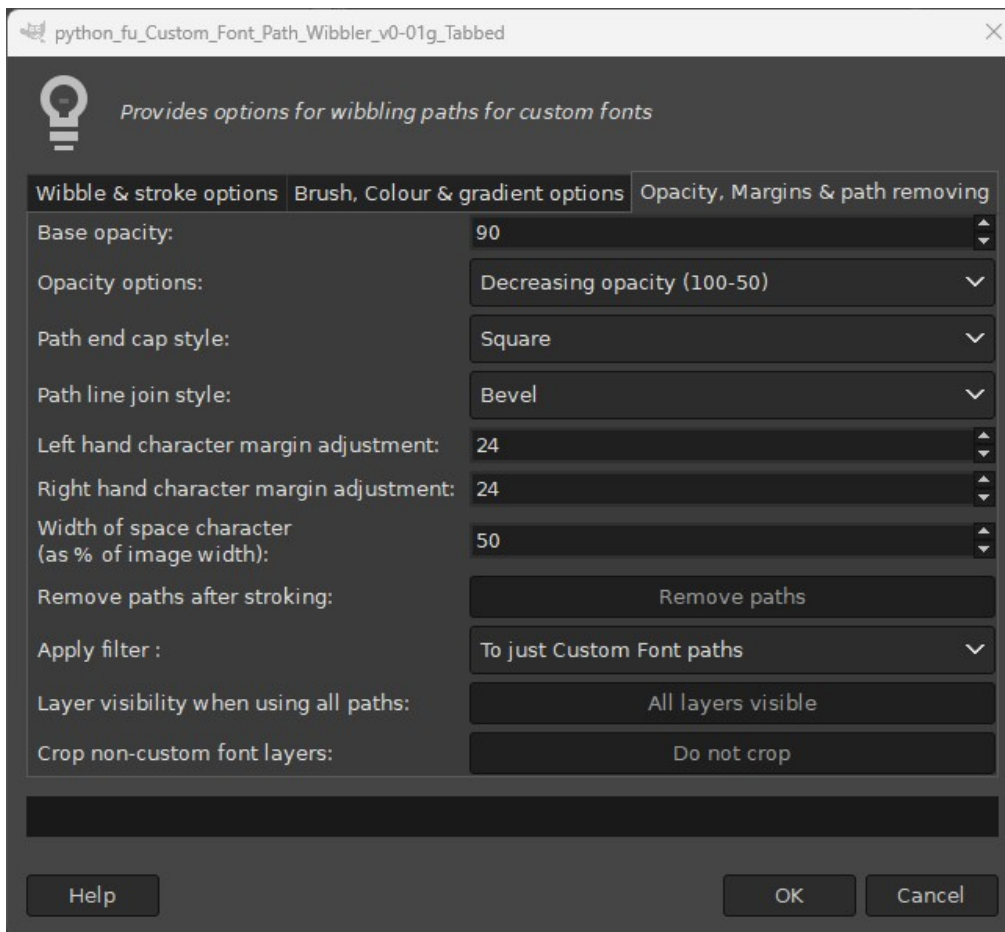
1. Set the amount of random variation for path anchors/handles
2. Tie adjustments to handles, anchors or both
3. Target the adjustments in a much more specific way
4. Excludes certain anchor points from the filter
5. Use line or brush to stroke paths
6. Set the width for the line or brush stroke
7. Set the amount to reduce the stroke width used for each temporary path
8. Blur the strokes or fill layers as they are added
9. Set the number of temporary paths/layers

Dialog Tab 2: Brush, Colour and gradient Options



1. Set the spacing between brush strokes
2. Use track direction or random brush angle
3. Set a random brush sizing
4. Taper options
5. Smallest taper setting
6. Stroke the last point in each path
7. Decide where to take colour from - foreground/background/gradient
8. Gradient colour style – random/ordered/restricted choice
9. Reverse gradient colours
10. Apply current gradient along stroke

Dialog Tab 3: Opacity, Margins and path removing Options



1. Set the base opacity level for stroking/filling paths
2. Set the options for using opacity
3. Set the style for the end cap when stroking with line
4. Set the style for joins when stroking with line
5. Left hand margin size for custom font making
6. Right hand margin size for custom font making
7. Set the width for the space character for custom font making
8. Remove character paths after use
9. Apply the filter to custom font paths or other paths
10. Set layer visibility for non-custom font images
11. Crop for non-custom font images

Section 1. Stroking character paths in their original form

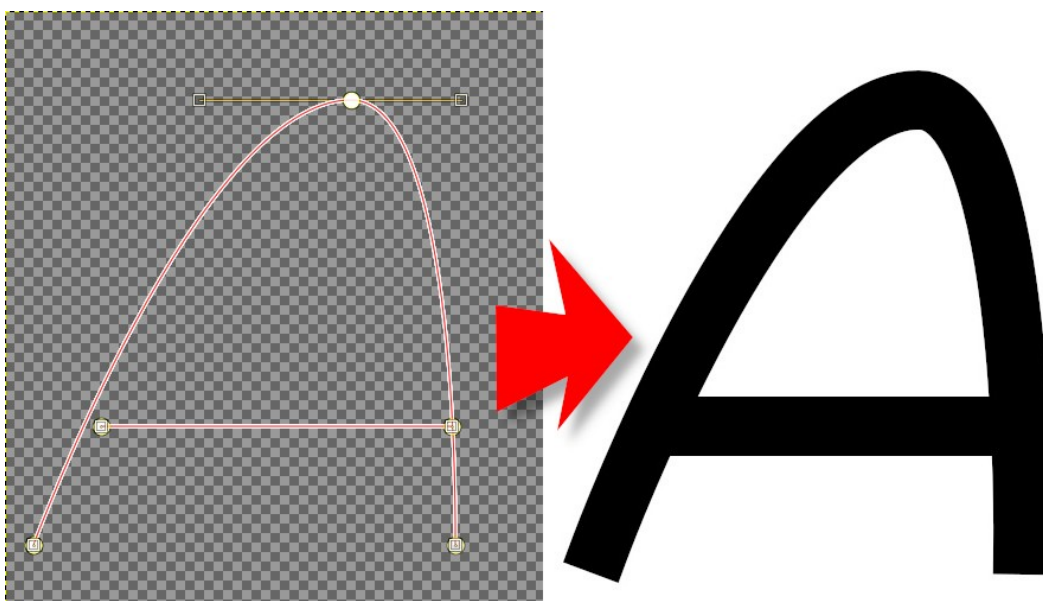
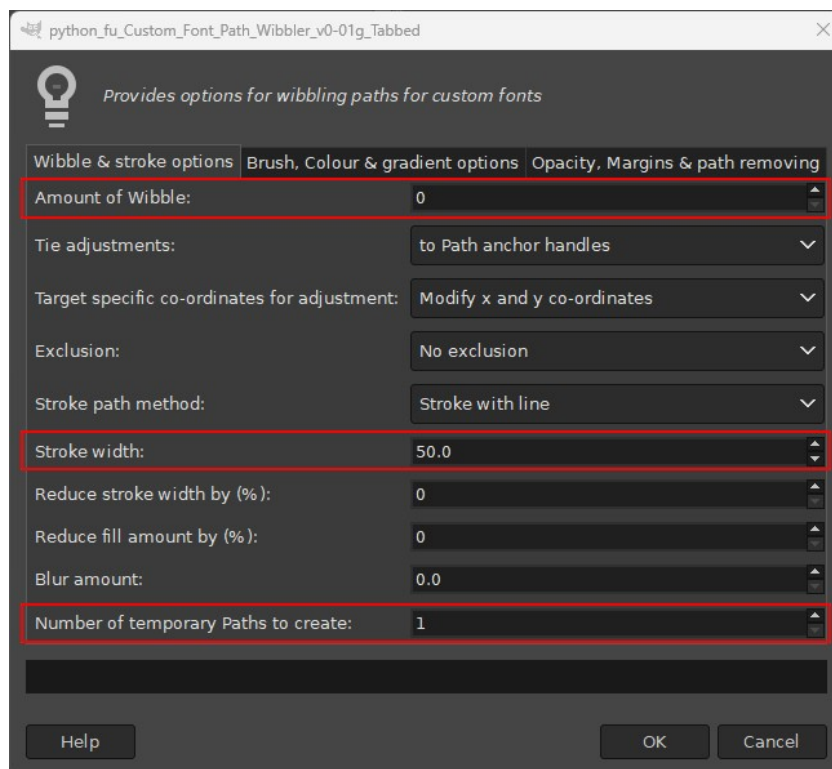
You may have created your own set of character paths or downloaded a set of character paths from the custom path thread on GimpChat and want to make a custom font as a base for decorating with other tools.

Open a file containing character paths in Gimp 2.10 and select the colour you want to use to stroke the custom font: White is normally the colour used.

Open the filter dialog:

Filters>>Custom Fonts>>Constructing Tools>>Custom Font Wibbler v0.1g Tabbed...

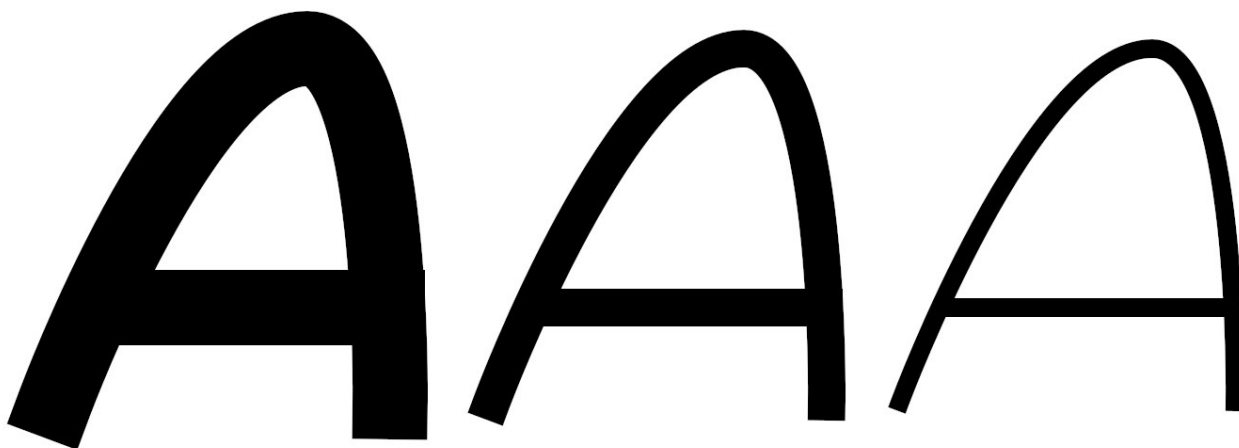
Use the settings shown to create characters that follow the exact curves of the original vectors.



Weighting

If you need to create a custom font in different thicknesses or weights, simply change the stroke width on Tab 1 of the dialog.

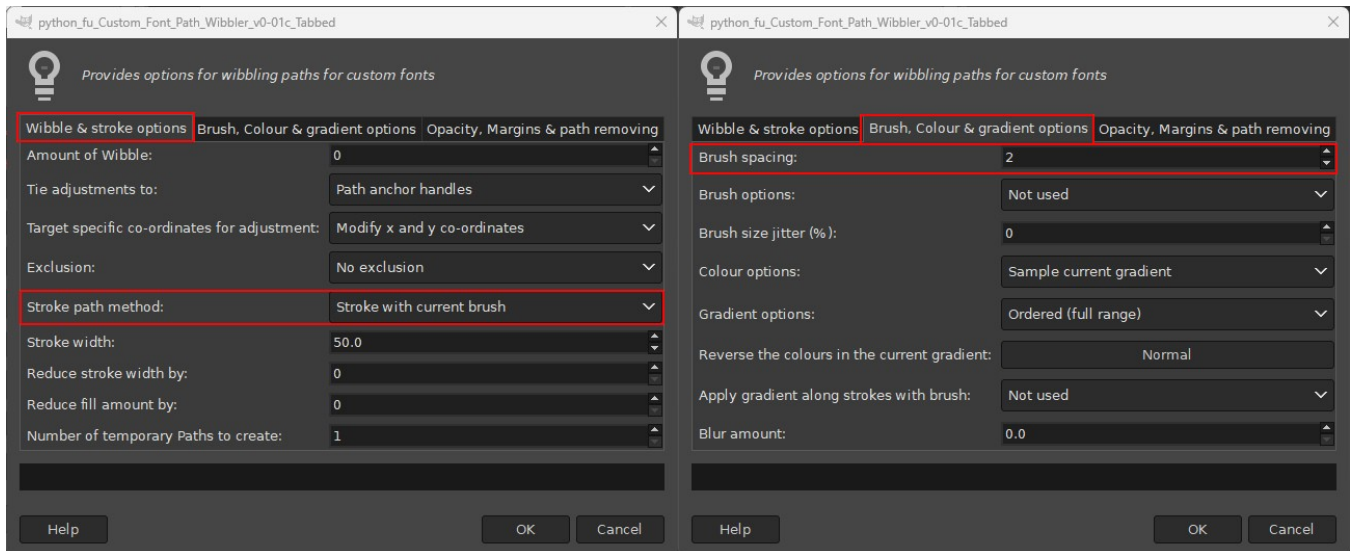
The stroke width values used in the examples below: 80, 40 and 20.



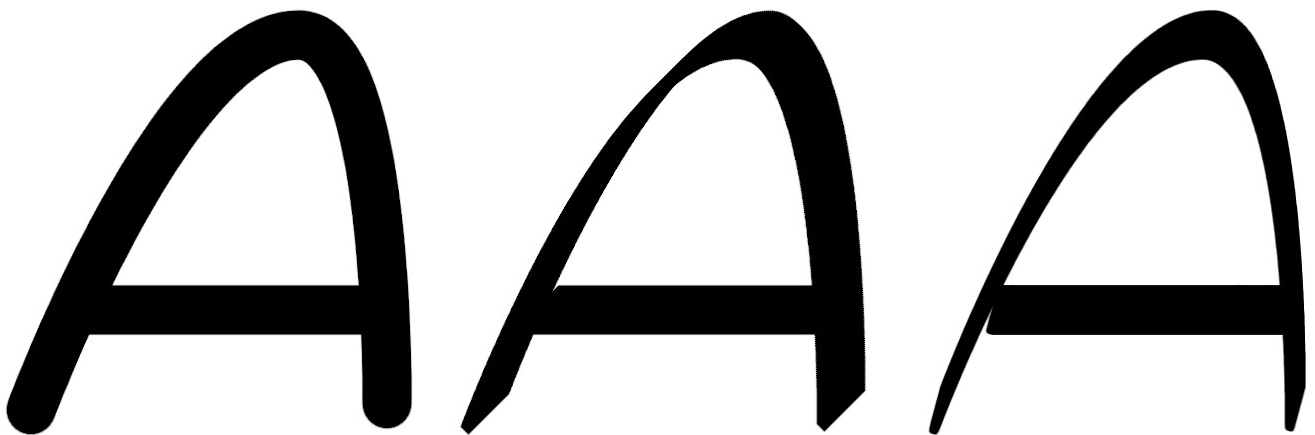
Shaping

If you want to change the shaping of the strokes use a brush to stroke the paths (click on the ‘Stroke path method’ option on Tab 1 of the filter dialog).

Use a round brush with a hard edge to add rounded end caps to the strokes or use an angled thin rectangle brush to achieve more calligraphic outcomes. Set the brush spacing amount on Tab 2 to a value of 1 or 2. (The filter will take longer to complete its work at very small brush spacing values.)



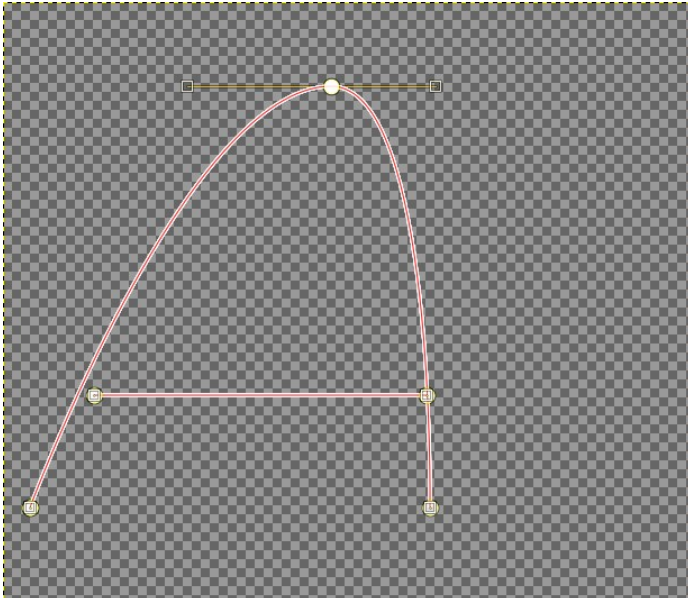
Outcomes below were with a round brush and two differently angled rectangle brushes.



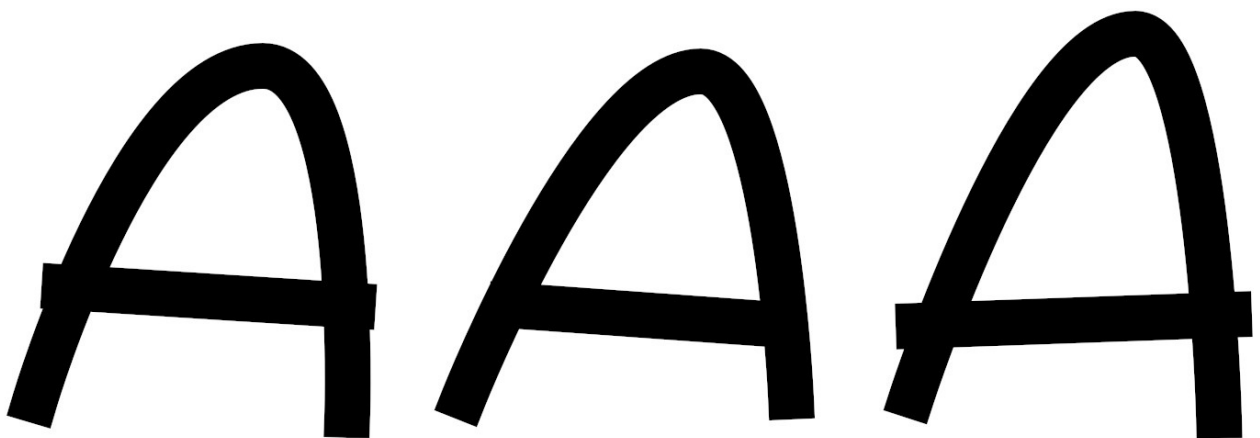
Section 2: Adding variety to character shapes

To do this you need to increase the amount of wobble used on Tab 1.

The default settings will randomly adjust all the position of the anchor handles that shape the path. The upper-case A shown below consists of five anchor points together with 10 control handles (the control handles for most of the anchors are difficult to see because they lie directly on top of the them). You can pull them out by holding down the CTRL key and dragging the mouse.

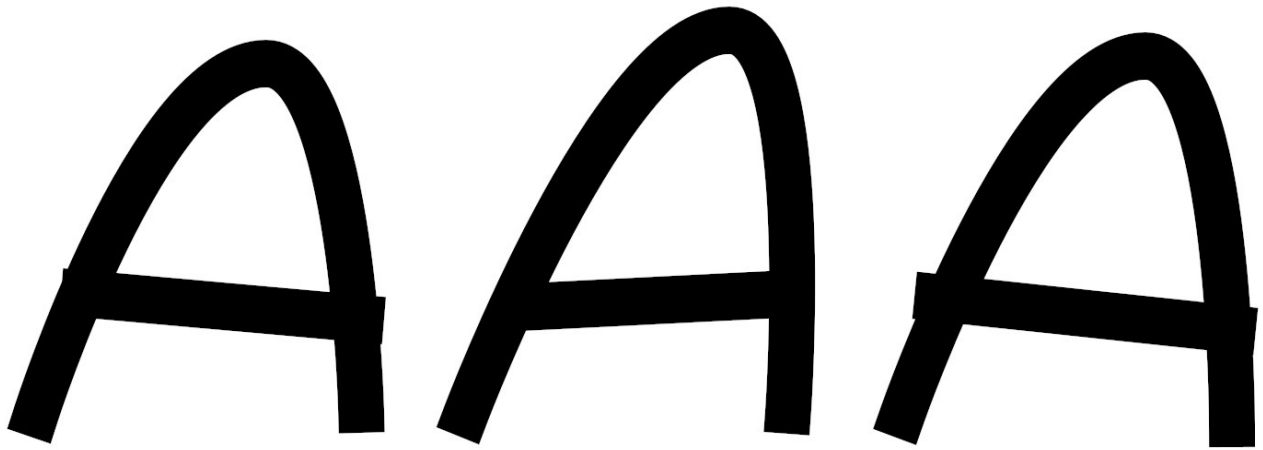


The image below shows three versions of the character created by setting the 'Amount of Wobble' to its maximum value of 24 while leaving the number of paths set to 1.

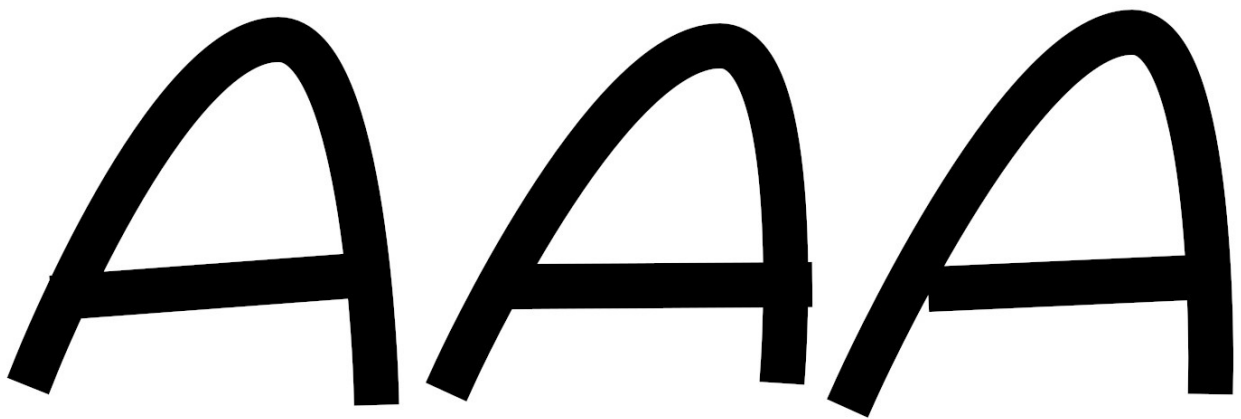


You can use either the line stroking or the brush stroking option.

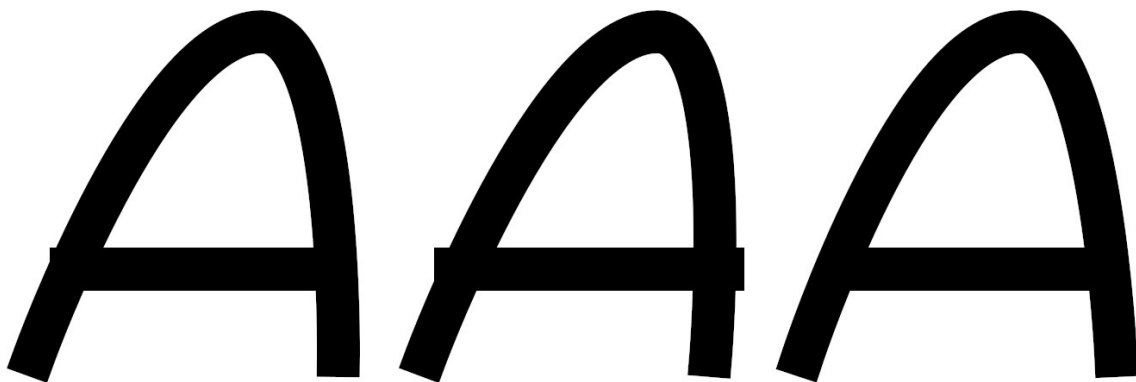
By default the filter adjusts the x and y co-ordinates of the anchor handles. The image below shows three variations of the character generated by adjusting the position of the anchors themselves.



And this next image show three versions of the character generated with adjustments made to both the handles and the anchors.



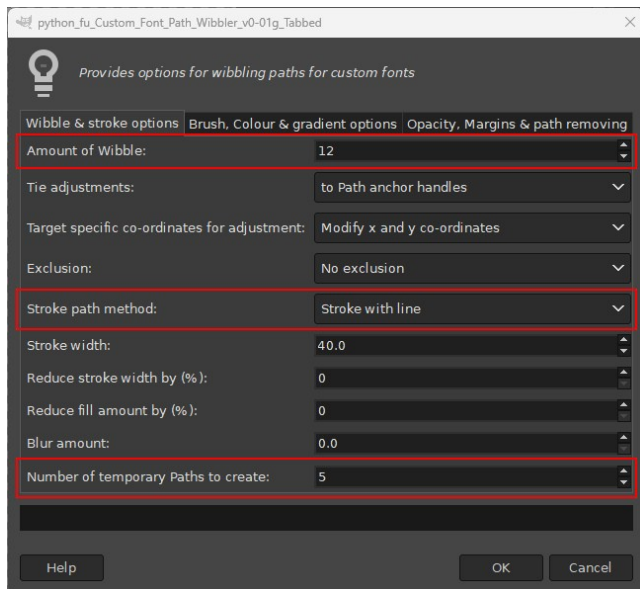
Use the ‘Tie adjustments to’ option on Tab 1 of the filter to change the focus of the variations. If you want to be even more pedantic you can target the specific co-ordinates to add variety to by using the option with that name. The examples below target only the x co-ordinates.



3. Adding textured edges with strokes

Some interesting effects can be achieved by overlaying different coloured strokes (taken from the currently selected gradient). This textured base can then be worked on by other decorative custom font filters.

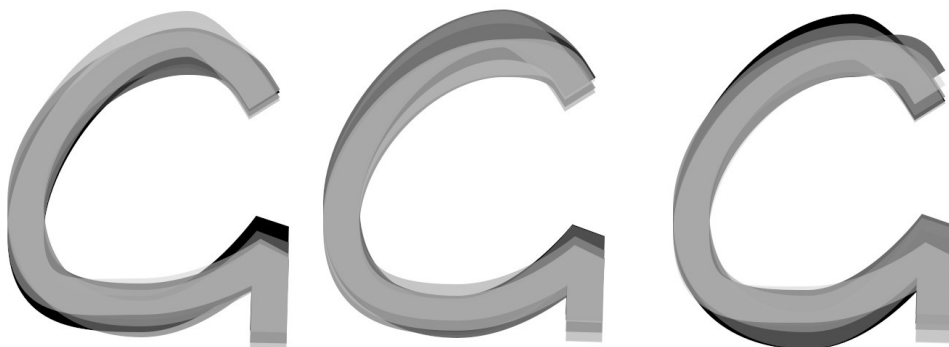
Use the quicker 'Stroke method' set to line on Tab 1 to experiment with this approach and increase the number of temporary paths used to 5.



Here I used the default colours with the gradient and the default gradient settings on Tab 2.



And the same effect but with a wibble value of 24:



Reducing stroke width

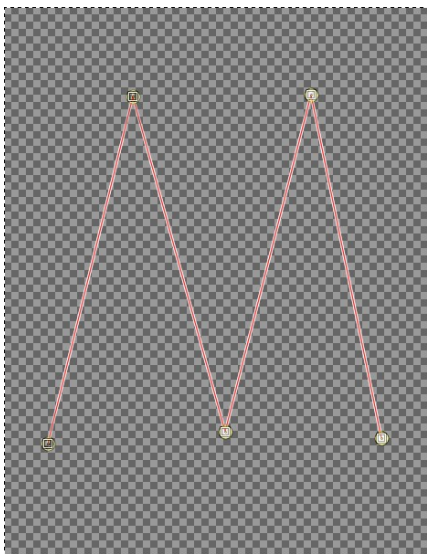
The option to reduce the width of the stroke (for each temporary path) can also be employed to increase the effect of the textured edges as in the examples below where the value used is first 2, then 4 and finally 8.



If you are a little underwhelmed by the wobble effect when using characters that use straight lines – such as with an uppercase ‘M’...

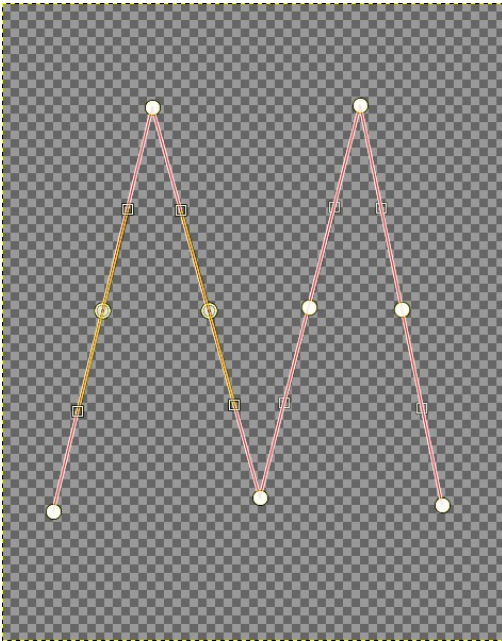


...it may be caused by using too few anchor points in the character path.

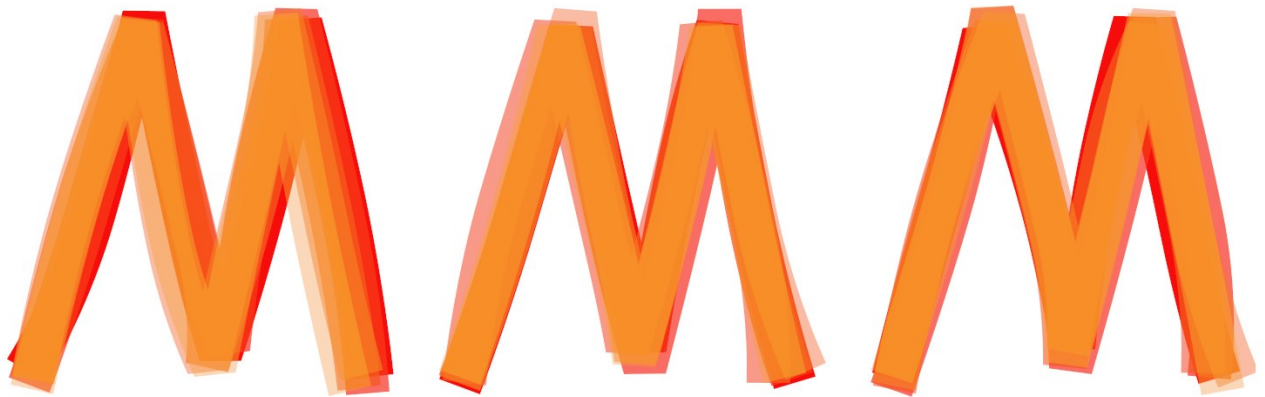


I have a habit of using the bare minimum of anchors when creating custom paths – but this works less well when wobbling is required.

If you were to add additional anchors with the path tool by say clicking in the middle of each of the four straight path lines whilst holding down Ctrl before running the filter...



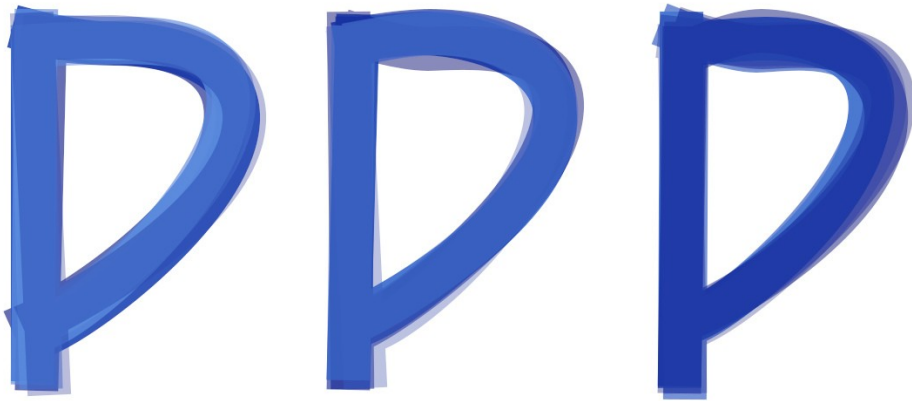
...it would produce a more pleasing outcome (IMHO).



Tab 2 Gradient options

By default the filter uses colours from the full range of the colours in the gradient in an ordered way; if the gradient begins with a dark colour then the filter will use a darker colour for its first layer and move on for each new temporary path using a lighter colour.

There are options on Tab 2 to use the gradient colours in a random way...

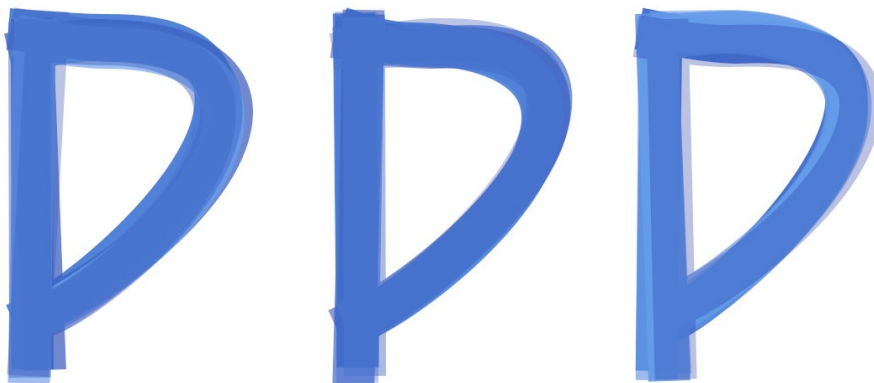


and to weight the choice of colour to either the first or second half of the gradient.

In the case of the gradient used above it would use darker colours for the first half...



...and lighter colours for the second.



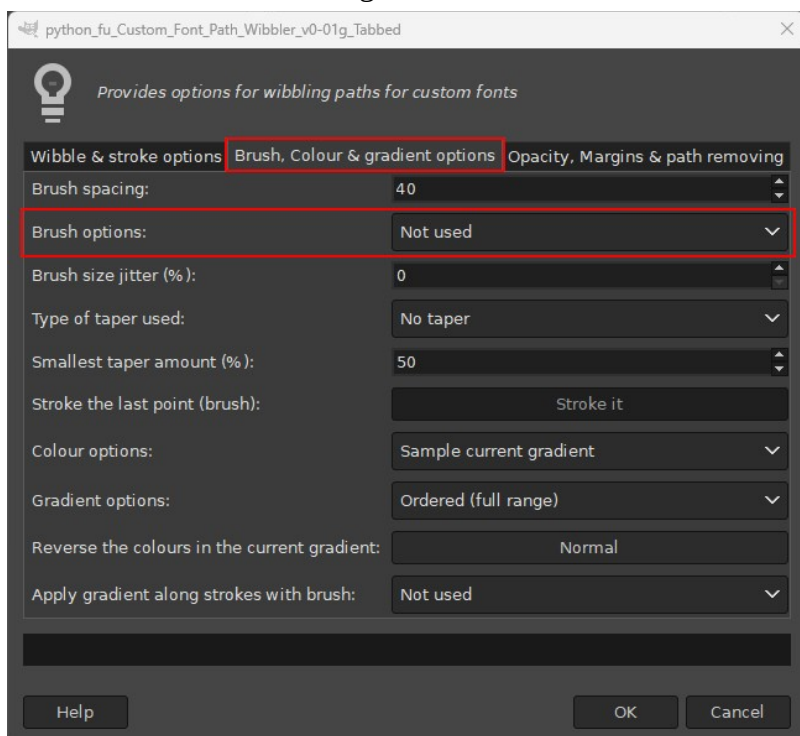
There is also a 'Reverse gradient' option to experiment with.

4. Using brushes

This section deals with the two options intended for stroking character paths with brushes that paint objects or patterns along a path rather than those that paint with colour. The brushes may contain single objects or several objects (i.e. animated or pipe brushes).

Select a brush from the Gimp brushes dock. Test it on a single character path – since I have found that one or two brushes do not work with the filter and produce empty layers – to find the best brush spacing value. The path width, which determines the brush size used in Wibbler, influences the effect of the currently used brush spacing value.

There are two options that can be employed from the ‘Brush options’ drop-down menu on the second tab of the filter dialog.

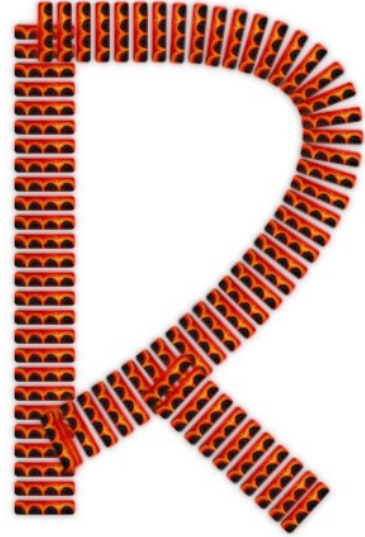
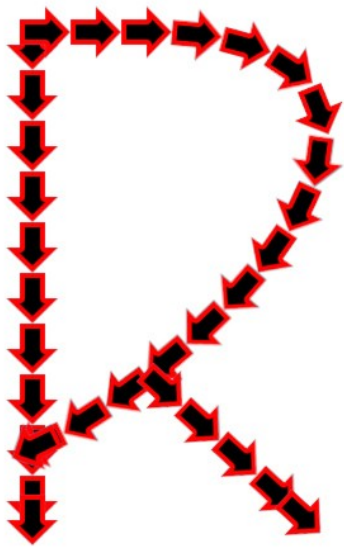


Track direction

This option forces the brush to follow the direction of the path stroke. In my example I wanted the tiles in a mosaic tile brush to appear to just touch each other. Initially the brush spacing value was too small – the image below shows my attempts at reaching a successful outcome.



Some examples of different brushes used with track direction.



Random Brush Angle

This brush option was initially intended for use with naturalistic styled brushes to combine the results with other custom font bases but there are also many abstract brushes that produce excellent results.

The following examples show brushed characters combined with a line stroked character.

An example without using the rotation option:



And with rotation:



And with the additional use of the brush size jitter option.



An example of a final form: A 3d version of the stroked characters combined with a brushed floral layer and drop shadow:



5. Taper

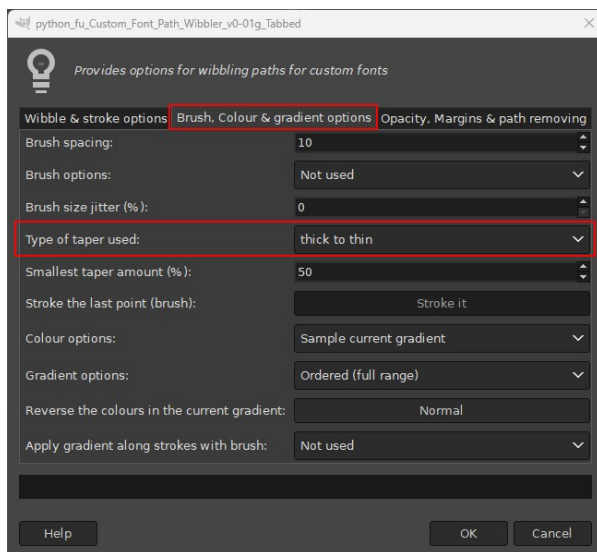
The taper option is applied with the current brush. Choose an option from the drop down list:

- thin to thick
- thick to thin
- start thin - to thick - end thin
- start thick - to thin - end thick

The characters below have a stroke width of 40.0 and the default 'No taper' option used with a round hard edged brush and the brush spacing set to 10. Thinner brush strokes require smaller values for the brush spacing option in order to create the illusion of a continuous stroke. (This also increases the time that it takes to stroke characters.)

SO?

Taper set to 'thick to thin':



SO?

Taper set as 'thin to thick':

SO?

Taper set as 'start thick - to thin - end thick':

SO?

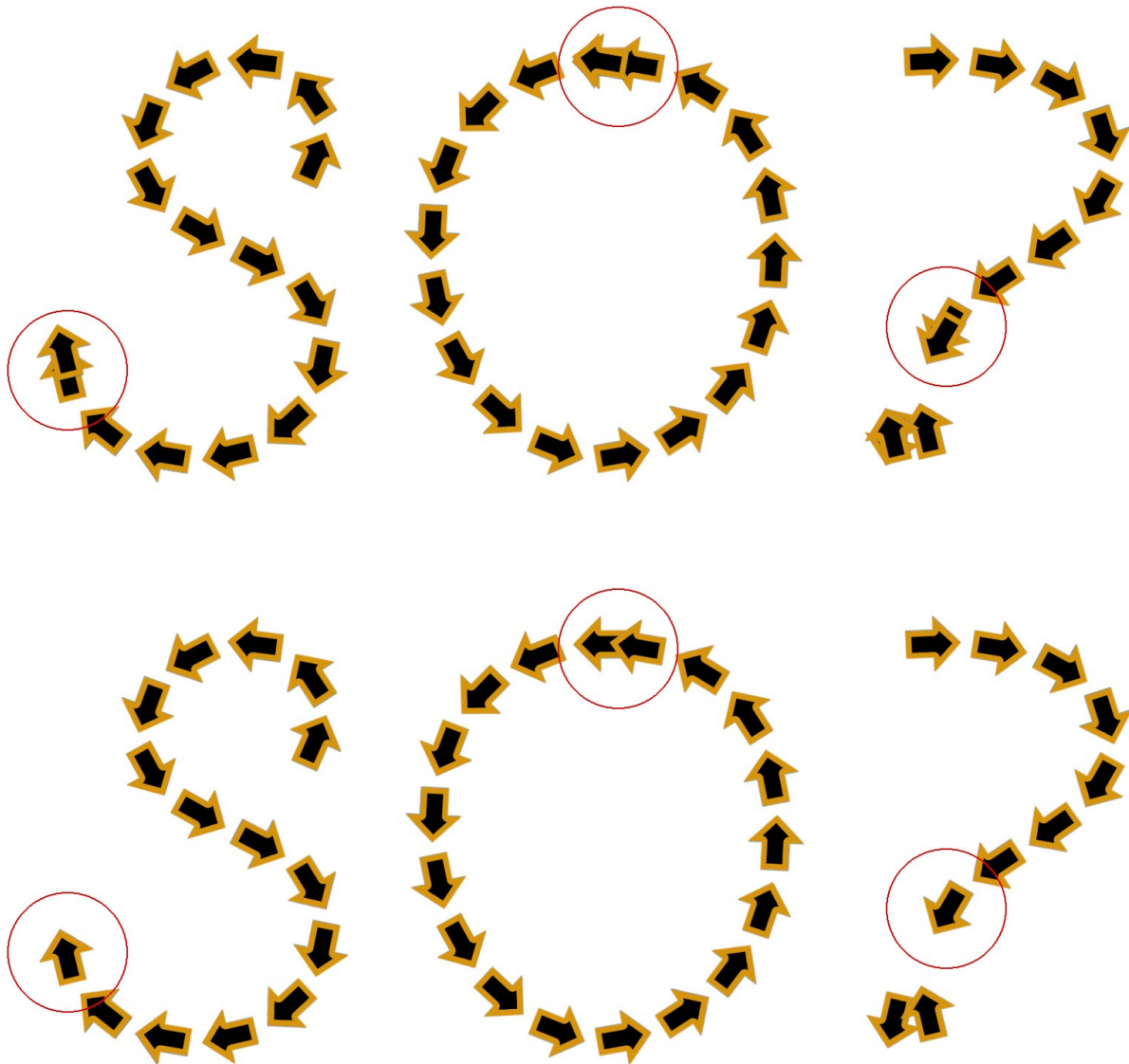
Taper set as 'start thin - to thick - end thin':

SO?

6. 'Stroke the last point' Option

I have also added an option to stroke (default) or not stroke the last point in each stroke with the brush. This works well with continuous brush stroking; without it the character can be somewhat shortened. Characters stroked with animated or pipe brushes and larger amounts of spacing may look better with the option set to 'Do not stroke'.

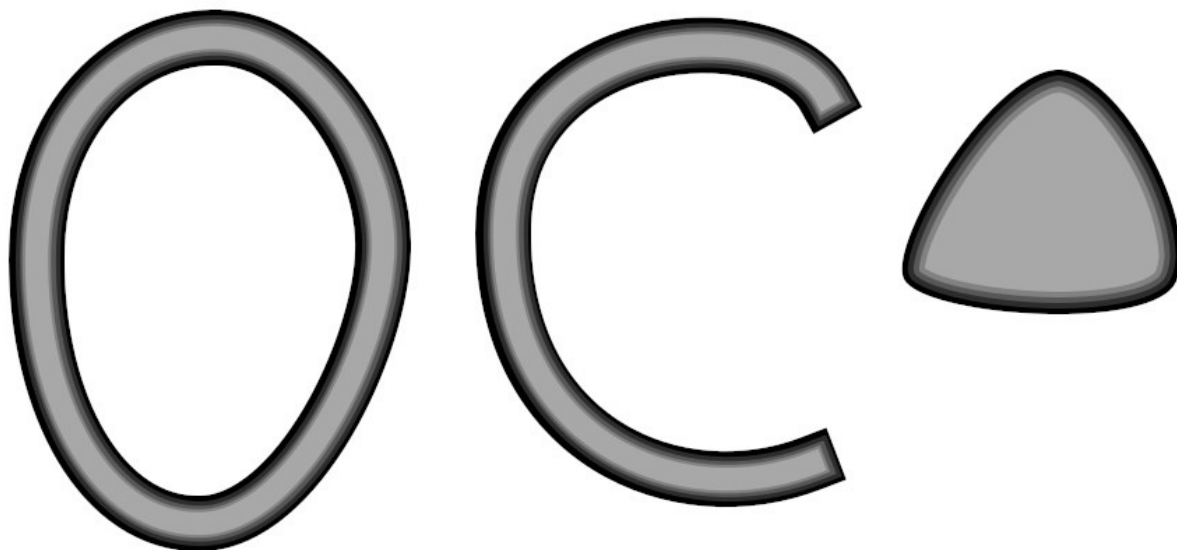
The example below uses an arrow brush. The top three characters show the untidy effect produced by the default option and the improved appearance when 'Do not stroke' is applied shown below.



7. Reduce stroke width and Reduce Fill width Options

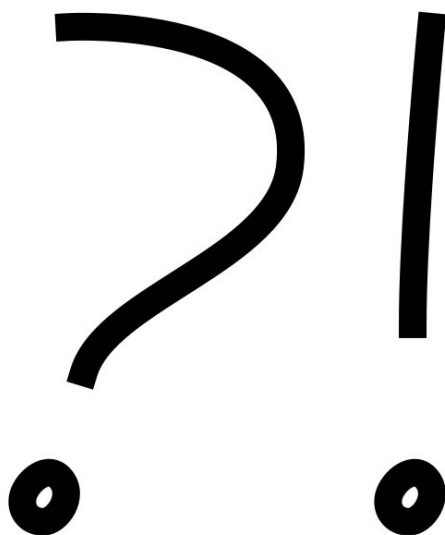
These two options now behave in a similar way. They reduce the size of the stroke width and fill width for each new character and layer created by a percentage amount.

The example below reduces each width by 20% for the five temporary paths used.



8. Combining Characters

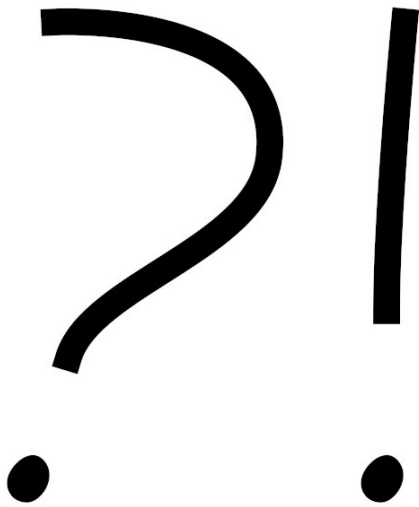
When stroking some character paths with a line (more noticeable with smaller widths) you may see holes in their centres: Think question mark, exclamation mark percentage sign etc. This may or not be the effect that you want.



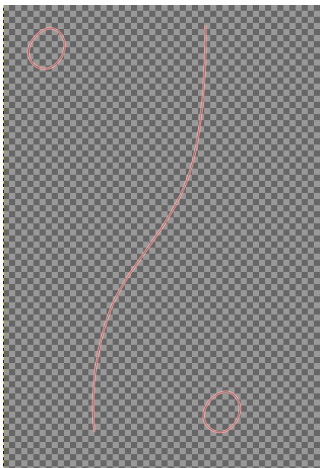
You can force a character to be filled but this is only suitable with a character that requires it all to be filled – such as a comma, or a semi-colon or full-stop (period). This would require the character to use the ‘ path’ suffix instead of the ‘ char’ suffix.

One solution would be to manually fill each of the offending characters.

There is another way (pedantic – yes) to combine the two as one character in Gimp so that the stroked and filled shapes will be merged into a single layer as shown below.



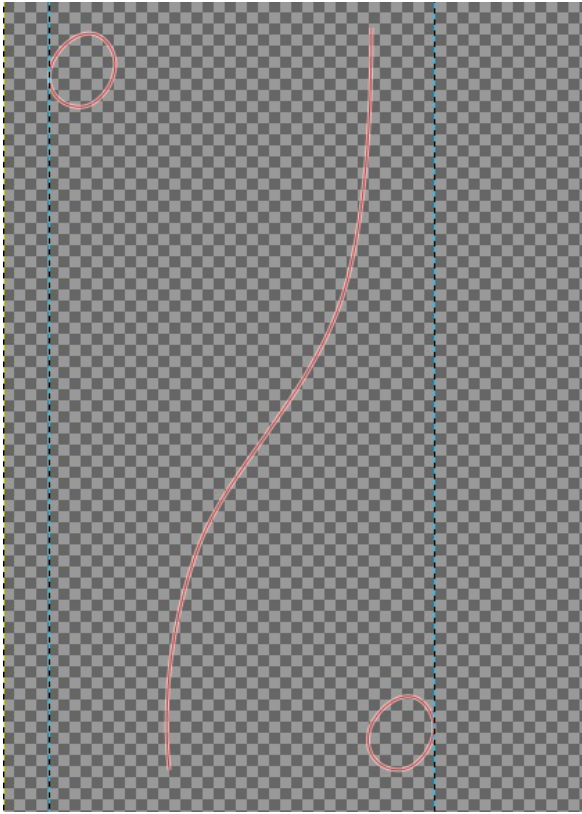
Locate the character that you want to have combined in the paths dock (my example uses the percentage sign character). Make it the only visible path and click on it to set it as the active path:



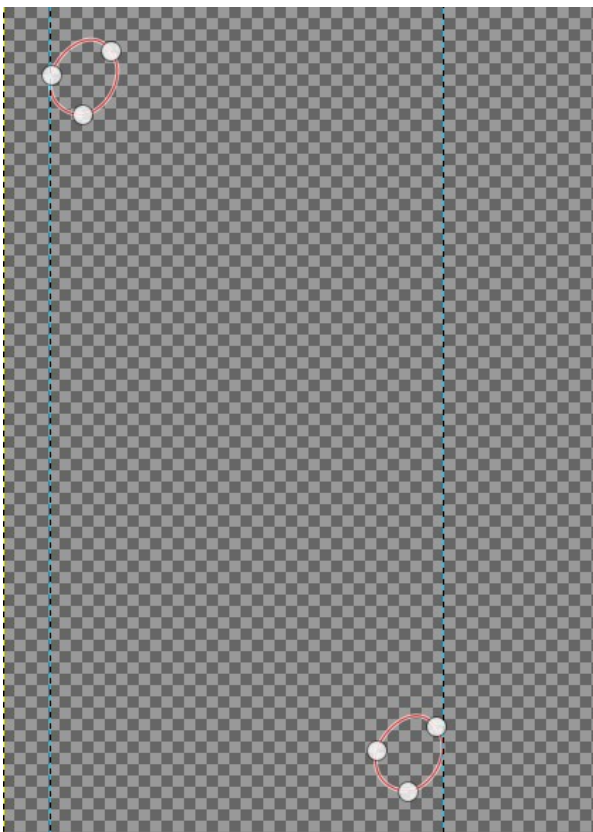
Duplicate the path and rename the copy with the ‘ path’ suffix:



It will make life a lot easier if you add a pair of guidelines to your working image so that one just touches the far left-hand edge and one just touches the far right-hand edge of the character.

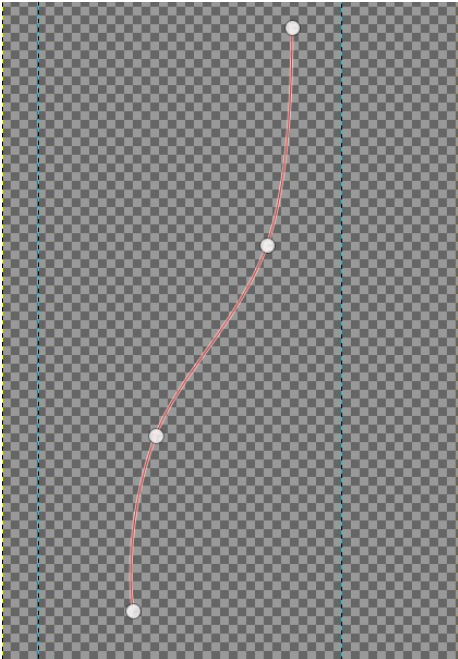


When you work on the character with the ‘ path’ suffix, you want to remove parts of the path that you do not want to be filled and leave just the parts that are to be filled. Use the path tool and click on each unwanted anchor; hit the backspace key to remove it.



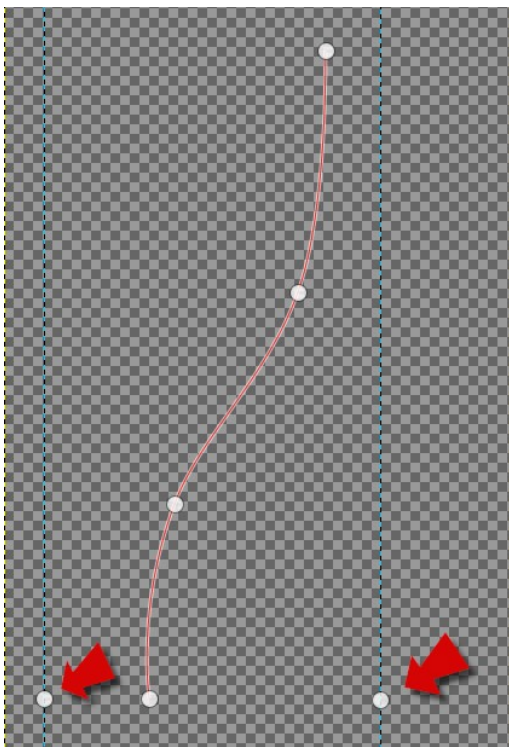
You can see that the remaining strokes are touching the two guidelines that we added earlier.

Turn off the visibility for this character and make the original character, with the 'char' suffix both visible and active in the main window. Remove any strokes that are not to be filled from this path by clicking on each unwanted anchor and pressing the backspace key.

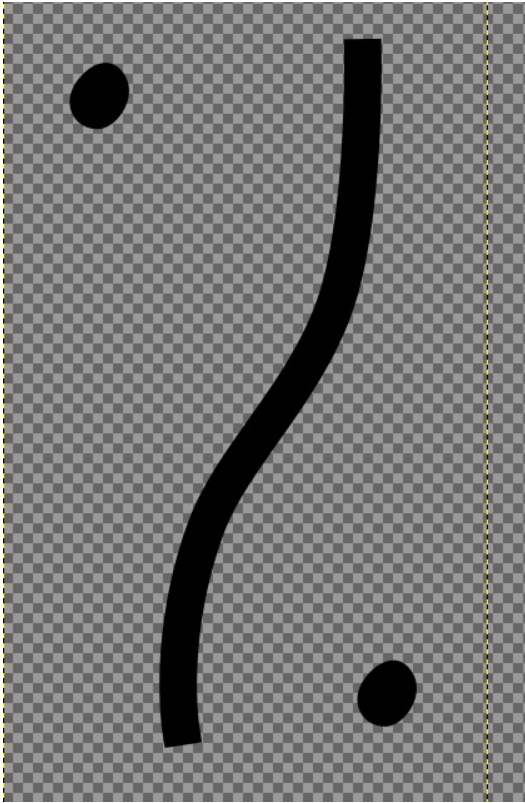


Now for the crucial step. You need to add a single anchor (not joined to any other stroke) if the current path does not already have an anchor point that touches the left-hand guide line. You will need to do the same for the right-hand guide line – add a single anchor if no anchor already touches the right-hand guideline. Hold down the Shift key and click to add a single unconnected anchor.

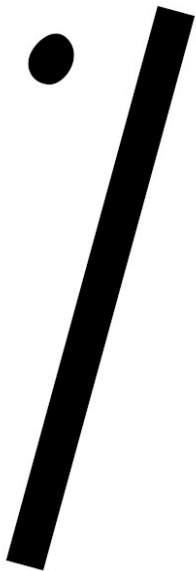
If you find that any of these combined characters suffer from unwanted cropping when you run the filter the reason will be that you have NOT added the single anchors to either the filled or unfilled characters.



The filter outcome for the percent symbol character:



And the outcome for a slightly different percentage character without the single anchors applied:

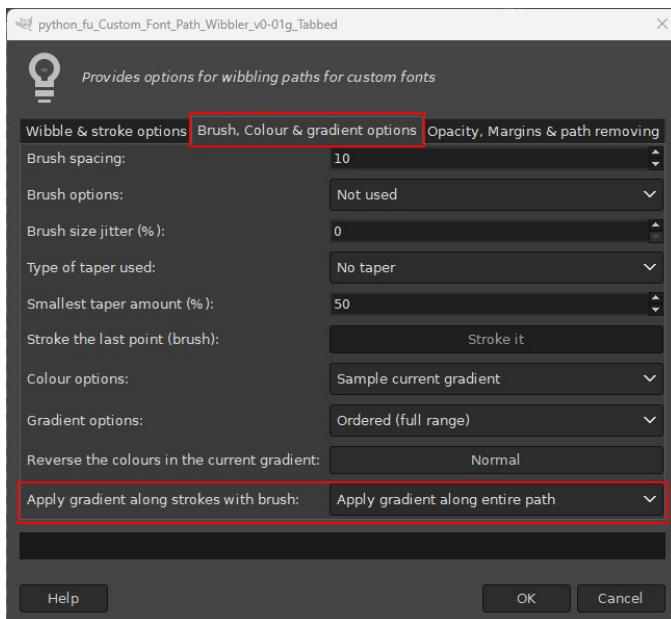


Thankfully there are relatively few such characters and you may prefer to live with holes in them!!!

9. Stroke along path

There is an option to stroke a character with the brush and spread the gradient colour along each stroke of the character path or along the whole character path.

And using merged paths with an italic brush and the old coloured pencil gradient...

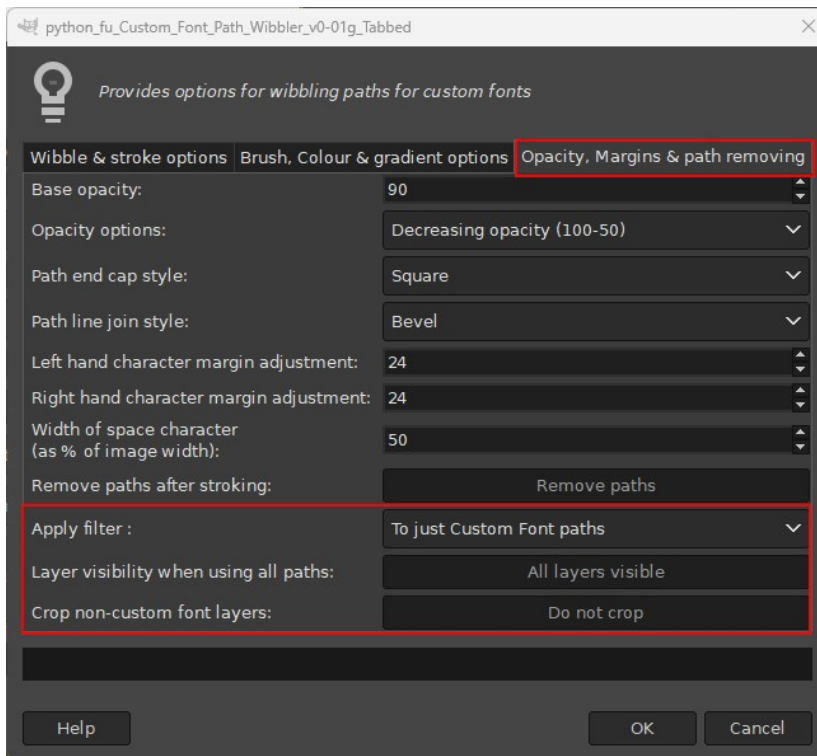


Gimp

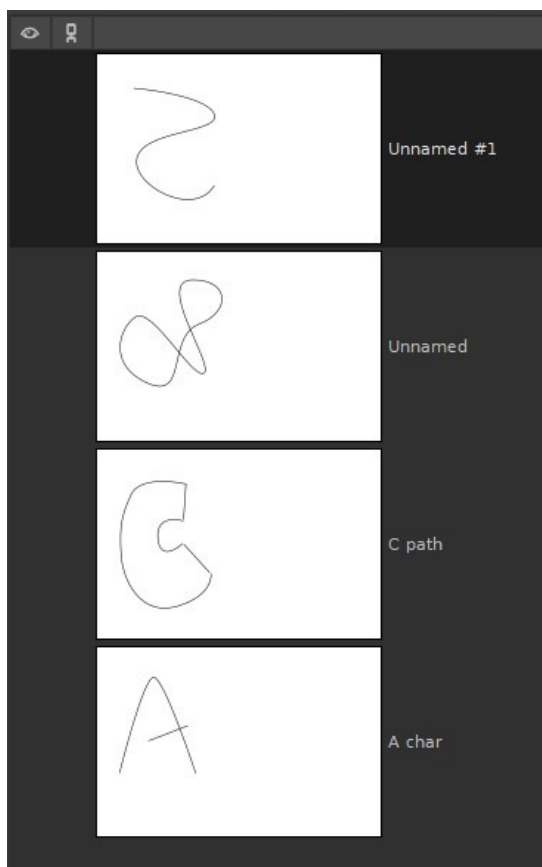
Gimp

10. Stroking non-character paths

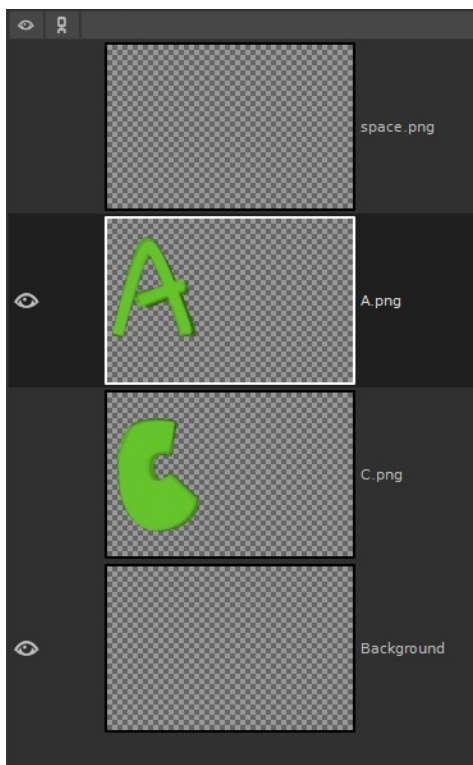
The older Wobbler filter required the renaming of paths (i.e paths that did not end with ‘ char’ or ‘ path’) but Wobbler provides an option on Tab 3 of the dialog to use these paths.



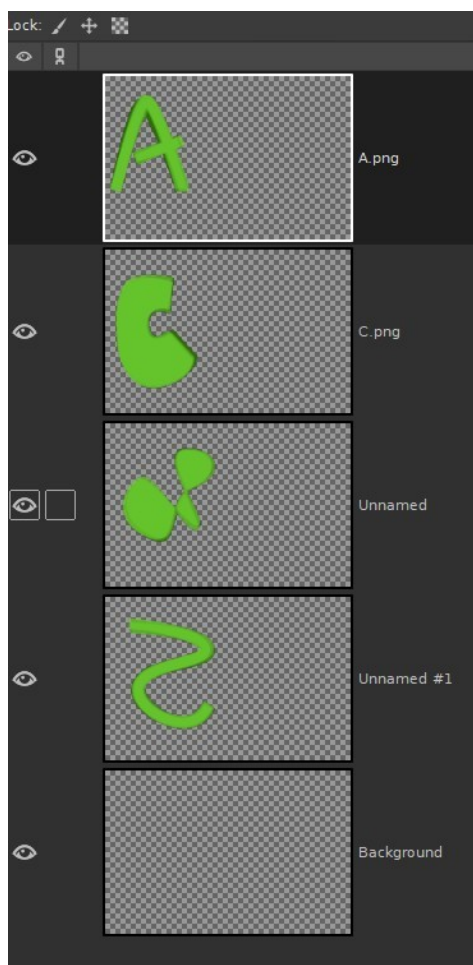
You can use the ‘Apply filter’ option to fill or to not fill all the available paths (although paths that are not closed will never be filled). Take the four paths shown below:



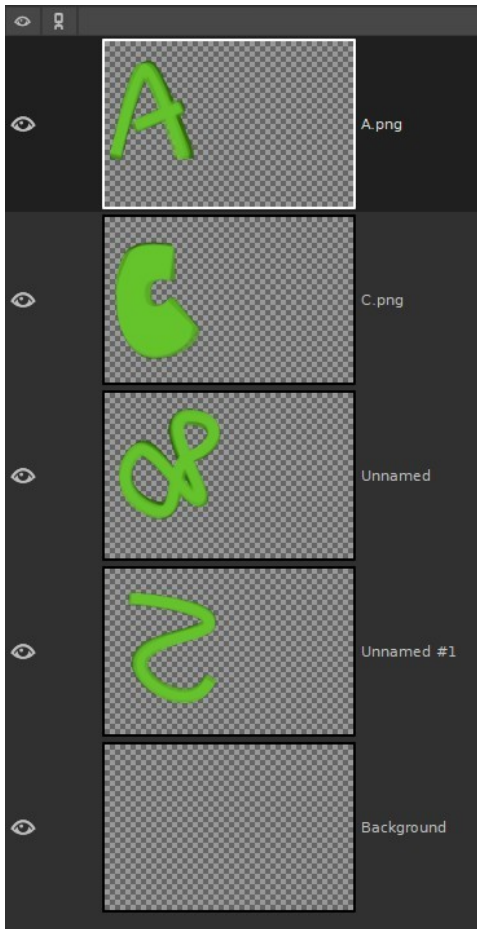
The default option will apply the filter to custom paths only (adding a space character) and ignore the other paths.



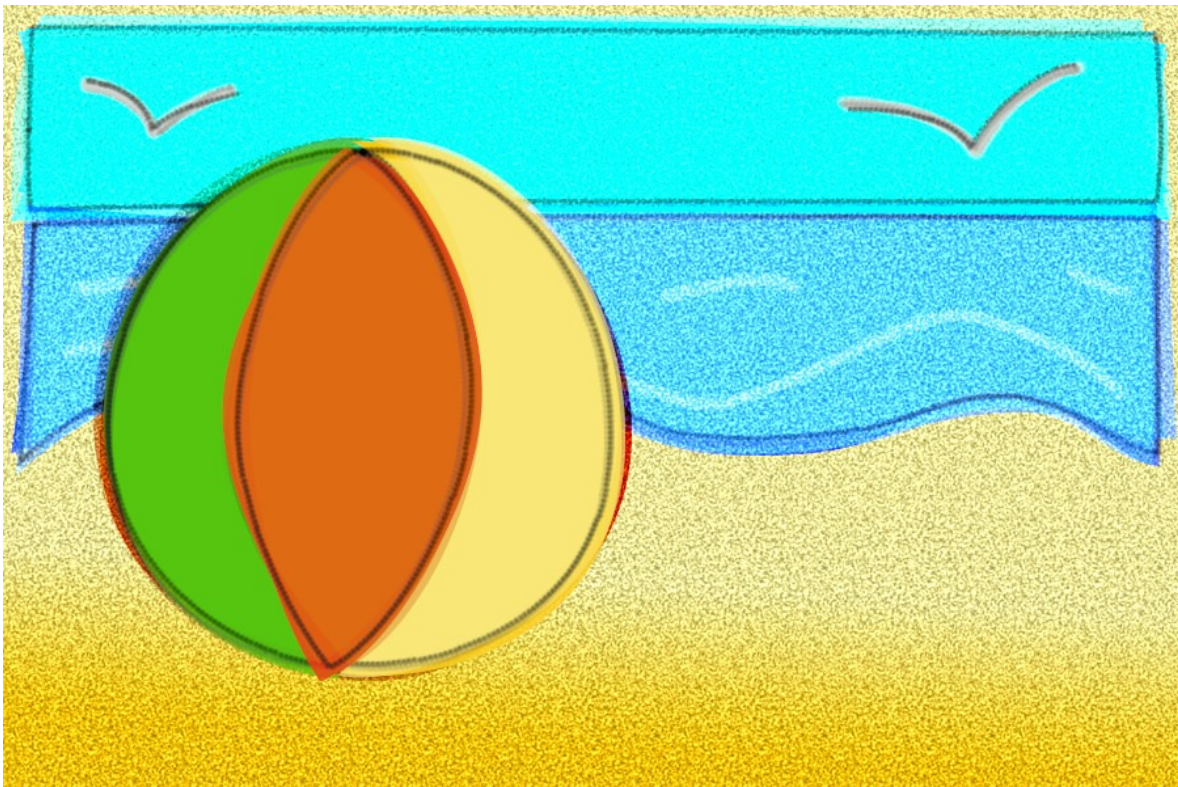
The second option, 'All paths with fill', will fill non-custom paths where appropriate.



The third option, 'All paths with no fill', will stroke non-custom paths.



Quite interesting images can be built up by stroking/filling ordinary paths with the filter:



There are other guides about using Wibbler to create images available on GimpChat.