

The Society of Civil & Public Service Writers

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Diary

AGM

19th May 2007

Poetry Workshop Weekend

27th -29th July 2007

DATA PROTECTION ACT

Members' names and addresses are held on a computer database which is used for mailing copies of the Civil Service Author.

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Editorial

Adrian Danson

The eight weeks of building work that my new abode was due to suffer in March began eighteen days before Christmas. Visit by the family of my wife's sister was postponed; attempts to sort out my books and papers; that dream of returning order to my life was defeated once more. I had hoped never to burden you again with reports of problems that thwart progression of my plans for Author and publishing a collection of our best work. Do I see a faint light at the end of the tunnel? Please, please let that be light at the end of the tunnel!

Annual General Meeting - 19th May 2007:

For those who are able to attend, please note that it will be held this year at the St. Vincent Centre. This is a convenient meeting place close to Victoria Station. From the station, turn right into Victoria Street and take the first right into Carlisle Place. The centre is little more than one hundred yards from Victoria Street, on the right hand side of Carlisle Place and recognisable by a statue above the door.

When seeking your internet support for our published members in the last issue, I mentioned only two members, but those who read our reports of member's success will be aware that there are others, such as Margaret Pilling, whose success has been reported and would surely benefit from your support.

We welcome the return of Poetry Pages, following receipt by the new editor Terry James of a few contributions from our poetic members. I hope we will see more in the future, but this continues to depend upon poetry members offering Terry their contributions and our subsequent enjoyment of such. You will know that Joyce was continually pleading for more and it will be no surprise to know that Terry faces the same problem. You have a captive and very appreciative audience, so poets please try to bury Terry under a deluge of your masterpieces.

I need some letters on controversial topics, to enliven the letters column that has proved popular. My efforts to promote such by comments on peculiar modern phrases have run out of steam. If I don't

get any from you I may be forced to include comment on politics and religion - believe me you do not want that, so sharpen your quills and let's have some fun.

I also need contributions for Author, not just the prize winning entries. From time to time I have a memory of my childhood, merely a snippet not something lengthy that might have merited entry for our Chairman's recent competition, e.g. I remember coming from a Saturday matinee after watching Johnny McBrown, a Hollywood cowboy that no one else seems to remember, and running down the road slapping my bottom as if it was the flank of an imaginary horse. Was I in white, and therefore a goody, or black and therefore a baddy? I can't remember, but it hardly matters.

I hope you found my memory of Ethel Westwood interesting (Editorial Spring 2006) and I thought a few other such memories might not go amiss. I think such would come under the heading of articles, which we continue to support through our article folios. An adult memory or perhaps that imaginary world of childhood; a reminder to ourselves of near forgotten times, a picture of the past that our younger members might use when writing of times before shop assistants illogically said, "Here you go" on handing you something. No prizes, but send me your memories. No more than 500 words and I will publish those I believe to be of greatest interest or entertainment.

I hope you will find my following second example of interest:

When chairing some MoD meetings in Paris about 35 years ago, my first duty was to report to the Air Attaché at our embassy. Following the formalities, over a cup of coffee he told us of his meeting with the Foreign Secretary, the late George Brown. Apparently he had been introduced to Mr Brown ten years earlier, yet Mr Brown instantly recognised the Attaché and congratulated on his promotion since their last meeting at RAF Kevelaar. Whether an example of his reputedly outstanding memory, or the result of an exhaustive library of photographic and written data I do not know.

The Attaché also described Harold Wilson's visit to the Elysee Palace. President DeGaul never forgave the British for excluding him from the D Day invasion planning, being in his eyes an equal with Generals

Eisenhower and Montgomery. He exercised his pique by vetoing Britain's application for entry into the Common Market, following our own seemingly arrogant rejection of an earlier invitation to become a founder member. However, Wilson was not the only foreign dignitary to suffer the following treatment.

As a visiting dignitary entered the Palace the General would begin his long descent of the spiralling staircase that led to the reception area, always arriving on the bottom step at the same moment that his visitor arrived in front of him. From his already imperious height he was thus able to look down even more upon his inferior visitor. Although the British Embassy was only a few hundred yards away, on entering the Palace Wilson asked for the toilets. DeGaul was left fuming on the step, from which he had descended by the time Wilson condescended to join him.

The Assistant Air Attaché invited me to a party at his apartment that evening. It was there that I met a Squadron Leader, who strolled over with a smile, hand outstretched and the words, "I believe we've met before". We had certainly served on the same RAF Stations on England and Germany, even Malta, but never at the same time. After twenty minutes of fruitless search we could not establish why we were each so certain that we had met before.

Minutes later I was introduced to the Squadron Leader's wife, whose topic of conversation was unsurprisingly different, soon raising the question, "Where do you live?" "Biggin Hill," I replied. "Oh so do we," she smiled.

It was eventually established that the Squadron Leader worked in St Giles' Court and I in Castlewood House, the building across the road. Each evening we walked down St Martin's Lane to Charing Cross Station, used the same train to Bromley North, sat on the top deck of the same bus to Biggin Hill, he near the front and on the left, I near the rear and on the right. As he got off at the stop before mine our eyes often met over the years that we shared this experience, but we had never exchanged a word until our frustrating twenty minutes in Paris. Small World!

Why Not Write a Letter?

Today the postman brought me a large padded envelope containing a well-produced paperback entitled “Postal Reform and the Penny Black” by Douglas N Muir. I was very surprised, having not ordered it. It then fell open at the flyleaf, which read

“This book was awarded for a prize letter in “Stamp Magazine”.

Members who are old hands will know all about writing to magazines, thus getting something in print, when it seems that editors just won't take anything else you happen to write. They'll also know that quite often there are monetary or other prizes to be had. I'm writing this little article for the benefit of new members who may not have tried this way of achieving satisfaction and sometimes even a prize.

The excellent publication “Freelance Market News” (produced by The Association of Freelance Writers, Sevendale House, 7 Dale Street, Manchester M1 1JB) lists new markets and includes a page on “Fillers and Letters”. Back in September it mentioned “Stamp Magazine” in this connection but as I'm no philatelic expert it didn't at first interest me. It was when Princess Diana's anniversary was much in the news and I realised that I had been musing on an aspect of her engagement to Prince Charles: the issue of Commemorative stamps and First Day Covers depicting the happy couple. I worked in the Philatelic Bureau of Crown Agents at the time and we spent a gruelling but happy summer shipping the issue to 21 Commonwealth countries, working lots of overtime to ensure deliveries were on time and praying that where the last lap of the journey was by small boat there wasn't a stormy sea to wreak havoc to our schedule.

I wrote this up in a letter to Stamp Magazine and then forgot about it, until today. So why not try a letter to a magazine about something close to your heart or something that infuriates you? Try being “disgusted of Tunbridge Wells” for once. Then sit back and await the postman.

Joan Lewis

Poetry Workshop

Mike Boland

Chairman: Liz Rowlands, 19 Arkley Court, Maidenhead, SL6 2YR

Treasurer: Terry Rickson, 48 Marlborough Road, Ashford, TW15 3QA

Secretary: Mike Boland, 11 Boxtree Lane, Harrow Weald, HA3 6JU

Bill Barnes Competition 2006

The results of the 2006 Bill Barnes Poetry Competition are:

1st Prize: **Angus Livingstone** 2nd Prize: **Margaret Hothi** 3rd Prize:
Sonia Royal

The next issue of the Poetry Workshop's magazine, **wavelengths**, will contain the judge's report, the three winning poems, plus those poems the judge mentioned as Highly Commended and Commended.

PW "Open Day"

The committee of the Poetry Workshop are planning to hold an Open Day event in London in May, to which all members of the PW will be invited to attend. Dates and programme have yet to be finalised, but details will appear in the Spring issue of **wavelengths** in March.

PW Weekend 2007

The annual Poetry Workshop Weekend will take place on **27 -29 July**. The venue this year is the Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre in Birmingham. The cost of the Weekend is £170 per person, which includes all meals, en-suite accommodation and meeting room. As usual, we ask for a deposit of £30, with the balance payable in May. Alternatively, you may pay by instalments, by arrangement with our Treasurer, **Terry Rickson**. A Booking Form was enclosed with the winter issue of **wavelengths**. This should be returned with your deposit to me, Mike Boland, at the address given above

Waves 2007

Contributions for **Waves 2007**, the annual collection of PW members' work, should be sent to **Liz Rowlands**, (address at page heading) by **31 March 2007**. Poems may be rhymed or unrhymed. There are no restrictions on form, but entries should be no more than **34** lines, including stanza breaks, and should not have been published

previously. To assist with marketing costs, contributors of published poems will be asked to purchase 6 copies @ £15.

Subscriptions 2007

Subscriptions to the Poetry Workshop fell due on 1 January 2007. The cost of membership remains unchanged for yet another year, being £3 for members of the Society of Civil & Public Service Writers. A Renewal Form was enclosed with the winter issue of **wavelengths**. Please complete and send it with your cheques/postal orders to **Terry Rickson**, whose address appears above. **Please** remember to make out your cheques correctly: they should be made payable to **SCPSW Poetry Workshop Account**.

Prospective new members should contact Terry Rickson at the address given above.

Membership of the Poetry Workshop provides:

- four issues of our magazine **wavelengths** each year
- the chance of publication in **Waves**, the PW's annual anthology of members' work
- access to the popular Postal Folio scheme
- eligibility for the Bill Barnes Poetry Competition (open exclusively to PW members)
- eligibility for the annual PW Weekend

If anyone is interested in joining the Poetry Workshop, please contact Mike Boland at the above address. He will be pleased to provide further details.

Dates to Remember

1 January 2007	Poetry Workshop subscriptions due
1 March 2007	wavelengths Spring issue
31 March 2007	Closing Date for Submissions to Waves
May 2007 (date tba)	Poetry Workshop Open Day
1 June 2007	wavelengths Summer Issue
27 - 29 July 2007	Poetry Workshop Weekend

Poetry Pages

Edited by Terry James

Salt Marsh

Terry Rickson

I have won, said the sea.
Man, you have dug, dyked, pumped
down each long century;
I have watched; waited.
Time means nothing to me,
I gobble up chalk, sand, mud,
relentlessly.

Through each breach,
open sluice, I'll creep,
re-claim what is mine;
and the cry of dunlin, snipe, curlew
will call across the marsh.

I have won, said the sea.

Be My Valentine

Steve Glason

Miss Cynthia Cousins our stately EO
Came in one morning her face all aglow
For someone had sent her – just before nine
An unusual present – a large Valentine

Now Cynth to her friend – is of uncertain years
Riding to work on a bike without gears
In wintertime – hockey – panache and verve
In summer its tennis with a Wimbledon serve

She gazed round the room (mountains of files)
Hardly aware of the secretive smiles
For it later transpired that her swain was young Mike
Who was trying to soften their mutual dislike.

(Steve – Terry passed me this handwritten work. I always having difficulty in reading other people's hand, so I apologise if I have failed to transcribe this to your satisfaction – Ed)

Cinquains For The Seasons

Terry Rickson

Spring comes
silently. First
the snowdrop, then the bud;
birdsong; a wide sun dispelling
the cold.

Summer,
heady with bees
and thunder; a combine
harvester churns dust in bleached fields
all day.

Autumn,
ripe apples fall
in the orchard; the light
begins to die and wet leaves lie
in heaps.

Winter,
frost stiffens grass
and twig like dead fingers;
holly and ivy foretell the
Christ Child.

The following poem was written by Anthony Roberts was selected by his family and read at the Service of Thanksgiving at Putney Vale Crematorium on 13th October 2006. Terry James commented that Anthony was a fine poet and Poetry Workshop members will miss him. (This is a sentiment that I am sure is shared by all those who met him. - Ed)

A Moment of Reconciliation

Anthony Roberts

I STOOD under a tree; between its branches
I could see stars sparkling,
vivid pin-pricks in the dark grey
of the louring November sky.
Nearby the college lights glowed yellow
and street lamps, each with its orange halo
stretched into the distance. I could hear
the chirp of benighted sparrows, the muted roar
of a passing car, the wail of an ambulance siren.
It seemed to me this was a moment of vision,
that I knew now the answer,
staring up through the pattern of branches
into the huge night sky, that eternally
embraces everything terrestrial.

W.F & F.G Froud Memorial Competition 2006

Judge's Report:

It was a very difficult task to choose three winners from, the sixty two entries submitted. I tried to read the stories from the perspective of a child in the age group 7-12. As I have been teaching primary school children for the past forty years I hope I have some insight into what type of story would appeal to them. After much deliberation I chose three very different stories as the winning entries.

First Prize - Jim the Genie and the Gyrocopter (Pen name Terry Sack-ville) Lesley Wilkie, Overdale, 8 Mill Street, Hutton, Drifffield, East Yorkshire, YO25 9PU.

This story began well, the code 3L2 RIP would get the children interested straight away. Children in this age group love codes. I like the way the author used modern language ---Boss instead of Master Gyrocopter instead of helicopter Rootput, the magic computer. Children would enjoy the use of names such as Rumblestripskin who was in charge of road safety Nautella who looks after safety at sea, Astroleda who brings out the stars at night and Nimbusto who paints pictures in the clouds. I thought these names were very clever and informative. Boys especially would like the connection with sport-the changing of the helicopter's colours from those of Manchester United to Hull city. I feel that this story would be read and enjoyed by most 7-12 year olds-

Second Prize - Adventure on the Great North Road (Pen name Mary Bryder) Mrs Joan Lewis, 17 The Green, Corby Glen, Grantham. NG33 4NP

This story is very well written and brings the children back in an unusual way to the world of stagecoaches and highwaymen. They would enjoy the transformation of Jane and Jeremy from gameboy playing kids in the back of the car to the frilly shirted boy and the girl with a long dress and bonnet who called their parents Mama and papa. The clever use of words such as victuals, abigail, truckie and tankard add a real historical flavour to the story. Children would enjoy the excitement of the highwayman with his great cry of "Stand and

Deliver". In the end we are left wondering where the guinea in Jeremy's hand came from. This story would be enjoyed especially by the older age group of 10-12 years.

Third Prize - Lavinia (Pen name Diana) Diane Shaw, IA Moss St., Weaverham, Cheshire, CW8 3MB

All children love mobile phones and texting so the opening line- Great holiday CU 2 morrow would have them, interested straight away. There is a good description of the airport and the flight- most children go on foreign holidays and could identify with the crowds, delayed flights, customs etc. and how many of us, like Daniel make up stories about the strangers we see around us. The story moves on to when the children arrive back home. A few days pass, then their house is burgled and Millie's bear Lavinia is missing. Children would enjoy the excitement and drama when Lavinia is found with her tummy full of diamonds.

Highly Commended

One Good Turn (Pen name Pamela) by Pamela Morrison of Maidstone, Kent

Granddad's Big Word (pen name Piglet) by Stephen Bibby, Squirrel's Leap, Woodacott, Silchester RG7 2NY

Animal Fortune by Tom Bryston, 7 Abercorn Gardens, Kenton, Harrow, RA3 0PB

All of the stories were very interesting and their overall standard was very high.

Thank you for given me the honour of judging the competition.

Gloria O'Grady

Jim the Genie and the Gyrocopter

Leslie Wilkie

It was Christmas night and Peter lay thinking about his Christmas presents. His favourite was a big red helicopter. On the side it had a series of numbers and letters and Peter had asked his parents what they meant. His father said it was a pattern number so that the man in the toyshop could order one for another little boy but Peter was sure that there was a different explanation.

He fell asleep thinking about that number ... 3L2RIP... What could it mean? As he slept, Peter could see himself standing by the helicopter. It had a handle on the side that he tried to turn to the right. It wouldn't move. He tried again, but this time he turned it to the left and it moved. Then he heard a voice say, "3L2RIP ... three left, two right and one push." He turned the handle as instructed and pushed and immediately found himself sitting inside the helicopter alongside the pilot.

"Yes, boss," said the pilot.

"Boss?" queried Peter.

"You're the boss and I'm Jim the Genie," said the pilot.

"If you're a genie shouldn't you say "yes, master?" Peter asked.

"Oh that's out of date. When we modernised, "master" went out with the magic lamp and the flying carpet."

"Is that why you have a helicopter now?"

"It's not a helicopter, it's a Gyrocopter," replied Jim.

"What's the difference?"

"A helicopter is what humans use to fly around in. It cannot fly through walls and buildings but my Gyrocopter can, it's magic. It can take you anywhere you want in a flash. Just tell me where you want to go."

"Can I bring Ian?" asked Peter.

"Who's that?" said Jim.

"My brother."

“Only if he believes in Father Christmas, pink elephants and yellow spotted jelly,” replied Jim.

Peter looked worried. “I don’t think he knows about the jelly.”

“Don’t worry,” said Jim, “I was only joking, of course he can come.”

He clapped his hands and in an instant Ian was sitting beside them, a puzzled expression on his face.

“Where am I?” he asked.

Jim the Genie patiently explained about the magic helicopter again and asked once more where they wanted to go.

“Bridlington beach,” said Ian.

“Okay,” said Jim, “let’s see what the Rootpute has to say.”

“What’s a Rootpute?” asked Ian.

“It’s a sort of magic computer that helps me find places.”

“But if you’re a genie, you don’t need a computer,” said Peter.

“Of course I do, I’m a genie not a genius.”

Just then Rootpute spoke from the instrument panel above their heads.

“Turn right to Ely Cathedral then left and follow star route one to Bridlington.”

“Okay,” said Jim and the gyrocopter immediately took off.

In an instant they were hovering over a deserted Bridlington beach. It was snowing outside. Jim asked the brothers what they wanted to do. Peter wanted to build a snowman but Ian said he would like to paddle and build sandcastles. In a flash Jim arranged for one part of the beach to be bathed in warm summer sunshine for Ian, whilst making sure that there was ample snow for Peter in another area. Jim himself settled on a carpet in the warm sunshine. The carpet hovered a few inches above the ground. Seeing this, Peter said, “I thought the magic carpet had been replaced by the gyrocopter,”

“Yes, that’s true,” replied Jim. “We had to trade them in when we got the gyrocopters but mine was so bad they wouldn’t accept it in part exchange. It failed its test - it would hover okay but had lost forward movement. It’s handy for lying around on though.”

“You said, we had to trade them in, how many genies are there?”

“Lots,” replied Jim. “I’m a general duties genie and we are the majority but there are plenty of specialist genies.”

“What does that mean?” Peter asked.

“Specialist? - oh, that’s when a genie has a particular job he has to work at, for instance there’s Rumblestripskin, can you guess what his job is?”

‘don’t you mean RumplestiltskinT”

“No, it’s definitely Rumblestripskin. He concentrates on road safety, he’s named after those lines painted across roads that warn car drivers to slow down.”

“How many more are there?” said Peter.

“Lots and lots, too many for me to remember them all but I did see Nautella when we landed on the beach.”

“Nautella?”

“Yes, she looks after safety at sea. Her job is to warn children to be careful at the seaside. Astroleda brings the stars out at night whilst Nimbusto paints pictures in the clouds.”

“Can you paint?” asked Peter.

“Not really,” replied Jim. “I can make things change colour but for really good painting you need the Rainbow Genie. Why do you ask?”

“Well, it’s the colour of your gyrocopter, I don’t like it.”

“But I had it painted in Manchester United colours because I thought all boys supported them,” Jim protested.

“No, I support Hull City.”

After half an hour they took off again, this time in a black-and-amber-coloured machine.

“Can we go somewhere else?” Ian asked.

“Fantasy time is running out,” said Jim the Genie. “It’s time to return home now but we can go wherever you like another day.”

“I think I’d like to go to Disneyland,” said Peter.

“Alton Towers, the London Eye, no, I know - Legoland,” exclaimed Ian.

“I’m tired,” said Peter yawning.

“Right,” said Jim. “I know where all tired little boys should be at this time of night - tucked up in bed.”

The following morning, Peter’s mother stood looking at the helicopter with a puzzled look on her face. Eventually she said, “I’m sure that flying machine was red yesterday.”

His father looked at the black-and-amber-coloured helicopter and said, “Well it can’t have changed overnight. “

Peter and Ian grinned at each other. They knew better.

W. F. & F. G. Froud Memorial Competition 2006 – 2nd Prize

Adventure on the Great North Road

Joan Lewis

Jeremy knew about the A1. His Mum said it could be a good fast road when she wanted to get to Grandma’s quickly. Dad said it could be a swine when there were road works or an accident. Mum said Dad shouldn’t say words like that in front of the children. Why not, thought Jeremy, it only meant pigs, didn’t it? And it was in the Bible.

He and his sister Jane were in the back of the car, playing with their Game Boys, while Dad drove fast and Mum watched the speedometer. Jeremy was growing bored with his game. The day was cold and grey and it would soon be dark.

Suddenly there was the squeal of brakes, his Dad swore, his Mum cried out and there was an awful bang.

Jeremy looked at Jane. Shocked, he saw she was wearing a long dress, not her jeans, and what he thought was a bonnet. The dress and the bonnet were pink, with ribbons.

“What are you staring at, Jeremy?” she asked. He was about to say “your funny clothes” when he looked down at himself. Where had his jeans gone? He was wearing trousers of that furry stuff that ladies’ posh dresses were sometimes made of - and they were purple of all colours! His tee shirt had gone and in its place was a shirt with a frill down the front and over that, a jacket of the same furry stuff.

Jane, what's happened?"

"I don't know what you mean, Jeremy. Nothing is happening. We're sitting in this boring coach being bounced about, as always when we go to see Grandmother in Yorkshire."

"Coach?" shrieked Jeremy, "where's Dad's car?"

"What's a car?" asked his sister. "Papa always takes us by the Mail, you know that. He sits outside because he enjoys it, but Mama is asleep as usual."

Jeremy sat up and looked around him. They were in a sort of carriage, like they had in museums, and the noise going through his head wasn't cars whooshing by but the clip-clop of horses' hooves. It was dark and he couldn't see much, just swaying trees. But the biggest surprise was Mum. She was asleep - her face looked the same but her hair was long and she was wearing a bonnet even more ridiculous than Jane's - it was standing up about six inches above her forehead. He couldn't see her clothes for the rug over her but she wasn't wearing sandals - her shoes were boots, with buttons up the side.

"Mum, what's going on? Are you all right? We all look different

The lady opposite him opened her eyes and glared at him.

"How dare you waken me, Jeremy, you know I must sleep on these journeys or be very sick."

"But, Mum"

"Why are you using such a vulgar expression? You know very well you should call me Mama. What Papa will think of your behaviour when I tell him that you have been impolite and have dared to waken me?"

Jeremy muttered "sorry" and sank back into the dark corner of the coach. He thought everyone had gone mad. Or was he dreaming? He pinched himself but it made no odds. He was still being jolted about with his mother and his sister in fancy dress in a very old vehicle and his Dad was apparently travelling outside, on top, he supposed, next to the coachman, as he'd seen in old films. He realised with a start that in the other corner sat another dark figure, a woman, he thought.

He could see some lights now but they weren't streetlights. Men seemed to be running about with lighted branches and there was a lot

of shouting. He jumped at the deafening sound of a horn and the coach rattling over a stony surface,

“The George, Grantham!” came the cry and the door opened. His father, in a floor length coat of dark green and a tall hat, stood there.

“All well?” he asked and put out his hand to help his wife. She started to complain about Jeremy but his father said heartily that they were all tired and hungry and they really needed a rest and some dinner. A little man in strange clothes lifted Jane down and then gave a hand to Jeremy.

“There you are, young sir,” he said “into the warm with you now.” He led the way into a building that Jeremy supposed was a sort of pub, or a hotel, as they followed his parents into a room lit by candles and a roaring fire. On the way in he’d noticed lots of coaches. Whatever was going on?

A landlord with white whiskers came and took his father’s order for some wine, lemonade and small victuals, whatever they were. Why wasn’t he asking for beer, Coca Cola and sausage and chips? He said “Dad” and was promptly told not to be rude.

“You call me Papa, my son, as you’ve been taught. Is that how you were being disrespectful to your Mama? You’re lucky I do not send you to bed without your supper.”

Jeremy sat very quietly. He looked from one to another of his family in despair - they were his family, he was sure, but what had happened to them? He daren’t ask his father where the car had gone for fear of going without supper, although he couldn’t help wondering what on earth he’d be given to eat.

He soon found out. His eyes popped as a girl in a long dress and a big white apron brought in a leg of lamb, and two chickens, and some unknown vegetables and then went back for bowls of fruit and plates of jam tarts. These looked quite good, he thought, like Grandma makes. His father carved and they all ate a large supper and then, to Jeremy’s astonishment, he and Jane were told to accompany Mama and the abigail up to their rooms, as it was bedtime. Jeremy forgot he’d been told off twice already and said loudly, “What’s an abigail?”

His mother took him roughly by the arm and, marching him upstairs, said that he knew very well that Bessie was their maid and that she would sleep in their room to make sure they didn't wander.

"In our room?" he said. And sure enough, when they got into a room with a fairly big bed and a sort of camp bed at the foot of it, his mother said they were to get undressed and get into bed, and to give Bessie no trouble. She said "Goodnight and God bless you" and went downstairs.

Bessie helped Jane out of her dress and into bed and turned towards Jeremy. He ducked and said "you're not undressing me!" Bessie laughed and said "No, Master Jeremy, you're too old for that, but take off your jacket, do, and hop into bed with your sister. Be a good boy, now."

As he was being allowed to keep his trousers on, Jeremy thought he'd do as she asked. Everything was so strange it didn't surprise him when Bessie lay down in her outdoor clothes on the camp bed, which she said was the "truckle". They all fell asleep quickly.

The sun shining through the little windows woke Jeremy and Jane early next morning. Bessie was already up and fussing with bowls of water.

"You're to come here and be washed, Master and Miss," she said. Jane went to her and Jeremy thought of arguing but at that moment there was a great shout below the window and he looked out. There was a figure on horseback and this time Jeremy did know what the man was - he'd seen pictures of highwaymen. He thought they always worked at night but here was one with a mask over his face in broad daylight. The man strode into the inn and came out with a big joint of ham, which he put in his saddlebag, and a tankard. He drank from the tankard and then passed it to the landlord, waved his hat and rode off. The landlord looked up at Jeremy and said, "You never saw that man, do you hear, young man?"

Jeremy drew back from the window and consented quietly to having his face washed. The door opened and his father came in.

"Good," he said, "up and dressed. We must hurry to breakfast, the next Mail is due." They followed him down the stairs and joined their mother, Jeremy looked at the great ham on the table and lots of eggs, and some fish, and although it was all very strange, he made a good breakfast.

Soon he and Jane were sitting, as before, on padded seats in a carriage drawn by four horses, opposite his mother and Bessie. His mother went to sleep again and Bessie kept nodding. Jeremy and Jane looked out of the windows but there wasn't much to see - just fields and more fields, although the coachman had said this was the Great North Road. Jeremy was sure that was what the AI used to be called and began to wonder what had happened to them all.

He, too, was nodding off when there was a great cry of "Stand and Deliver"; the coachman shouted "I'll fire on ye!" and his father's voice said, "Now look here, my man, none of your nonsense". His mother woke up and she and Bessie started to wail. The door of the coach was wrenched open and the masked man said, quite nicely, "Your jewellery, if you please, My Lady," His mother quickly handed over her bracelets and rings, and the box that had been on Bessie's lap. Jeremy heard his father objecting but when the highwayman fired his gun in the air he became very quiet and handed over his purse,

Jeremy watched the man for a minute and then said, without thinking, "I saw you at the inn this morning, you had ham and beer." His parents both said, "Hush, what nonsense, of course you didn't".

The man looked at Jeremy and said "Ah, then I'd better take you with me, hadn't I?" He pulled Jeremy out of the coach just as the coachman hit him over the head with his whip. It slowed him down a bit and then he laughed out loud.

"Well, my young gentleman, I shan't kidnap you after all. If you forget you've seen me I'll give you a guinea!" And with that he pushed the coachman, Jeremy and his father down on the grass and jumped on his horse. He was well in the distance before Jeremy rolled over and sat up.

"Thank goodness you've come round, son," said his father, in his ordinary voice. Jeremy looked at his Dad, who was in his ordinary clothes. His mother and Jane were hovering in the background. They were in jeans and tee shirts and sandals, as they had been before. Jeremy blinked at everything and then said "Where's the coach?"

His father replied he knew nothing about a coach, only that a van had cut in front of him and caused the crash.

"Crash?" asked Jeremy. He looked around again and saw their car, all smashed up. A policeman was talking to two men and another was

directing the A1 traffic round the accident. Jeremy looked at his parents and his sister.

“Don’t you remember the Mail coach and the highwayman?” He asked. They looked a bit worried and shook their heads.

“You’ve had a bang on the head,” said his Mum, “the ambulance will be here soon. I expect you dreamed that. Don’t worry; the doctors will sort you out.”

Jeremy wanted to argue with them but he could see that they didn’t remember where they’d all been. He’d have to let them believe he’d imagined it all.

But the guinea in his hand proved they were wrong, didn’t it?

W. F. & F. G. Froud Memorial Competition 2006 – 3rd Prize

Lavinia

Diana Shaw

“Great holiday! C U 2 morrow”

Daniel selected “ok” and within seconds, his message to his friend was winging its way across the Atlantic.

He had been saving up for his new mobile phone and for a holiday present Mum and Dad had paid the difference! Six-year-old Millie on the other hand, had chosen Lavinia.

At first Millie had been unable to decide on a name for her little bear. It was rather unusual, being a delicate shade of lavender instead of brown, so an unusual name was needed. It was Mum who noticed the writing on the little card around the bear’s neck. “Lavinia - the lavender scented bear.” So it was decided!

The departure lounge was so crowded with passengers that the family had been lucky to find seats. Their flight was already delayed by one hour.

“I’m thirsty!” moaned Millie.

“Come on then,” said Dad. “Let’s go and buy some drinks for everyone.”

Mum smiled then returned to her magazine, while Daniel was absorbed in watching the planes through the huge window.

“How do you fancy iced lemonade?”

Daniel swung round.

“Oh! Thanks Dad.”

They were all enjoying the cool drinks when Millie said slowly,

“Where’s Lavinia ?”

“Didn’t you take her with you?” asked Mum.

“No!” cried Millie, becoming agitated, I left her on the seat next to you!”

“Don’t get upset, she can’t be far away!” Mum rummaged in the bag at her feet. “Perhaps she’s fallen in here!”

Down on his hands and knees, Daniel searched under the seats, but there was no sign of the little bear.

Millie was inconsolable. They all did their best. Dad retraced their walk to and from the drink’s counter just in case.

“Excuse me.”

They all turned round from trying to comfort Millie. Daniel recognised a woman with long dark hair who had been sitting close to them earlier.

She smiled. “Has the little girl lost this?” she asked, holding out Lavinia. It was on the floor over there.” She pointed behind her vaguely.

Millie stopped crying immediately.

“Thank goodness,” said Mum. Thank you so much!”

“Glad to be of help,” the woman said handing the bear to a delighted Millie. Then she turned away and quickly disappeared into the crowd.

“British Airways flight B.A. 3761 for London Heathrow is now boarding at gate 11.”

At last.

Pleased to be on their way once more, the family joined the trail of people snaking slowly forward towards the doors and the waiting plane. Millie clutched Lavinia as if her life depended on it. She was not going to lose her again. But one thing was puzzling Daniel; how

had the bear ended up on the other side of the lounge, nowhere near the drinks counter?

He didn't mind Millie having first turn in the window seat. He sat next to the aisle and watched the rest of the passengers board. He could not help himself. As people settled in their seats, he began playing the game; making up stories in his head about the strangers around him.

“That man over there, for instance, pretending to do the crossword in the newspaper. He just had to be a foreign agent in disguise! (That surely could not be a real beard)” Daniel decided he must be deciphering a coded message!

He turned his attention to the small, sad-faced boy sitting across the aisle next to a cross looking woman with pointed features.

“Who could they be? The child was an orphan with no one to care for him but a wicked aunt!”

Just then, Daniel became aware of a conversation going on two rows behind the “orphan.” It sounded like an argument conducted in half whispers. He could see the angry face of the man as he turned to face a woman sitting sideways with her back to the aisle. She looked familiar. The couple fell silent. Turning round in her seat the woman opened a magazine. Daniel could see her quite clearly now. He was right; it was the person who had found Lavinia. He wondered why they had been arguing.

“ Daniel! Dreaming again,” laughed Mum. She adjusted the tray on the back of the seat in front of him.

As the hostess passed along the meals, he suddenly realised how hungry he felt, his game of people watching could wait for the time being!

Next there was a film to watch, until he could no longer keep his eyes open

When Daniel awoke he took his turn in the window seat and he was still there, looking out, when the plane touched down at Heathrow airport.

As they crossed the short stretch of tarmac, he took out his mobile.

“I’ll take a photo,” he said. “We can have the plane in the background.”

They were waiting by the carousel for their last piece of luggage to appear when the woman walked past and smiled at Millie.

“Take good care of that bear!” she said.

Millie nodded and hugged Lavinia to her.

Just then, a rather odd thing happened. Daniel was sure she *pretended* to stumble. She steadied herself against their trolley and, for a few seconds, seemed to be staring at the suitcase that was already loaded. Then all was back to normal again as she walked away. Perhaps he had imagined it.

Customs next. Thankfully, the family were waved quickly through. Daniel noticed that some people had not been so fortunate. He passed a desk, there were the man and woman again, and they were having their cases searched! As the family walked on, Daniel felt an uncanny urge to look back. The man was staring straight at him!

Dad pushed the trolley out through the automatic doors towards the car park. They had to take the lift to level four and it was about fifteen minutes before the luggage was safely stowed in the car boot and everyone was strapped in and ready for the short journey home.

Daniel could not wait to show his friend, Ben his new mobile. Other thoughts of strangers and odd happenings were soon banished to the back of his mind.

The weekend passed and the children returned to school. Their holiday in America was just happy memories.

It was Tuesday afternoon. Mum collected Daniel and Millie from school. They were just turning into their avenue when a red car came roaring towards them causing Mum to break in alarm.

“Madman!” she shrieked.

Daniel’s stomach turned a double somersault. It wasn’t the sudden jerk of the car; for a split second, he had glimpsed the face of the driver and he recognised him!

Mum stopped the car on their drive, still muttering about reckless driving as they climbed out. Millie was the first to reach the front door.

It's open!" she cried.

Mum grabbed her arm and held her back.

"You two stand there," she said quietly as she stepped forward and gave the door a push.

They could see quite clearly up the hallway. At first glance, all seemed well. Mum entered cautiously.

"Oh no!" she cried. Daniel was beside her in a second. Beyond the hall, through the lounge doorway, they could see things scattered around; the room was a tip!

Mum's hand was trembling as she held the phone.

"We've been burgled," she told the policeman on the other end.

Very little had been taken; some spare cash from the bureau, a necklace Mum was sure she had left on the table and a few other bits and pieces of little value. The officer who called seemed puzzled.

"Hardly worth the bother of breaking in," he said.

Upstairs, nothing seemed to have been disturbed. They were standing in the kitchen having a cup of tea when Millie gave a cry and came running from her bedroom. Something *had* been overlooked.

"Lavinia's gone!" she wailed. "She's not on my bed!"

No one could believe it. The bear was definitely missing but whoever would have taken it and why?

Daniel remembered the car that had passed them on their way in.

'do you think it was the burglar?" he suggested.

Mum had to agree that it seemed suspicious.

The police officer was interested. "Can you describe the car?" he asked.

"It was a red BMW," Mum said.

Then Daniel remembered the driver's face.

"I think it was someone we saw at the airport," he said.

Dad looked a bit doubtful. He knew all about Daniel's vivid imagination.

“Well,” said the officer, “If any thing else comes to mind, please get in touch.”

It was later that evening when Daniel jumped up from his chair in excitement.

“Look!” he said.

There was the photo on his mobile: Mum, Dad and Millie with the plane in the background; but there was something else. Just behind the group and slightly to one side a man could be seen clearly and half of the woman walking beside him.

“He was driving that car this afternoon!”

Daniel seemed so convinced that Dad agreed to pass the information on to the police. Two days later, they were just sitting down to tea when the telephone rang.

“We’ve all been asked to go to the police station,” Dad said curiously.

They gathered round the big table in the inspector’s office.

“I wanted you all to come,” he said, “because this concerns all of you!”

With that, he opened a drawer and took out several objects that the family recognised. Last of all, he placed on the table a small lavender coloured bear.

“Lavinia!” shrieked Millie in excitement reaching out for her favourite toy. The inspector smiled.

“Just a moment,” he said, picking up the little bear. “There’s something I must show you.”

He turned Lavinia over to reveal a gaping hole where the seam down her back had been carefully unpicked. Millie turned to Mum almost in tears. “don’t worry,” the inspector said. “She will soon be as good as new, but look!”

He carefully removed a small package from inside the bear and, opening it, he tipped out a little heap of something that sparkled brightly!

“Oh!” cried Mum.

“Diamonds?” said Dad in astonishment.

“Exactly,” agreed the inspector.

Daniel just stared at the glittering jewels, all sorts of questions racing around inside his head.

“When we saw the photo on Daniel’s camera” began the inspector, “we recognised the man straight away. He and his companion had been under surveillance for some time. Together with what Daniel told us, we were able to arrest them on suspicion of burglary. When we found Lavinia at their house, they knew the game was up and confessed to everything. I understand the bear went missing for a while at the airport? Well that was when the diamonds were planted inside her.” He turned to Millie.

“So that is how you and your little bear became international diamond smugglers!”

Millie looked worried for a moment until everyone burst out laughing.

“They could not risk being searched,” the inspector went on. “They were pretty sure that a family like you would not be stopped by the customs officers. The only thing was, *they* were stopped and their plan to snatch the bear before you left the airport was foiled.”

“But how did they know where we live?” Daniel began, and then his mind flashed back to the incident at the airport when the woman had pretended to trip. She must have read their address on the luggage label!

“Now that we have the criminals in custody,” the inspector continued, “I would like to thank Daniel for his excellent detective work!”

Lavinia was soon repaired and safely returned to Millie’s bedroom where she now has her own little bed to sleep in: a special present from the police.

As for Daniel, well he is still talking about his VIP day at the police station. He even went out in a patrol car! Now he just can’t wait until he is old enough to join the force!

Testing, Testing

Terry Rickson

The organisation which many of us knew as “the Civil Service,” has changed a great deal in recent years. One of the areas most affected by change, I suspect, is that of recruitment and entry. I was reminded of this when searching the loft of my house recently and coming across a dusty, faded green folder; I recognised it immediately. The folder contained various exam. papers, ranging from the General Certificate of Education, known universally as “School Cert,” to other items including test papers for Civil Service exam’s set by the Civil Service Commission.

I sat the Clerical Officer Open Competitive Examination in 1950. The exams were conducted in the Chenil Galleries, Chelsea. Living as I did then in North Middlesex, Chelsea was terra incognita, as far as I was concerned but I made it - for four days!

The exam’s comprised, four English papers, composition, précis, English Literature and handwriting, Arithmetic, History, Geography, French and a General Paper. I think there was an Intelligence Test as well (no funny remarks, thank you!). If my memory serves me correctly, other subjects on offer, included Biology and Botany and for languages, German, Spanish, Welsh and Latin. The time allowed for the papers varied from, twenty minutes for the handwriting test and from one to two hours for other subjects. This not surprising when questions ranged from such things as, “Explain the purpose of the Royal Academy.....”, “studying a portion of an Ordnance Survey map, find evidence that the hills west of Eastbourne are composed of porous rock” or translating from English into French - this latter, every school-child’s worst nightmare!

I passed. Thanks, I’ve always thought, to having taken the School Cert. that summer and the lucky choice of my three best subjects, History, Geography and English.

I look at the papers and questions now and ponder, “God, I don’t think I could answer a bloody thing!”

Winning entry in the 2005 Travel Article Competition

Winchester Experience

James Lancaster

I placed my hands against the cool stone face of Winchester's Westgate and sensed its durability; a rugged medieval version of the Arc de Triomphe. Through its archway I saw the length of High Street, then beyond, the greenery of St. Giles' Hill. For durable it has proved to be; historic Winchester, formerly capital of ancient Wessex, and for 200 years before the Norman Conquest, capital of England. Moreover, within comfortable walking distance there is evidence bearing testimony to the story of this fine cathedral city.

Alfred the Great was Winchester's most famous citizen, and on becoming king made it his capital city. Now with sword and shield, his statue looks down over the present-day scene. The visitor's Guide Book contains details of a suggested walk and prominent among the recommended sights is the only remaining part of the castle, the Great Hall built in the 13th century. The legendary King Arthur is remembered here, and a Round Table bearing a painting of him dressed in Tudor robes hangs like a giant dart board high up on the rough stone wall. At the castle in William the Conqueror's day, his great Domesday Book survey was kept.

A building miniature in comparison, is St. Swithun-upon-Kingsgate. Kingsgate is the other of two surviving city gates and St. Swithun's one of few churches remaining from the Middle Ages which were built over a city gateway. Here I ascended stone steps leading up to the church, which above the archway, quaintly joins both sides of the street together. It is dedicated to the Winchester-born saint and as I paused in thoughtful meditation in this tiny church above the street, I experienced the sensation of being enclosed in a bygone age.

Through the supporting archway of St. Swithun's, the Wykeham Arms is seen; named after Bishop William of Wykeham, founder of Winchester College. Furnished with old desks and memorabilia from the college, it is a popular meeting place, holds a unique atmosphere within its walls, and is recommended whenever good food and drink, and courteous service are sought.

On an adjacent wall I read the nameplate - College Street - and walked alongside buildings enhanced on this summer day by the sunlit

foliage of nearby trees. At number eight I stopped to read a plaque set above the doorway of a three-story house. It was to here in May 1817 that novelist Jane Austen came to rent rooms in order to be near her physician. There was however to be no cure for her kidney disease, and in the early hours of July 18th she died at the age of 41.

To one side of College Street lies the cathedral close, while to the rear is Winchester College. With the longest unbroken history of any school in the country -over 600 years - past pupils such as Lord Wavell, formerly successful Field Marshall during world War II, and later Viceroy of India, are remembered here with pride. Overlooking colleges and quadrangle stands the chapel tower.

Demanding attention above the city roof-tops is Winchester Cathedral. Building began in 1079 to replace Old Minster. Over 100 years earlier when Old Minster itself was being enlarged, Bishop Swithun's grave - which at his request had been outside the building - was opened so that his remains could be re-interred indoors. But on July 15th 971, rain intervened and continued for forty days. So was born the legend which still causes us to look anxiously skywards on that date in July.

Thomas Hardy set the telling conclusion to his novel *Tess of the D'urbervilles* in Winchester. From a distance he describes the city below, much as it might be seen today when he writes of; "the broad cathedral tower, with its Norman windows and immense length of aisle and nave, the spires of St. Thomas's, the pinnacled tower of the college, and more to the right the tower and gables of the ancient hospice, where to this day the pilgrim may receive his dole of bread and ale".

When inside the cathedral I found it was indeed that "Immense length of aisle and nave" that immediately impressed. In another story, Hardy humorously refers to; "the dry dustiness which ultimately pervades the persons of kings and bishops (*whose tombs are inside the cathedral*) with the damper dustiness that is usually the final shape of commoners, curates, and others who take their last rest out of doors".

Among those whose dry and dusty remains are kept in labelled mortuary chests is the Danish King Canute. Saint Swithun now has a more ornate memorial erected in 1962 - this for a bishop who had wished to be buried outdoors with his parishioners.

My progress along the north aisle was halted when I came to the grave of Jane Austen. The solid slab at my feet marked her final resting place, and here I read an inscription portraying a humility that belied her stature in the field of literature. Perhaps fittingly the finest tomb in its chantry chapel, is that of William of Wykeham, for 38 years Bishop of Winchester, and founder of the college. He is remembered within a cathedral which owes much of its splendour to this learned and influential man.

During the day, tours are led up the tower, Our guide advised that in places the narrowness of the way could be claustrophobic. As the climb began up worn and winding stone steps he joked; “this is like a motorway compared with what comes later!” He was right, and further progress found shoulders brushing against the stonework to each side. Relief arrived when a doorway was reached which opened to the roof. From behind the safety of the parapet, some idea was acquired of the view which was yet to come. Here it was limited because of the nearness of steep roof and broad tower above.

The final ascent was approached with confidence, and when emerging again, this time onto the tower’s flat roof, all agreed the climb had been fully justified. Below lay the compact city, its clock towers and other landmarks awaiting identification, while on every side the Hampshire countryside basked in the August sun.

I had still to see the memorial to a man “who saved the cathedral with his own hands”. Strange to relate, this accolade goes to a deep sea diver. During the years 1906 to 1912, when parts of the structure were in danger of collapse, the entire cathedral was underpinned and work had to be carried out below the water table. With some respect, I paused to consider, that for his heroic achievement, William Walker will be forever remembered within these walls, among the great and noble of the land.

Writers other than Hardy found Winchester to be a place of inspiration. While living in Colebrook Street, John Keats was writing the memorable Ode to Autumn. By following the route of his daily walk, alongside the leisurely-flowing River Itchen, and across the water meadows, I understand how such inspiration came.

The paths lead to St. Cross Hospital, a secluded medieval almshouse which still provides a home for retired clergymen. Here amid flower-filled greenery is tranquillity. The Brothers wearing either

black or magenta gowns go quietly about their daily routine, or sit one with another on the wooden seats about the grounds, to rest contentedly in their retirement.

After walking in the Master's Garden, seeing the Brethren's Hall, then marvelling at the arrangement of utensils required in a kitchen of former times, I entered the church. Such size and splendour takes the visitor by surprise. On this day, the sun, through clear glass windows high in the structure, illuminated the vaulted roof, and spread light over pillars, arches, and alcoves, to finally rest on the ornate carvings and craftsmanship of the pulpit.

It is generally accepted that author Anthony Trollope had St. Cross Hospital in mind when writing about the lives of retired clergy in his delightful novel, *The Warden*. Others in The Barchester series followed, which portrayed life among the society of a small cathedral town. Then here, even as Thomas Hardy wrote in 1891; "to this day the pilgrim may receive his dole of bread and ale." To partake of this age-old tradition, is to momentarily slow down the pace of today's onrushing world, and reflect that long ago, there really was another time, another place.

The area around Winchester offers many interesting places to visit. I sought out that historic spot on the sweeping South Downs; the cricket field of Broadha'penny Down at Hambledon. Here as a cricket enthusiast I paid homage to a stone monument which marks the birthplace of the English game, then walked from the small thatched pavilion and out over the hallowed turf, among the ghosts of England's cricketing past. Across the road at the *Bat and Ball* pub with its mementoes of the historic game, a glass of cider and a friendly welcome, brought me very much back to the present.

From the quaintness of this picturesque cricket field, there can be found in the village of West Meon, a connection with what is agreed to be the finest of all grounds. A clue is in the name of the local inn; *The Thomas Lord*; the link being, that the founder of the world-famous ground at St.

Johns Wood in London is buried in the churchyard here. His table-tomb is maintained by MCC members, whose headquarters are at Lord's Cricket Ground.

A fascinating introduction to "Soilless Horticulture" is promised at Houghton Lodge, an attractive house set in equally attractive gardens.

I wandered through these gardens of varying themes, admiring many artistic examples of topiary and eventually came to the bank of the River Test. The white-walled house with distinctive roof and chimneys is popular with film makers, and at the river's edge a wooden landing stage erected for use in *The Buccaneers*, is now, with seating provided, a pleasant amenity. Growing Fuchsias is a speciality here, and I looked on in admiration at the many greenhouses filled with cascades of colour from these popular flowering shrubs.

But then to the rarity of a Hydroponicum, where growing without soil is explained. The intricately devised watering system, together with crystals of a particular nature in place of soil, are an essential part of this specialised procedure. A package is available to buy, containing all that is needed for anyone wishing to create an impression back home - growing tomatoes without soil.

Having seen the house in College Street where after a brief stay Jane Austen died, and read the moving inscription on the slab covering her grave in Winchester Cathedral, it seemed a happier note should be struck by visiting the family home. This is situated near Alton in the Hampshire village of Chawton, a setting which Jane, sister Cassandra, and Mrs. Austen found much to their liking when they arrived in July 1809. I too found the setting equally delightful. A lawned garden with shrubs and borders surrounds the property, while tall trees set at intervals add varying shades of green to the colours below.

Personal mementoes and documents are generously displayed in the rooms of the detached red-brick house, together with other material which helps to create more clearly those early nineteenth century days. A patchwork quilt Jane made with her mother and sister denotes the contented young woman of that time; similarly a pianoforte which she played, to began each day with music. From this house much of her work went out for publication, and nowadays reaches even greater audiences through film and television. Are there many who have not heard of Mr. Darcy?

From my visit to Winchester I gained an increased sense of well-being and optimism. I had seen here in Hampshire an impressive part of England's past; a preserved piece of ancient Wessex, unspoiled by present-day planners, which augurs well for it to remain a place of cultural eminence long into the future.

Continuing the History of Our Society: Competitions

Compiled by Beryl Jones

A valid argument for attracting new members has been by the use of competitions, and with this in mind the Society therefore launched its first competitions in June 1938. These were for the best poem, short story, one-act play and for the best review of any book published by a member during that year.

The poem was for a maximum of forty lines, whilst the short story had to be of six minutes reading length and to begin with a given sentence suggested by a Mr Purvey, a Society member.

The one-act play had to be of twenty/thirty minutes duration and the prizes were one guinea and half a guinea for each competition, with the exception of the book review where the prizes were two guineas and one guinea.

In October 1939 a short story competition was announced entitled "Missing from Home", 2,000 words maximum, and the prizes were one guinea, half a guinea and five shillings. It is not known who the winners of these early competitions were but in May of 1940 the poetry prize was won by a P. James for a poem entitled "Mr Dalglish".

Prizes of five guineas, two guineas, one guinea and twenty, 5/- book tokens were on offer for a short story competition announced in August 1942; and the six judges had a mammoth task reading through the large number of entries the competition attracted. One of the judges L. A. Pavey wrote at the time:

"It was notto be expected that the standard of so many stories sent in from all quarters would be a uniform onethey varied from excellent to poor. For the critic there was plenty of good solid fare, though much of it the confused feeding of a haggis. In the midstthe tit-bits and some really enjoyable dishes."

Ninety eight entries were received for the 1944 entries, the prizes of which were three guineas, two guineas, one guinea and ten merit awards of five shillings.

The competitions for 1945 saw a total of ninety five poems and seventy five stories. The short story prize was apparently won by a

Wm. R. Ormerod whilst Miss Kathleen Bird (later Kay McManus) won third prize. (In the October 1959 issue of the "Author" Miss Bird is credited as being the earliest competition winner on record.) In September of that same year Miss A. M. White donated a prize called "The Peter Jackson Book Prize" in memory of Peter, a published author, who was lost on the Dunedin in 1941 (see chapter entitled The Early Days.) The subject was a poem on any aspect of the sea and was won by Mr W. A. R. Mason (Assistance Board) and entitled "Men of the Little Ships."

In 1947 Lord Vansittart donated a prize of £25 for a novel written by an unpublished novelist. There were forty six entries and the winner was G. Calvert Miller for *Adela (A Tale of Roman Britain)*"; whilst the poetry competition for that year attracted over forty entries and was won by Doris Major with R.G. Murray and Leslie Harris second and third respectively.

A prize of ten pounds was offered in 1948 by James Laver for the best review of a book, which resulted in fourteen entries and was won by Ruth Collins and in 1949 the Society gave a prize of twenty pounds for the best book on a non-fiction subject. There were sixty entries for this competition which was won by Samuel McKechnie for his book entitled "Charles Lamb of the India House.,

During 1952 three members of the Society, George Farley, Eric Burgess and A. F. Ebert were given the task of drawing up a set of competition rules; whilst also during that year the Society once again donated a prize of twenty pounds for a novel of between 70,000 and 100,000 words. This competition was judged by literary agents Christy & Moore who reported that:-

"Although the general standard was high the number of entries was disappointing."

The winner was Madge Darby with "Windwhistle Hall". 1952 also saw the establishment of the first annual travel article competition sponsored by Vincent Brennan in memory of his wife. The first winner of this competition was I.O.Evans.

The Lewis Wright Short Story competition of 1953 attracted only six entries; the judges drawing the conclusion that entries were low because they had to have a coronation theme.

The prize for an essay entitled “The Civil Service and the Future” was withheld in 1956 when the three judges could not agree that any one entry deserved the prize. Some entrants failed to deal with the subject, whilst others broke the rules. Incidentally in 1959 a prize of five pounds offered by Peter Snaith for an essay of 2000 words entitled “The Changing Pattern of the Civil Service” was also withdrawn because the response was so poor. (A conclusion could be drawn here that Society members did not wish to write about their place of work.)

During 1955 the Society offered a prize of ten pounds for the first 10,000 words of a novel and a synopsis of the remainder. Unfortunately this competition attracted only fourteen entries but the winner was Leslie J. Hubbard; Mr Hubbard was also the winner the following year of the Bernard Newman prize. This was for a crime story entitled “The Duke and the Pineapple” and the judges commented at that time that:- “The number of entries was extremely disappointing and the standard was not very high.” In December the President of the Society, Sir George Rostrevor Hamilton offered an annual competition prize of five pounds, the subject of which would be decided each year. The theme for 1957/8 was “Town & Country” and the length limited to 2,000 WORDS. This competition continued until Sir George’s death in 1957.

In 1960 Dr. Mary Sheridan offered prizes of three guineas and two guineas for the best short story (3,000 words maximum) by Civil Servants and ex-Civil Servants who were not members of the Society. This competition drew eighty six entries and was won by H. Swift of Nottingham (War Dept.), whilst the runner up was Eric Messenger of York, also of the War Dept.

Also during this year the Chairman, Charles Neilson Gattey, allotted prizes of two guineas and one guinea for the best two letters giving “helpful and practical suggestions for increasing membership and improving the Society’s facilities.” There were ten entries with joint first prize winners - Miss Doris Leaper and Mrs Jane McWhirter, whilst joint second were Miss Gertrude Whitaker and Mr R.C.E. Lee. Miss Whitaker herself donated prizes of two guineas and one guinea for the best letter on “Flow and why I Joined the Society of Civil Service Authors.” The winner was D.G. Noakes and joint runners up were Mrs McWhirter and Miss P.R. Lee.

February 1963 saw the second short story competition for non-members with prizes of five, three and two guineas on offer. The results were apparently disappointing as only thirty five entries were received. The winners were (1) K. Owen, Pontypool (M.P.N.I.) (2) A. J. Kennett, Harrow Eald (Postmaster General's Office) (3) L.C.Allington, Ilford (P.O.Eng.Dept.) The Herbert Spencer Poetry competition for non-members was won by R. J. C. Darley (Inland Revenue) who was also the 1962 winner.

October 1964 was the closing date for entries for that year's annual competitions which were:- The Lewis Wright Short Story competition, The Herbert Spencer Poetry competition, The Madge Brennan Travel article, The George Farley Travel article, The Mary Sheridan prize (for a full length play) and the President's Prize which was won that year by Miss Isabel Winthrope (a previous winner in 1961.) The prizes for each competition were £5 whilst the entrance fee was 2/6d.

The following year Dr.Mary Sheridan donated a prize for novices, defined as:-

“A member of this Society who has never received payment for a short story, whether from an Editor or the B.B.C., or as a prize in a competition within our own competitions.”

The Herbert Spencer Poetry competition of that year attracted thirty entries and the winner was Miss Mary Codd for “Cows Under a Hedge.” However the judges felt that the general standard of entries was disappointing and hoped for better efforts in 1966. In total one hundred and twenty three entries were received in 1966 for the various competitions, and judging from the diverse comments, standards had indeed improved. i.e. The George Farley Humorous article “All entries could be classed as very good tries.” In summing up the best three entries for the Herbert Spencer Poetry competition the judges stated:- “Each conceives an emotional situation and expresses his/her impression with economy, clarity and grace.” The Madge Brennan Travel article:- “Entries wholly stimulating and full of interest.”

However 1967 once again saw a downturn in the calibre of entries for the Lewis Wright Short Story competition for which there were twenty one entries:- “Entries not particularly outstandingnot stories as such since they lack plot and consist of reportage or anecdotes.”

The President's Prize for that year, the last in the series, was presented by Lady Rostrevor Hamilton and was won by Miss Mary Codd.

The Herbert Spencer Poetry competition for 1968 had a total of sixty nine entries of various lengths and topics. "The humorous and satirical rubbing shoulders with grim and tragic poems." There was the thought that due to the large number and variety of the poems, future competitions might have to have a set subject and a limit on length. Between 1968/70 Alan Watts (then Editor of the C.S.A. Magazine) ran a number of mini-competitions with the aim of encouraging beginners to write, and hopefully see their work in a form of print.

In 1974 two further competitions were announced. The first being The Bernard Newman Memorial Competition for the best short spy story, not to exceed 3,000 words. The prize of ten pounds being given by Mrs Newman in memory of her husband, a former President of the Society; whilst a second prize of five pounds was donated by Mr Wilfred Sirrell a prominent member. The second competition was The Merseyside Competition with a prize of five pounds, for a personality piece of between 800/1200 words. When The Merseyside Civil Service Club was wound up in 1970, they donated five pounds to the Society and Alan Brack, who had been Secretary of the Merseyside Club, judged the entries. The winner of the Bernard Newman competition was Mrs S. Daniels of Cleethorps for "the Betrayal" and the winner of the Merseyside Competition was Miss S. Leather of Burnley for her article entitled "Jo's Jubilee".

The Society announced a short story competition in 1977 to celebrate the Queen's Silver Jubilee. The first prize of ten pounds was given by Mrs Newman and a second prize was once again donated by Mr Wilfred Sirrell. There were twenty one entries for this competition the winners being: (1) A. J. Jaroszkiewicz of Southend-on-Sea (2) Mrs Hilda Hickman of Deal, Kent. Both these winners incidentally were former "Writers of the Year".

The following year (1978) a competition was held for a Science Fiction short story in memory of the late Vice-President I.O.Evans (who was himself a former Writer of the Year.) The first prize of fifteen pounds was given by the Society and won by Victor Negus Moore with "Goodbye Deputy Commissar General". The second prize of ten pounds, donated by Mrs Evans, was won by Sylvia Daniels with

“The Stowaway”, and the third prize of five pounds, again donated by the Society, was won by James Brind with “The Beginning of the End”.

Early in 1980 the Society announced the C.P.Snow Novel competition with a prize of fifty pounds from Lord Snow, a second prize of thirty pounds from Mrs P. D. James and a third prize of fifteen pounds from the Society. Regrettably Lord Snow died on the 30th June of that year but it was the wish of Lady Snow that the competition should be held in memory of her husband.

For some years the Society had been holding six annual competitions and those for 1980 were as follows:

The Herbert Spencer Poetry Competition: Prize £10/-/- 57 entries. No restriction on theme but a limit of 30 lines.

The Lewis Wright Short Story Competition: Prize £10/-/- 67 entries. Maximum 3,000 words.

The George Farley Prize: Prize £10/-/- 19 entries. Humorous verse only.

The Vincent & Madge Brennan Travel Article: Prize £10/-/- 12 entries. maximum 3,000 words.

The Victoria Neilson Gattey Memorial Competition: Prize £10/-/- 14 entries. Theme - a short story Suitable for Radio 4's Afternoon Short Story programme. Length approximately 2,100 words.

The Mary Sheridan Prize: Prize £10/-/- 14 entries. Subject - a 15 minute radio play.

Although the subjects have varied slightly from year to year, the general pattern was that of the 1980 competitions. The judges, themselves successful authors, were chosen from members of the Committee and assured competitors that:-

“..... their work is very carefully considered. The average number of entries for the various competitions total around 150, so it will be appreciated that the judges have no easy task in arriving at the prize winners. As all entries are submitted under pen-names, the judges do not know the identity of the competitors.”

The Society acknowledged with gratitude the debt it owed to the donors of all the prizes. Since the deaths of Herbert Spencer and Dr. Mary Sheridan, the Society provides these prizes from its own funds, but continue to call the competitions by their former names. With reference to the Vincent and Madge Brennan Travel Article, Mrs Joyce Brennan provides this prize in memory of Vincent, whilst Charles Neilson Gattey provides the Victoria Neilson Gattey prize in memory of his mother and George Farley's family continue to provide this prize in memory of their father.

In addition to the major competitions, the Society also held a number of mini-competitions throughout the year for articles and short stories (500/600 words) and poems. These competitions were sponsored by the Society's own members with prizes of around £3, £2, £1 and were usually judged by the sponsors themselves. Notices regularly appeared giving details of relevant competitions in most of the Civil service journals e.g. Red Tape, Civil Service Opinions, Civil Service Pensions, Tempo, Portcullis, Taxes and New Windows.

The job of Competition Secretary has been handled most capably over the years by the following members:-

Miss Kathleen White	1945 - 1949
Miss Winifred M. Reed	1949 - 1951
Frank Ebart	Jan 1952 - 1961
Roy MillerMay	1961 - 1962
Frank Ebert	Jan 1953 - 1965
Peter Snaith	Sep 1965 - 1968
R.C.Jeffries	Sep 1968 - Present (2007)