



PixelPapers the Thirtieth .

1 January, 2005.

[Verse](#) <> Contributed poetry, old & new

[Prose](#) <> Stories, Articles & First Chapters

[Comment](#) <> Wordsworth <> News & Views <> etc.

[Screen](#) <> Film, stage & television - Mulrooney on Schepsi

[Live Index](#) <> Contributors and titles in past issues:
180+ and 1039+ respectively.

[Back Nos](#) <> Issues to date, sans irrelevant bits

[Notes for Contributors](#)

[Contact](#) <> An addressed e-mail blank instantly ready
for your contributions to be pasted in, or news & views.
No attachments please

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CONTRIBUTIONS FOR PP30 WILL BE ACCEPTED UNTIL 1ST FEBRUARY AND FOR PP31
THEREAFTER



Comment

Season's greetings to all our contributors and readers.

PixelPapers is now a lusty seven year old and has published its thousandth work. Thank you for your support.

It has been pleasantly warm here in the west for the days leading to Christmas and

beyond. We've had all the fairings but a dinner table half the size of yesteryear. Part of our fare was rock lobster, which has dropped in price and is now freely available in the country where it is caught.

The stores were quieter and more restrained with their music but the childrens' choirs on television were raucous for the most part, probably due to fear of the medium and over-rehearsal beforehand.

We've had our worries with our eldest granddaughter holidaying in Thailand. No sooner had we checked that she was safe when we realised that her charming French aunt and uncle were due to meet her and would also be in the country. All is well.

Spam Traps

Spamming on the internet is constantly changing.

Porn has disappeared, but the *Nigerians* are soldiering on, varying the locale but not the tortured structure of their prose and the careless morality and implausibility of their proposals.

Purveyors of cheap software from unlikely addresses offer tempting bargains, tempered by the certainty that you could bet on no delivery after payment.

Pharmacists and pseudo pharomicists offer cheap medicines in the hope of snaring citizens of the U.S., where gluttonous social philosophy means that it is anything but the land of the free.

New kids on the block are the copywatch sellers, offering Rolex and other famous brands for about ten times the going price of similar items in Bali. (I suspect that the stock comes from the same source. The Bali boys used to flock around like blowflies once they identified tourists as likely marks, flashing their glittering cases of watches bearing all the expensive brands. We became sorry for the tricks we played on them and, paradoxically, even bargained upwards after forcing them down to a few rupiahs above their cost price!)

Fraudsters with enough computer savvy to virtually take over a site are probably the most dangerous internet trap. These include "banks" asking customers to confirm details of their accounts that are sufficient for arranging illegal withdrawals. In a recent case a couple paid hundreds of dollars for an expensive laptop computer, ostensibly advertised by someone living in a nearby town. They were tricked into paying the money to an address in Poland, on the grounds that the seller was soon to be holidaying there!

As rule it is unwise to trade on the interent unless you are quite sure of the trader. It is also unwise to open attachments if the sender is unknown to you.

Wordsworth

The word, *tsunami*. or wave generated by an earthquake or volcanic action, won't disappear from the world consciousness easily, after the terrible events on Boxing Day.

The pictures taken of it and its aftermath will live in our minds.

It is obvious that many people could have been saved if they had been more aware of it and the likely chain of events. Literature has touched on it in the works of Pliny the younger on Vesuvius and Pompeii (and more recently in a story in PP27) and we have Hokusai's painting, *Great Wave*, well known in print form. But a lesson by a British teacher named Kearney, according to a report from *The Sun* in England, has saved hundreds of people in Phuket. His ten year old pupil recognised the situation and told her mother with vigour and conviction sufficient to have the beach front cleared in time to escape from the big surge.

News & Views

Joker

A number of Primary Schools were doing a project on "The Sea." Kids were asked to draw pictures, or write about their experiences. Teachers got together to compare the results, and put together some of the comments that were funny, and some that were sad. Here are some of them.

The kids were all aged between 5 and 8 years.

*

This is a picture of an octopus. It has eight testicles. (Kelly age 6)

*

Whales are animals, not fish. If they don't get air they can drown, like my brother did last summer. (David age 7)

*

Oyster's balls are called pearls. (James age 6)

*

I don't like the sea. It makes me sick on the ferry. (Peter age 6)

*

My goldfish died. Why? (Katie age 5)

*

If you are surrounded by sea you are an Island. If you don't have sea all round you, you are in continent. (Wayne age 7)

*

I think sharks are ugly and mean, and have big teeth, just like Emily Richardson. She's not my friend no more. (Kylie age 6)

*

A dolphin breaths through an arsehole on the top of its head. (Billy age 8)

*

My uncle goes out in his boat with pots, and comes back with crabs. (Millie age 6)

*

When ships had sails, they used to use the trade winds to cross the ocean. Sometimes, when the wind didn't blow, the sailors would whistle to make the wind come. My brother said they would be better off eating beans.

(William age 7)

*

I like mermaids. They are beautiful, and I like their shiny tails.

How do mermaids get pregnant? (Helen age 6)

*

I'm not going to write about the sea. My baby brother is always screaming and being sick, my Dad keeps shouting at my Mum, and my big Sister has just got pregnant, so I can't think what to write. (Amy age 6)

*

Some fish are dangerous. Jelly fish can sting. Electric eels can give you a shock. They have to live in caves under the sea where I think they have to plug themselves into chargers. (Christopher age 7)

*

My mum has fish nets, but doesn't catch any fish. (Laura age 5)

*

When you go swimming in the sea, it is very cold, and it makes my willy small. (Kevin age 6)

*

When me and Sarah went to the sea side in the summer holidays, we hid in the sand dunes and watched my big sister doing it with her boy friend. It was fun. (Lauren age 7)

*

Divers have to be safe when they go under the water. Two divers can't go down alone, so they have to go down on each other. (Becky age 8)

*

On holiday my Mum went water ski-ing. She fell off when she was going very fast. She says she won't do it again because water shot up her fanny. (Julie age 7)

Azamnig

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Amzanig huh?

Excerpts from 4th & 5th grade children

Ancient Egypt was old. It was inhabited by gypsies and mummies who all wrote in hydraulics. They lived in the Sarah Dessert. The climate of the Sarah is such that all of the inhabitants had to live elsewhere.

Moses led the Hebrew slaves to the Red Sea where they made unleavened bread, which is bread made without any ingredients. Moses went up on Mount Cyanide to get the ten commandos. He died before he ever reached Canada but the commandos made it.

Solomon had three hundred wives and seven hundred porcupines. He was a actual hysterical figure as well as being in the bible. It sounds like he was sort of busy too.

The Greeks were a highly sculptured people, and without them we wouldn't have history. The Greeks also had myths. A myth is a young female moth.

Socrates was a famous old Greek teacher who went around giving people advice. They killed him. He later died from an overdose of wedlock which is apparently poisonous. After his death, his career suffered a Dramatic decline.

In the first Olympic games, Greeks ran races, jumped, hurled biscuits, and threw the java. The games were messier then than they

show on TV now.

Julius Caesar extinguished himself on the battlefields of Gaul. The Ides of March murdered him because they thought he was going to be made king. Dying, he gasped out "Same to you, Brutus."

Joan of Arc was burnt to a steak and was canonized by Bernard Shaw for reasons I don't really understand. The English and French still have problems.

Queen Elizabeth was the "Virgin Queen," As a queen she was a success. When she exposed herself before her troops they all shouted "hurrah!" and that was the end of the fighting for a long while.

It was an age of great inventions and discoveries. Gutenberg invented removable type and the Bible.

Another important invention was the circulation of blood.

Sir Walter Raleigh is a historical figure because he invented Cigarettes and started smoking.

Sir Francis Drake circumcised the world with a 100 foot clipper which was very dangerous to all his men.

The greatest writer of the Renaissance was William Shakespeare. He was born in the year 1564, supposedly on his birthday. He never made much money and is famous only because of his plays. He wrote tragedies, comedies, and hysterectomies, all in Islamic pentameter.

Writing at the same time as Shakespeare was Miguel Cervantes. He wrote Donkey Hote. The next great author was John Milton. Milton wrote Paradise Lost. Since then no one ever found it.

Delegates from the original 13 states formed the Contented Congress. Thomas Jefferson, a Virgin, and Benjamin Franklin were two singers of the Declaration of Independence. Franklin discovered electricity by Rubbing two cats backward and also declared, "A horse divided against itself cannot stand." He was a naturalist for sure. Franklin died in 1790 and is still dead.

Abraham Lincoln became America's greatest Precedent. Lincoln's Mother died in infancy, and he was born in a log cabin which he built with his own hands. Abraham Lincoln freed the slaves by signing the Emasculation Proclamation.

On the night of April 14, 1865, Abraham Lincoln went to the theater and got shot in his seat by one of the actors in a moving picture show. They believe the assinator was John Wilkes Booth, a supposingly insane actor. This ruined Booth's career.

Johann Bach wrote a great many musical compositions and had a large number of children. In between he practiced on an old spinster which he kept up in his attic. Bach died from 1750 to the present. Bach was the most famous composer in the world and so was Handel. Handel was half German, half Italian, and half English. He was very large.

Bethoven wrote music even though he was deaf. He was so deaf that he wrote loud music and became the father of rock and roll. He took long walks in the forest even when everyone was calling for him. Beethoven expired in 1827 and later died for this.

The nineteenth century was a time of a great many thoughts and inventions. People stopped reproducing by hand and started reproducing by machine. The invention of the steamboat caused a network of rivers to spring up.

Cyrus McCormick invented the McCormick raper, which did the work of a hundred men.

Louis Pasteur discovered a cure for rabbits but I don't know why.

Charles Darwin was a naturalist. He wrote the Organ of the Species. It was very long people got upset about it and had trials to see if it was really true. He sort of said God's days were not just 24 hours but without watches who knew anyhow? I don't get it.

Madman Curie discovered radio. She was the first woman to do what she did. Other women have become scientists since her but they didn't get to find radios because they were already taken.

Karl Marx was one of the Marx Brothers. The other three were in the movies. Karl made speeches and started revolutions. Someone in the family had to have a job, I guess.

[Top](#)



A few notes on Schepisi

by Christopher Mulrooney

Roxanne

What looked at the time like directorial fuzziness was more a reflection of an Australian director in the American Northwest with a script adapted from a late nineteenth-century French play.

Schepisi's plush mise en scene makes a lot of the gagwork a good study, and gives scenes like the "nose riposte" a measure of Rostand's grandeur.

A Cry in the Dark

An Australian test case serves Schepisi as a kind of laboratory in which he isolates yellow dog journalism as a revival of the Roman holiday. His somewhat remote model is *The Wrong Man*, and he tosses in a quote from *The Godfather* (John Marley and the horse's head) as part of the surrealistic transformation of a dingo attack into a lynch mob.

This is all handled very realistically, with a very dry acuity, compensated without underlining by the Australian cinematography. Schepisi controls the mickey of the tale at the outset with a very well-filmed statement of the incident, in which a teetotalling Seventh-Day Adventist minister who likes to feed the dingos finds one of them has filched his infant daughter. Schepisi diffuses the mickey of the subsequent investigation, gossip and trials with myriad setups often less than a hundred frames in length, showing different aspects of the proceedings. The modulation of a tragic occurrence into a Media Circus takes two shots involving the technical arrangements at a television station, filmed with simple authority, and lasting less than a minute.

A relationship can be seen with certain elements of *L'Argent* and *Zulu*. The lesson is *Don't Feed The Dingos*, or as the main character says, "People can turn on you like a pack of hungry animals, can't they?"

The Russia House

The thematic line is essentially that of Burt Kennedy's *The Trouble with Spies*, with one scene adapted from Peter Hunt's *Assassination*.

Butley's bloody metaphors are among the gags, like a war room clock giving the time in *Ustinov*, a long imitation of *From Russia with Love*, and a passing reference to *The Conversation*'s famous last scene.

Schepisi's main contribution is the dazzle of himself in St. Petersburg and Moscow, making those sickening 360 degree ER pans (or bedpans) make real sense for once, as so much unexpected scenery comes into view so surprisingly. Toward the end the camera settles like a tourist's stomach and gives location shots that are breathtakingly standard.

A charming gag is the repeated car conversation shot from a moving crane, and another is having Ken Russell's part end midway, like *Lear's Fool*.

Mr. Baseball

You may take the East meets West poesy of this film at face value, and there's a lot of value here. The Japanese angle is very well played, and most particularly by Ken Takakura as a baseball manager. He really gets to parade in this part, which carries far more of the essential action than certain script points mentioned in reviews like the one wisely left unsigned in the *Washington Post*.

Tom Selleck's performance as the New York Yankee who's traded overseas accomplishes all the various gags and sleight of hand required in fine style.

Fine style is what you get when you put a 35mm camera in Schepisi's hands and send him out to satisfy his thirst for novelty. Japanese baseball!

Six Degrees of Separation

According to Shaw, Sir Henry Irving used to do this to Shakespeare. Shaw himself has Rita Kempley's failing, that of judging a work by its performance. The BBC thought Will Smith's worthy of praise.

"John Guare," says Schepisi in an interview, "the guy who wrote *Six Degrees of Separation*, kept saying, 'The dialogue is the wallpaper.' And he's right---great wallpaper, sure, but what's happening around that dialogue? Who's doing what? What are the other people thinking? What they're thinking lets you know that, wait a minute---what this guy's saying is not exactly what he means or feels, or something. That's the fun of it."

The passages from Shaw are amusing and instructive. "In a true republic of art Sir Henry Irving would ere this have expiated his acting versions on the scaffold... This curious want of connoisseurship in literature would disable Sir Henry Irving seriously if he were an interpretative actor. But it is, happily, the fault of a great quality---the creative quality. A prodigious deal of nonsense has been written about Sir Henry Irving's conception of this, that, and the other Shakespearean character. The truth is that he has never in his life

conceived or interpreted the characters of any author except himself. He is really as incapable of acting another man's play as Wagner was of setting another man's libretto; and he should, like Wagner, have written his plays for himself. But as he did not find himself out until it was too late for him to learn that supplementary trade, he was compelled to use other men's plays as the framework for his own creations. His first great success in this sort of adaptation was with the Merchant of Venice. There was no question then of a bad Shylock or a good Shylock: he was simply not Shylock at all; and when his own creation came into conflict with Shakespear's, as it did quite openly in the Trial scene, he simply played in flat contradiction of the lines, and positively acted Shakespear off the stage. This was an original policy, and an intensely interesting one from the critical point of view; but it was obvious that its difficulty must increase with the vividness and force of the dramatist's creation. Shakespear at his highest pitch cannot be set aside by any mortal actor, however gifted; and when Sir Henry Irving tried to interpolate a most singular and fantastic notion of an old man between the lines of a fearfully mutilated acting version of King Lear, he was smashed. On the other hand, in plays by persons of no importance, where the dramatist's part of the business is the merest trash, his creative activity is unhampered and uncontradicted; and the author's futility is the opportunity for the actor's masterpiece.

"Punch, whether as Jingle, Macaire, Mephistopheles, or Richard, has always been a favorite part with Sir Henry Irving. The craftily mischievous, the sardonically impudent, tickle him immensely, besides providing him with a welcome relief from the gravity of his serious impersonations. As Richard he drops Punch after the coronation scene, which, in deference to stage tradition, he makes a turning-point at which the virtuoso in mischief, having achieved his ambition, becomes a savage at bay. I do not see why this should be. In the tent scene, Richard says:

There is no creature loves me;

And if I die no soul will pity me.

"Macbeth repeats this patch of pathos, and immediately proceeds to pity himself unstintedly over it; but Richard no sooner catches the sentimental cadence of his own voice than the mocker in him is awakened at once, and he adds, quite in Punch's vein,

Nay, wherefore should they? since that I myself

Find in myself no pity for myself.

"Sir Henry Irving omits these lines, because he plays, as he always does, for a pathetically sublime ending. But we have seen the sublime ending before pretty often; and this time it robs us of such strokes as Richard's aristocratically cynical private encouragement to his entourage of peers:

Our strong arms be our conscience, swords our law.

March on; join bravely; let us to't pell-mell,

If not to Heaven, then hand in hand to hell;

"followed by his amusingly blackguardly public address to the rank and file, quite in the

vein of the famous and more successful appeal to the British troops in the Peninsula. 'Will you that are Englishmen fed on beef let yourselves be licked by a lot of ----- Spaniards fed on oranges?' Despair, one feels, could bring to Punch-Richard nothing but the exultation of one who loved destruction better than even victory; and the exclamation

A thousand hearts are great within my bosom

"is not the expression of a hero's courage, but the evil ecstasy of the destroyer as he finds himself, after a weak, piping time of peace, back at last in his native element."

Schepisi shows what a genius can do with a complete misreading of the play. John Guare kissed the check, I would have imagined, but no, he chose Schepisi.#



[PixelPapers the Twenty Ninth](#)

[PixelPapers the Twenty Eighth](#)

[PixelPapers the Twenty Seventh](#)

[PixelPapers the Twenty Sixth](#)

[PixelPapers the Twenty Fifth](#)

[PixelPapers The Twenty Fourth](#)

[PixelPapers The Twenty Third](#)

[PixelPapers The Twenty Second](#)

[PixelPapers TheTwentyFirst](#)

[PixelPapers TheTwentieth](#)

[PixelPapers The Nineteenth](#)

[PixelPapers The Eighteenth](#)

[PixelPapers The Seventeenth](#)

[PixelPapers The Sixteenth](#)

[PixelPapers The Fifteenth](#)

[PixelPapers The Fourteenth](#)

[PixelPapers The Thirteenth](#)

[PixelPapers The Twelfth](#)
[PixelPapers The Eleventh](#)
[PixelPapers The Tenth](#)
[PixelPapers The Ninth](#)
[PixelPapers The Eighth](#)
[PixelPapers The Seventh](#)
[PixelPapers The Sixth](#)
[PixelPapers The Fifth](#)
[PixelPapers The Fourth](#)
[PixelPapers The Third](#)
[PixelPapers The Second](#)
[PixelPapers The First](#)



[Letters or Submissions](#)

[Top](#)