

Kernewek Lowender Writers Competition Winners 2011

Adult

Max Fatchen Short Story Award

Winner : Alan Horsfield "Return to Treasure Island"

Highly Commended : Brett Lawrie "The Toilet Troll"

Steven Gepp "Lament of the Unknown Soldier"

Max Fatchen Poetry Award

Winner: Alan C. Hughes "Waking in a Strange Place"

Highly Commended: P.S. Cottier "Above the River Flats"

Linda Sutton "To Awaken in Wonderland, A Strange Place"

Children

Max Fatchen Young Writers Award – Short Story – 12 to 18 years

Winner: Shauna Franks "My Bestfriend"

Highly Commended: Niki Spurling "A Small Man with a Big Heart"

Max Fatchen Young Writers Award – Poetry – 12 to 18 years

Winner: Tamsin Endley "Nothing"

Highly Commended: Lee Prentis "What Makes a World Perfect?"

Max Fatchen Young Writers Award – Short Story – Under 12 years

Winner: Joshua Nicholls "The Most Amazing Find"

Highly Commended: Ethan Nicholls "The Hunt for Jumpy's Mother"

Bella Stiene "Tsunami"

Max Fatchen Young Writers Award – Poetry – Under 12 years

Winner: Chelsea Northcott "Kernewek Lowender Poem"

Highly Commended: Jack Brazier "My Name is Jack"

Hayley Sawley "I Know a Puppy"

Kernewek Lowender Writers Competition Winners 2011

Max Fatchen Short Story Award

Winner: "Return to Treasure Island" by Alan Horsfield

Return to Treasure Island

1

Jamie lay on the floor of the stockade hut, breathing slowly. He could hear the pirates closing in and the dull tap of Long John Silver's wooden leg.

'Get him to 'is feet!' growled Silver.

'Get rid of him now. He's trouble!' spat Morgan.

'Aye, and Billy Bones and Black Dog would thank us. May they rest in peace!' muttered George Merry.

'Hawkins knows more than he tells. We'll postpone any retribution until we knows what he knows!' warned Silver gruffly.

There were murmurs of discontent amongst the pirates.

'Haul him to his feet!' bawled Silver.

Two pirates grabbed Jamie by the armpits and roughly hauled him to his feet. Jamie shook

his head, as if disorientated. In a moment he had to make his futile escape attempt through the hut door.

'Pieces of eight,' the parrot on Silver's shoulder seemed to squawk.

'Right, hold it there! That was much better!' called Margaret Walton, the play's director, from her seat in the Town Hall.

The actors on stage relaxed. Graham Hunt, playing Silver, rubbed his hand through Jamie's hair. 'Not bad for a beginner,' he commended.

Jamie, playing Jim Hawkins, knew how much the play depended upon him. The play opened on Friday night. It was getting 'butterflies' dose.

'Much better Jamie. Remember, while you're acting you have to believe that you're in a real situation. That way you'll convince the audience,' advised Margaret.

Thanks Margie,' nodded Jamie.

'Your fear is looking much more realistic. One thing, don't look as if you're helping the pirates drag you to your feet. Make your dash to the door a desperate attempt. We'll have a ten-minute break. I have fliers I want distributed around town. Please everybody, take some,' Margaret concluded.

Jamie hopped from the stage onto the hall floor as the curtains closed. He helped himself to a few fliers. He was going to keep one. After all, his name was on it.

Blackwood Amateur Theatrical Society

presents

Treasure Island

Adapted from R. L. Stevenson's novel by Graham Hunt
Director: Margaret Walton

Starring:

Long John Silver - Graham Hunt

Ben Gunn - Wade Hawker

Jim Hawkins - Jamie Sanders

Mrs Hawkins - Jackie Sanders

with members of BATS

Set design: David Alan

Bookings: Blackwood Newsagency **Details:** Blackwood Weekly

Venue: Blackwood Town Hall
August 8 pm

Dates: Fri 4 Fri 11
 Sat 5 Sat 12

Re-reading the flier, Jamie grinned. On stage, just remember to believe it is all actually happening, he reminded himself.

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2

For days, Jamie had felt dizzy with anticipation. He was surviving on his nerves. There had been a time during one rehearsal when he actually thought one of the pirates was real. He put it down to good make-up and shrewd acting.

The final dress rehearsal went well with just a few glitches

Sally, who was operating the curtains, began to close them too soon. It was the dress rehearsal.

'We can correct a few minor mistakes/ Margaret had said as the troupe relaxed in the auditorium seats. 'But there are points I want to discuss about individual performances. Nothing serious.'

She then commented on each actor's performance.

When she came to Jamie she said, 'Much more believable Jamie. A couple of times I really thought you were afraid. Just take care in the treasure scene. Don't let Silver upstage you! People need to see your reactions to Ben Gunn's arrival. Everyone thought he had died after being abandoned on the island.'

On opening night they had a full house.. After a few seconds on stage, of nerves it was as if the audience didn't exist. Jamie was fully involved in the action. At one point he thought had smelt rum on the breath of the pirate, George Merry.

That didn't make much sense. In real life, George was the local policeman.

This 'believing' idea was starting to create its own problems for Jamie. On another night, when the pirates pulled him from the floor, he actually saw Silver's parrot give a balancing wing flap before squawking, 'Pieces of eight.'

In the dressing room, Jamie said to Graham Hunt, 'For a moment tonight I'd have sworn that the parrot was alive.'

Trick of lighting, more likely. Captain Flint is well and truly stuffed! As dead as the original Captain Flint/ smiled Graham as he removed make-up.

The Blackwood Weekly reviewed the play. Jamie saved a copy with his flier and his signed program. He was starting to feel like a star.

Treasure Island Pieces
of Eight to BATS

Blackwood Amateur Theatrical Society's production of Treasure Island is another success for local director, Margaret Walton.

The story, adapted from the Stevenson classic is full of suspenseful action. Hunt is excellent at portraying Silver as a hypocritical villain. Wade Hawker is a frighteningly convincing, demented Ben Gunn. A big welcome to newcomer, Jamie Sanders, playing Jim Hawkins.

There are times when his fear of and his

disgust with the mutineers is uncannily realistic. His attempted escape will have patrons on the edges of their seats.

The pirates steal the show, with their fantastic costumes, colourful language and devious schemes.

Silver's parrot, does look a little too much like the stuffed bird it is!

Treasure Island plays in the Town Hall until Saturday, 12 August.

On the final night when Jamie made his escape dash he suddenly realised he had reached the door before the pirates could grab him.

'Stop the lad!' bellowed Silver.

But Jamie was through the door. For a moment he was disorientated. He expected to see neatly stacked props in the dimmed backstage lights. Where were the dressing rooms?

A sudden fear went through him, as he realised he had left the stage. It was not in the script.

He turned quickly towards the back of the hut door when he tripped and fell on what felt like firewood. He didn't hit the backstage floor. He hit dry earth.

Suddenly he was grabbed from behind. 'Got him!' yelled Job Anderson.

When Jamie twisted his head around he looked into the face of an angry pirate. And coming around the corner of the hut hobbled Silver, followed by his band of mutineers.

'Pieces of eight/ squawked Captain Rint as it hopped across Silver's shoulders.

'Lively lad/ sneered Anderson. 'Don't want him escaping and reporting to *good* Captain Smollett!'

'In case yer've forgotten, Hawkins is a hostage. Nothin' happens to him/ advised Silver. 'You idiots would waste a hostage we can bargain with. But not Silver. When he's served his purpose and we have the treasure, we maroon him on this island just like Captain Flint did Ben Gunn.'

T'were years ago!' grumbled a pirate.

Jamie was confused. The play had shifted to some new set. And the pirate didn't act mean. They were mean.

Silver fished in his coat pocket for the treasure map. He flung it to the ground contemptuously. The pirates pounced on it, except for Anderson. Jamie could feel his indecision. The mutineers knew Silver was a master of deception.

'And when you've got the treasure/ growled Silver, 'how you going to take it back to merry England. Smollett's now in control of the Hispaniola - since Hawkins here relieved your useless friends of their command.'

Jamie feared the pirates had many reasons for being rid of him. He had beached the ship so that the captain and his trusted crew could take command. The loss of two mutineer hadn't helped matters.

But it was *just* a play. It wasn't real. Jamie searched his mind for explanations. There were none.

That night, in the smoky hut, while the pirates scrutinize the map, Jamie had been tied to a wall support.

Escape was impossible. He slept restlessly on the dirt floor surrounded by pirates, some who slept like troubled animals. One pirate slept against the door - the only escape route. Any of the pirates could have been watching Jamie.

Morning brought no release from the nightmare.

When they set off for the treasure Jamie was tethered to the hobbling Silver. The men were armed as some carried digging implements. Their first goal was to find a giant tree north of Spy Glass Hill.

A noisy dispute broke out amongst the pirates as to the map's interpretation. Suddenly Anderson let out a cry.

Everyone stopped

Through the trees, I saw someone running!' he said, pointing to a stand of gnarled mangroves.

'Won't be an animal!' growled Silver. 'I swear it was a man,' argued Anderson. Several pirates were muttering nervously.

'We'll you can rest assured it's none of the captain's crew. You thinking it be a ghost! Something to do with Captain Flint when he buried his treasure!' Silver growled. He shook his head and gave the rope a tug. 'Let's get the treasure.'

As they struggled up Spy Glass Hill Jamie could feel the hot sun on his head. With a sinking feeling he had to accept he had become Jim Hawkins.

With an ache in the pit of his stomach Jamie stumbled along behind the one-legged Silver and the pirates. Some of the impatient pirates were forging ahead.

As they crested the slope the leaders let out a terrible howl. Those following crept forward fearfully.

Lying entangled in vines were the bleached bones of a sailor. Pieces of his sea coat were still visible. The shocked sailors believed it to be an evil omen. Two pirates wanted to return to the hut - or even rejoin the Hispaniola.

Sweating, Silver studied the unusual bone arrangement. The skeleton was on its back with its arms extended along the ground above the head.

'Ain't natural/ whined one of the pirates.

Jamie felt apprehensive but Silver said calmly, 'I've a feeling that there, mates, is our compass. Those bones will give us a bearing.'

Silver was right. Some men started to whisper amongst themselves. Others looked at Silver with deep-seated hate as he ordered them on ruthlessly. 'Stop this nonsense. Dead men don't scare me - especially in daylight!

On the next low rise the party could see three tall trees in the distance. As they moved forward they no longer spread out but remained in a tight, nervous huddle.

Suddenly from the directions of the trees came a high quavering voice of an old sea shanty. It was Captain Flint's song.

'It's Flint!' exclaimed Tom Savage as he turned pale.

'Flint's been dead a dozen years/ sneered Silver with a frown.

Jamie looked around anxiously. Some of the pirates were crouched on the ground, Others were about to retreat. If he hadn't been tethered to Silver Jamie might have joined them. The hairs on the back of his neck prickled.

Without warning, the voice called for Darby McGraw, the name on Captain Flint's dying lips.

Terror blazed in the eyes of many of the pirates. Jamie could feel the tension and fear. He didn't know about Flint, but the pirates seemed familiar with his final moments.

Silver was unnerved but remained calm. 'Something odd's a-going on here. I want the treasure and I means to have it. Don't care if some cowardly dogs run, I'm not. Not even from Flint. Dead men don't sing and talk!'

'Easy Silver, 'George Merry warned, 'tis bad luck to cross the path of a dead man.'

'Dead man/ repeated Silver. 'Dead men don't flit through the trees - and dead men don't have echoes! Didn't sound like the old, sea dog, Flint I knew.'

Silver had their attention. Thinks I know who it is.'

4

Silver looked at each man. 'Your ghost/ he snarled, 'is none other than Ben Gunn. The fool's become demented after being stranded here for years!'

Jamie could see grudging respect for Silver's reasoning. *No* one was afraid of old Ben Gunn, dead or alive.

Renewed fervour gripped the pirates. The wanted gold.

The party reached the tall trees and again took their bearings. They were within reach of Flint's treasure, from the good ship, Walrus.

The sweating party strung out with Silver and Jamie in the rear. Then an anguished moan of disappointment rose from the leaders who had abruptly stopped on a small rise.

The moan turned to curses as men dropped their tools.

When Jamie and Silver reached the group they saw a huge pit. In it lay smashed chests and a shovel, broken and rusting. On one board was the word, 'Walrus'.

Several pirates jumped recklessly into the pit and started clawing through the sandy soil with bare hands. Others picked up the empty chests and hurled them to one side.

Sensing something terrible Silver untied Jamie. Take care lad. There's going to be trouble/ he whispered.

The rope dropped to the ground, unnoticed by the frantic pirates. Ben Gunn's name was repeated with loathing.

When Jamie glanced down at the fallen rope he saw a glint of metal in the soil. He stooped and picked it up. It was a gold coin. Surreptitiously he showed it to Silver. Silver nodded.

Casually squatting Jamie found a stick and began scratching the soil. Soon he had several coins. He handed them to Silver. Suddenly Job Anderson yelled a vulgar warning.

The pirates looked towards Silver and Jamie. They saw treachery. 'Run!' hissed Silver, as the pirates scrambled out of the pit.

Jamie ran. At first he had no idea where to go. Then he remembered the hut in the stockade. If he could make the stockade then he could bar himself inside. Maybe the Captain's men would rescue him.

He took off towards Spy Glass Hill, his incensed pursuers quickly on his trail.

As he slithered and tumbled down the steep hill side he knew, that the murderous mutineers were getting closer.

As crashed by the mangroves he knew that two of the pirates were within twenty metres.

Suddenly he saw the stockade wall. He might still make the hut before capture. But the breathless cursing of one pursuer was too dose. A quick glance over his shoulder and Jamie's heart shuddered.

A red eyed, angry pirate was making a leap for him.

As he reached the door of the hut he felt his shirt being yanked. The pair was travelling with such force the unlocked hut door burst open and they tumbled through and onto the floor.

'Nearly lost him!' growled the breathless pirate.

'Pieces of eight,' squawked the parrot.

Jamie lay perfectly still. He wasn't lying on dirt. He was on floorboards!

Then the curtain closed for the end of a scene. The audience clapped with enthusiasm. Jamie groggily got to his feet unsure of where he was. He was drenched in sweat. Could it have been the stage lights?

'Excellent acting Jamie,' said Sally. 'Could have sworn George Merry had you terrified!' Jamie simply shook his head.

He put his hand in his pocket. He felt something round and fished it out. He looked at it in bewilderment. It was an old gold coin.

Jamie keeps the coin with his souvenirs of the play. Whenever he is asked about the coin he replies that it's nothing more than a stage prop. Any other explanation is too extraordinary to be believed.

Highly Commended: “The Toilet Troll (A children’s story)” by Brett Lawrie

James hadn’t always been afraid of toilets, but recently the toilet in his house was scaring him silly. It wasn’t so much the toilet itself that scared him; it was the particularly strange noise it made every time he flushed it. James did whatever he could to avoid hearing the terrifying sound. For a while, he simply stopped flushing altogether, but this made him very unpopular with his parents, who upon finding one of his ‘surprises’ would call him in to the bathroom and make sure he flushed it then and there. Sometimes he would flush it and run at full speed from the bathroom, but his mum and dad put a stop to that when he nearly knocked his grandfather for a six when he was walking in the back door. Once, he tried using a broom to press the button, but he only managed to smash the light globe on the ceiling instead.

James was nine years old, with the kind of copper red hair that made old ladies want to come up and touch it. He wanted to be a famous explorer when he grew up and find unknown wonders and tribes. His dad told him that explorers were always brave and certainly not afraid of a toilet, but James reminded him that explorers wouldn’t have a toilet to use, so how would he know they weren’t afraid. After this, James spent days pestering his dad to let him go to the toilet in the backyard just like a real explorer. His dad told him he was pretty sure there was a council by-law against such things, and if there wasn’t, there should be.

James confided in his friend Tom that he was afraid of the toilet. Tom was the sort of boy who knew something about just about any subject you could care to name. Tom informed him very matter-of-factly that he must be suffering from ‘Crapperphobia’, (named after the inventor of the toilet, Thomas Crapper) and that it was a sure sign of madness. James wasn’t so sure that Tom knew what he was talking about, and besides, it wasn’t the toilet that scared him – it was the noise he heard every time he flushed it. His parents had tried to listen for the noise, but said it sounded normal to them and that they weren’t going to pay good money for a plumber to pull the toilet apart just because it made a ‘scary noise’.

When his friend Tenille came for visit he told her about the noise, and that she should listen for it when she flushed. Tenille was a quiet, patient girl; she and James had been friends since they started school together. Tenille had excellent hearing and had once heard a kitten stuck in the drainpipe at her Nan’s place and was able to rescue it. She called the kitten Piper and it had grown up to be a rather bad tempered and generally unpleasant tomcat. James knew that if anyone could hear the noise, it would be Tenille. Tenille agreed to go and have a try. James’ mum told him off for standing outside the bathroom when Tenille was in there. Never had James been so excited about someone using the toilet in his life. Surely he wasn’t going crazy, and he was sure he didn’t have Crapperphobia (if it did exist). He waited and listened.....

“Oh please, by the ‘Seven Veils of Hercules’. Stop doing that!” growled Kenneth Gruntkin.

For the tenth time that day, a torrent of smelly water rushed through Kenneth’s cramped, dimly lit living space. Once again the foul liquid sent him chasing his belongings down the mysterious tunnel. Empty tuna cans rattled noisily away and out of his reach.

Kenneth had not always lived in such disgusting surroundings; he was once a successful squirrel exterminator, able to hit a squirrel with a potato at a distance of 30 paces. In fact, as far as trolls go, Kenneth was a success. That was until that fateful day when he was lured on to a new Troll Vision game show called ‘Trick or Treat’. Henry Gathsaw (his only rival in the squirrel extermination business) managed to convince him to appear as a contestant. Trolls are not known for their sophisticated senses of humour; they are generally content with slapstick. In fact, nothing causes quite as many laughs to a troll as seeing someone punched in the face.

What the game show producers hadn’t told Kenneth about ‘Trick or Treat’ was that the trick of the show was that there was no treat. Everyone who appeared on the show ended up wishing they had chosen to spend the weekend in the burrow of an angry badger. The prizes (if you can call them that) were always terrible. For instance Henriette Murgan ‘won’ a holiday to act as housekeeper and cook to ‘Fedor the Boring’, the most boring and unpopular king troll land had ever known. Fedor constantly complained about his food, snored loudly and broke wind noisily (sometimes all three at once).

Surely Kenneth’s ‘prize’ must have been the worst; it was described to him as ‘The holiday of a lifetime’. Little did he know at the time, that it meant he would be spirited while he slept and unceremoniously dumped into the sewer pipes of a human house with only a teddy bear and a year’s supply of canned tuna for company. Waking up on that first day must have been the worst experience of his life, the smell was terrible and he was terrified.

Kenneth had tried vainly to find a way out of the cramped, smelly cave that had become his home. The best he had managed was to find an area that didn’t entirely flood every time the tidal wave of stink raced past. Here, he was able to keep himself and his teddy relatively dry. Even his teddy bear was beginning to annoy Kenneth. Despite knowing that it was made out of squirrel fur and sawdust, Kenneth was sure that he had seen it staring at him. Sometimes when things were particularly quiet and all you could hear were the faint drips of water in the distance, Kenneth was sure he heard the bear call him a loser and burp. Kenneth needed to get away from that psycho bear and out of this horrible smelling place.

“Yeah, I heard something too”, Tenille said, “it sounded like something clanking, and someone complaining; really hard to hear with all the water noise though”.

James was so relieved he wasn't going crazy; he didn't have 'Crapperphobia' (if it even existed). The question was, what or who was making the noise. "Flush it again and let's both listen", suggested James, still slightly afraid of flushing. So Tenille flushed and they both put their heads down near the toilet bowl and strained their ears. This time they both heard the clattering and the low, growling complaints, it sounded something like "stop it, stop it" and something that sounded remarkably like swearing, even though they couldn't make out the exact words. James knelt down in front of the toilet and shouted "Who are you, and why are you in my toilet?".

Kenneth heard voices coming down the stinking tunnel, he was overjoyed; maybe, *finally*, his weeks of stinking misery would soon be over.

"I am Kenneth Gruntkin", he yelled, "please get me out of here".

"He said he is Fenneth Pumpkin, I think" said James pulling the kind of face kids pull when they don't quite understand something an adult has told them. James suggested flushing the toilet about a million times more, in the hope that it would wash Fenneth free from his hiding hole. Tenille thought it was a stupid idea since he obviously didn't like it when they flushed even once.

Since neither James nor Tenille were going to put their hands down the toilet to rescue Fenneth, they decided to go outside where James has seen the plumber working on the sewerage pipes once. Once outside they spotted Piper who had followed Tenille to James' house. For the third time that week Piper was trying to reach into the bird cage to eat the budgies. They moved Piper and then started to search for the round plastic inspection plates that the plumber had once removed. James remembered finding the whole process pretty revolting but strangely fascinating at the time, but he hadn't taken much notice where they were. Eventually, with no help at all from Piper, who had given up trying to eat the birds in exchange for trying to eat Tenille's ankles, they found the inspection plates. James used a stick and they managed to scrape away the dirt and grass and lift off the plates. Since they were now kneeling down, Piper decided it was time to bite and claw them on their heads.

Kenneth could hear scraping sounds and what seemed to be voices from somewhere above him; at first they were very faint, then from either end of his little 'home away from home' he was sure he could see light. Yes, he was sure now, there were shafts of light coming from either direction, but the voices seemed to be angry, saying things like "get out of it you pest" and "get out of my hair, you are so annoying". Kenneth was now not so sure he wanted to be rescued, his rescuers sounded quite angry, and he was at least safe in his cramped stinky room. "don't hurt me", he yelled, "please don't hurt me, I can grant you one wish".

James and Tenille could hear Fenneth Pumpkin better now, but still not very clearly, James was sure he said, "I can't eat my fish". James shouted back "You don't need to eat a fish Fenneth, we are going to try to rescue you".

Kenneth thought it was a very odd thing to say but felt happier now because he really didn't want to eat any more canned fish.

At that moment Piper decided that whatever was down the holes in the ground must have been more interesting than biting children. He decided to investigate by diving headfirst down the one with the strange noise coming up from it.

Suddenly Kenneth saw the ferocious beast clawing its way toward him; the cat only just fitted in the pipe but was slowly edging its way toward him. Kenneth started to throw empty tuna tins at the beast, which couldn't decide if that was a good thing or a bad thing and paused to lick some crumbs of fish from the tins. Still unsure if he could trust the voices above, Kenneth decided that he had no choice, so he started stacking full tuna tins so that he could climb up to the newly opened hole above his head. "Help me, I'm down here" shouted Kenneth.

As much as the smell made James want to throw up, he reached his arm down the hole and groped around until he felt something. Kenneth felt the giant hand close around him just as the claws of the beast swiped away at his tuna can ladder. Just in time Kenneth was pulled to the surface, dripping, terrified and incredibly stinky.

James placed Kenneth on the grass and looked for something to wipe his hands on. Kenneth was still worried about the cat and didn't stop to chat with the humans, after all, trolls have spent hundreds of years trying to avoid humans and Kenneth wasn't about to change that. He ran into the long weeds as fast as his stumpy legs would carry him, as he left he shouted over his shoulder "Thank you, you have your wish, use it wisely". "A wish, what was that Kenneth said about a wish?" James asked. "He must have granted us a wish for rescuing him.", Tenille said. James wanted to wish for a million dollars, Tenille just wanted to wish that they could get Piper out of the septic pipes.

James' dad called out of the laundry window to ask what they were doing. "We're just rescuing the toilet troll dad" James answered. "Toilet troll, why are you rescuing a toilet troll?" asked dad, somewhat puzzled. "It doesn't matter now Dad, but we do need to call a plumber to get Piper out", James said. James' dad slapped his forehead and complained that it would probably cost a fortune to get someone to come and do that.

Temille grinned when James asked. "Do you think a million bucks would be enough?"

Highly Commended "Lament of the Unknown Soldier" by Steven Gepp

I woke up.

I was already in the middle of battle.

Again.

My hands held a sword, a short gladius, dented and heavy. I wore a tunic with leather strips and some pieces of metal, but not many. My helmet seemed too light.

Scant

protection. Instinctively, I knew what to do.

As always.

I took a brief pause to look around- Many were around me, dressed as I was. The trees and shrubs and high grasses told me we were in a forest. The dull light told me it

was morning or evening. The smoke and smells told me there was a fire nearby. And those we were fighting against also carried swords, but they wore furs and leathers.

They

were also clearly the aggressors.

"Receptui canete!" called a voice over the sounds of fighting. The men dressed like me started to move backwards.

I watched them go, still unsure of where exactly I was or what I was doing. And then I saw them. There must have been a good dozen, maybe more, waiting. A trap had

been set.

I ran at them. As my men reached the hole I knocked the leader, my leader, aside with my shoulder and then bounded away. "Quis...?" he started but by then I had waded

into the midst of the trap, swinging my sword all about me.

Pain is intense when it first strikes. It burns and bites into you like a living animal. Only the flow of your own blood stems that pain, because only then does the adrenaline kick in and give you the energy you need to fight it. And fight it I did as fists

rained down on me even as metal edges cut into my flesh.

Behind me I heard more words; I think I saw the leader instruct his men around the pit ready for them beneath a carpet of sticks and leaves.

They came to my side. The enemy were routed.

"*Julius, fugent,*" one of them breathed.

I saw the leader, this Julius, young but so charismatic, stare down at me. He touched my face even as my eyes closed. "*Quis hic homo estne?*" he asked.

None could answer. None would be able to answer. And I could never tell them.

-:[*]:-

Death is a long sleep with no waking.

But not for me.

-:[*]:-

I woke up.

I held a bow in my hands. As always, I knew how to use it.

There have been many awakenings since that forest in the middle of nowhere. But none this intense. The battle was fierce. All around me men dressed as I was - in a leather tunic, a thin mail dress over the top - were dying. The battle was ours to lose. Their leaders were exhorting them on into battle, charging against us.

Our leaders were nowhere to be heard.

One man in particular, on a horse, his long sword pointing at us, stood out. I was armed with but a bow. In close order combat I would be helpless. I understood none of the words being spoken around me, and even if I did know the language so many were yelling and screaming I do not think I would be able to make out any of the words anyway. Chaos was growing, bringing with it panic. Many fled. Our localised leaders, our sergeants, our more experienced fighters, tried so very hard I think to bring us under control, but I did not understand their exhortations.

I had one chance. I notched the arrow, its flights slightly askew and took aim at the midst of their leaders.

I loosed it and watched it sail forwards. The pain was sudden and intense. But pain does not last forever. The blood quickly covered my chest and I fell against the man who had ripped me open, my armour so ineffective against his sword.

My eyes did not fall from the projectile. I watched. Other eyes fell upon it. Time seemed to slow down. I could see every inch of its flight. I watched it strike. It pierced the eye of the man on the horse who held his sword aloft.

He grasped his face and tumbled to the ground. Immediately I was dropped and my attacker ran, but he was swamped by men dressed as myself. More of them swamped over the man who had fallen from the horse. It was a desperate act. Swords were raised and came down. Even from the ground I could see the shower of red that covered them all.

I closed my eyes. I felt my body being lifted up on high. "*L'est un heros!*" The words reached my ears but I did not understand them. It did not matter.

-:[*]:-

Death is but the ending of a novel read once.

I savour mine often.

-:[*]:-

I woke up.

Again. So many more times since that arrow had pierced that Lord's eye.

The first sounds I heard were voices. "Remember the Alamo!" one cried. I had no idea what it meant. But there were many of us" We were on a field. On the other side of a river were the other group. They were cramped in.

"Remember Goliad!" More words that meant nothing to me.

A bugle sounded. A call to arms. The gun felt natural in my hands. We forded the river and engaged them on the wide field.

We swamped over them. They fell to us en masse. The screams of the dying filled the air. None of them were from our side. We just marched on and they dropped before our numbers. Hundreds of them fell to us. "Remember the Alamo!" "Remember Goliad!" "Long live Texas!" The rallying cries echoed across the field as our wounded were carried away and their dead were trampled underfoot. I reloaded my weapon even as I marched with my comrades at arms.

Many fell to me. I was being followed by a group of soldiers, swept along by my path of destruction. Every shot brought another down. The sight of my face started to strike fear into the enemy. I took more to death than seemed possible. Those behind me cheered my every movement. Their blood stained my boots and trousers. The field was muddy, but there was no rain in the sky. I trudged forward.

The gunshot echoed loudly.

The pain was a brilliant burst of heat. It radiated from my stomach. The metal taste that filled my mouth was wet.

I fell.

They rolled me over. I could not move my eyes. "Who is he?" one asked.

"Dunno. Good shot. The best."

I would have liked to have thanked them. But there were so few deaths on their side on this day that mine had them rattled.

And I really was not in a position to answer.

-:[*]:-

Sometimes a death seems all for nought.

No matter the heroism, there can be times when it means nothing at all.

-:f *]:-

I woke up.

I was running.

All I could tell was that it was a beach. There were so many of us down there, all trying to run along the sands. We were running up a hill. "*Hepsini oldurun!*" screamed a voice above us all. Our metal helmets sat uncomfortably on our heads, our rifles were heavy in our hands. We were young and we were a long way from home.

I knew all of that. But that was all I knew. Information was generally not needed.

I was never awake long enough to need more.

The soldiers above us were firing down on us at random. But that was all they needed to do. We were storming the beaches and they, high up, picked us off. Beside me a man who was barely a man was raised up by the impact of the shot and tumbled backwards. We just watched him fall with resignation before once more continuing ever onwards and upwards.

I heard mentions of 'the Hun' and 'the Turks' but did not know which we were facing. The accents were odd, not ones I recognised, even though the language was one of those familiar to me. "Come on, you bloody ANZACs!" cried a voice and everyone around me moved a little faster. I reached into my pocket.

A grenade.

I grunted. That was it. One rifle, a grenade. Not even any more ammunition. More

fell all about me. We climbed higher and higher. I only just avoided the body of a comrade, half his face missing, blood streaming from him like a liquid rope. He smashed wetly into the rocks behind me. I closed my eyes and pushed even further.

There, ahead of us. A shot rang out. Ahead of me. I was alone now. I looked behind me and saw the faces peering upwards. They were terrified beyond words, these boys who would be men. And they were watching me intently.

It was only then I saw the opening. A small opening, but five steel barrels poked out of it.

I took out the grenade as the first burst of heat and pain shot through me. But I held on. The cloud of sand beside me showed where a second shot missed, just, My knee was shattered. Surprisingly little pain, but also now little movement. This was it, then. I pulled the pin with my other hand and threw it even as I lost balance and toppled backwards, down the embankment, another shot puncturing my body with too much ease.

The explosion was much larger than I would have thought. The guns fell silent.

I was caught. "You're a fucken hero, mate." What a strange accent from this tanned man. But that was all. On a beach surrounded by Turks.

{.}:

The sleep of death should be always there.

It should not be a mere stepping stone to the next adventure; it should not be a mere doze.

:f *]:

I woke up.

The plane I was in seemed to be a part of me. The air was rushing in hard and fast. We were travelling at a great rate of knots and I could see that ground was looming large. I could also see that most of the front screen had been shattered. Beside what was left of the pilot and co-pilot.

Ahead of me and ahead of this plane was a large concrete side of the reservoir below us. The four engines were struggling. "Abort!" cried a voice. "Operation Chastise is an abort!"

"Almost there," I said. The words meant nothing to me, they were simply what needed to be said.

The light from two spotlights illuminated the water beneath. "Ready," crackled a voice in my headphones. "Bombs away!"

I waited briefly before wheeling the plane around in a huge arc. Smoke poured from two of the engines. The barrage of anti-aircraft fire looked like streaks of gold in the night. Too many pounded our fuselage. I watched the bomb drop onto the water. It was spinning. It hit the surface of the water and bounced, still spinning. "Come on!" that voice in my headphones said eagerly.

Another bounce. And another. And... The explosion rocked through the entire dam. The effect was instantaneous. Water gushed outwards and down.

I lost myself in the moment. The blast through the empty front windscreen was one I should have avoided. The pain was so very brief before numbness swamped me. I did not want to look. I knew the damage. I had never lost a limb before.

"Who are you?" I turned my head and saw a shocked face staring at me. "What happened to them?" I smiled and felt the blood pour from my mouth. So my arm was not all that was hit; there was no pain elsewhere. Just numbness. "My God man, who are you? Where did you come from? You know you just saved..."

I climbed out of the seat, but the plane lurched and the newcomer threw himself into the other chair.

I lost balance. I fell. Falling, falling, falling. I remember hitting the water. It was like slamming into the ground. All the wind left in me was knocked out. It was cold. The numbness covered me completely. And the blackness.

-:[*]:-

Even the dead should not be disturbed.

There should be sleep. I should be allowed to sleep.

-:[*]:-

I woke up.

I was climbing out of a trench. The enemy were visible across the shattered no man's land. Their faces told me they were from the Far East. But so were many of my compatriots.

Two groups of people from the same country.

-:[*]:-

I woke up.

The jungle was thick. More people in the Far East, but my companions and I came from elsewhere. Humidity was wearing down on me. Somewhere one of my comrades at arms was singing loudly. Why would you do that in battle?

-:f *!:-

I woke up...

Did I ever get to sleep?

Have I slept yet? The gun I held was being aimed at an enemy I could not see.

They were too far away. It sat heavily on my shoulder. I pulled the trigger. The recoil was like being hit with a brick.

Somewhere some one died.

-:[*]:-

I'm always awake.

I just move.

Why am I needed now more than ever? Where did the concept of enlightenment and wisdom with age go? I am in a rocky desert. I am in a different desert. I am in an African militia. I am in a South American guerrilla force. I am in a European army fighting for the break up of my country. I am fighting against my own brothers, against an enemy I do not know, against people just like me, against those totally different.

I wish I never woke up.

How long ago was it now?

I've been awake for too long. So very, very long.

-:[*]:-

I woke up.

Really woke up.

I have a grave. It is at the War Memorial in Canberra, capital of Australia.

I have a tomb at the National War Memorial in Confederation Square, Ottawa, Canada.

I have another tomb in France, beneath the *Arc de Triomphe* in Paris. And another in Alexander Garden in Moscow in Russia. Yet another in Westminster Abbey in London, England.

I have monuments in Baghdad, Madrid and the Prague; I have a memorial in Egypt, in the heart of Cairo.

It is not necessary. All I ask is that I be allowed to sleep and rest in peace.

Forever.

Max Fatchen Poetry Award

Winner : "Waking in a Strange Place" by Alan C. Hughes

Slowly two eyes open. Two eyes of cornflower blue.

Try in vain to focus on a world that's bright and new.

Gone are the drab and grey walls; gone is the noise and whine.

No more the glare of lighting or the polished chrome-works shine.

The ceaseless chatter's ended, no uniforms of white.

No sound of constant footsteps to echo through the night.

The smells and sounds and feelings of the place that was his keep,

Are left behind forever, in the dark of last nights sleep.

The things before are changed now, this is a different place.

The light is kindly glowing and gentle on his face.

Soft colours all around him, bright colours up above.

And one voice so familiar, to fold him in its love.

A strong arm slides beneath him and lifts him from his bed.

Warm arms to support him with a hand beneath his head.

Then all thoughts are forgotten, no memories of the past,

As he wakes up in a strange place, and baby's home at last.

Highly Commended ; “Above the River-flats” by P.S. Cottier

That night I fell asleep after my customary ‘one or two’,
(which somehow numbered three, or four, or more than just a few)
and I awoke at half-past-nothing to the thump of ball on bat,
so I rolled over to watch the cricket ground, above the river flats.

Cricketers wear whites, it’s true, but these glowed like a full moon,
and no-one had to run, for the players floated like balloons.
Above the grass they hovered like angels, or at least anaemic owls,
and something had muted their grunts and usual sporting growls.

‘Howzat?’ was quietly asked and somehow that old appeal,
sounded like Hamlet’s queries when he ponders if he’ll
be or end it all with a sudden bodkin that is bare,
and I wished I hadn’t laid my swag down, just exactly there.

The ghostly game played itself out, as all games must do,
and I lay and watched the players fade, and felt the showery dew.
Then I raised myself, and shook myself, like a dog come from a dam,
but knew that this attempt to forget was a feeble, wishful sham.

At the pub, later that day (and who wouldn’t need a beer
having watched ethereal cricketers for what seemed like a year?)
I raised the topic of the sports-ground, and what teams use that green,
all casual and circumspect with no mention of the scene.

‘There’s no teams play there no more’, my informant said.
‘All the young blokes have moved away, and the old ones are dead.
I was the greenkeeper, and I still keep it mowed flat and nice,
but no-one uses it, ‘cept wombats. And the bloody mice.’

The truth tingled on the edges of my beer-loosened tongue,]
to tell that immortal cricketers still sent the ball down, and swung
an elegant bat in a strange, beautiful moon-lit ritual,
but such a tale would mark me as a liar quite habitual;

So I shut my mouth, then opened it, and swallowed down my tale,
With the comforting blanket of my pension-purchased ale.
wut each night now, as the visions toss and smash and frolic,
they are applauded with enthusiasm not entirely alcoholic.

For a man remembers many things, though he may forget more,
and I recall my own lost days, as I keep the spirits’ score,
before I left my home and love, when I played a different game.
And the exercise of the ghost-team now warms my tired cold frame

Highly Commended ; “To Awaken in Wonderland, A Strange Place” by Linda Sutton

I wish I could go down a rabbit-hole,
to follow the White Rabbit with Alice.
I'd argue with rude Humpty Dumpty.
And meet a White Queen in her palace.

I'd nod off to sleep in a moment,
to awaken in a strange place is fun;
when a Mad maker of hats holds a tea-party,
and the washing-up never gets done.

I'd stop and chat with a Cheshire Cat,
who grins like mad all the while,
then all at once he disappears
'till all I can see is his smile.

I'd sit on a jury of twelve from the zoo,
at the trial of the Knave of Hearts.
I'd give a 'not guilty' verdict,
And for supper I'd eat all the tarts.

Then in this strange place, where I awakened,
some soldiers might arrest me instead,
but they're only a pack of playing cards;
still, I wish I was safe home in my bed.

To awaken in Wonderland seems very strange,
and a fantasy life has appeal;
but what I like best is the place that I know,
where the people and creatures are real.

Max Fatchen Young Writers Award – Short Story – 12 to 18 years

Winner: “My Bestfriend” by Shauna Franks

These hands, the old, calloused, dirt stained hands. These are the hands of my best friend.

My best friend, what a great man he was. Working, always working, so hard to keep food on the table for his family. He would take any job that would earn him a few dollars, even working on the railways breaking stone, in the harsh summer sun. He was a kind man with a gentle voice. He would do whatever he could, go out of his way to help anyone.

I can still remember his smell, that musty smell with a hint of jellybeans. He loved jellybeans, especially the white ones, he would always eat one and say, "It tastes exactly how it looks, white". That always made me giggle He was a comical man. He would poke fun at everyone. But he never meant any harm and would always apologise afterwards, even though we already knew he was joking.

He didn't have much. Even as a child he was left by his parents, his mum died and his dad couldn't cope with being a single parent. Living in an orphanage for six months of his life, he left as soon as he was old enough to look after himself. He was brave, he never let it get to him, and he would not dwell on the past just look to the future. I remember going to visit him, his house wasn't much, a small brick house, ordinary looking. Though he was a great gardener. His gardens were spectacular, and the brown bricks were like a canvas for the splashes of indigo, violet, yellow, orange and blue. I remember him picking up a sunflower seed one day and saying to me "This little fellow doesn't look like much, but with a bit of sunshine, water and love it will be one of the most beautiful sights to see, only after you my dear". That sentence has helped me so much. Even when I felt like nobody loved me, he always did.

He was a very average looking man to any stranger's eye. Just another man comfortably fitting into society. He always wore checked green button up shirts and khaki slacks; he would tuck his shirt in to his belt. Complaining about how people dress in today's fashion, he would say "whatever happened to dressing respectfully". He laughed at himself, saying he was obviously getting old, just needing a golf hat to top off the picture. His hair was so thin and wispy, almost like clouds, topping off his head like icing on a cake. It continued to become thinner through his aging, but he still brushed it. Even if he was bald I'm sure he would still brush the skin atop his age spotted head.

His voice was soothing to me. Like a comforting hug, when he spoke to me I felt warm and safe. He would sing along to his radio; Johnny Cash's song 'I walk the line' was one of his favourites. He wasn't a wonderful singer and even sometimes he forgot the words so he would begin humming in a raspy monotone voice. That sound would brighten my day. I remember one Christmas time I was upset, pulling me onto his lap he tickled me until I promised I would smile all day that day. He gave me a kiss on the cheek and let me go. I did not frown once more that day.

I still remember the year that my parents divorced; he helped me stay strong through it. There would be days I would be so upset I would run to his house crying as if the entire world and all its beauty had come to an end. He would open the door, pull out a tissue from his long pockets and hand it to me. I would wipe my face, and the smell of him would linger with me all day. I realised that he was the beauty in my unstable world.

Every birthday of mine, he would give me thirty dollars in a card. Usually in a plain looking card with a tacky joke on it. Something about getting old. I kept every card he gave me.

He left to go to the hospital when I was still young, I didn't get to see him as often, and he lost his jellybean smell because he wasn't allowed too much sugar anymore. He couldn't get out of bed much and his house was sold. Nobody took care of his garden, the flowers wilted and died. He was only dressed in hospitalgowns now and he didn't have any white, wispy hair left. His voice became so quiet I couldn't hear him talk.

I didn't visit him much after that because he wasn't the same, he wouldn't make jokes and he couldn't make me smile. When I was twenty I got a call from the hospital. I was all he had left after his daughter died of cancer, just like he did. I knew it wouldn't be long, but I always said "I'll go see him tomorrow", tomorrow never came. Each day I grew lonelier. I still wonder if I hadn't been so selfish, and I visited him what would have happened. Now I'm getting older I have almost forgotten his smell, the sound of his voice, how he looked and how he made me feel. Sitting here, in a hospital bed, just like the one he died in, remembering and wondering. Will I be as strong through my chemo as he was?

I loved him, my grandfather.

Highly Commended; "A Small Man with a Big Heart" by Niki Spurling

Two girls approached me whilst I was sitting in Rundle Mall in Adelaide. Smiling at me, they asked for a photograph. I handed them a bible. Oh, to be young again.

I was 17 when I was sent away.

I was enlisted in the war in Germany. My grandfather and my father both served so I served as well. I succeeded in making several friends there who were in the same situation as me, which in the long run helped with my homesickness and illnesses from the diseases I was exposed to.

When my friends and I were told to stand in the front line, they got shot. Henry dropped down on my left, he was shot in the heart, Donald dropped down on my right. He had red bullet marks staining his uniform. I looked behind me and George and Ivan had dropped to the ground as well, both bleeding to death. All of them. Lying on the dirt as hard as concrete surrounded by empty bullet shells scattered like confetti. The sight of this almost ruined my life. I closed my eyes and laid flat on the ground, trying to avoid any bullets coming towards me. All I could think about was the safety of myself.

Then it hit me. A biting sensation in my hand. I desired it to be some kind of foreign bug or insect. Turns out it was a bullet. I dropped my gun. I lay on the cold hard ground, pretending I was dead. They left. I was the only one left from my country fighting these beasts.

I toppled away from the lake of dead bodies surrounding me. I stumbled to the nearest hospital. I entered inside clutching my dripping, smelling hand. A Nurse swiftly approached me and escorted me to a bed.

She hastened over to the doctor. It felt like forever before the doctor came over to stitch up the hollow tube – about the size of a 5 cent piece, penetrating through my swollen bloody hand. I was in so much pain. Clenching my hand against my chest. I have a feeling of guilt and pleasure about not being able to serve for my country. It had to be the hand I hold my weapon in. I couldn't move my fingers. The bullet had shattered my nerves and bones in the hand.

This had to be the worst day of my life. But I was wrong. It was love at first sight.

A beautiful Australian Nurse came over to see if I was stable. After the amount of morphine they gave me I was a little out of it. She had hair like gold silk that was tied up nicely in a bun just below her hat. She was wearing a gorgeous white nurse's uniform with an Australian flag as the emblem. I felt proud to be Australian at that moment.

We shared stories about our previous lives with our families back in Australia. Time passed, we said goodbye but not forever. I wrote to her every day. Talking about the people we had saved and the friends we had lost.

Eventually I was dismissed from the Army and I was sent back to Australia. We kept in contact as much as possible but I too was busy settling down again to reply at once. She wrote me a letter 3 years after I was dismissed saying she had been dismissed herself and she wanted to see me again. I was so thrilled to see her. My heart was racing, sounding like a trotting horse as I read the same line over and over.

60 years have passed and I now have an amazing wife. The same woman I fell in love with that very day I went into the hospital after being shot in the hand. We have two beautiful children, two girls to be exact. They both met brilliant smart men and now have three children each making me a very proud grandfather. They are the most important people in my life.

My distant memories were interrupted by the noises around me. I had a strange sensation as I heard bangs sounding like penetrating bullets. But it was just one of the acts in the Fringe festival.

This had to be the worst day of my life. But I was wrong.

I was situated in Rundle Mall right outside Woolworths. All the people talking sounded like the airplanes hovering about me whilst serving at War. People are so rude these days. Talking on their mobile telephone, they are ignoring me. There are clusters of people talking to one another, buskers doing their shows 200m away on each side of me and business men and women rushing past as if they are late for their meetings. They are so unsympathetic and offensive towards me. I am cold and tired. I feel old. I am trying to make a change in the community by giving away bibles. I am not asking for any profit, just their time of day to say hello and take a bible. I do not understand why the younger generations are so unsympathetic. I went and fought for my country when I was their age, risking my life for the country I love. But then my day changed.

I snapped out of my distant memory. The two lovely girls are still there. They are not ignoring me. I looked at them again. It looked as if they were on a school excursion. I sat with my hand in the saluting position. They smiled and got out their camera's, took the photograph and walked off.

It was almost the best day of my life.

Max Fatchen Young Writers Award – Poetry – 12 to 18 years

Winner : “Nothing” by Tamsin Endley

Like a land in a drought
Like a garden that cannot flower
Like a home without a family
Like a corpse without a death

A place far, far away
A place from which it is impossible to escape
A deserted place where silence is an action
A cave where nothing can grow, nothing can live

This is where I was born
This is where I died
This is where I live

This is where the drought runs like a hunting animal
This is where I cannot think, cannot speak, cannot move, cannot see
This is where that eternal drought of all life
The place where nothing grows and nothing lives

A home away from love
A horror away from feeling
A life away from death
A thirst away from water
A fear away from threat

This is my home
And even death cannot part me now

Highly Commended : “What Makes A World Perfect?” by Lee Prentis

People who call others Monsters,
Are themselves monsters and the victim is just misunderstood.
The victim might become rich and famous someday.
To me everyone is perfect and unique in their own way,
So no one can tell me different.
The traits which will make a better world,
Are Butterfly wings and roots and light and family and friends and courage and a
heart of gold,
As well as an open mind.
Butterfly wings to fly higher than the stars above.
Roots too stand tall against the strong wind.
Light to make the right decision and follow your values.
Family to support you decision even though it might sound crazy.
Courage to face your fears and try again,
Heart of gold to be kind to others even though they are your enemies,
An open mind to not judge a person by the outside but what is on the inside.
We are all like flowers ready to bloom and show our power.

Max Fatchen Young Writers Award – Short Story – Under 12 years

Winner ; “The Most Amazing Find” by Joshua Nicholls

The sun's rays illuminated the sky on that warm Autumn afternoon when I made the most amazing find of my life.

Dawdling down the dusty path between the semi-bare trees I noticed their dark branches reaching for the sky like long fingers searching for warmth. The red, orange and yellow leaves spiralled down as the tree shook its long body.

I dragged my feet and kicked something hard. I thought it was a stone but something made me look down. At first I didn't see it. But then amongst the colourful leaves I saw a golden sparkle. It looked as bright as the sun.

I bent down and picked it up.

At first I thought it was a stick from one of the trees but as I picked it up it began to shine brighter and to sing.

“A magic wand is what I am,

Your wish is my command.”

I was surprised and puzzled. I didn't believe in magic and magical things but I didn't want to leave it on the ground so I stuffed it into my pocket and continued to walk home.

All of a sudden I realised that I was late for dinner.

I said “I wish I was home for dinner” and suddenly I was sitting at the table in my house and my mum was serving me dinner.

I was bewildered. I touched my pocket and could feel the wand spinning around and around. I suddenly realised that it worked and that magic was real. I ate my dinner in a hurry and rushed upstairs to my bedroom.

I slammed the door and locked it.

Slowly and carefully I put my hand in my pocket and took out the wand. I held it in my hand and studied it.

It was about two centimetres long and crooked like a twig but it shone like a golden star. Once again it sang.

“I'm a fairy wand

Lost again

Find my owner

For a prize to claim”

I looked at the wand in disbelief.

Bang, bang, bang. “Let me in Joshua” called my brother Daniel from the other side of my door. I hurriedly put the wand under my pillow and unlocked the door.

“About time” Daniel said as he stomped through the doorway. “What were you doing in here?”

I shrugged and said “nothing”.

Daniel didn’t believe me and he started to search.

All of a sudden he came to my pillow and noticed a sparkle of gold coming from underneath.

“No!” I screamed as I tried to block him from my pillow but I was too late.

Daniel had grabbed my pillow and seen the wand.

“Ah ha” he said as he grabbed the wand.

The wand wiggled and screamed as it tried to escape from his grasp.

“Don’t break it!” I yelled. “It’s magic!”

Daniel stopped.

“You are a liar” he said and he threw it out of the window.

I dashed to the window as if I could catch it but was just in time to see it land on the grass below.

I could see dad outside with the lawnmower heading towards the wand.

“No, Dad stop!” I yelled as I jumped out of the window “Uh oh” I said as I fell from our second storey.

Dad stopped and tried to catch me but he was too late. I hit the ground and grabbed the wand “I wish Daniel didn’t do that” I said as I stood up and looked at my window.

Zap. I froze. There I was back in my room watching Daniel search.

“I don’t know what you were doing but I’m going to find out” he said as he left my room. I laid back and fainted.

When I came to it was morning.

“I had a strange dream” I said as I hopped out of bed and slowly put my hand into my pocket. I wasn’t expecting to find anything but my hand hit something hard. I carefully took it out – it was the golden fairy wand.

“Oh no, it was real!” I mumbled as it started to sing again.

“My owner is missing

Oh wow, wow, wow

Find her and hurry

Please do it now.”

I was confused. I didn’t know what it wanted. Wait a second – its owner. That’s what it wanted.

I thought it would be easy but it wasn’t.

I searched and searched.

I wished to go to Paris, then London, then Rome then India. But no matter how hard I looked I didn’t find the wand’s fairy.

It was getting late so I wished myself home.

Sitting on my bed I was frustrated. I wanted to know where the wand’s fairy was. Then suddenly I knew what I had to do.

“why didn’t I think of this before?” I yelled as I leapt up and said “I wish the wand’s owner was here”.

Zap!!!!!!

Boom!!!!!!

Suddenly I saw a tiny fairy with golden wings. She had pink hair that went all the way down to her knees and she wore a dress that flashed like a million gold coins when she moved. Her shoes were red with golden stripes and she smiled as she said “Hi. My name is Treasure. Thank you for finding my wand and looking after it.”

“What would you like in return?” Treasure asked.

“Just a good life. That’s all” I said.

“Wouldn’t you like a bag of gold coins instead?” she asked.

“Would I!” I yelled. “You bet!”

Treasure lifted her wand and muttered some magic words which I didn’t understand and a huge bag of gold appeared next to my bed.

I couldn't believe my eyes.

"Goodbye and thank you" she said as she waved her wand and slowly started to vanish.

"Don't go" I yelled "when can I see you again?"

Just as she was almost invisible Treasure said "just rub two pieces of gold together and say my name and you will see me....."

Straight away I put the gold in a secret compartment in my closet so that Daniel wouldn't find it. I don't think about it much but sometimes when I feel lonely I rub two coins together and Treasure comes to visit me.

What a most amazing find I had that sunny Autumn afternoon.

Highly Commended : "The Hunt for Jumpy's Mother by Ethan Nicholls

One day in the dusty Australian outback a joey kangaroo was hopping around the bush. His name was Jumpy and he was just a little Joey.

Jumpy hopped here and hopped there. He looked sad and frightened. He started to cry. "Where is my mother?" Jumpy cried. His crying got louder and louder.

All of a sudden an old wombat heard Jumpy. His name was Robert and he was coming out of his hole and he was grumpy because Jumpy had woken him up from his sleep.

Robert said "what's the trouble?"

Jumpy cried "I have lost my mother!"

So Robert decided to help Jumpy find his mother.

First they went to the desert but they could not find Jumpy's mother. They did find a long brown snake called Jordan. Jordan was lying on a rock sleeping in the sun. Jumpy asked Jordan "Have you seen my mother?" Jordan said "no but you could look at the billabong".

So Jumpy, Robert and Jordan went to the billabong. They could not find Jumpy's mother. They did find a green frog called Hop. Jumpy asked Hop "Have you seen my mother?" Hop said "no but you could look at the big gum tree".

So Jumpy, Robert, Jordan and Hop all went to the big gum tree but they could not find Jumpy's mother. They did find a fluffy koala called Luka who was sitting on a branch in the tree eating gum leaves for his lunch. Jumpy asked Luka "have you seen my mother?" Luka said "no but I can climb up high in this tree and have a look for you".

Jumpy watched as Luka climbed up higher in the tree. Eventually Luka was at the top of the gum tree and could see Jumpy's mother. She was looking for food for Jumpy and his brothers near Uluru. Luka climbed back down the gum tree and told the animals that he saw Jumpy's mother at Uluru.

Jumpy was excited and said "come on, let's go and get my mother".

So all of the animals went to Uluru and found Jumpy's mother. Jumpy was so happy that he jumped into his mother's pouch.

That night the animals had a party at the top of Uluru.

Jumpy was glad he had found his mother.

The End.

Highly Commended; "Tsunami" by Bella Stiene

The warning siren pealed loudly. Everyone panicked. The streets filled with people. Amber ran out of her house wondering what was happening. She went up to her neighbour and asked, "What's happening, Ann?" Ann looked frightened, "A tsunami will reach this island in 30 minutes! I don't know what we should do." Amber had only just moved to the western side of Flinders Island, and she didn't know much about the island's susceptibility to tsunamis. "I have to get to Chappell Island as quickly as possible", Amber said, "my parents live there and I need to warn them. Chappell Island is completely flat!" "You had better hurry because it will take 10 to 15 minutes to get there by boat since the ferry won't be going", Ann replied.

Amber ran towards one of the dinghies tied up on the boardwalk. She started untying the rope when a man came up to her. "What are you doing to my boat? It was very expensive you know." She knew the man to be John Hitter. He had sharp, mean eyes, a scar running down his cheek and he looked like he would strangle anyone he met.

"I need it to warn my parents in Chappell Island of the oncoming tsunami", Amber said desperately. "Can I please borrow it?" "NO!" said the man. "You can never borrow it. The only boat you can borrow is that one." He pointed to a little row boat with a gaping hole in the bottom and one oar. "I'll take the broken boat", she said. An idea was beginning to form in her head. She grabbed the oar and hit him on the head. He fell to the floor with a thunk. "Now I'll take the expensive boat", Amber said with satisfaction, getting into the dinghy.

She was three quarters of the way to her parents when she noticed that the hem of her pants was slightly wet. Oh no, there was a hole. She panicked. Pushing the throttle as far as it would go, she sped ahead. Just as she arrived at Chappell Island her boat sank. "I was very lucky", Amber said, out of breath. She went straight to her parents place. "Hello?" she called, looking around the house. "Is anyone home?" No one answered. She ran to the back garden and found her parents sitting in their spa, looking very relaxed.

"How nice of you to join us", said her father. Amber cried out in frustration, "I've been running around looking for you! A tsunami's coming! I've come to take you to Flinders Island, but my boat has sunk! And we've only got about 18 minutes to get to higher ground!"

At this point her parents panicked. They scrambled out of the spa and started searching for something. "What are you looking for?" asked Amber. "I've got it!" shouted her Mother, holding up a key. "The key to the garage where the speedboat is kept." "Of course," Amber muttered to herself. "The speedboat."

The family opened the creaky garage door. They dragged the dusty speedboat out. “Hopefully it still works”, yelled Amber over the noise of the engine starting up. The speedboat coughed and spluttered, then it finally worked.

They literally flew across the water minutes ahead of the tsunami. When they pulled to a stop at Flinders Island the family hopped into a deserted vehicle and drove to the highest mountain in Whitemark, Mt Strzelecki.

The drive was bumpy and rough, and they got thrown around the car. Half-way up the mountain they had to stop and walk along on overgrown track. It was steep and treacherous, and they kept tripping on roots sticking out of the ground. When they got to the top the family found all the inhabitants of Flinders Island standing there, waiting for them.

An enormous wave appeared on the horizon. It grew bigger and bigger as it neared. The water then receded and came back and flooded the island. Water gushed beneath Mt Strzelecki and everyone shouted, cheered and threw their hats up in the air ; happy that they were alive.

“We made it!” cried Amber’s family.

Max Fatchen Young Writers Award – Poetry – Under 12 years

Winner: “Kernewek Lowender Poem” by Chelsea Northcott

Skipping, skipping ‘round the pole,
In and out our ribbons fold.
Everyone is smiling now,
At the end we take a bow.

Our petticoats are blowing,
Up in the sea wind.
Lucky nothing’s showing,
Or Saint Mary’s school won’t win.

All I eat is pasties,
They’re filling up my tum.
Full of flour and onions,
They are so yum.

I love maypole,
Dancing and singing.
All those boys,
Their slingshot’s flinging.

Unfortunately this poem’s done,
But I hope you had a lot of fun.

Highly Commended : "My Name is Jack" by Jack Brazier

My name is jack
I wear a back pack
its black
put it on the bag rack.
My name is jack
I live in the outback
in a shack.
My name is jack
step back
you might have a stack
from that crack.
My name is jack
I'm going to have a snack
I'm having a big mac
then a TIC TAC.
My name is jack
I'm going to row in my kayak
then ride in my hatch back
watch out it's a yak
on the train track
I hope it doesn't attack.
My name is jack.

Highly Commended : "I Know a Puppy" by Hayley Sawley

I know a puppy,
who's a real toughie.
He loves to go for a walk
and always tries to talk.
This puppy never sleeps
and loves to chase the sheep
All he does is play,
every single day.
This puppy will try to lick you,
so watch out or you might get the flu.
He loves to run and run and run,
until there is no sun.
This puppy loves to have fun,
under the sun.
He loves to eat tomato,
but his favourite food is a potato.
He is quite small
and loves to play with a ball.
I'm so lucky,
to know this puppy.