

ISSN 1063-0848

Minas Tirith Evening-Star



*Journal of the
American Tolkien™ Society*



Volume 40, Number 3

Year End 2012

Minas Tirith Evening-Star^{ar}



Journal of the American Tolkien™ Society

Volume 40, Number 3

Spring 2013

Table of Contents

An Old Meeting of Ways by David Grayson page 3

The Orc and the Trolls by Oxymore Took..... page 5

Dinah Hazell Obituary by Ruth McLauchlan..... page 7

In the Hall of Fire..... page 8

Poetry by Anish, Svendsen, Hermiz, and van Tebberen

Hugo's Bookshelf page 14

An American Tolkien Society News and Review Feature

Phelan W. Helms, Connor W. Helms, Philip W. Helms

Frodo Lives..... page 29

State of the Society page 32

Cover: Carved Pumpkin: idea: Noah Dettman; project: Dettman Family

Minas Tirith Evening-Star: Journal of the American Tolkien Society is produced for the American Tolkien Society by WereWolf Publications and is provided to all members without further charge. Also available by e-mail in PDF format and in RTF format on diskette or by e-mail. ATS annual dues are \$10.00 US for e-mail; \$12.50 US inside U.S. (including zip codes in Puerto Rico), Canada and Mexico; \$15.00 US in other nations. Dues include First Class handling inside U.S., Air Mail to other nations. Potential contributors, send self-addressed, stamped envelope for guidelines.

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<http://www.americantolkiensociety.org>

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ISSN 1063-0848

An Old Meeting of Ways: Gateway to Adventure

David Grayson

In mythic adventure tales, the hero often resides in the ordinary world and lives an ordinary life – until he or she receives “the call to adventure.”¹ When the hero answers the call, they are drawn inexorably into a series of trials. But first, the hero must depart the familiar world and cross the threshold into the mythic realm. As the mythologist Joseph Campbell explained, “A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder.”²

Sometimes, the threshold between the regular and the mythic worlds is off the beaten track. In the Narnia tales, for example, it is a secluded country house with many rooms, including an empty one with a wardrobe.³ In other stories, a port city serves the purpose; for example, Mos Eisley in Star Wars. The common thread of these spaces is that they stand on the edge of the known and unknown – the familiar and mythic realms.

In *The Lord of the Rings*, a small and otherwise ordinary community functions as the gateway for Frodo and his companions. Though it may seem unremarkable at first glance – the center of a cluster of villages with only a few miles of country around – Bree is an intersection of multiple worlds.

Tolkien relates that the village of Bree has historically been a crossroads. He writes, “For Bree stood at an old meeting of ways; another ancient road crossed the East Road just outside the dike at the western end of the village, and in former days Men and other folk of various sorts had travelled much on it.”⁴

A commonality of these places is that they bring together disparate people. Bree fits such a pattern. It is the only community in Middle Earth where hobbits and men reside together. Moreover, as mentioned above, Bree is a

longstanding meeting place for travelers from all over the West of Middle Earth. Indeed, at the Prancing Pony, Frodo and his companions encounter a diverse group: “Barliman Butterbur was standing near the fire, talking to a couple of dwarves and one or two strange-looking men. On the benches were various folk: men of Bree, a collection of local Hobbits (sitting chattering together), a few more dwarves, and other vague figures difficult to make out away in the shadows and corners.”⁵

Because of this diversity, the hero is able to meet fellow travelers – potential friends as well as enemies. It is at the Pony, of course, where the hobbits meet Aragorn. And it is here where the hobbits are spied upon and unsuccessfully attacked by the Ringwraiths.

Opportunity is also a hallmark of these gateways. The hero may be able to locate a guide. He must decide whom to trust and join with – just as the hobbits discuss the merits of the “strange-looking weather-beaten man” who has introduced himself to their party.

Although the hero may have already encountered danger, by passing through the gateway he is ushered into the adventure proper. By the time the hobbits have reached Bree, they have already had important encounters with Old Man Willow, Tom Bombadil, and the Barrow-wights. But at Bree they link with Aragorn and plunge forward in the Ring quest.

Readers may reasonably ask about the role of Rivendell, where the Fellowship is established and the quest is formally enshrined. However, by the time the Hobbits have reached the House of Elrond, they are already firmly enmeshed in the adventure. The enemy has pursued them; Frodo has been dreadfully wounded; and the Ring has been exposed.

“Strange as news from Bree” the old saying goes. This perfectly captures the role of Bree in the tale of the Ring – and no doubt in other tales. For Frodo and his companions, Bree is the portal between two paths.

Notes

¹ Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (New York:

MJF Books, 1949), 49.

² Ibid., 30.

³ C. S. Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (New York: Collier Books, 1970), 1.

⁴ J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1978), 207.

⁵ Ibid., 212.

The Orc and the Trolls *A Tale from the Pits of Mordor*

Collected by Oxymore Took

An orc was once sent to the dark cages of Mordor to help keep tabs on the trolls that His Nibbs kept for war. It was a horrid, nasty job that no one wished for. It was a long standing rule in that job, however, that if someone could actually teach the trolls a thing or two, they would be allowed to return to their home cave.

Well, our clever fellow, the new orc, was delighted to hear that bit of news while being shown about the cages. Each pen held three trolls. He noted that, day or night, a candle always burned in the cages. He was told that they were hard pressed to get the candles in place to illuminate the cages. It was far easier for the guards to allow the candles to burn wastefully all throughout the day rather than risk putting them out when they were not needed.

“Why d’nt we put da candles out?” asked our fellow.

“Ah, and y’d be likin’ ta go in da cage ta do it?” asked his better. “Y’re most likely to loose an arm - and not be the first to s’ffer so!”

So it was that the orc knew he had come upon the thing he could do – he would teach the trolls to put out their own candles. Surely that would impress the bosses and get him his ticket back to the Mountains and his home cave.

Every wise orc knows the old saying in Mordor, never

think for yourself! But our fellow was from the outlands and not a native to His Nibbs' neighborhood.

So it was that our fellow took to talking to the trolls. Now trolls are dumb creatures but not as dumb as the stone they are made of! They were curious as to why the orc would want to sweet talk them night after night in their pens. Soon, from the one cage that our fellow had chosen to be his subjects, the trolls began to look forward to his visits. The three trolls sat on their haunches and smiled big toothy grins as the orc spoke to them.

"Y' gotta blow that there candle out f'r me, my lads! Come on now. Just y' try." At that point the orc would point at the candle, purse his lips, and blow.

The trolls all laughed!

The orc stomped his feet in frustration!

The trolls jumped up, stomped their feet, and laughed louder.

"No, y' egids! If'n y'll jump f'r me, why won't y' blow f'r me?"

The orc pointed again at the candle and blew his breath.

One of the trolls scratched his head. He twisted his mouth to the left and blew. But the twist of his lips sent the air off to the side. The flame remained undisturbed.

The orc jumped up and down in aggravation. The trolls laughed and jumped up and down.

The next time the orc attempted his lesson, he encouraged the second troll in the cage to blow.

That troll twisted his mouth to the right. He had the same result: a flame that still burned. The orc jumped up and down in irritation. The trolls laughed and jumped up and down.

The following time something was different. The orc did not see the captain of the cages walking down the aisle between pens in his direction. But the trolls saw him. They knew this was the "boss" of the goblins and the sight of him sent their stony bones a-shivering! Their orc friend began his humorous yammering outside their cage as he did every visit.

"Puff, puff, puff!" went the orc.

The trolls did not start their deep laughter this time.

The cruel boss was sneering and heading in their direction at a quick pace.

“Come on, y’ merderis monsters!”

Stomp, stomp, stomp went the orc.

The trolls did not wish their friend to get in any trouble with the boss so they promptly grabbed him, pulled him inside their cage, and stomped him to jelly. They could not help themselves at that point and they all laughed with their stony voices.

The boss orc arrived at their cage and frowned in a deep scowl. “Put out that candle!” he shouted at the trolls.

The third troll cowered and blew out the flame.

Never think for yourself!

Mordor orc motto

Inspired by a story by Robert Graves

Dinah Hazell

Dinah Hazell, independent scholar, passed away on 14 December 2012. A specialist in medieval English literature and cultural studies with a focus on social commentary, her numerous scholarly print and online publications include *Poverty in Late Middle English Literature: the Meene and the Riche* (Four Courts Press, 2009) and translations of Middle English romances and complaint literature. Dinah also designed and co-edited the online journal *Medieval Forum*, and designed curriculum for an immensely popular class on *The Lord of the Rings* as epic literature taught at San Francisco State University where she presented guest lectures and co-taught with her recently deceased husband, Professor George Tuma. A contributor to *Beyond Bree*, she was a recipient of its 2012 honorary award for her book *The Plants of Middle-earth: Botany and Sub-Creation*. Dinah approached her Tolkien studies from a medieval perspective.

- Ruth McLauchlan



*In the
Hall of
Fire*

*An American Tolkien Society
Poetry Feature*

The Dwarvish Palace

At one time
 the caves of Moria
 were filled with dwarves
who mined deeply - very deeply
 for mithril
Their flagons were filled with
 strong red wine
They ate great portions
 of mutton on the bone
They sang as they mined
They chipped away at the
 stones
Built a palace
 where there had once been only rocks
But they mined too deeply
 and awakened all manner of
orcs
Even worse they awakened
 the flame of Udun
Whose powers were beyond their strength
Balin son of Fundin
 was buried in the heart of the mountain

His grave lies there still
A grim reminder
of the dwarvish glory
which once was

- *Matthew Anish*

The Bravest Thing

It's the bravest thing you've ever done
More than the quest we undertook
Through firs, and storm and dark of night.

A harder challenge than the evil hordes
That we both faced together
On those paths to the Cracks of Doom.

And it's the greatest treasure that you'll find.
More than the gifts bestowed to you
by an Elvish queen.

It's the love you found within this lass,
you've taken as your bride.

To go to her, and be with her,
to give your love to her alone,
took more bravery than you'll ever know.

It's a challenge worthy of a hero, and
That is what you are, dear friend for
it's the bravest thing you've ever done.

-*Jonathon D. Svendsen*

Oh Walls of Moria

No sound, Oh Walls of Moria
Save the wretch that follows me
He creeps and crawls and climbs
up your Walls
caressing his palm
like a thief!

“My Precious!” Oh Walls of Moria
grows heavy upon my breast
it beats and pounds and calls
to my heart
like that wretch
that never rests

In the empty dark, we travel most watchful
through halls of bones and those forgotten.
I curse my uncle for the life he spared
In the dark depths
of the riddles
in your kingdom.

Curse you and that foul stench of a wretch!
Curse your dormant city of underworld lies!
Curse the soundless fear fermenting my blood
Hissing its name
In vain at
the mounted Eye.

It's everywhere, within your deceptive walls
Whose silence turns to drumming
The Troll, the orcs, and the arrows
Rage for battle -
Coming! “They
are coming!”

A chain of mithril saves me First Deep
Though, our foes surround us in the corridor
When “*Ghash! Ghash!*” they retreat.

It's Durin's Bane:
Balrog's Flames
Of Anor!

Doom, Doom, the Bridge of Khazad-Dum
We cross it in haste, Oh Moria Walls!
Wizard and fire over bridge asunder
Shadow drops;
Whip binds;
Gandalf falls.

No sound. Oh Walls of Moria
Save the wretch that follows me
Our fellows, our losses, our hopes
Fade away
In the darkness
Of what I see.

- *Renee A Hermiz*

Darkness Against the Moon

In blazing anger, the dragon scowls
with fearsome eye and temper foul,
As the crowd watched in stuporous awe
Fire-red ripples run towards the shore

Mad with rage, Smaug struck the night
Setting the town with his flames alight
An inferno smote the roofs of thatch
Dragon's tinder a kindling match

As a silhouette against the moon
So. . . seemingly from harm immune
Yet, with bow string drawn unto his ear
Bard's black arrow - aligned, flew clear

Straight and true went the flying dart
Piercing through the bestial heart . . .
Now emptiness shrouds once burning eyes

The Great Worm, here, in silence lies

- Ellena van Tebberen

At Helm's Deep

At the fortress which had never fallen
The Rohirrim gathered to
make their last stand
Theoden King - free of Wormtongue's
lies and evil counsel
called for a "red dawn."
The members of the Fellowship
joined the struggle
Legolas fired arrows into many of the Uruk-hai
Gimli, the stout dwarf, wielded his axe
to the dismay of orcs who got in his way
Aragorn lifted his mighty sword in battle
The White Rider - Gandalf - joined the fray on Shadowfax
Saruman's murderous hordes went down to defeat
A great victory occurred there
Saruman's army was broken
His home would never be the same
The former leader of the Istari - now corrupted by power
saw his dreams of conquest shattered
by the bold strokes of the free people of Middle-earth

- Matthew Anish

Wings in Flight

Marauding gleam in shadowed sky
A dragon swoops his downward flight
Fire flickers from mountain - high
On scales that catch a flash of light

With savage beatings of his wings
Whipped tail slashes, a tryst in death

On Esgaroth the outrage springs
In fury strikes his flaming breath
Long passage held beneath the heights
While smouldering, his hatred grew
Till once again he roared his might
And through the dark in anger flew

- Ellena van Tebberen

Not for Me

'Twas not for me, this war was raged
But for another reason.
Yes, we saved our home
Exactly as we hoped we could.

Perhaps I should enjoy this time,
A day of peace and joy,
But 'twas not for me,
We fought and bled.

I look at you, your bride,
And the brand new babe
within your arms,
It was for you this war was fought.

So you and they may enjoy
The bounties life can offer,
And live in days of peace.

It was for her, this brand
new babe,
we fought to win this war.

And for that child, we won.

- Jonathon D. Svensen



Hugo's Bookshelf

*An American Tolkien™ Society
News and Review Feature*

*edited and selected by
Philip W. Helms*

You shall not pass up these Legos!

A Lego review by the Hobbit interns,
Phelan and Connor Helms

If you love sets that can have multiple stories then Gandalf Arrives is the perfect Lego *Lord of the Rings* set for you. This set includes Gandalf, Frodo, a cart, fireworks and other “hobbit” fun things. The characters look great, but it would have been nice if they had included a tree with this set so it looked more like the scene from the movie. We really liked that they included the fireworks in this set and that they were fun and creative in the way they went together. We took the set apart and made lots of other stories with it as well as that was great fun!

If you love Legos and giant bugs then you will just love Shelob Attacks. Shelob is actually a giant spider lurking in the

deep, dark caves of Mordor. In the story Gollum tricks Frodo Baggins into going in to Shelob's cave. Sam, Frodo's friend is not going to let Frodo get eaten so he saves the day with the sword "Sting" and the elfish light given to Frodo by Galadriel the elf. This set includes Frodo, Sam, Gollum (who is so cool), a HUGE Shelob and a cave. Shelob is really scary when put together and we liked tearing her back apart. We don't like spiders very much. This is the only set you can get Gollum in. Mom wants to steal him!

Attack on Weather Top is the scene where Frodo gets stabbed by a Ringwraith's blade and starts to pass into the world of shadow. That's enough about the story for now. My personal favorite part of this set is that it is so well designed. A cool function is that you can shoot missiles at the Ring Wraiths. The guards left many years ago, but they left their weapons behind and a rat moved into Weather Top. There is also a trap door that Frodo can kind of get away with. This sort of covers the bit where he goes into the world of the Nazgul when he has the Ring on. This set looks like fun and we want it for Christmas.

The Orc Forge at Isengard is in the movie very big. The characters that are included are Lurtz, another Uruk-hai, and two Mordor orcs. So far you don't see this set in stores yet, only on the Internet. This set includes pieces of metal and a forge, plus the Uruk-hai birthing pits. There is a video online for all of them. This one's video has a designer who has tattoos on his knuckles. <http://thelordoftherings.lego.com/en-us/default.aspx?icmp=COUSFR9LOTR> I want it and after reading this you will to.

Mines of Moria set is a great set for Lego collectors because it is a set with skeletons, hidden compartments, and minifigures of Legolas, Boromir, Gimli, and Pippin. On the bad side we have a cave troll, and two Moria orcs. They added just for fun columns that you can make fall. They also added an accessory pack and the gates that they lock up using an axe. There is a chest with gems and gold in it that I like a lot, too.

Next is the Uruk-hai Army. This is made to be about the part where the Uruk-hai attack Rohan at Helm's Deep.



Eomer, a Rohan Soldier and four Uruk-hai come with this set. There is also a horse, a small catapult and an armored hook shooter that shoots hooks at the walls. The designer says this set will hook into the Battle of Helm's Deep set too. The Rohan flags are nice and I like the Rohan helmets in this set, too.

Finally is the biggest of the sets – Helm's Deep! It has over 1,300 pieces! I like that they made a way to get Gimli from a door to the army, and that you can drop rocks into the heads of the Uruk-hai. I also like that you can blow up the wall. They made a throne room so that Aragorn, King Théoden, and Gimli can sit and eat together and stuff. I also like how they made the tower and the box to allow Gimli to blow the horn. There are lots of cool things you can do with the parts in this one to make new and weird weapons including you can add bits to Gandalf's staff to make it look more like a spear if you want to.

These are great Legos and I hope that any of you that buy them have a great time! We can't wait for The Hobbit sets to come out!

- PWH & CWH

A Curious Invitation

The Forty Greatest Parties in Literature

Suzette Field

|Picador (Pan Macmillan, London)

ISBN 978-1-4472-0955-3

302 pages, hardcover

Release: October 11, 2012

£14.99 (approx. \$24.14 US)

This is a curious book. The author is an impresario and party promoter, and has organized some noteworthy events in reality, including “Satan’s Rout at Halloween with a full symphony orchestra, accordion-playing polar bears and naked waiters and waitresses.” (quote from her introduction)

She selected the 40 parties based on these criteria:

1. The parties are described in works of fiction;
2. Poetry and drama were excluded in favor of prose;
3. “As varied as possible in terms of genre, country, period and style.”

She gives no very good reason for selecting 40 examples. Bilbo Baggins’s Eleventy-First Birthday Party is number 13 of this varied selection.

The chapter or entry is divided into sections on:

- The Invitation
- The Host
- The Venue
- The Guest List
- The Dress Code
- The Food and Drink
- The Conversation
- The Entertainment
- The Outcome
- The Legacy

Serious readers may be startled at her descriptions of Bilbo as “the most famous hobbit in the Shire,” and of Gandalf as “a weirdo wandering wizard,” not to mention characterizing The One Ring as “a Ring of Doom.” Her summary of The

Legacy of the party is best left to stand alone and speak for itself:

“Inspired by a phrase that Professor Tolkien scribbled on a blank page in a student’s exam book that he was marking - ‘In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit’ - came the trilogy of novels which still, to the enduring frustration and fury of the literary establishment, wins just about every poll of the greatest book ever written. *The Lord of the Rings* pretty much founded the fantasy literature genre and has sold over 150 million copies worldwide. One wonders if Professor Tolkien’s books would have been quite so popular if he hadn’t had a weird name, like one of the characters from his own stories, but had been called something dull instead, like his friend and fellow Oxford don and writer Clive Lewis (better known as C.S. Lewis).”

In short, this chapter makes no real contributions to Tolkien scholarship, and may be mildly offensive to serious readers. The chapter is, however, enjoyable for what it is - at least in part a tribute to Tolkien’s great work.

- PWH

Tolkien Trivia

A Middle-earth Miscellany

William MacKay

Fall River Press (Barnes and Noble, Inc.)

ISBN 978-1-4351-4197-1

128 pages, hardcover

Hardcover \$5.38; Nook Book \$2.99

Like *A Curious Invitation*, this volume does not bear any recognizable price information. The prices for this volume reported above come from the Barnes and Noble website. This is also the first book we’ve reviewed which was initially listed as a “Nook Book” - an electronic file available for download to one’s electronic reader. At this point, we’ve been reviewing things in these pages for 45 years, and the world is changing around us. . .

This is a trivia or quiz book. A new one appears every few years, from one publisher or another, as interest in Tolkien

and his work is judged to wax stronger. This example of the genre includes questions and answers regarding Tolkien himself, as well as those internal to his work. Sections are:

- The Mythmaker
- A World of Hobbits, Elves & Dwarves
- Frodo & Friends
- Roads Go Ever Ever On

It seems very likely that the author had the best of intentions, and is, in his own way, a modest scholar of Tolkien's works. However, at times, his answers go seriously awry, making his book far less useful for trivia games and competitions than, for example, Foster's *Guide to Middle-Earth*. A couple of noteworthy examples which could well be typographical errors: He identifies Bilbo's father as "Gungo Baggins" (page 72) rather than Bungo Baggins. (The reader will note that the G is quite close to the B on the familiar QWERTY keyboard.) Similarly, he identifies the second Rankin and Bass animated feature as "*The Return of the Ring*," (page 118) rather than *The Return of the King*. (The R is not especially close to the K.)

On the other hand, he does odd things like insisting on using "dwarve" as the singular of "dwarves," (page 36), and posing the question, "How many friends and relatives are invited to the gala?" (i.e., the Eleventy-First Birthday Party) and answering "A gross of goodly guests come to the birthday party. In other words, 144 creatures are entertained." This is simply wrong information and poor scholarship.

In addition, he throws in questions such as "Is J.K. Rowling a Tolkien fan?" (page 31) which may well have very little or no relevance for serious readers, and others which seem merely ridiculous, such as "Are the Inklings Dwarves or Elves?" (page 37)

Please note that these examples do not constitute an exhaustive list; it is our purpose to review the work, not re-edit it. On the whole, this collection of trivia goes too oft astray to merit serious consideration.

- PWH

On the Shoulders of Hobbits

The Road to Virtue with Tolkien and Lewis

Louis Markos

Moody Publishers, Chicago IL USA

ISBN 978-0-8024-4319-9

234 pages, trade paperback

\$14.99 US

The author's purpose, stated in his Introduction, is "to revive a more traditional - and more transcendent - understanding of virtue and vice and of human purpose and dignity by catapulting the reader into the great and timeless stories bequeathed to us by Tolkien and Lewis."

His title is, presumably, a reflection of the well-known observation, "If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants," written by Isaac Newton in 1675. It is, of course, whimsical to imagine such a concept applied to standing on the shoulders of hobbits, but the author manages nicely in a figurative sense.

Each chapter pursues a single theme, message or moral, illustrated first from Tolkien's work, then from Lewis's Narnia tales. The author makes it clear he is writing for adults, and that the work is not intended to be scholarly in nature. He does not offer a Christian or allegorical reading of the Tolkien and Lewis works. He states he believes "these deeply Christian authors allowed themselves to be conduits of the Good, the True, and the Beautiful." He also recognizes that Tolkien did not greatly care for Lewis's Narnia stories, and does not attempt to imagine otherwise.

Unlike Gaul, the book is divided into four parts:

1. The Road
2. The Classical Virtues
3. The Theological Virtues
4. Evil

He concludes with a short essay, "In Defense of Stories," and offers bibliographical essays on Tolkien (Middle-earth) and Lewis (Narnia).

The book is, as intended, an undemanding read, and we found it a pleasant read as well. It is clear that the author is not primarily a Tolkien scholar, but is sufficiently well-versed in the works to carry out his purpose. An unsympathetic or hostile reader may well find distractions based on this level of scholarship, but a receptive reader will not find it burdensome.

It must be admitted that some readers will find this volume controversial, but those are likely to be the readers who wish to ignore the faith backgrounds of both authors as impediments to a good yarn. This work seems intent on restoring aspects of the tales which can become lost in the transition to film, for example, as other hands craft screenplays and the like. It is our unabashed view that any aspect or element of the works so lost is a tragedy to be lamented by the reader.

We do not hesitate to commend this volume to the readers' attention, and hope they will find it as satisfying as we did. (*Disclaimer, or something: The reviewer is a Conservative Quaker and Christian.*)

- PWH

Green Suns and Faërie

Essays on J.R.R. Tolkien

Verlyn Flieger

Kent State University Press

ISBN 978-1-60635-107-9

224 pgs., trade paperback

\$24.95 US

This volume is a work of serious scholarship, and a welcome addition to one's library of Tolkien commentary. Professor Flieger is the author of three previous books of Tolkien commentary from the same publisher, as well as the editor of an expanded edition of "On Fairy-Stories." The quality of her scholarship and writing stands out in the field, and we are pleased to review this collection of essays.

The 25 essays collected here range from those

appearing for the first time to those reprinted from various publications and anthologies, from fannish works to university press publications. The whole is divided, like Gaul, into three parts:

Part One: Tolkien Sub-creator

Part Two: Tolkien in Tradition

Part Three: Tolkien and His Century

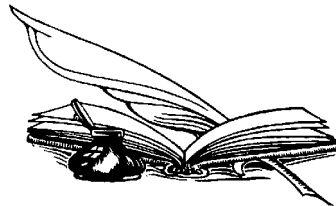
The first part includes several essays focusing on “On Fairy-Stories” from varying perspectives, a careful consideration of “the Idea of the Book,” and a detailed consideration of “Smith of Wooton Major,” among others.

The second part includes studies of “The Concept of the Hero,” “The Green Knight, the Green Man, and Treebeard,” and the Wild Men generally. Also worthy of note are an essay on “Tolkien and Lonnrot as Mythmakers” and one dealing with the *Kalevala* and “The Story of Kullervo,” the newest work in this collection, and one which may bring to mind Dr. David Dettman’s scholarship within these pages over the years.

The third part includes seven essays which can be brought together under a rather broad heading, but which might equally stand alone. “The Unhealed Wounds of Frodo Baggins,” another essay first published in this collection, may recall to the reader earlier scholarship by Amalie Helms in these pages.

It is always a pleasure to encounter a new collection of Professor Flieger’s work. Kent State University Press has done well with these projects, producing volumes well and carefully designed, printed and bound, and priced modestly enough to keep them affordable. We are glad to commend this volume to the attention of the reader and the collector alike.

- PWH



The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey

Directed by Peter Jackson

**Starring Sir Ian McKellan, Sir Ian Holm, Martin Freeman,
Cate Blanchett, Richard Armitage, Elijah Wood,
Christopher Lee, Andy Serkis and others.**

**Available in 48 fps, 24 fps, various 3D formats, D Box
Motion, 2D format. . .**

As readers are already aware, this is the first of three films by Peter Jackson based on *The Hobbit*. The Jackson team has already displayed a penchant for expanding upon Tolkien's work, in three *The Lord of the Rings* films. This penchant is again on display as the team makes an heroic effort at stretching a single volume into three films.

We selected a team of six to review the film, to assure a range of opinions were covered. The six included one young fan familiar only with the previous films, two young fans, familiar with the book through recordings and a graphic novel; a rather serious fan of several decades standing; a much younger, but still serious fan; and an adult recently come to the books following the previous films. We selected a theatre which was offering the 48 fps version (24 fps being the industry standard), and just to assure we had covered all bases, we obtained "luxury seating" in the D Box Motion section. For readers not familiar with this technology, the film contains a motion track, just as it contains a sound track, and this motion track is read by the equipment which controls the seats. Thus, the seats tilt backward to view mountains; forward to view caverns and the like, and generally bounce all about during action sequences. To our disappointment, the seats did not rise into the air and invert us when the troll picked up Bilbo by his furry feet. . .

The Jackson plot line opens with a recap (not to say spoiler) detailing the business of the Rings of Power, then picks up elderly Bilbo beginning to write his memoirs. Curiously, this seems to be the very morning of the Long Awaited Party, and affords an opportunity for Frodo to pass through the scene,

en route to Gandalf's arrival in Hobbiton (at the beginning of Jackson's *Fellowship* film). In due course, as Bilbo writes, we are transported into a protracted flashback: *The Hobbit*.

The film itself is delightful, and visually stunning. The special effects are dazzling. The repeated battle scenes are rousing (especially when one's seat throws itself into the spirit of things). However, one cannot help wondering at the length of the battle scenes and other action sequences (Radaghost fleeing a pack of wargs in a sleigh drawn by energetic rabbits - or perhaps hares - comes to mind). One might also be distracted by the emphasis placed on The Necromancer and Dol Guldur, elements which rather lurk in distant shadows in Tolkien's work. Scenes such as Radaghost administering CPR to a hedgehog at Rhosgobel, which is under siege by giant spiders, seem a trifle out of place to a viewer expecting the film to be based on Tolkien.

Several plot detours have also been constructed with an apparent eye to providing cameos for actors from *The Lord of the Rings* films who would not otherwise appear in *The Hobbit*. In addition to Elijah Wood noted above, during the brief stop at Rivendell, even Gandalf seems mildly surprised to find that Galadriel (Cate Blanchett) and Saruman (Christopher Lee) are visiting Elrond at that very moment. . .

On the obverse of the tarnished coin, scenes to which many viewers have looked with anticipation vary in quality. The Unexpected Party proceeds with some gusto, but lacking in some details, such as the dwarves' hoods and tassels and selected musical instruments. The encounter with the trolls is also largely satisfactory, though we missed the line, "What I wants to know is, what's a burrahobbit and what's it got to do with my pocket?" The Riddle Game is rather nicely done, but still imperfect, though Andy Sirkis as Gollum just gets better and better. (Grows on one, like a fungus. . .) The underground battle against the goblins, in which Gandalf slays the Great Goblin, has been drawn out into a running battle sequence which bids fair to dominate the film; likewise the "Fifteen Birds in Five Fir-Trees" sequence has been expanded.

We had mixed reactions to the wargs as presented in this outing; some of us were relieved that the new warg image is more lupine, while others were disappointed that Jackson did not maintain continuity with the previous films, even at the price of the hyena-wargs featured there.

“Spoiler” Alert: The film concludes just after Thorin and Company have been deposited by the Eagles. This, coupled with the two hour, 45 minute length of the film, may give some hint of the extent to which Jackson’s team has fluffed up the various plot points.

All said and done, without making a full inventory of the Jacksonisms, the film was a good deal of fun, and is well worth seeing. As we observed of *The Lord of the Rings* films, this is very likely the best we’re going to get. An enormous amount of money has gone into these, and many of us do not expect to live to see remakes, barring some sudden advance in technology.

Oh, and the youngest fan in our group (age 7) arrived at the end of this film, sagged back in his seat and breathed an awe-struck, “Wow!”

- PWH

The Hobbit Menu

Denny’s Restaurants

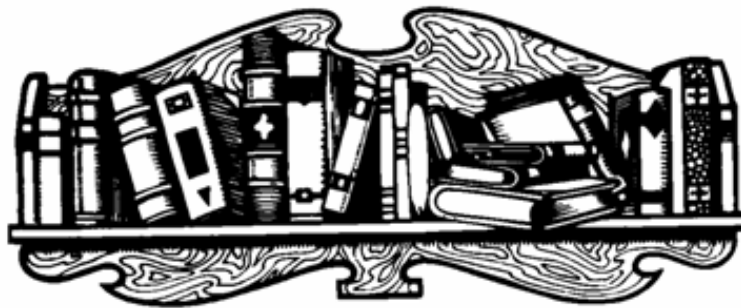
Here, There, and Everywhere

In the spirit of Happy Meals[®] and other promotions managed by the Saul Zaentz Company (apparently not Jackson), Denny’s Restaurants have implemented a The Hobbit Menu. This special menu is a trifold with nice graphics placing a Denny’s restaurant high in the mountains, as if it were Rivendell, one supposes. . . . Menu items are named after characters or groups in the film. We tried two different Denny’s, the second visit being to one near the theatre, just after viewing the film, and involving the same team of six. (We might add to the earlier description of this group that one of our number has a considerable local reputation as a chef and baker.)

We tried most of the special menu items, between the two visits. The best of the lot were the breakfast items: The Hobbit Slam (a multiple choice breakfast item, including seed-cake French toast, Shire sausage, etc.), The Shire Skillet (eggs and Shire sausage atop fried potatoes, etc.), and the Hobbit Hole Breakfast. It may be noted that the Shire sausage involved is a single banger, much larger than typical American breakfast links. Lunch and dinner items include: Frodo's Pot Roast Skillet (curiously includes broccoli), Gandalf's Gobbler (turkey sandwich plate), Dwarves Turkey Dinner (no description warranted), and the item we did not try: The Ring Burger (a large hamburger topped with deep fried onion rings). Also of note: Lonely Mountain Treasure (cubes of the seed cake French toast, with a cup of icing for dipping), and Radaghast's Red Velvet Pancake Puppies (akin to fresh donut holes, also with icing for dipping).

If one purchases a Hobbit entrée, one receives a packet of three Hobbit trading cards, one of which seems consistently to be a coupon for items such as free beverage, free pancake puppies, etc. Disclosure: We received and used a coupon for 20 percent off our entire order. Our conclusion was that the menu was fun, and the food adequate, but Denny's is still Denny's.

- PWH



Hobbit Day Observances

Tolkien: The Forest and the City

September 21-22, 2012

The School of English, Trinity College Dublin

Speakers: Professors Tom Shippey, Michael Drout, Verlyn Flieger, Thomas Honegger and Alison Milbank, as well as new voices from Ireland, England, Germany and the US with the participation of Dr. Henry Gee

Dr. H. Conrad-O'Briain

conrado@tcd.ie<mailto:conrado@tcd.ie>

or by post:

The Forest and the City

c/o Dr. H. Conrad-O'Briain

School of English, Arts Building

Trinity College, Dublin 2

Ireland

For nine years in a row now, I have hosted an all-day *Lord of the Rings* movie watching party at my house. It's generally been in the summer, but we decided to do it in the Fall this year, and we happened to plan it, without knowing, on September 22! My wife passed along a link from your webpage to me, and I was SUPER EXCITED to see that we are celebrating on Frodo and Bilbo's birthdays. Just thought you might like to see our way of celebrating that happens to fall on September 22 this year!

Micah

Merry Tolkien Week, everyone! Allow me to let you know what we have in store...

Greeting from **Peter Jackson**

submitted by Laura Schmidt

Tomorrow is Hobbit Day!

Bilbo really sums up how we feel about you,

ThinkGeek friends:

“I don't know half of you half as well as I should like; and I like less than half of you half as well as you deserve...”

At least, we *think* he does. That's a compliment, right? Hobbitses are so tricky with their wordses.



Commemorating the 75th Anniversary of The Hobbit

Festival in the Shire

Free Entry

a celebration of The Hobbit with original art exhibition, bookfair, talks and music

Thursday 20th - Saturday 22nd September 2012

at Hartbrug Church, Romanuszaal, Lange Mare, Leiden, Holland

Opening hours
Thursday 12 - 21.00
Friday-Sat 10 - 17.00

Art exhibition featuring the work of world renowned fantasy artists, a bookfair with a large selection of books and Lord of the Rings movie merchandise, and a program of talks.

Brought to you by

Festival Art and Books
www.FestivalArtandBooks.com
in association with René van Rosenberg
www.tolkienshop.com
Venue website - www.hartebrug.nl

Festival Art and Books
Collectable Art and Rare Books

TOLKIENSHOP.COM

The poster features several images: a book cover for 'The Hobbit', a painting of a dragon, a painting of a landscape, a painting of a building, and a small image of a book with a white cover and a black design.

Frodo Lives

*An American Tolkien Society Column
noting those times when something just leaps
out, where perhaps it didn't quite belong. . .*

This entry submitted by **Amalie Helms**, who found it circulating online. . .

For \$3000, you too can live in a Hobbit hole

If your dreams of squatting in the Shire were dashed after the sheep moved in and filming for *The Hobbit* began, here's something to assuage your pain. An Etsy seller has built a series of Bag End children's playhouses priced at the cost of a few months' rent, and they're big enough to fit a Rider of Rohan or two. Without their mounts, of course.

Here are the stats from seller Hobbit Holes. Buy all four, set them up in your local park, recruit some friends, and pretend that all those court summonses are being hand-delivered by orcs:

This Hobbit Hole playhouse is 12 feet wide, has a maximum interior height of six feet three inches and about 50 square feet of floor space. Comes painted as shown. Comes with a set of plexiglass and screen windows. Has a pressure treated floor system and all cedar framing. Floor is urethane-treated sanded plywood.



I am a tour operator specializing in walking tours in the Swiss Alps. We are in the preliminary stages of planning a summer 2013 tour which would follow in the footsteps of Tolkien's 1911 summer in Switzerland. This tour would also include a visit to the Tolkien Museum which will be opening in Jenins Switzerland next year. We would start in the Lauterbrunnen Valley, where Tolkien stayed. His sketches of the valley became the inspiration for his Rivendell. We would also walk around Mürren, Grindelwald, the Grimselpass, Zermatt and other areas he traveled.

Greg Witt
801-226-9026 (US)
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www.alpenwild.com

Hobbit slippers

Available from www.thinkgeek.com

A picture is worth a thousand words. . .



Pubware

Also available from www.thinkgeek.com

A picture is worth at least a thousand words. . .



State of the Society (Continued from page 32)

checks, perhaps) were returned with messages such as “return to sender.” We encourage these members or senders to resend their letters to the same address, and we promise prompt attention.

Since the Jackson films, fandom has apparently undergone some changes, which have impacted the submission of material of acceptable quality for MTES. As a result of this trend, and due to time issues, we have varied our **publication schedule** already. With a measure of regret, we are shifting to an occasional schedule rather than a fixed schedule. We will honor memberships on the basis of three issues per year, but these may appear over a period of more than a year. We will continue to number issues at three per volume, to avoid confusion.

We apologize for any inconvenience and/or confusion which have resulted from these changes, and we seek and appreciate your understanding and support.

The State of the Society

The last couple of years have not been kind to our Society. Our web host unilaterally withdrew support for the software we used to construct our **website**. As a result, the site has not been updated for some time. This has led to rumors that the Society has ceased to function. We will be constructing a new website at the same URL in the near future (with new software). This will require time, but we hope to get a new beginning on the site soon.

A wide-ranging Internal Revenue Service (IRS) review of nonprofits resulted in loss of our **nonprofit status**, which was granted to the late 1970's. The IRS sent the notice of this review to our address at the time of the application; it was returned and their summary action was to revoke our status. The "appeal" available to us is to reapply for nonprofit status. The Board has decided that at present this would not be a productive use of our time and energy. This will make little difference to most members and readers: only a few have made donations in excess of dues, and we have assured over the years that dues and services/products provided to members have balanced closely.

The editor emeritus and treasurer underwent surgery twice in 2012, and was generally out of circulation for six months or so. As a result, the business of the Society suffered. Our **publication schedule** has fallen behind; more on this later.

Some dues **checks were not banked timely**, and our financial institution has declined to process checks more than six months old. As a result, we will be returning several checks to the senders. In each case, we have implemented the membership as ordered, and we hope the senders will issue new checks which we may negotiate.

In addition, the post office box rental was not paid on time, and the **post office closed our mail box** temporarily. We have now corrected this, and reopened the same box, so that our address remains unchanged. However, a few letters (and

(Continued on page 31)