

From the Back Verandah

Many of you will remember from school how *New York Herald* journalist Henry Morton Stanley found lost explorer David Livingstone in “darkest Africa”. But did you ever wonder what gave rise to Stanley’s famous restrained greeting? Here’s an account, also restrained, courtesy of *Nature* (Vol. 6, No. 184, 1872).

From 1866 little had been heard from Livingstone, who had been searching for further sources of the Nile. His welfare became a matter of international concern, and Stanley was sent by his editor to look for him. On 10 November 1871 he entered the town of Ujiji on Lake Tanganyika, and observed “a pale-looking, grey-bearded, white man, whose fair skin contrasted with the sunburnt visages of those by whom he was surrounded”.

In an instant he recognised the European as none other than Dr. Livingstone himself; and he was about to rush forward and embrace him, when the thought occurred he was in the presence of Arabs, who, being accustomed to conceal their feelings, were very likely to found their estimate of a man upon the manner in which he conceals his own. A dignified Arab chieftain, moreover, stood by, and this confirmed Mr. Stanley in his resolution to show no symptoms of rejoicing or excitement. Slowly advancing towards the great traveller, he bowed and said, Dr. Livingstone, I presume?”, to which address the latter, who was fully equal to the occasion, simply smiled and replied “Yes”.

It was not till some hours afterwards, when alone together, seated on a goat skin, that the two white men exchanged those congratulations which both were eager to express, and recounted their respective difficulties and adventures.

— Fizzgig

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Back Issues Are Still Available

BIKWIL

The Newsletter of Quiet Enthusiasms

Editor: Tony Rogers

ISSN 1328-7842

No. 12

March 1999

Tally Ho!

What wonderfully faithful readers! The results of our recent survey on whether to charge for *Bikwil* are in, counted and applauded, and your response has encouraged me to the following decision.

From and including the next issue (No. 13, May 1999), there will be a \$5 charge for a year’s worth of *Bikwil*, i.e. six issues. To guarantee your subscription, fill in the enclosed form and return it together with your cheque. I need them *no later than Friday, 9 April 1999*, please. If you require occasional extra copies of an issue (for bragging purposes, say), the cost will be \$1 for each, payable as ordered.

Among your complimentary comments were several suggesting that a higher subscription charge was justified. Thank you, but let’s leave that idea for the GST era, eh?

Some other remarks, culled and edited from your replies, are:

“Will subscribe for 2 copies.”

“Why not conduct another survey to see if readers will pay more than \$5, so as to offer commissioned contributors a nominal fee?”

“How about a regular crossword?”

“What does ‘Bikwil’ mean anyway?”

“More popular culture stuff, please.”

“Don’t change a hair of it — between the cracks of the monster pavement of Life Materialistic a lovely violet is growing”.

What’s Inside?

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Puddin' 'n' Pie

A reference in the May 1998 *Bikwil* (No. 7) to the TV series *Pie in the Sky* prompted me to recall the many times I've appreciated the screen work of that show's amply framed star Richard Griffiths, and to do some research on him. Here's what I've found out.

He was born on 31 July 1947 in Thornaby, in north-east England. Of course, the nearby towns are far better known than the village of Thornaby. Darlington, for example, with its locomotive from the first public passenger rail service. And there's Durham too, with its 12th century cathedral, Middlesbrough, where the Dorman Long Co. constructed the Sydney Harbour Bridge in sections, and Whitby, where Cook's *Endeavour* was built.

One of the few things Griffiths sometimes mentions of his childhood in interviews is the poignant fact that both his parents were deaf mutes — extraordinary, perhaps, given his later career. Unlike Lon Chaney Jr., also the actor son of identically disadvantaged parents, Griffiths has of course made a name for himself in non-silent roles. Inevitably, though, he became fluent in sign language before learning to speak with the help of radio.

Leaving school poorly qualified at age 15, he took on a variety of jobs until he enrolled at Billingham Technical College as a mature-age student, then subsequently went to the University of Manchester.

Although best known to audiences here as a screen actor, Griffiths works a lot in the theatre too. Apart from Shakespeare, for instance as Henry VIII (surprise!), he has acted in such diverse plays as Ben Jonson's *Volpone*, Pirandello's *Rules of the Game* and Brecht's *The Life of Galileo* (in the title role). In December 1998 ABC TV treated us to a tiny taste of his stage presence, when he recited T.S. Eliot's wonderful *Journey of the Magi* as part of a Christmas concert.

But right now let's get to his screen appearances over the past 20 years, starting with feature films. Some of the following were made originally for TV, but are included here because of their movie length.

Probably the first was *The Comedy of Errors* (1978), in which he appeared as an officer (presumably non-speaking). Next came *All Things Bright and Beautiful* (1979), though in what role I can't say.

Chariots of Fire (1981), after opening with a 1978 funeral, soon

Web

If Oz train travel is your bag, then take a lingering gander at these sites.

Background Australian Railway Info contains data not only on government railways but also on those privately owned. The recent Sydney light-rail line is covered too, as are the older Sydney Monorail and the very much older Silverton Tramway at Broken Hill. Preservation groups get a good guernsey, as do equipment and rolling-stock suppliers.

A site with similar aims is *Rail-Page*. As well as the predictable links to related sites, it includes information on topics like model railways, locomotives, rail preservation, railway mailing lists and the XPT. And let's not forget its Forward Planning Department, where you may propose improvements to any Oz railway.



Line

The *Great Southern Railway* site devotes itself to its three great trains: the Indian Pacific, the Overland, and that most exotically seductive of all Aussie

railways, the Ghan. A prominent feature is its series of clickable route maps. As you might expect, the site provides information on fares and times.

Timetable, fares and ticketing information for all Australia is available at *Australian Rail Maps*. Maps galore, of city suburban lines and of all country lines showing every passenger station. The Sydney map displays not only all stations (including those on the Olympic, monorail and light rail lines), but also ferry services. Sydney links are provided to government sites — rail, bus, ferry, light rail, Tourist Commission.

— TR

Internet sites referred to above:

<http://www.law.usyd.edu.au/~matthew/railway/background.html>
[wysiwyg://53/http://www.railpage.org.au/](http://www.wysiwyg.com/53/http://www.railpage.org.au/)
<http://www.gsr.com.au/>
<http://people.enternet.com.au/~cbrnbill/maps/austrail.htm>



I love California. I practically grew up in Phoenix.

Dan Quayle

Cecil Rhodes? I like him, I frankly confess it; and when his time comes I shall buy a piece of the rope for a keepsake.

Mark Twain

Quintessential Quirky Quotes

The trouble with her is that she lacks the power of conversation but not the power of speech.

George Bernard Shaw

Few things so speedily modify an uncle's love as a nephew's air gun bullet in the fleshy part of the leg.

P. G. Wodehouse

When I am in the pulpit, I have the pleasure of seeing my audience nod approbation while they sleep.

Rev. Sydney Smith

does a flashback to 1919 and Cambridge University. And there, in all his glory, is Griffiths as the top-hatted, racially prejudiced Rogers, head porter at Caius College.

The following year Griffiths had roles in two films. One was *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, where he was cast (surprise again!) as Falstaff. The other was the black satire *Britannia Hospital*, in which he played Cheerful Bernie, the hospital's radio DJ, complete with cigar and fold-up sun specs. When we first meet him he is kitted out in a pale blue T-shirt emblazoned with the message "Die Laughing with Bernie"; later he dons black trousers, a bow tie and a silver lamé jacket, and turns down his sunnies ready to meet the Queen Mum.

In *A Private Function* (1985) he played Allardyce. This is a farce about the 1950s, when ham was still in short supply in England, and concerns the kidnapping and attempted fattening of a most desirable pig.

In 1987 he appeared in *Withnail and I*, a cult movie about two boozing unemployed actors in the late 1960s. At one stage they take a holiday in the Lake District. But nothing goes to plan, with the weather, the locals and even rich Uncle Monty (played by our man R. G. as a predatory camp figure) conspiring to make the sojourn less

than tranquil, and they soon escape back to London, to booze anew.

In *The Naked Gun 2½: The Smell of Fear* (1991) Griffiths had a more substantial presence, and in fact played two parts, those of Dr. Mainheimer and Earl Hacker.

That year he also appeared in *King Ralph*. Here he is grey-haired Duncan Phipps, a Buckingham Palace Assistant Private Secretary who is sent to America to track down and help train the only surviving member of the Royal Family ("the Wyndhams"). Most of the film has him dressed in a bespoke Savile Row suit, occasionally with bowler hat. One of my favourite scenes occurs when he is caught grooving at an electronic drumkit, surrounded by music synthesizers.

Blame It on the Bellboy came in 1992. This farce depends on a confusion of identities between three guests in a Venice hotel — a real-estate buyer, a hitman and Maurice Horton, a lustful politician (Griffiths). An inept bellboy gets their similar names mixed up, so the real-estate customer is mistaken for the hitman and becomes the target of a mobster, the hitman thinks a harmless woman is his mark, and when a real-estate woman approaches the politician, he thinks he's meeting the bird a computer dating service has arranged for him.

A large, gap-toothed man in a comedy sex scene? A bit cruelly written, but well done, R. G.

In *Guarding Tess* (1994) he plays manservant Frederick, a role memorable for a short manic scene in which he dances backwards and forwards across a doorway miming Leporello's *Catalogue Song* from Mozart's *Don Giovanni*.

What about other movie appearances? Such as his roles as a French-accented terrorist on the Eiffel Tower in *Superman II* (1980), a studio engineer in *Breaking Glass* (1980), Sir Tom in *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1981), lawyer Delmas' assistant in *Ragtime* (1981), Collins in *Gandhi* (1982), Anton in *Gorky Park* (1983), Captain Billings in *Greystoke: The Legend of Tarzan* (1984), Willie Tuttle in *Shanghai Surprise* (1986), a cardinal in *Casanova* (1987), the Second Admiral in *Goldeneye: The Secret Life of Ian Fleming*, aka *Spy-master* (1989), and Jim Minty in *Funny Bones* (1994).

It was in the early '80s when I first noticed Griffiths myself. It was on TV, and he was at last the starr — in a short but exciting serial in which he played a computer whiz who stumbles on to a big crime. It was called *Pig in the Middle*, and it had a really catchy electronic theme tune and opening titles in the style

of a PacMan computer game. A bit like *Pie in the Sky*, in so far as there was detecting going on, but to the best of memory few culinary moments. Soon after, they made a second series, with the same characters, called *Birds of Prey*, which had the hero chasing all over Europe. Anyone remember some more details about these mini-series — the hero's name, for instance? And what a shame the ABC no longer has the rights to rescreen either.

One of his other notable TV appearances is his part as Humphrey Appleton in the *Inspector Morse* episode called *The Day of the Devil*. This concerns not only a convicted rapist on the run from a high-security mental hospital but also signs of Satanic practices in Oxfordshire. If I remember it correctly, Appleton is one of the chief suspects in the latter bit of nastiness.

Before we get to *Pie*, here is as complete a list as I can muster for the rest of his TV work: as Jean-Pierre in *Bergerac* (1981), as Premier Dubienkin in *Whoops Apocalypse* (1982), a satire of superpower disputes, as a window cleaner in *The Five Minute Films* (1982), as Sidney Garbutt in the *Glasshouse People* episode of *Boon* (1986), as Hans Koopman in the *They Call Me Midas* episode of *Lovejoy* (1986) (about a fake Klimt con job), and as Ronnie in *Model by Day* (1994).

"But I don't have a fax machine. Please send it through the post."

"That will take far too long, sir."

"Surely not. Two days at the most."

"Are you certain you have no access to a fax at all — an office — a friend?"

"Sorry, no . . . Hang on, why do you need a fax? Aren't you sending me some software?"

"No, I have to send you an authority form so you can fill it in and send it back with the disc you're using now. Then I can send you the new disc with the software on it. That's why a fax is better."

"I don't see why I have to use a fax — send it by mail, please."

"Do you realise, sir, that I'm in Singapore?"

Thinking very quickly for someone whose grip on sanity has already loosened considerably: "I don't mind if it takes two or three weeks, send it by mail. Not everyone has a fax machine you know."

Then, before he has time to reply, belated high-tech inspiration hits me: "What about email?"

"Just a minute, sir . . . No, are you sure you can't get to a fax?"

"Look, there is such a thing as pen-and-ink still, you know, and stamps for envelopes. I'll give you my address, and you mail it."

"All right, sir, what is your address? What is your email? I'm going to try to send it via email. These are your reference numbers, if you want to ring us again."

Ring them again? Is this man kidding?

"806 132, your customer number, and 47778, your RMA." (Whatever that is.) "Thank you for your enquiry, sir."

Oh, yes, in case you're wondering. The form did come by email, and Jack filled it in and returned it, together with his original disc. In due course the new software arrived, at no cost, and all was well at last, albeit a little anticlimactic after such unrestrained telephonic excitement.

And they say Government bureaucracies are intricate and painful to navigate. But now Sleepy Jack Hanrahan at least has an inkling of just how Victor Meldrew feels. He does "beleeve" it!

Well and good — but do we?

— E. Roy Strong

I'm trying, you see, to get an up-to-date version of some software I own. It isn't hard to find the distributor's phone number: There it is, as large as life, in the Sydney phone book — 9416-0601. Looking it up, however, is the last easy task in my quest I'll accomplish.

Naïvely emboldened by my success in exploring traditional tools, I ring the number. But what do you think happens? I am greeted with a recorded message telling me that the number has changed, and if I wouldn't mind waiting, they'll transfer me automatically . . .

This transfer to their new number works ok, but guess what? The woman who answers understands what I want, all right, but informs me that this is not the correct number. The original place — the Linfield Business Centre, she *thinks* (but has never been *absolutely* certain if it's them who've been getting it wrong lately) — has mis-transferred me.

Automatically mis-transferred me, you'll note.

Never fear, the right number is 9970-5488, she says. I ring that, but lo and behold, I've reached the wrong number.

"The number you want is 9955-2455."

"You *are* sure?"

"Oh, yes."

Dialed that. Go on, have another guess. You *are* counting, aren't you?

"The number you want is 9925-7799."

Dialed that.

"Oh, you want tech support, just transferring you."

Completely unaware that I'm now up to my sixth connection, a nice polite Indian-sounding man comes on the line. Yes, he can help, but first, apparently, we have to argue, just in case I already really have the software I reckon I'm missing and don't realise it.

Somehow, with a modicum of goodwill on both sides (principally his), I pass this test. You little humdinger. Who said I couldn't track things down with my walking fingers? If only I'd known!

"Ok, I'll send it to you. What is your name and phone number?"

Not my address, notice, but undeterred I give them.

"Are you in Australia?"

Funny question. Still undeterred, I assure him that I am.

"Is that your telephone number you gave me?"

"Yes. Isn't that what you just asked me for?"

"Can have I have your fax number?"

In 1998 we were treated to *In the Red* (from Mark Tavener's satirical novel) in which R.G. plays beautifully the three-piece-suited Geoffrey Crichton-Potter ("Potty"), incompetent leader of the Reform Party, more interested in a good meal at the Savoy than policy. Here again the script calls for a couple of nasty references to his girth, but he finally gets his moment of glory, where his size actually comes in handy.

And finally there's the glorious *Pie in the Sky*, which began in 1993, and ran for four series. Plainclothes Detective-Inspector Henry Crabbe, who adores cooking, wants to take early retirement and open his own restaurant, Pie in the Sky. At the last minute, however, he is suspended from duty on a trumped-up charge by his manipulative boss, who allows him to indulge his culinary passions so long as he answers any call to solve a case.

Well-written regular characters abound in *Pie*. Henry Crabbe, of course, is the most commanding of our interest. Apart from his intelligence as a detective, his humanity is what attracts us — he is not Crabbe, but Henry. For him, food represents love, as we see again and again in the many kitchen scenes. To his staff he gives commitment, and in return gets their enduring loyalty. And, what's more, he plays tapes of Elgar's music to his hens!

Freddy Fisher, Henry's boss, has the seniority that Henry lacks, but none of his brains. On the face of it, your stock weak character with all the outward trappings of authority, but developed with enough subtlety to keep us from getting bored.

The great irony in *Pie's* characterisation, and a stroke of genius, is the portrayal of Henry's wife Margaret, an accountant, as no lover of fine food whatsoever. She prefers potato crisps and takeaways.

And who could forget vegetable grower Henderson? A minor part, maybe, but vividly reminiscent of similar lesser characters in Dickens.

It's hard to pick a favourite episode from so many gems, but what about the one where Henry has to mind a frightened prosecution witness? She is rude and uncooperative, and insists on smoking marijuana. Far worse, she won't eat the food he offers — she likes fish fingers and chips, which she fondly remembers from childhood. Needless to say, after much argy-bargy, not to mention the usual interference from Fisher, Henry saves her from the crims, and the episode ends with a special meal of ff. & c. that he solicitously prepares for her, as guest of honour at Pie in the Sky.

Another episode has Henry and Fisher on an appalling management training course. The best bit occurs as part of the subplot when Henry

sneakily swaps their psychological tests. The stupid course leader later sadly tells Henry that he will never amount to anything in the Police. Fisher of course simply glows when informed that he is superior in every way — intelligent, highly imaginative, and destined for great things.

I should also mention the very last episode, throughout which Henry carries a lemon in his pocket, so he can dejectedly sniff it from time to time in case he regains his sense of smell, which he has lost.

What with the *Two Fat Ladies* and all, there seems to be a welcome drift lately on TV away from health-crazed epicurean trendies towards programs featuring corpulent cooks. Whether Griffiths himself is a fervent chef, I haven't been able to ascertain, although according to a quote in *TV Week* (20/6/98), he claims not to share at least two other of Henry Crabbe's finer qualities:

Henry's a great guy, the kind of bloke I wish I was. I don't feel I could live up to his standard of moral rectitude, and he has incredible patience. I'm very impatient, really.

Even so, Griffiths really understands Henry, and always delivers a wonderfully downplayed performance that accentuates, rather than obscures, the admirable, lovable character of this detective/restaurateur.

There are several further Griffiths appearances I have read of, but the details available are very sketchy. Whether they are all TV roles, I can't say; I suspect so. They include *An Dich Hab' Ich Gedacht*, *The Cleopatras*, *El Cid*, *The Goody Guys*, *The King of Living*, *Light Snack*, *Perfect Scoundrels* and *World Cup — A Captain's Tale*.

Now, how often do you see anyone throwing a grand piano into a swimming pool? Well, I'm happy to announce that Griffiths did it — in an episode of *Minder*. If memory serves, the character he played lost his temper with the way his wealthy father was treating him, and his revenge was the aforementioned aquatic, albeit unmusical, deed.

Delighted I am, also, to inform you that in 1998, together with two other famous figures in the arts — Booker Prize winning author Pat Barker and crime novelist Baroness P.D. James, Richard Griffiths was awarded an honorary Doctor of Letters by the University of Durham. And who was conferring the degrees? None other than the Uni Chancellor, Sir Peter Ustinov.

A lovely actor, Richard Griffiths, built for comfort, not for speed. He may be a one-man theatre-in-the-round, but in our house we can't get enough of him.

— TR

Telephone Exchange

[From *Come Spin Us a Yarn, Sleepy Jack*]

My old mate from uni days, Sleepy Jack Hanrahan, has turned up again. He's just retired from his post of lecturer in Linguistics at the University of —, and now with more time on his hands, over a glass or four of red he insists on erecting even taller stories than I remember from the '50s.

Mind you, Jack's "entertainments" are a mixed blessing. Like many university types, he's always had a chronic tendency to recycle his rather forced and feeble adolescent jokes. According to long-time colleague Mary Mary Quiet 'n' Scary (who represents, I am assured, the discerning academic female point of view), what saved him on such suicidal occasions was the way his tiny nose ("his sole redeeming physical feature" she calls it — and believe me, she'd know) wrinkled up when he smiled, and seemed to take on a winsome expressiveness of its own.

Which (apart from the "wrinkled" aspect) is more than you can say for the jokes themselves.

On the other hand, his comical stories about real people (even though you always know that the facts are being embellished) can have you, if not rolling about the floor in no time flat, then at least reluctantly ordering another couple of anticipatory bottles. Speaking of garnished reality, I should quote Willem van der Guilder here. His long-held conviction is that if you take any claim of Sleepy Jack Hanrahan's, reduce it by 2,000 and then extract the square root, you'll still be left with no less than a conservative exaggeration of the truth.

Well, judge for yourself. I submit the following tale in as close to Jack's own words as I can recall, and in the first person. Any overstatement is Jack's, not mine, though as per always he has solemnly affirmed that every detail is authentic. It belongs in *Bikwil*, of course, simply because it celebrates how (relatively) quiet enthusiasm for modern technology can inevitably triumph over adversity. You do like happy endings, don't you, where the human spirit comes out on top? Now read on . . .

In Old English there were two similar looking, but quite distinct, verbs — *cliofan* (= “to cut”) and *clifan*, later *clifian* (= “to adhere”). By about 1500 the former had become *cleve*, while the latter, also in the 14th century, had become *clive*. This “. . . had also the variants *cleove*, *cleve*, the latter of which at length prevailed; the two verbs having thus become identical in the present stem were naturally confused in their other inflexions.” (OED2)

All very academic, I know, but it does go a little way to explaining our modern antonymous mystery.

Also in that *Three Ways* were featured a number of words the touch typist can key on a keyboard with the left hand only, right hand only, alternate hands, feet, nose, etc. Were you as surprised as I was to learn that “typewriter words” hold endless fascination for some compulsive word jugglers? Indeed, there’s at least one Internet site where they thrive in sumptuous profusion — *A Collection of Word Oddities and Trivia*, maintained by Jeff Miller, a teacher at Gulf High School in New Port Richey, Florida (<http://members.aol.com/gulphigh2/words.html>).

It isn’t *Bikwil’s* policy willy-nilly to pinch the stuff of Net obsessionists (come on, who’s

kidding whom here?), so I’ll gingerly extract just a handful of writing-machine extras from Miller’s work, and leave you to seek out the rest in your own time. Seeing that someone will soon come up with more astounding examples, you’ll notice that I for one won’t dare say “longest”, just “long”.

Long, left hand only: *Tessaradecads* — meaning “groups of fourteen” (though, according to Miller, who quotes Webster2, it’s spelt “tesseradecades”; my spelling is OED2’s).

Long, right hand only: *Polypphony*.

Long, top alphabetic row only: *Proprietor, perpetuity*.

Long, middle alphabetic row only: *Alfalfas*.

Long, alternating hands, two letters at a time: *Postmuscular*.

By the way, up there I twice used the word “antonymous” (by childlike analogy with “synonymous”), but according to OED2 such a formation doesn’t exist. Nor, for that matter, does “antonymic”. Both, however, are in the Merriam Webster Internet dictionary, and “antonymic” is in Macq3. We await OED3 with great eagerness.

— Harlish Goop

Where Three Ways Meet

The following inventory of remarkable *Presidential Coincidences* was submitted by a long-time *Bikwil* trivia specialist, Socrates.

Abraham Lincoln was elected to Congress in 1846.

John F. Kennedy was elected to Congress in 1946.

Abraham Lincoln was elected President in 1860.

John F. Kennedy was elected President in 1960.

The names Lincoln and Kennedy each contain seven letters.

Both were particularly concerned with civil rights.

Both wives lost children while living in the White House.

Lincoln’s secretary was named Kennedy.

Kennedy’s secretary was named Lincoln.

Both Presidents were shot on a Friday.

Both were shot in the head.

Both were assassinated by Southerners.

Both were succeeded by Southerners.

Both successors were named Johnson.

Andrew Johnson, who succeeded Lincoln, was born in 1808.

Lyndon Johnson, who succeeded Kennedy, was born in 1908.

John Wilkes Booth, who assassinated Lincoln, was born in 1839.

Lee Harvey Oswald, who assassinated Kennedy, was born in 1939.

Both assassins were known by their three names.

Both names comprise fifteen letters.

Booth ran from the theatre and was caught in a warehouse.

Oswald ran from a warehouse and was caught in a theatre.

Booth and Oswald were both assassinated before their trials.

Nocturne

[After Hearing Clare Hansson's *Breathe Through Ivory*]

Heard late in solitude
 in the cathedral of night
 a serene concord:
 on ivory an elegy of bells,
 from strings long drawn by the bow:
 warm, vibrant tones,
 deep as the dark:
 this gentle nocturne falls
 like a benediction
 on my aching heart.

— Bet Briggs

(from her *The Azimuth Suite*, 1991)

A Word in Your Pink Shell-like

As always, the editor is keen for regular contributors to tidy up all their loose ends. Me he has asked to handle some backlogged bits and pieces that arise, in *Bikwil's* typically digressive way, not from earlier *Pink Shell-like* efforts, but from the first *Where Three Ways Meet* column (No. 6, March 1998).

'Ere we go, 'ere we go . . .

(Speaking of football, I suppose you knew that the word “soccer”, in the 1880s and 90s spelt *socca* or *socker*, derives from *Assoc.*, short for *Association*, as in *Association Rules?* OED2 implies that it's a little like “rugger”, from *Rugby School*. There's even “footer” too, though this was confined to the England of *Brideshead Revisited* and decades prior. Australian English, of course, has “footy“.)

Anyway, one thing you will recall is that — except for Frisco cable cars and ducks quacking and reversed Microsoft icons — the *Three Ways* in question was a potpourri of word trivia, one fragment of which concerned the two antonymous meanings of the verb “cleave” — *adhere* and *separate*. Rashly, we stated that “cleave” is the only such contrary word in English.

Well, in the true spirit of “shared pleasure in the seriousness of the apparently trivial miscellaneous”, Bruce Johnson has written in with a few additional examples of words “that pull in opposite directions”. I quote him:

Secrete — both *to conceal* (“secreted about his person”, in this senses related to “secret” and “secretary”), and *to disclose* (as in “secreting a fluid”)

Rank — to be of rank implies an exalted position, but, as in “my offence is rank”, implies a degraded status

This next one is cheating with typography:

Apart — implying separation, and *a part*, implying union.

Interesting, Bruce's reference to “secretary”. I'd forgotten its original meaning, now obsolete, of “one who is entrusted with private or secret matters”. That meaning, deriving from the mediaeval Latin *secretarius*, goes back at least to the 14th century. That noun came from post-Augustan Latin adjective *secretus*, which meant “separated, out of the way, lonely, secret”, and which, in its turn, derived from the Classical Latin verb *secernere* (= “to sever, sunder, separate”).

While we're at it, let's quickly look at the two “cleaves”.