



Winning, Highly Commended &
Commended
Entries

5-7 Age Category

The 18th Elmbridge Literary Competition 2023

The Road

Some are long and winding and some lead to nowhere while others to Hell, even if paved with good intentions. From the ones less travelled to those that go ever on and on, roads and the journeys, real and symbolic, taken along them have always been a common theme in literature.

2023 is the 30th anniversary of The R C Sherriff Trust. Much of Sherriff's writing involved journeys, some literal; the charabanc day trip of his first play, A Hitch In The Proceedings, the family heading off for their annual holiday in his novel, 'The Fortnight in September', or the journey home taken by David Preston every night, except one, in 'Home By Seven', some metaphorical; Harry Faversham in 'The Four Feathers', Johnny McQueen in 'Odd Man Out' and the journey undertaken by Stanhope, Raleigh, Trotter and the soldiers in Sherriff's most famous work, a journey that leads to a fateful climax in the trenches of the First World War.

For the 18th Elmbridge Literary Competition, The R C Sherriff Trust and Elmbridge Borough Council, were looking for short stories and poems on the theme of 'The Road'.

Previous Competition Themes:

2005:	Cook Up A Story
2006:	On My Way
2007:	A Life In Colour
2008:	Once Upon A Time
2009:	A Symphony of Life
2010:	The Elmbridge 100
2011:	Breaking The Barrier
2012:	A Dickens of A Christmas
2013:	One Act Radio Play
2014:	Dear Diary
2015:	Flights of Fantasy
2016:	Love
2017:	Luck
2018:	A Shiver Down The Spine/Things That Go Bump In The Night
2019/20:	New World
2021:	Music
2022:	Enigma

Short Story Category

1st Place Story: The Road To Safety

Ziva Patel

For the past few days, I have been on a precarious journey in a container all the way to Turkey.

On the wooden, hard floor, rank, pungent smells overpowered me as I tried not to breathe in and out. The remains of oxygen floated around the container like invisible gold. As Mia, my baby sister, sobbed all day long, I felt like sobbing too. Sobbing to go back. Sobbing for the things I left behind.

As I cradled Mia to sleep, thoughts started swimming in my head. Will I make it to England? Will this road ever stop? Will I ever go back to my home country again? Then, everything else was suffocated in silence.

Still undulating along the road, I stared into the jet-black darkness. The truck started to shudder as we jumped over pot holes and jerked around curves like a coiled spring. All I could imagine was that we were on a countryside road: we were travelling at a normal pace and the road was twisting, winding and meandering. Or perhaps we were passing through mountain ranges?

I continued to be so dispirited, so depressed and so forlorn that I pondered if my heart would burst. Those three days we spent in there passed extremely slowly, like a snail slithering along the ground, that it felt like a lifetime. Pins and needles stabbed me in the foot due to sitting down for so long. With nothing to do, nowhere to sleep, nowhere to eat and nowhere to play, I wished the journey would come to a halt.

And then...Bump! Bump! Screech! Screech! We had stopped completely. The door whipped open unexpectedly and salty air landed on the tip of my tongue. As I alighted from the dank prison, the rutilant sunset shone in my eyes.

"You are in Turkey now," said a man, who was helping us out of the shipping container.

We had made it to Turkey. But not everybody.

Unfortunately, this was not the end of my road. I still had to travel through Europe, cross the English Channel and arrive in England where we could hopefully seek asylum. Would we be free there? I still didn't know if this road would end in safety.

2nd Place Story: The Road

Jay Atish Kenny

I always dreaded when the alarm rang. The dreadful thought of riding to school gave me chills. It was already a wet morning with dark clouds *'Wouldn't it be good to be tucked away in my bed?'*

At 7.15 am, my mother got me and my brother into the car and sped off to school. The streak of sunlight gave clarity to the wet morning as motorists cleverly maneuvered the road. The road was too familiar to me as I have passed it a thousand times to school.. The same trucks that raced the road recklessly. The same hawker with a grim face as her customers patronized her stall. Foreign workers walking up the pavement rushing to work. A feeling that I detest. I dreaded the journey down the road.

However, that very day, the landscape changed There was a bottleneck traffic congestion from where our car was, right up to my school. I am not a morning person and, in most instances, I would have chosen to take a nap in the car but curiosity kept me awake. *"There is an accident"*, mum said as we inched closer to the accident spot, I realized the accident victim was none other than my classmate, Josh. He was unconscious and covered with blood. Motorists just passed impervious to the incident. *"Is he dead? Will he die?"* My tummy was in knots. *"Mum, do something!"* I blurted. *"I can't leave my boys just in the car"* she replied.

A strange thing unfolds then. The hawker with the grim face; ran frantically towards Josh and drew him closely to her chest. There was so much concern in her eyes She then dashed to the middle of the road stopping passers-by for help. She was least perturbed that her stall was left unattended. The child's life was her priority. Cars just passed by. Then, at that instance, one of truck driver stopped in respond to the lady's frantic waving. Within a short period of time, the truck had raced Josh to the hospital with the grim looking hawker holding him lovingly close to her chest.

Josh was discharged within a week. The doctors said he had a concussion on his head, but since he was rushed to hospital, just in time; his life was saved. If there was any delay, it could have been fatal. But here was something 'deeper' than that I felt. The road which I had so many stereotypical judgments; had given me a kaleidoscope view in so many ways. I realized the hawker doesn't have a grim face, but someone who worked tirelessly to fend for her family; and also, the familiar truck driver was NOT racing the street but a hardworking man who rushes for work. In dire circumstances, they do not think twice of them. As the saying goes *"Never judge a book by its cover"*. I was too caught up with my own idiosyncrasies that I judged the road and its patrons unfairly. The road humbled me!

3rd Place Story: Our Morning Route

Danzel Norferio Song

My name is Dean. I am a 5 years old kindergarten students. My dad drives me to school every morning with our small red car. I always enjoy our morning trip to school. Dad would prepare his car in the garage while sipping his morning coffee. Mom would help me to get my bag and snacks ready. I always hug mom before leaving for school. My dad and I take the same route to school every day. We would pass a small shopping area near my house. I recognize some shop owners there. One of them is an old lady who has a grumpy white cat. My dad would lower down the car window to let me wave my hand and say good morning to the people there. They always greet me back and wish me a nice day.

A few minutes later we would cross a railroad. Sometimes when we are running late, we might be able to see a train passes by. What a nice scenery to have in the morning. I wonder if the train can bring me faster to school than my Dad's car. The road leading to my kindergarten passes a huge university. It's a school for grownups. It is bigger than my kindergarten. Its gate is painted blue and look sturdy. The only thing missing is the playground. I could not find it anywhere. Only some benches and lots of trees in its front yard. I can see some people walking down the road to get to their morning classes. I wonder what it's like to study when I grow up. Dad says I might go to that school once I grow older.

I will finish kindergarten in 2 months. Dad says that I will go to another school to continue my study. I asked him once, whether that means that we need to take a different route to my new school. I wonder if the shop owners would still wait for me passing by every morning. I also wonder if I ever got the chance to see the rushing morning train again once I move to another school. Dad always tells me that everything is gonna be okay. New school means new route. New route brings new adventures. At the end of the day, I love adventures so I think I will be fine

Highly Commended: The Path To Adventure

Melody Williams

"May is the best season," Mary's sister always said. Mary knew she was wrong. She sometimes couldn't help but tell her that she was silly and May was a month not a season. Mary was an adventurous sort and the ramshackle farm she lived in didn't exactly suit her expectations. But that's what got her into trouble.

One hot morning in May, Mary was dusting the plant pots. Her back ached and her hands were blistered. Suddenly an idea popped into her head. Why not go for a walk, if I am back in half an hour they won't even miss me.

Five minutes later, Mary broke the barrier of the farm for the first time and went into the forest beyond. This really was the road to adventure. Years later Mary would say what happened next was bad luck. For she got lost.

Mary tried to ignore the rustles and squeaks of the forest but it was no good. She hadn't noticed that she was being watched. Suddenly a big black bird flew at her. She stumbled and began to cry. Mary remembered what her mother said, "When something goes wrong stay calm." Silently Mary began to compose poetry to distract herself from the forest's tricks and settle her nerves.

*I was born determined,
Free and winged,
To fly around the hedge
And sit on your window ledge.
Proud am I,
I live to fly
Along the sky.
I eat from farms
And sleep in Mother Nature's arms.
I'm actually quite like you,
Don't ask what I do
When I need the loo!*

It must have worked as the forest seemed brighter now. Mary looked to the horizon and was surprised to see a rock formation that resembled a gigantic skull. She was no geologist, unlike her namesake Mary Anning, and was unsure what type of rock it was. Its stony face had all the details including hollow eyes, bent nose and grinning mouth. There were even some crooked boulders that looked like teeth. It was probably ancient because the top was covered in a weed and vine hairstyle. Mary also wondered if it was manmade or natural. It was as if somebody had carved it but it was too high for that. Mary suddenly glimpsed a spiral shape in the rock, an ammonite. The mystery was solved. This fossil proved it was one of nature's wonders. Mary was proud of herself. Maybe she was a little like Mary Anning after all.

Time passed quickly and soon it was nightfall. Mary gazed up at the stars and admired the constellations. The black sky reminded her of an endless lake, its ripples lit by the pearly

moonlight, like a realm of mysteries to heaven's open gate. But how did Mary get home, you ask me? Well, she used the stars to navigate. Back in bed she was heard whispering, "Home sweet home."

Highly Commended: The Path Less Taken

David Mintiers

Chapter 1 The Park

'Please bring your homework on Monday,' said Mrs Smith. I'm Isaac, I love weekends, today is a Friday and I had finished school. 'Mummy, let's go to the park?' I said excitedly. We reached the park, and I was very hungry, so I asked mum for a snack. She gave me a pack of biscuits. I put them in my pocket and went about playing. Later I opened the biscuit wrapper and looked around to bin it. There were no bins in sight, but I spotted one in a distance, the path to the bin had a puddle and was very muddy. I decided not to go on the muddy path and dropped the wrapper on the ground as it was an easy thing to do and other kids did the same.

Chapter 2 The Trash Giant

Something hit my head suddenly, and I shut my eyes. When I opened my eyes, I saw the sky has turned amber with red clouds. I saw myself surrounded by piles and stacks of trash boxes, square and round shaped. I rubbed my eyes; I could not believe what I saw. There was no nature, trees, or grass. Instead, I saw creepers of rubbish growing everywhere. I kept walking in disbelief and reached my school. My school was replaced by a huge heap of plastic bags and cups. I climbed on top of the heap to see the other side. The heap lurched and almost threw me on the ground, but an enormous hand, made of plastic bags, cans and tissues caught me. I saw a giant made of waste stand up on his feet and he brought me close to his face. I stared in his eyes made of glass and plastic waste.

He smelled of garbage, the sight was so terrifying. He lifted me up in the air and roared, 'I was watching, you did not bin the biscuit wrapper'. 'I am sorry, the path was muddy and slippery, I could not reach the bins' I said in a trembling voice.

'Everyone who litters have made the Earth a wasteland,' said the giant angrily and opened his huge mouth to swallow me with his scrap metal teeth, I screamed loudly in fear.

'Isaac!!' are you ok? what hurts?' called my mum. I opened my eyes; I could see her worried face. 'I think you hurt yourself on your head, let's go home said mum.

Chapter 3 Path not taken

While walking home, I held mum's hand tight. I smiled, the sky is blue, and everything is beautiful. I realised I made a mistake by skipping the path to the bins. I took the wrapper and binned it. The Earth turned into a wasteland because everyone avoided the path less taken. On my way back home, when I put my hand in the pocket, I pulled out a piece of scrap metal it was the giant's tooth!

Highly Commended: The Miraculous Journey

Elizabeth Mintiers

Chapter 1 The adventure

'Some journeys are miraculous, like stumbling upon, a wishing stone, you can make a wish, and it will come true', I continued reading.

'Eleanor! Time to go to bed', we have a hiking trip tomorrow', said mum. Hello, I'm Eleanor, I love long journeys, a long drive by road or a hiking trail and a chocolate brownie treat from the café when we finish makes it perfect. I turned off the lights and curled up into my cosy bed, excited about the adventure the next day.

My parents decided to take me to a hiking trail that we haven't been on before. We drove in our car, the road was interestingly narrow, shiny, and zigzag. 'We are on country road!' exclaimed daddy. We reached the woodlands and parked our car.

Chapter 2 Lost in the woods

The woodlands were full of butterflies. I chased them for long and ended up with three of them, furthermore I couldn't decide which colour to choose.

'Mummy!' 'Look!' I said and turned around, there was nobody! I walked through the trees searching in all directions. I was frightened and tears rolled down my down my cheeks. I was lost in the woods! 'How will I ever find my parents again'? I sobbed! I only wished to find my way back home.

The woods were quiet as I stepped on the crunchy leaves, it was getting dark, the birds chirping faintly.

Chapter 3 Found you!

I reached an old wooden shed and walked towards it as it was getting cold.

I heard whimpering noises coming from the inside. Wiping my tears, I opened the door and saw a puppy groaning in pain. I went closer, only to see one of its paws, trapped in a box. I tried to pull the paw out gently, it was tricky, so I went out of the shed to find help. On the gravel path a pink, shiny stone caught my eye, I held it in my hand, and it glowed. Suddenly a voice echoed, 'What is your wish?' 'Whoa a wishing stone?!' I exclaimed.

I quickly replied, 'The puppy is in trouble please help him'. As soon as I wished for it, the little puppy jumped out of the shed and ran in the opposite direction of the path. I ran behind him and 'Look! What have I found? - The road!! I saw the entry sign to the woodlands and our family car parked at the entrance.

Chapter 4 The miraculous journey

I waited for my parents to return to the car. I realised every journey has a purpose.

My journey in the woods was miraculous, it helped me rescue a poor animal in trouble. As I saw my parents walking towards me, I was thrilled and felt a wee bit older. I was eager to show them the wishing stone I hid in my hand, but as they came closer it disappeared.

Commended: Road To 'Nowhere'

Azariah Olabayo

One sunny day on a long road, in the middle of nowhere, there was a fat kangaroo with smelly feet, a shy koala with a fluffy tummy and a big nose, a beautiful platypus, a soft kookaburra and a very cute quokka. They were lost, in the middle of the road but they were happy because they were practising their gymnastics poses. They wanted to go to Portugal but they didn't know how to get there. The koala said 'we are stuck in the middle of nowhere. I have an idea let us go on Google to find out how to get off this road' but koala realised that he didn't have his iPad. The kangaroo had his iPad and he looked on Google. The kangaroo said 'na na na na na I'm smarter than you'. The koala spat at the kangaroo and said 'Stop it I don't like it'. The kookaburra shouted 'Stop arguing, otherwise you will be on time out forever'. So they both became angry and anxious.

The kangaroo said 'OMG, why is this happening? Maybe we can forgive each other without fighting? Maybe we can play games?'. 'Yes' everyone said. 'Come on be nice to each other' said the platypus. 'Yes, but hurry up before the lamp starts to flash' said the kangaroo. The kangaroo looked at Google and found directions to Portugal. They walked a little further down the road and saw an airplane. 'Oh no, but we don't have any money to pay the pilot' said the quokka. The pilot said, 'Don't worry you don't need to pay me, because you have been nice to me and showed me the directions'. The flight took 19 hours and 41 minutes. The animals were very tired as they didn't sleep very well.

They finally arrived in Portugal and had an awesome time. They saw the Portuguese Prime Minister and said 'Good morning Prime Minister, have you had a good day? Can we play with you?' The Prime Minister fainted because he had never seen a talking platypus. After a few minutes, the Prime Minister woke up and he played with the animals. The lamp started to flash. The animals disappeared.

Commended: Trip To The Mountains

Alqueena Agatha Erhintya

It was a beautiful summer day. My friend and I have been planning a trip to the mountains for a week. We packed our bags and set off early in the morning, excited to spend a day hiking and exploring the beautiful landscapes.

As we drove through the winding mountain roads, the view was breath-taking! Tall trees and lush grass forests seemed to go on forever. The fresh and clean air is very different from what we used to experience in urban areas; full of pollution.

We finally arrived at our climbing destination. The trails were steep and winding, but the view was worth it. We could see for miles, and the mountain peaks seemed to stretch to heavens. This feeling of calm and peace was what I felt when I was on the top of the mountain, unlike the city full of traffic jams and all its hustle and bustle at any time.

As we hiked, we stopped to rest and took in the beauty of our surroundings. We sat on a rocky outcropping and ate our packed lunches, enjoying the peacefulness of the mountains. Again, this was my first experience. My friend and I felt a great sense of peace climbing up.

We headed back towards our car as the day began to wind down. We were tired but happy and had a great day of adventure in the mountains. As we drove back home, we could not wait to plan the next journey that led us to another beautiful destination.

Poetry Category

1st Place = Poem: The Road To School Lucy Rochford

The road to school is
Hilly. Dad and I really
Enjoy walking to the top,

Running if we are late.
Once we get to the
Ascent, we pretend to
Dance through Gingerbread Land.

The pointy roofs
On houses look like castles.

Sometimes we see birds
Cheeping. Dad and I
Have lots of fun on our way. But
One of the best parts
Of the road to school is that it
Leads me home at the end of the day.

1st Place = Poem: Welcome Aboard This Princess Service Mia El-Sherbiny

Welcome aboard this Princess service calling at...
Rapunzel's tower, covered in flowers.
Snow White's forest, with a woodcutter called Boris.
Ariel's ocean, don't drink the sea witch's potion.
Aurora's palace, the fairy's called Alice.
Cinderella's ball, her mother is cruel.
We hope you enjoy your journey through Princess Land.

3rd Place Poem: The Secret Road

Ruby Lee

You may think that roads are simple,
Just like someone's smile with a dimple.

But if you do deeper and deeper,
You might meet an animal keeper.

The animal keep will say to you,
"If you go down that road, it will lead you to a magical woodland. So be careful and true".

But if you do go down the road,
The woodland forest will be in sight.
(You might think you may be bored,
However, you could be in for a fright!)

The magical woodland is an unexpected place
With enchanting squirrels stuffing berries in their face.

Woodland fairies like to collect pollen from flowers,
Giving them to animals, which gives them mystical powers.

The deepest part of the woodland forest is a secret door of every road that takes you to
anywhere you like.

You may think that roads are simple,
But the only one which isn't the secret road.

Highly Commended: Some Roads

Joni Eyre

Some roads have a turn and hills.
Some roads go passed buildings and signs, and some don't.
Some roads have holes with moles inside.
Some roads are motorways with motorbikes on them.
Some roads go under things and some don't.
Some people on long journeys say "are we nearly there yet?"
"Yes!"

Commended: The Road

Arianna Goodman

Some roads are long and windy
Some are very dirty
Others polished and shiny
Some are clean and undented
Some are ugly with tyre marks
For cars they were invented
Roads are very convenient
They are a pavement for the cars
The name must be a big agreement!
The road

Commended: The Road

Oliver Weaver

You may think that roads are boring
like someone's hoard with a dull door
but if you go deeper and deeper
you might find a woodland packed with mythical creatures.
Also you might find a happy man.
The man will say to you "don't go down that road"
but indeed you do.
You wonder why he said that to you
because you turn to find lots of juicy berries!
So what caused this man tell you this?
Aha you see a sign saying do not go.
So don't sulk when your parents tell you that you are going on a road:
it could be cool!

The R C Sherriff Trust is an independent charitable trust, established through the terms of the Will of playwright, R C Sherriff. It has been promoting and developing the arts in the Borough of Elmbridge, for 30 years. Further details about the Trust can be found at www.rcsherrifftrust.org.uk

Elmbridge Borough Council's Arts Development seeks to increase opportunities for people to engage in the arts, culture and heritage of our Borough, either individually or through partnerships, such as those with the R.C. Sherriff Trust that make Elmbridge Primary Schools Festival possible. With the aim of engaging residents, Elmbridge Borough Council's Art Development supports arts organisations and presents arts-based activities that improve the physical and mental health of people who live and work in Elmbridge.

