

BWI Competitions Officer Report for 2025 AGM

BWI ran two competitions in 2024. One, the Pamela Miller Short Story Competition, was exclusively for BWI members. We received 16 entries, with the winner being Richenda Rudman with her entry “The 7th Son”.

The second competition was the Martha Richardson Memorial Poetry Prize, which was open to the world. There were 56 entries received, and it was won by our very own Cassandra Arnold with “To Map A Myth”.

Some notable entries did not win, and a few notable mistakes or misunderstandings may have jeopardised certain entries and possible winning opportunities. In particular, I remind our entrants to ensure they slavishly follow the stated requirements.

- If the rules require 12-point Comic Sans as the font, then do not use 13-point Flakey Pastry font – your entry will be discarded.
- Where the requirement is under 1000 words, 1001 words will disqualify that entry.
- While a poem can tell a story, e.g. “The Man From Snowy River”, a short story is considered prose, not poetry. Prose is a straightforward, natural form of writing, while poetry is a more expressive form that uses rhythm, rhyme, and figurative language and is, therefore, generally much more challenging to do well. Unless it is done exceptionally well, it will tend to fail as a short story. Generally speaking, if you write a short story as a poem for a short story competition, you’re unlikely to win because the competition usually looks for a straightforward story, not a poem. Poetry also often uses line breaks to create a musical or chant-like effect and frequently uses metaphors and similes to create images or ideas. Use prose or poetry appropriately.
- If each entry must be submitted as a single file, do not bundle seventeen separate entries into one file. All such entries will likely fail as an essential requirement has not been fulfilled.

No matter what errors, apparent or otherwise, may have been observed by me as the Competitions Officer, and although I desperately wanted to point out radical deficiencies, I refrained. All entries were supplied to the judges for assessment and decision as they were received.

I hope BWI will facilitate competitions in 2025, but that will require someone from this club to step up to be the Competitions Officer. It was with reluctance that I put my hand up for the position last year, and I will not be taking on that role again this year. The person who becomes our Competitions Officer this year will be fully supported by the incoming committee and myself. I’m quite sure there will be expertise available to assist in what is not an onerous position as it’s mostly just record-keeping.

The incoming committee will have my full support, and I wish them well. Being a committee member is rewarding in and of itself, and it’s good to feel instrumental in helping our club move forward. I feel this club will only stumble along without greater input from more members. At the AGM to follow, I will advocate that the committee have six ordinary member positions available instead of the previous two. My reasoning is that the more opinions and differing points of view that BWI can have, the greater the likelihood of success. Having just two ordinary members limits the amount of expertise and commitment that is available for the club. It is not necessary for all those positions to be filled, but their availability encourages extra participation of more members. Our club is not elitist. It is run by our members for our members. “Ask not what your club can do for you; ask what you can do for your club.”

I thank all 2024/25 committee members for their support and friendly interaction throughout the year.

PM (Phil) Green