MORE ETYMOLOGICAL CURiosITIES

ANIL
Perth, Australia

• SEXTUPLY WEIRD

whetstone Wets t’ hone.
This homophonic anagram definition is already highly unusual but goes on to become a perhaps unique curiosity in its etymology, a paradox. Neither stone nor whet is related to hone, yet hone as a noun means whetstone and comes from a word that means stone (OE han) and from an earlier word that means whetstone (Skt. sana)! Stone instead traces back to I-E stai-, sti-, whet is from OE/Germanic words meaning sharpen, and wet has the same origin as water, but here it usually means wet with oil. In addition, the anagram is a near charade, simply moving one letter (h).

• SAME BUT DIFFERENT

Defer and deter are unrelated yet have the same definition, put off, in two different senses.

• QUADRUPLE PUN?

Websters weave webs, weft/woof interwoven.
This nearly tautological definition of webster is composed only of related words, not surprisingly. What’s surprising is the quadruple pun. Webster is an old word for weaver, interpretable as: 1) human weaver; 2) spider; 3) surfer, web surfer, webmaster; 4) Noah Webster’s alphabetical web.

• QUADRUPLE COINCIDENTAL SIMILARITIES

The word bound has four similar meanings from four unrelated origins.
1) obliged, fastened (<past tense of bind <> band (fasten)).
2) boundary (<OF bonne, borne, bone).
3) intending, toward (<Olehuinn, bun (get ready, dwell)).
4) leap (<F. bondir, rebound, spring, make a resounding noise; related to bomb.
The meanings overlap heavily, all implying limitation, edge or aim/move toward. 1-2 are actually opposites of 3-4, stationary vs. moving. Compare rack in the Aug.’18 Mean Sidewalks.

• 2 TRIPLE COINCIDENTAL SIMILARITIES

1) three unrelated but related-looking word groups all meaning divide/divided/division:
separate <pare.
sept 1, septate, septum (<L. saeptus, enclose.
sept 2 (tribe division) <section.
2) found is 3 homographic cognates, all bring into being or awareness.)
a) find, past tense <OE finden, come upon.
b) base, establish <bottom, lay foundation.
c) mold, cast (metal, in a foundry) <mix, melt together.
• MORE SINGLE COINCIDENTAL (etymologically unrelated) SELF-SIMILARITIES
briar plants: 1) thorny bush; 2) also brier, heath plant > brier pipe.
keel marine vessels: 1) spine of a ship, a ship (poetic); 2) a type of boat, a barge.
meal food: 1) ground grain; 2) a repast <measure.
muse thought-producers: n.) goddess, poetic inspiration; vb) ponder, entertain (an idea), amuse.
policy plans, practices: 1) government program, plan of action; 2) insurance contract
tarry delay(er)s: 1) delay; 2) like tar (a delayer).
And a coincidental self antonym:
yard size opposites: 1) something large (lawn or garden) vs. 2) something small (3 ft. length).
(Yard 2 once meant penis! What?? Of an elephant or whale?)

• EVIL METALS
Tho not related, cobalt and nickel were both named after demons by superstitious miners. Nickel first meant demon or the Devil, Old Nick. Cobalt is from kobold, a goblin or demon.