

## MEAN SIDEWALKS

ANIL

Perth, Australia

This is my fourth M.S. but they won't be numbered in future. Since the much-regretted demise of Kickshaws, I shall be using this title for my kickshaws as a sort of regular 'column'.

Art without humour is like Jehovah without Jesus. — *Anon.*

(Okay I made it up. Maybe.)

### • STRAY UNI-VERSE

I've mostly worked on Animal Uni-verses, but this one is *presumably* peculiar to the human animal.

#### Stray Thoughts

Stray thoughts come on like twitches  
from dark, fey hidden niches.  
You've no say in these glitches;  
they give no warning, no itches.  
They can irk and be bitches,  
maybe echo ad pitches  
and annoy, these mind switches.  
They can curse you like witches,  
and can burden with hitches,  
or can put you in stitches—  
or can click and bring riches!  
(Or be zilches like quiches.)



### • MY ALPHABETICAL DAY

Awake. Bowels. Coffee. Daydream. Exit. "Fly." Greetings. Hunker. Install. Juggle. Knit. Lunch. Mail. Notes. Opprobrium. Puzzles. Quit. Rush. Supper. TV. Unload. Visitors. Wordplay. X (don't ask!). Yawn. Zzz.

### • SCIENCE IS SHIT! (But *nice* shit, and *conscious* shit.)

I was amazed and amused to discover that **science** and **shit** have a common Proto-Indo-European root! Web 3 and, in greater detail, Eric Partridge's *Origins* relate both to "to shed"—split off (as a piece of knowledge; know), divide, dissect, analyse (= science), cut out, throw off, excrete. Partridge ties these three words (science, shit, shed) to a host of other related words, some quite surprising: sciolism, conscience, **conscious**, conscientious, unconscionable, plebiscite, prescient, nescient, **nice**; **shot**, scot, **sheet**, **shut**, shutter, shuttle, skeet, **skit** (vb. & n.), skittish, skittle, **scout**, scout 2, shyster; **shingle**, ab/scission, scissors, rescind, abscissa, **schedule**, schism, schizophrenia, and maybe shout.

Science/shit and many other pairs from the above list make nice additions to the *strange bedfellows* in my article "Vanilla Vaginas" ('10-150).

There is no shortage of contrarians who believe that science and shit are still related. I must now be careful not to brag that I am "full of science".

• ERRATUM: pages 193b-206a in the August 2016 Kickshaws were from me, by error unattributed.

• ANOTHER TENNIS PUN

Here's one that came too late for my article on the subject ('16-164).

**FIVE SETTERS** a pack of dogs that hang around outside the tennis court hoping someone will hit a ball over the fence that they can chase down and slobber up

• APT SPOONERISM

At the Hopman Cup tennis tournament in Perth in January 2017 the temperature reached 41° (= 106° F). One participant, **Heather Watson**, might well have cried: "**Weather? Hot sun!!**"

• 2-LETTER 2-WORD PALINDROMIC 4x4 WORD SQUARES

These eight squares (definitions below) seem trivial but may be the only possible examples of their type with Scrabble words in Collins *Scrabble Dictionary*, authority for international tournaments. All but ESES (= esses) are in Chambers *Official Scrabble Words*. *Official Scrabble Players Dictionary* lacks anan, eses, esse, oppo and sese. Web3 lacks naan, sese and eses. All twelve are in OED. Thanks to Jeff Grant for OED and suggestions. Compare Dave Morice's *Dict. of Wordplay*, pp. 248-9, word unit squares.

The first two are palindromes and double-tautonyms (tautonymic words + tautonymic lines).

- |    |      |    |      |
|----|------|----|------|
| 1. | ANAN | 2. | ESES |
|    | NANA |    | SESE |
|    | ANAN |    | ESES |
|    | NANA |    | SESE |

These four are both letter and word palindromes, and their words are palindromes in themselves. They're not tautonyms but are word and letter "flip" tautonyms.

- |    |      |     |      |    |      |    |      |
|----|------|-----|------|----|------|----|------|
| 3. | ANNA | 4.† | ESSE | 5. | OPPO | 6. | OTTO |
|    | NAAN |     | SEES |    | POOP |    | TOOT |
|    | NAAN |     | SEES |    | POOP |    | TOOT |
|    | ANNA |     | ESSE |    | OPPO |    | OTTO |

† #4 can form a true sentence: *Esse sees, sees esse!*—When existence sees, it can only see itself! By a stretch the other squares can also make fun sentences. I'll spare you. But it's fun. Try it.

Squares 1 and 3 and also 2 and 4 share the same letters and can be combined to produce two 4-word non-palindromic double squares (different across and down). It also works reading 'sideways'.

- |    |      |    |      |
|----|------|----|------|
| 7. | ANAN | 8. | ESES |
|    | NANA |    | SESE |
|    | NAAN |    | SEES |
|    | ANNA |    | ESSE |

Selected meanings:

ANAN signals a failure to hear or understand.

\* ANNA former Indian monetary unit and coin.

ESES = esses, plural of the letter S.

ESSE existence or essence.

\* NAAN a type of Indian bread.

NANA grandmother (Brit.) or child's nurse or nursemaid (US).

OPPO opposite number (sweetheart, friend, associate, or counterpart in another organisation).

OTTO attar, a rose oil perfume.

SESE = sessa, a Shakespearian interjection perhaps meaning "enough said".

\* This letter-flip pair are punny synonyms, Indian money = Indian "bread"!