

ISSUE 10

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Welcome, at last, to *Anor* 10! First of all, I must make it clear that I am not going to apologise for the late arrival of this issue. Most of you will have received (and, I hope, read) the first C.T.S. missive of term, in which the reasons for this were spelt out, and I'm sure that anyone who hasn't read the missive can guess those reasons!

Owing to the long gap since the publication of *Anor* 9 some of the reports in this issue, notably the Oxonmoot report, may seem rather out of date. However I hope that these will give a flavour of the events concerned, and will encourage as many C.T.S. members as possible to take an active part. We may have been the largest Smial at Oxonmoot last year, but let's see if we can really dominate it this year. Also in this issue are a number of reviews, amongst which is one on *Middle Earth Role Playing*. While I would welcome comments on this and any other matters raised in *Anor*, I must make it clear that I do *not* want *Anor* to turn into a gossip magazine for Role Players, nor do I intend to give large amounts of space to the subject in future issues. MERP is of direct interest to a Tolkien Society, but most other role playing games aren't.

On the subject of comments, one major feature I intend to introduce in *Anor* 11 is a letters page, or rather a comments page, by which I mean that the letters need not necessarily be written down and sent to me—just catch me with a scrap of paper and open your mind—and I'll even show you what I've written down (if you can read it!) to make sure it really is what you want to say!

I shall finish as I began, by not appealing for material for *Anor* 11—that approach hasn't worked before, and I see no reason why it should work now. I will merely point out that the copy date is April 1st, and I hope that *Anor* 11 won't be as late as *Anor* 10!

Mike Percival

Reports

Oxonmoot 1985

As I was foolish enough to promise this report to our persuasive Editor nearly four months ago, I suppose I had better attempt to write it.

To begin at the beginning with a definition: Oxonmoot is the annual weekend gathering, in Oxford, of the Tolkien Society. Its aim is to encourage enjoyment and understanding of Tolkien's work, to honour his memory and (of course) to provide plentiful opportunities for merry-making.

Last year the Cambridge contingent consisted of Colin and myself as first-timers and of about seven old hands (sorry, folks!). We met in the Turf Tavern from 6 p.m. on Friday, 27th September, and I was relieved to recognise several faces and Marcus's hair. The trouble began when I collected my registration envelope, and found that it contained a name badge (display compulsory) and a 'Song Book'. There were no planned activities that evening, so people sat around in the Turf, eating, drinking and generally behaving in the way that any self-respecting Tolkien Society should.

Saturday dawned ridiculously bright and early, and I arrived at the Town Hall in time to attend the 'First time Oxonmooters (*sic*) introductory chat and welcome'. In fact I learnt nothing new from this, as I had grilled the Cambridge mob pretty thoroughly beforehand, but it was probably useful for others. The Smials' Forum followed; it consisted almost entirely of a discussion of what-on-earth-to-do-about-*Mathom*. This is the Smials' newsletter, which has now become part of *Amon Hen*, the Tolkien Society bulletin. Colin, Iwan, Julian and I next headed for the informal Quiz, in which I displayed my ignorance and the other three took the first three places, in some order which I forget. By this time Mike had organised the GTS's table in the sales area, and we stood around trying to persuade people to buy back issues of *Anor* and posters (and sometimes succeeding). The 'Scandalsheet', with which we had all been issued, warned readers, "be ready to duck if anyone tries to flog you a copy" of our "latest research report on, 'Why do One-armed Aztec Gay Lesbian Footballers like Tolkien?' edited by one I. Rhys Morus with sixty pages of computer analysis by J. Bradfield." Last year such readiness was not required; I can not guarantee that the same will be true this year!

At noon everything stopped for various presentations to Priscilla Tolkien, who spoke briefly to an enthusiastic audience, as well as providing more lunch than the assembled masses could consume. Quite a feat, that. The left over food was much appreciated at the party that evening. Miss Tolkien's generosity in this and other matters was instrumental in making Oxonmoot such an enjoyable occasion, and we are all grateful for it. A short play, 'Yes, Mr. Chairelf', by Margaret Askew, was performed, but I did not manage to stay in one place and pay attention for long enough to feel able to comment on it. After this had finished I went to see the exhibition of artwork on Middle-earth subjects; I was particularly impressed by Ted Nasmith's portrayal of hobbits, without the twenceness which too often intrudes into such paintings. During the afternoon a discussion and a Battle Arts session

in the University Parks were our contrasting options. Along with about fifteen others, I took part in the discussion, whose main conclusion was the unsurprising one that the *Lays of Beleriand* are not of a uniformly high standard; however, we did range through many other subjects, and it was interesting to listen and talk to so many knowledgeable people.

At 4.30 there were rehearsals for the evening ceremonials, and my careful avoidance of involvement in this was swiftly brought to nought, when I found out that Maggie's white gown did indeed fit me. This removed my last excuse, and I found myself impersonating the Spirit of Good to Julian's convincing Spirit of Evil. I remember beginning to plan our ceremonial in Emma bar some months before, but it had indeed undergone a wondrous transformation since then. The basic idea was that, during the evening, good and evil peoples should mingle in peace, and lines read alternately in English and Welsh (by guess whom?) emphasised this universality. Following other contributions too numerous to detail, the Morgul-hai did their best to make evil dominate in a characteristically dramatic presentation.

At last we were free to relax for a few hours; Catherine and I took the opportunity to buy some vodka, feeling that we might need it by the end of the evening.

In fact the dramatics were fairly painless, and we could get down to the serious business of enjoying ourselves. The costume masquerade classes were won by the Morgul-hai and a young dragon, who had by this stage been irredeemably corrupted by the aforementioned Evil ones. Colin made an impressive showing in the smoke-ring competition, helped by having the right costume for it. Later in the evening there were various entertainments including recitation by Maggie, who was excellent as always. I also enjoyed the sing-song, but this was not universally as popular; neither were the Morris dancers who were unable to move quietly even when they were not dancing, and caused a certain amount of disturbance. At 11 p.m. the Town Hall had to be cleared, and 'we' headed back for the Turf.

Rooms 13 and 15 each hosted a party; Minas Tirith was based in the smaller Room 13, where we (again) sat around and drank, talked, drank and were lectured on sheep-farming (yes, really). At some hour of the morning Jeremy Morgan, who was useful as a chauffeur to Oxonmooters throughout the weekend, drove me back to the house where I was staying. I shall long remember the friendly atmosphere that prevailed even amongst people who had scarcely met; it had been a most enjoyable evening.

In spite of Saturday night, just about everybody made the visit to the Tolkiens' grave in Headington Cemetery, which is the most solemn and in many ways the most important part of Oxonmoot. Denis Bridoux sang Galadriel's Lament, and wreaths were placed on the graves. After the ceremony Colin and I were ferried with the other first-timers to Miss Tolkien's home, where she kindly allowed us to see memorabilia of her father, provided refreshments, and made us feel welcome with her interest and conversation. To conclude Oxonmoot, we went back to the Turf for lunch and to say goodbye to friends. Some people then went directly back to Cambridge by coach; I stayed in Oxford for another couple of days, avoiding the thoughts of the Societies' Fair which were beginning to surface, and would be sure to do so once I set foot in Cambridge.

Altogether, then, I am very glad that I went to Oxonmoot, and I can recommend it to any of you who are thinking of going this year. The Cambridge contingent was bigger last year than ever before, but there was plenty of room for more. Any present or past Committee member will be glad to offer advice; see you next September!

Perdita Stevens

The 1985 Minas Tirith Smial Foreyule Feast

Having at last discovered the venue for this, our first feast, we entered, not knowing quite what to expect. What we found was very interesting, and has ensured we will attend the next one without any hesitation. [repetition or deviation.— ed.]

First and foremost must come food and drink. In a phrase borrowed from somewhere, "it snowed food and rained drink"—well, mushrooms anyway. The food was carefully prepared by members of the committee, who diligently washed, sliced and fried a mountain of mushrooms. Other food available included jacket potatoes, bread, cheese and salad, which was quickly consumed by a horde of hungry hobbits. Drink also flowed freely, except for one or two of the heavier beers which coalesced while being poured. There was a good selection of beers and other drink—someone had even had the bright idea of buying some cider. This cider, if that's what it was, took three parties to finish off (before it finished some of us off, thankfully!), as well as staining our host's table, but apart from this the food and drink were very good.

Since this was an optional costume party, a number of 'beings' were present. A selection of these included a hobbit and a Nazgûl (whose appearance sparked off a lively debate on their subversion and when it occurred), but the star of the feast must have been Glorfindel, his appearance in stunning black, offset by the startling hand embroidered pink tracery, providing a lively debate on his sexual preferences. Does Glorfindel's choice of black show a sneaky suspicion of his true intentions—were there really ten Nazgûl??

A surprise guest appearance was made by Celeborn—well, at least by his cardboard replica. We all know elves were cool headed, but how he kept a straight face with those incriminating stains I will never know. Fortunately he kept his head all evening, although last time he was seen he appeared to have lost it, so if anybody comes across a cardboard head, please forward it to Celeborn, c/o the C.T.S. committee. Let this be a warning to all of you, never take up with strange elves! (and Glorfindel was strange!)

The music provided that evening was a pleasant mixture of Hawkwind, Fleetwood Mac and Thirteenth Century Church Music. Once most people had retired to recover from the excessive amounts they had consumed, the few foolhardy souls remaining launched into a sing-along. After dredging the archives for tasteful songs and unfortunately not finding any, we chose to sing some Tolkien Society Favourites (???). Half an hour of this forced the last of us to leave.

So overall we found this a very enjoyable evening, and a special vote of thanks should go to Julian Bradfield for letting us use his flat and for clearing up after us (aided by the members of the committee). If you failed to get to this event then you missed one of the great events of this year, and you should try to get to the next one.

Ian Alexander, Graham Taylor

The 1985 National Smials' Quiz

A full report of the Quiz was commissioned, but failed to materialise before *Anor 10* went to press. (Thanks, Chris.) The Quiz was held in November in Jesus Party room, and after several changes of leader, the final result was a win for Barad Ecthelion (Julian Bradfield, Iwan Morus and Duncan McLaren) over three other teams. Much alcohol was consumed, in particular by Heren Nénikarmetarion (the Guild of Piss-Artists), many questions were answered, some correctly and others incorrectly, and a good time was had by all. My thanks to Maggie Thomson for her help with setting the questions.

Mike Percival

The Society of the Shire

Several commentators have recently mentioned the apparent stability of the hobbit society of the Shire (see for example Crawford (1985), Stenström (1985), Morus (1985) or McLaren (1985)). Before analysing the evidence for stability I want to make some comments regarding the validity of the assumption that the society is stable. There is a definite impression of this given by the apparent lack of change in the sixty years between the return of Bilbo and his eleventy-first birthday, which is backed up by the historian's statements regarding the Shire in the prologue to *The Lord of the Rings*. This however disregards the fact that in the following few years the Shire undergoes exceptionally radical change, coming under the domination of Saruman and suffering from attempted industrialisation and the expropriation of surplus production.

This directs us to the question of why some individual did not seize control of the Shire at an earlier time, and why did it require 'external' influence when it did happen? This implies, in fact, the lack of an internal dynamic within the Shire (of which capital accumulation is only one possible example). Thus the question I want to pose, (in an empoeic sense), is why this internal dynamic is either lacking or has no visible demonstration in the records we have available?

The evidence for stability is mostly in the form of a lack of internal conflict and a lack of means whereby such conflict could be resolved. In *LotR* (prologue) it is said that "the Shire at this time had hardly any 'government'." The small number of shirriffs supports this, as does the note that there was only one Shire official, although I think that it is valid to assume more than one Mayor. Similarly, although some form of judicial system existed (since wills for instance were highly formal), it was limited in extent and in retributive powers. These included only the Lockholes and potentially expulsion, although there is no

direct evidence for this in the Shire, unlike the Anduin hobbit settlements. This implies a lack of need for them, and there is indeed little evidence of law-breaking (in terms of violence against people or property). The worst alleged is a possible drowning and the worst reported a case of spoon-theft! This suggests that individual and group activity was highly routinised and thus relatively stable. This is confirmed by the fact that adventurous behaviour was perceived by most hobbits as unusual or even 'wrong' and was therefore, for example, "lushed up" by the Took family.

This lack of conflict is so alien to our modern society that it seems necessary to look for some obvious mechanism, of which only one clearly exists, that being the habit of present giving. The traditions involved are clearly described by Tolkien himself in *Letters* (p. 290ff.) and thus only require a brief recapitulation here. Besides a highly formalised receiving tradition based upon a form of extended family, there is a tradition of present giving by the individual celebrating his/her birthday, which is described as "a form of 'thanksgiving' and taken as a recognition of services, benefits and friendship shown, especially in the past year." (*Letters* p. 291). Party or feast giving, on the day, was also normal. It could be argued that the second of these habits was eventually replaced by our Christmas present giving tradition, while the first and third still exist in modern society. However, the higher frequency of present reception by any given individual particularly in the absence of explicit religious ties could make the hobbit custom a much more effective tool promoting social stability.

More recent history reveals at least two cases where human societies have developed 'giving' traditions. These occurred amongst Amerindians in British Columbia until about 1925 and amongst Melanesian islanders up until the present day. Many characteristics of potlatch (the Amerindian custom) as Crawford (1985) suggests, do reflect those recorded by Tolkien, particularly in the account of Bilbo's farewell party (*LotR* I 1) which was only quantitatively unusual. Gifts were indeed distributed according to the social rank of the recipients, the size of the gathering did reflect the rank of the donor and the gift distribution was accompanied by great feasts and general hospitality in which the donor was accompanied by his kin-group. Crawford then leaps to the conclusion that it is therefore the giving traditions which prevented capital accumulation via the redistribution of wealth and through shared conspicuous consumption.

In doing so he fails to consider the actual way in which the mechanism works. This is actually crucial, for the phenomena above cannot prevent accumulation without efficient social control over the accumulation ideology. Indeed if societal values encouraged the giving of expensive parties and gifts this could possibly engender accumulation. However, societal values in the Shire were stated to have encouraged small gifts and in particular gifts produced by the giver. This strongly echoes the giving traditions of the Melanesian islanders, for whom status depended on the successful rearing of pigs (see for example Modjeska (1982)), which by its control over primary production prevented the material part of accumulation. Status was thus relatively non-material, which is similar to the Shire where, for instance, Lotho aspires to gain status in the form of the headship of two separate families.

The most interesting part of the comparison with Melanesia is that in those islands the production of status goods led almost directly to the intensification of agriculture in particular areas, while surrounding land, capable of supporting extensive agriculture, was left unused. Thus it seems unnecessary to call on interference by the elves and Gandalf to explain the intensive use of land within the Shire as Crawford does. In Melanesia such intensification was common even in the absence of high population densities. This

is another point on which Crawford appears misled. He begins his essay on the Shire with an estimate of population based on nothing more than the stated size of the land. The figure he comes up with (300,000 to 500,000 individuals) is probably grossly inflated. If we work from the fighting population of Hobbiton and Bywater combined (about 200 hobbits according to *LotR III*) we can suggest a total population for that settlement, including women, children and the elderly, of about 1000 individuals, most of whom, like the Cottons, would have been involved in agriculture. Although there were (from map evidence), at least thirty settlements in the Shire, the map also shows that most of these were much smaller than Hobbiton and Bywater. Even if, as is hinted in *Letters* (p. 360), the detailed map in *LotR* only shows one half of the settlements, the total population of the Shire would probably not have exceeded 40,000 hobbits at the end of the Third Age. This relatively low figure is confirmed by the comment in *Letters* (p. 291) that only recently had kinship communities spread out over more than twelve miles, and the fact that the average number of children per family at 2.59 is only marginally if at all above the replacement rate. This figure is estimated from the genealogical tables in *LotR*, which while they may omit some children, also miss out any childless families. The age of marriage would be relatively high as a result of the structures of land inheritance.

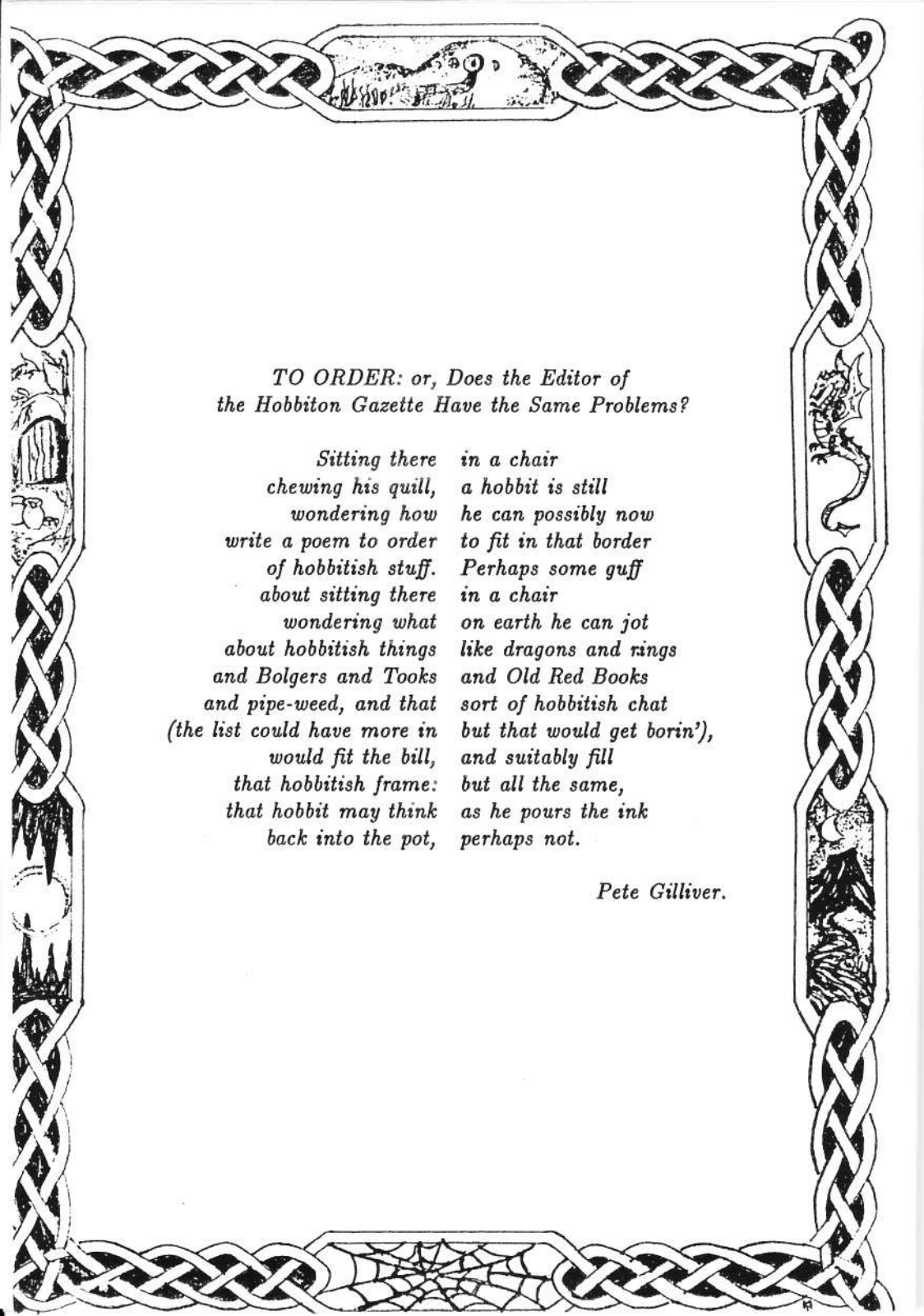
Such a figure for population allows us to suggest that the settlements were still essentially, if not kinship communities, at least neighbourhood communities. This is essential to the prevention of capital accumulation since the mechanisms suggested above can only operate in a truly local community where virtually all individuals were known to each other. Such communities also naturally exhibit less conflict over resources, and are able to make the joint investment necessary for intensification. The noted frequency of present receiving (once per week on average) supports the notion of a strong sense of community.

The existence of such a community thus answers the question posed above. The close-knit stability of hobbit settlements, reinforced by kinship links between areas, particularly through the twelve major families, produced a situation in which no hobbit would be capable of seizing control without external assistance (Saruman's motives are a different question altogether). Thus although the giving traditions were important in hobbit society they do not provide the clear cut answer that has previously been believed.

Duncan McLaren

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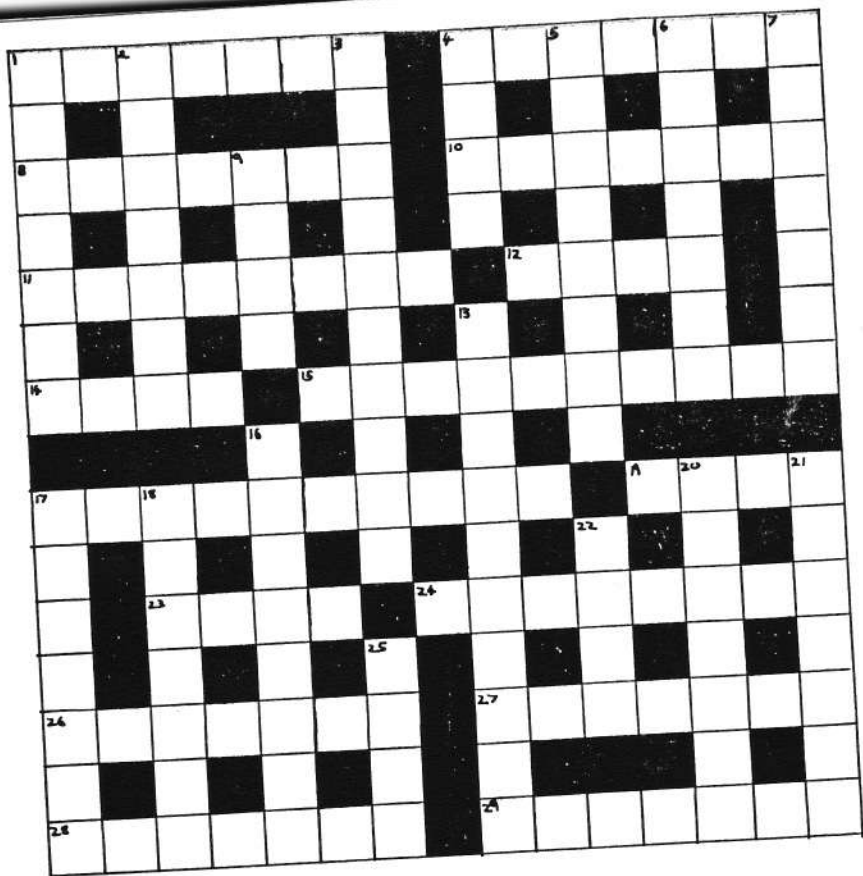
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*TO ORDER: or, Does the Editor of
the Hobbiton Gazette Have the Same Problems?*

*Sitting there in a chair
chewing his quill, a hobbit is still
wondering how he can possibly now
write a poem to order to fit in that border
of hobbitish stuff. Perhaps some guff
about sitting there in a chair
wondering what on earth he can jot
about hobbitish things like dragons and rings
and Bolgers and Took and Old Red Books
and pipe-weed, and that sort of hobbitish chat
(the list could have more in but that would get borin'),
would fit the bill, and suitably fill
that hobbitish frame: but all the same,
that hobbit may think as he pours the ink
back into the pot, perhaps not.*

Pete Gilliver.



ACROSS

1. Give birth to ... well, Oriental version of Glaurung (7) 4. Divine inhabitant of rather dreary village (7) 8. A day made red, as these may find written (7) 10. Including one Continental that's harboured here (7) 11. Bearer of news from Bree has little chance (8) 12. Commercial artist returns to earth (4) 14. Bloodshed in Lórien (4) 15. Large ship ruins canal roads (10) 17. Mallorn, i.e. a sort of elm, may be found here (10) 19. Refuse from beginning to end to be called shepherds (4) 23. Maggot's tooth? (4) 24. Cleverly ruling Eä by the sword (8) 26. A lord of green lands whose blood was presumably blue (7) 27. Call an engineer before Yule (7) 28. Falls between the sides opposed to intake of breath (7) 29. Aragorn's trousers? (7)

DOWN

1. He was old and fat for quite a while (7) 2. Wicked letter read out to king (7) 3. 12 pounds from Hithlum (10) 4. Numenorean cape? (4) 5. Radio interference described by river voyager (8) 6. Men appear swarthy in this brown light (7) 7. Beren disapproved of some relative of 5 (7) 9. Naughtiness found in the Prince of Cats (4) 13. Island capital's holding on to foreign money (4,6) 16. Eminence due to lack of hair? (4,4) 17. Controversial strip upset Henry Lord of 21 (7) 18. Albert burnin' flowers (7) 20. 'Where grey the waters run' (7) 21. 19 call Dwarves 'dead little fish' (7) 22. Point to jar dispensing Sauron's grain (4) 25. Sun King on a trip to Australia (4)

uncle mike's book corner

Hi there, and welcome to another not-too-serious dip into the sf/fantasy book market. This time I've got something old, new, borrowed and (only in colour of the cover artwork) blue, plus a couple of others, not to mention a film (consider it a late Christmas present) First, the old:

Moon of Three Rings, André Norton, ACE, 200pp, price ... you tell me!

This is one of her best, and is a book I read when I was about 12—even before *LotR*! It is, sadly, nigh on impossible to get hold of (I didn't get round to owning a copy till my second year in Cambridge), but can be found (surprisingly) in the junior fiction section of your average library—a fate suffered by all too many of André Norton's books.

The plot concerns a space Trader, Krip Vorlund, who finds himself caught up in an intrigue involving a girl called Maelen and the local nobility of the world he's just landed on. All very simple, were it not for the fact that Krip has to disappear, this feat being accomplished by him and a barsk (being a native wolf-like animal) exchanging bodies (with Maelen's assistance).

The story unfolds from there, being told alternately from Krip's and Maelen's point of view—I won't tell you any more of the plot, though. Suffice it to say that, when I finally got hold of a copy and re-read it, it was still as good as I remembered it. If you're lucky, you might find a copy in Forbidden Planet (Denmark St., London in case you didn't know!)—failing that, I'm open to persuasion!

And to follow, the new ...

Saga of Old City (Greyhawk Chronicles 1), Gary Gygax, TSR inc., 350pp, £3.10

Recognise the name? (For those of you who don't, Gary Gygax is 'Mr. Dungeons and Dragons'). TSR seem to be moving into the book market, although it has to be said that this book comes nowhere close to the DragonLance trilogy. The hero is one Gord of Greyhawk, and the book chronicles his rise from street urchin to accomplished thief and his numerous adventures along the way. The world of Greyhawk is nicely detailed, and some of the characters are fun—a bald druid called Curley springs to mind (anyone remember a certain Harlem Globetrotters player of that name?). In general, however, it falls a long way short, and I cannot imagine it being considered for publication by anyone but TSR. The plot feels like a bad D&D campaign and the dialogue ... 'sucks' is the nicest thing I can find to say. The redeeming feature—some nice artwork by Clyde Caldwell, but even then he's used the same model for two portraits of different unrelated women. (If you like the D&D artwork, look at *The Art of the Dungeons and Dragons Fantasy Game* (TSR, 140pp, £9.00) which contains some superb art, mainly by Caldwell, Larry Elmore (rave, rave) and Jeff Easley.)

Readable, but no literary merit—don't buy it, borrow my copy.

Next, the borrowed, by kind permission of Anne (ta, Anne)

Another Fine Myth, Myth Conceptions, Myth Directions, Hit or Myth Robert Asprin, ACE, £3.10 (I think)

And the 'myth' jokes go on ... Robert Asprin, the man responsible for the 'Thieves' World' series, has produced another gem of a series here. The original was a comic strip, featuring the adventures of Skeeve, an apprentice magician, and Aahz, his unwilling mentor. (Well, you see, there was this here accident involving Skeeve's original mentor and an assassin, when he happened to have just summoned Aahz (who, by the way, is a large, green, scaly inhabitant of Perv)—Aahz is now stuck, powerless, with Skeeve.) It has made the transition to a book extremely well, and is, not surprisingly, very funny.

Skeeve's other companions include Tananda (a rather pretty demon) and Gleep. Gleep is a dragon with terminal halitosis, a bad case of affection for Skeeve and a one word vocabulary—yes, you guessed it: 'Gleep!'. Most of their adventures are highly improbable, full of action and humour, and generally insane.

Fraid it's Forbidden Planet again for this one, although there are several copies in Cambridge. A lesser reviewer than I would say these are too good to myth, but I won't. [I'm glad he mythed out on that one—ed.]

The blue is a long-awaited rebind job ...

The Chronicles of Morgaine, C. J. Cherryh, 690pp, £2.95

First of all, ignore the cover. Morgaine does *not* wear blue fibre-glass form-fitting plate armour, nor does her sword act as a lightning conductor! Cover apart, this is a truly excellent rebind of a trilogy, comprising *The Gate of Ivril*, *The Wells of Shiuan*, and *The Fires of Azerot*. The plot hinges round the 'Gates', which are essentially teleportals between both different worlds and different times. Morgaine's job is to travel from Gate to Gate, closing them behind her, and her companion in this is a dishonoured warrior named Vanye, from whose viewpoint the tale is told. Her weapons are a small hand blaster (which is never referred to as such), and a sword, Changeling, which, to be honest, makes Elric's Stormbringer look mundane.

Over the 700 pages, an awful lot of character development goes on, especially in the relationship between Morgaine and Vanye, and between Vanye and the villain Roh (who happens to be his cousin).

One of those books I never wanted to finish—recommended unreservedly, especially at the price.

To follow that little lot, some shorter reviews:

Master of the Five Magics, Lyndon Hardy, Corgi, 408pp, £2.50

Hmmm ... yes, well. Apprentice thaumaturge falls in love with beautiful unmarried lady, resolves to win her hand and sets out to become (not entirely intentionally) an archimage, aided and abetted by the lady's female adviser. Becomes archimage, hero of the moment, etc. She marries a northern barbarian, and he, rather predictably, gets the other girl who he really loved all along. Its one redeeming feature is its magic system, which is very well put together, and unlike so many fantasy novels which involve magic, actually works in a believable fashion.

Don't bother unless you're into designing fantasy role-playing games.

The Tower and the Emerald, Myra Caldecott, Arrow Books, 350pp.

This could have been really good. The plot is superb, spoilt by the fact that the writing style is disjointed, jumping from sudden revelation to sudden revelation in an alarming manner. The narration changes viewpoint once every page or so, in some cases seemingly in mid-sentence: in short, it doesn't work.

A good plot with a good book hiding in it somewhere—this wasn't it.

Hawk of May, Kingdom of Summer, In Winter's Shadow, Gillian Bradshaw, Methuen, 260pp each, £1.95 each.

If you haven't heard of this trilogy yet, why not? It is one of the two best works set in Arthurian Britain that has been published (the other being Marion Bradley's *Mists of Avalon*). I haven't enough space to rave about it, so just go read it, huh?

And finally, the film:

Red Sonja starring Brigitte Nielsen and Arnold Schwarzenegger, produced by Dino di Laurentis.

Sadly, by the time this gets into print, *Red Sonja* will have left Cambridge. A pity. The plot is fairly straightforward. Sonja's family are killed by an evil Queen in a royal fit of pique because the Queen wants Sonja and Sonja (understandably) doesn't want to know. Sonja's sister is a member of an all-female priesthood who own a sacred talisman, which gets nicked by the same Queen so that she can do a bit of empire-buildig with its assistance. Sonja's sister dies and entrusts Sonja with the destruction of the Talisman (which ties in nicely with her own ideas for revenge). No—I'm not giving anything away ... that's the first five minutes of the film—the rest is action. Sonja's party consists of herself, a young Prince and his fat guardian and ... well, he's played by Arnold Schwarzenegger, he admits the name he gives in the film is false and that he is a 'High Lord', and Red Sonja is a Robert E. Howard character ... I think it's Conan.

The action is fast and furious—no excuse for a fight is passed up, including a mammoth scrap between Red Sonja and 'Conan'. The fight arranger deserves a medal, if nothing else for producing a female lead who looks comfortable swinging a huge two-handed sword. The fights are all, without exception, well put together, even if the odds are a little far-fetched. (Incidentally, it is nearly a physical impossibility to decapitate someone with a sword!). The setting is suitably wild and beautiful, and some of the video effects are amazing—watch for the bit where they stop at the edge of the evil Queen's land—a massive chasm, green grass one side, blackened earth the other and an incredible bridge spanning it.

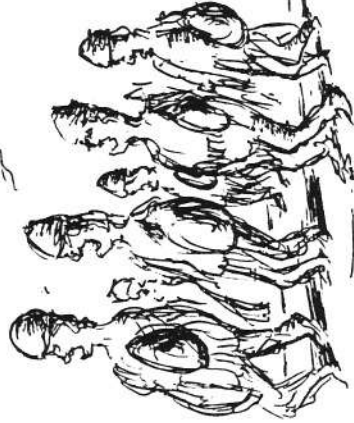
OK—so its just an excuse for some sword-swinging, but it's fun, even if Sonja sounds like a KGB agent from a Bond film. Worth getting out of a video library if it's available.

Oh well, that would appear to be it for another issue. Next issue: the new André Norton answer to 'Thieves World', some Alan Dean Foster, and maybe a couple of trilogies ... No I haven't finished *Maia* yet!!

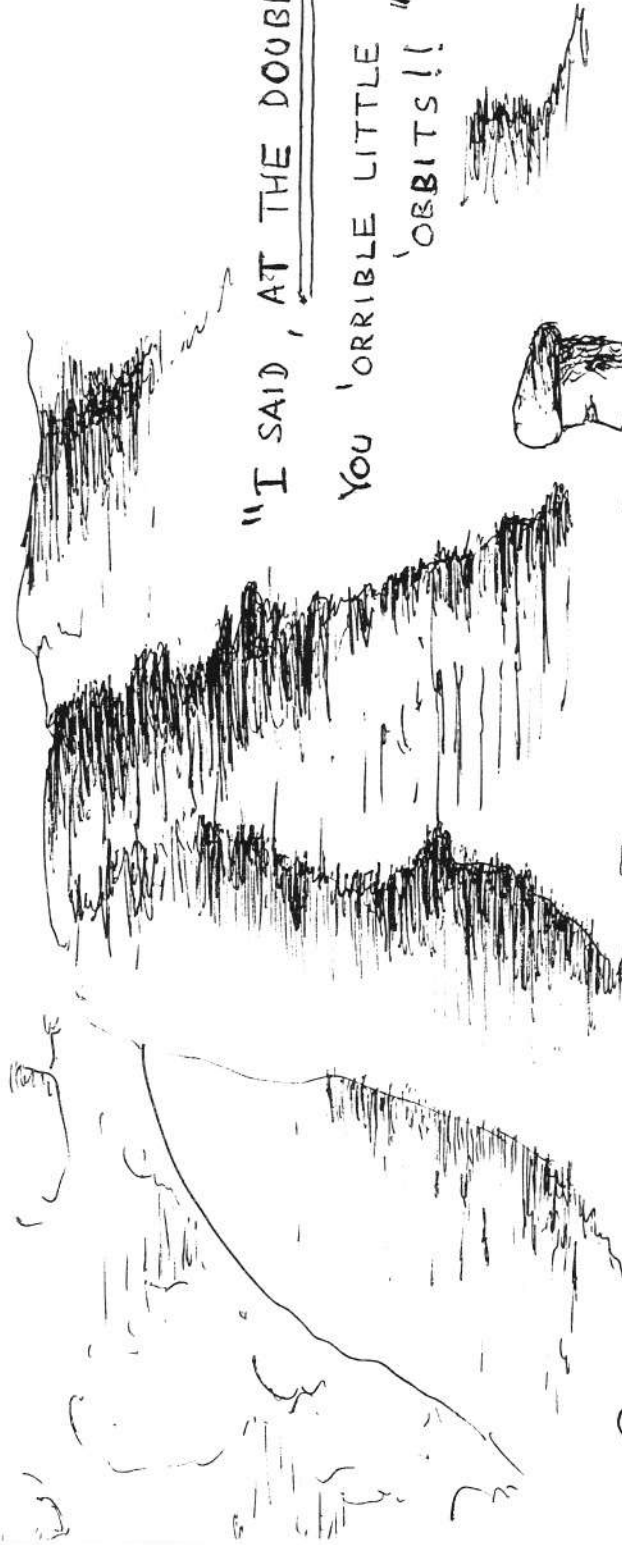
Mike Whitaker

"I SAID, AT THE DOUBLE

YOU 'ORRIBLE LITTLE
'ORBITS!!"



← EISENHARD



Reviews

The Mythology of Middle-earth by Ruth S. Noel. (1977) Published in the U.K. by Panther Books in 1979.

I was initially disappointed by this book, since I had expected it to attempt to develop the mythology of Middle-earth in a coherent form and then analyse it from a comparative perspective. However Noel actually begins by elaborating certain basic mythic themes and then goes on to examine their occurrence in Tolkien's works in a relatively piecemeal manner.

In general it is thus a descriptive work, identifying many possible sources and influences for the mythology of Middle-earth. It does not, unfortunately, go much beyond this in that it rarely attempts to make any judgements as to Tolkien's actual sources, and does not make any effort to evaluate the literary 'realism' of Middle-earth's mythology. However, this does allow Noel to avoid the trap of postulating conscious imitation on Tolkien's part. Only in two cases does she suggest that Tolkien is consciously using individual mythic ideas. These are that Sauron is based on the solar gods, and particularly Odin, and that the ring is based on the ring of Andvari the dwarf in Scandinavian legend. These are also rather more plausible sources than frontispieces from freemasonry books!

The book was written before even *The Silmarillion* was published, and, not surprisingly, it therefore has several factual errors, such as the identification of the Balrog as a creation of the great enemy. On the other hand I found it actually amusing that she points out that the common theme of the Hero dying as he kills the dragon, found for instance in Beowulf, is lacking in Tolkien's works!

There are other minor weaknesses, including a ludicrous (and unnecessary) attempt at locating Middle-earth in/as Europe on the basis of map evidence. Also, in some cases the search for symbolism is carried to extremes, for example, a symbolic rebirth is identified in the escape from Thranduil's palace. On the other hand there are some intriguing points relating to the consideration of Middle-earth simultaneously in terms of myth, and of Tolkien's conception of 'faerie'. Noel attempts this at several points, with the conclusion that Middle-earth is definitely not faerie, while Valinor is somehow both faerie and 'olympus'.

Thus the book is generally a review of mythology in terms of Middle-earth, but for one, like me, unacquainted with the details of Scandinavian, Celtic, Teutonic and even Greek and Roman myth it is well worth reading.

Duncan McLaren

Middle Earth Role Playing Iron Crown Enterprises

Many of you will be at least familiar with, if not involved in, fantasy role playing games. These interactive fantasy adventure systems have always drawn heavily upon the collected works of Tolkien for inspiration and a consistent mythos. It is only in the last few years that Elan Merchandising, who hold the copyright on all Tolkien's work, [surely the copyright is held by A & U and the Tolkien Estate?—JCB] have consented to an official Middle-earth based role playing game (RPG). The licence to produce the game was granted to Iron Crown Enterprises (I.C.E.), a small American company who had gained what amounted to a cult following among RPG players for the high quality of their material and the excellent (if amazingly complicated) Rolemaster fantasy RPG. I.C.E. produced what is generally regarded as a very good game in Middle Earth Role Playing (MERP). This was based on a subset of the awesome Rolemaster rules, and succeeds in combining the accuracy and technical perfection of its big brother with greater playability. Indeed it is possible to replace sections of MERP rules with various books from the Rolemaster system if greater detail is felt to be desirable. The relevance of all this is that the game should not be seen as sacrilegious in any respect. MERP contains a wealth of information on Middle-earth which is totally consistent with Tolkien's work. There are large sections devoted to the positions of Valar and Maiar in the mythos, the races and languages of Middle-earth, and the creatures, herbs, poisons, diseases, equipment and politics of the region. The game system, once mastered, is simplicity to use and a vicious critical hit system makes sure that no-one takes Uruks lightly, while ensuring that it is theoretically possible, if highly unlikely, for your hobbit to do damage to a Nazgûl. To support the game there is a series of adventure campaign books, each of which describe, in around eighty pages of A4, a region of Middle-earth. These books have to be seen to be believed, covering, as they do, regional geography, climate, politics, plants, creatures, history and peoples. Each book also includes a large poster map of the region, and smaller maps of each important site in that region, be they barrows, Bree, Angband or a Gondor frontier fort. Particularly recommended in the series are the two Mirkwood books and the one on Moria. The histories are so precise and detailed that it is possible to play adventures in any age.

The main advantage of MERP from a gaming point of view is that, as well as being an excellent game, the mythos is well known to almost everyone. Consequently, campaigns set around Third Age 3000 are very popular. If you already play or would like to begin, and the idea of leading a party of dwarves into Moria to search for Balin son of Fundin appeals, then MERP is the game for you. Alternatively, if role-playing does not have any appeal, then go into any games shop anyway and at least look at the campaign books. The information therein is the logical extension of Tolkien's legacy and complements his work beautifully.

Paul Harcourt



The Economics of the West

The economies of the west present at the time of the *LotR* can be divided into three broad categories:

— firstly there were the essentially self-sufficient rural areas like the Shire. These lands made some surplus to feed their towns, but that was all. This was probably the most important mode of production seen in the west, accounting for over half of its population, since most human and elvish communities were of this sort. For elves this was possibly due to their having low metabolic rates, and so only requiring a relatively low food consumption.

— secondly there were the specialist communities like the dwarves who entered into trade of their manufactured goods to pay for the importation of food and other necessities. These will be looked at in more detail later on in this article.

— finally there were the Guild based lands of Gondor and possibly the other human settlements in that region. Although the majority of productive units may have been employed in the agricultural sector I believe there is enough evidence to point to the existence of Guilds. The evidence is that separate 'houses of healing' existed, and the name of the street where Pippin met Bergil was 'Lampwright's Street'. So this realm at least exhibits the hallmarks of a medieval state, quite possibly at the proto-industrial stage, but kept immiserated by perpetual warfare. With the fall of Sauron and the ending of the War of the Ring this proto-industrial state may well have been able to industrialise as it entered a period of peace and prosperity which would allow for the necessary capital accumulation and sociological changes. This provides an overall view of the west in *LotR*; some of the important areas will now be considered.

An important question concerning Middle-earth is the wealth of the Shire. Estimating its population provides the first problem; Crawford (1985) places the figure at the time of the *LotR* at 300,000 to 500,000 hobbits, while McLaren (1986) in this issue of *Anor* places the figure closer to 40,000. The importance of these figures will appear later. The Shire was a highly agricultural area, the agricultural sector being definitely the largest part of its economy. Associated with this is forestry, which was important for the fuel needs of the Shire: quite possibly coppicing was practised to ensure those needs were met. With the forestry there may have been an associated paper making industry; although Crawford suggests that paper was produced from rags, the evidence of a Post-Office and the large number of hobbits expecting invitations from Bilbo suggests widespread literacy and thus sufficient demand for pulp processes to have been practicable. Tobacco production was also important; here the Shire was self-sufficient at least, and some surplus was produced which they exported to Bree (although not enough to destroy Bree's own tobacco industry), and possibly to Ered Luin. A final item they produced was beer, which was an important luxury [luxury??? - ed.] item for hobbits.

To understand the Shire's economy further it is necessary to look at the class structure which existed at the time of the War of the Ring. Hobbits can be divided into four groups:

- tribal: the Thain as head of one of the most important families.
- aristocracy/middle-class: hobbits like Bilbo and Frodo who inherited their wealth and as a direct consequence could lead a life of luxury not requiring them to work. This class could have included the majority of those hobbits that lived in the towns.
- bourgeoisie: the only example available is Pimple; he may possibly have been a one off, or he could have been a foretaste of future hobbit society. He was willing to go to any length to own the means of production in the Shire.
- peasantry/proletariat: over ninety per cent of the population fall into this class; they were essentially rural and landless (any land they owned was not enough for self-sufficiency). The existence of a food surplus backs up this argument since this is hard to achieve with a system of small self-sufficient farmers. These hobbits lived by selling their labour either for goods or money. (The whole concept of money will be examined in a future article.)

These classes and their interactions greatly affected the Shire's economy.

Local Government in the Shire, in the form of the elected Mayor, directly intervened in the economy. Three services were provided; the Watch (possibly 25 hobbits before the War of the Ring), the messenger service (a part time service?) and the museum at Michel Delving. These had to be paid for. There are two ways this could have been done: firstly an indirect tax on beer and tobacco consumption, which is plausible since even the lower population figure would give a relatively low per capita cost for providing the services. Secondly the 12 large families could have paid gratuities to the state, like the Catholic Church's 'Don Gratuit' in pre-revolutionary France. This is the more likely explanation, since it was the leaders of these families who were most likely to use the services. But the important point is that there was state involvement in the economy, a fairly revolutionary concept for the level of the Shire's economy at that time.

Hobbits had a high food consumption; they were able to eat whenever given the chance, and so are unlikely to have had much surplus for export to the dwarves of Ered Luin, which Crawford suggests they did, although as stated above it is possible they did export tobacco there. The hobbits appear to have been self-sufficient in everything except some metal production, and since dwarves smoked, it is likely that the hobbits bartered tobacco for metal goods. Internal payments would have been by barter or coin since there was no banking system; coin seems to have been favoured although a personal credit system may have worked in this essentially tribal society. The road system was most probably kept up by a local work requirement of hobbits, to ensure the state of local roads was acceptable.

A final area of the Shire to look at is Bilbo's coat of mithril, which Gandalf described as being worth more than the whole of the Shire! Although it was fit for an elven prince, this statement either places the physical worth of 40,000 hobbits, their mills, inns, leaf plantations and farms at a very low level, or was inaccurate. The real problem arises over the meaning of the word 'value'; to Gandalf, who had travelled the many lands of the west, land value may have been virtually nil, yet to the hobbits, who would have seen good agricultural land as scarce (marsh areas, etc., existed in the Shire), and to whom food production was of vital importance, land value would have been very high. Accepting the second definition, which I, as an economist, do, makes Gandalf's statement invalid; the Shire was worth far more than any one item of armour no matter how unique. This whole question of the physical worth of the Shire I hope to look into in a future article

after further exploration of the subject; any criticisms or suggestions on this area would be appreciated.

The extent of trade is the next area to be looked at. Trade was at its height when Númenor reached the peak of its power. This is not unusual in a quasi-medieval state when a captured empire provides a market for the goods from the ruling country. Númenor's power stretched to Lindon, Pelargir, Umbar and Harad. With the fall of Númenor came a breakdown in trade as different parts of the empire broke or were split away by the fall of Isildur after the last alliance. The only other large trading bloc to come into existence was the slave land of Sauron in the east. The large numbers of troops etc. brought west by Sauron to help in the War of the Ring were bound to lead to some trade, most probably utilising routes of communication created by the Númenoreans and kept up by the realms that came after them. But throughout the rest of the Western world the lands slowly sank into an almost barbaric state, with any trade limited to a very local area. This can be seen in a couple of examples. Firstly, the small amount that was known about the North by those who lived in the South. The men of Rohan knew of hobbits, but not whether they still existed, and Boromir searched for a long time for the House of Elrond, "of which many had heard, but few knew where it lay" (*LotR* II 2). Secondly, the fact that people of the same race, for example elves, knew so little about each other, as seen by the way Galadriel greeted Legolas at Lothlórien.

Yet some trade did exist; Crawford believes that the hobbits traded food (although, as I said earlier, I believe it was more probably tobacco) for manufactured metal goods and coins. This whole topic fits in well with the idea of specialisation which I shall look at later. The hobbits definitely traded with people outside the Shire, that is normal trade, not like that which Bilbo inaugurated for his birthday party. One of their trading partners, and probably their most important, was Bree. Bree definitely bought tobacco from them—see Butterbur's apology to the travellers for not having good Southfarthing tobacco to give them. Other local trade that did occur was between the elves of the Greenwood and Laketown, between Dale and the Lonely Mountain and also probably between the Lonely Mountain and the Iron Hills. The ties of kinship between dwarves led to trade between them, especially when certain areas had the only accessible source of a vital raw material, e.g. Moria and Mithril.

So the trade that did exist seems to have been local or along a natural route of communication, such as the elves of Greenwood using the Forest river for trade with the men of Laketown. As men and hobbits spread after the defeat of Sauron it is likely that the extent of trade would have increased, especially along the King's highways, like the Greenway linking the Northern and Southern kingdoms of Arnor and Gondor. If Gondor became industrialised, we have to assume they were traditional only in their outlook on research into warfare, and that the loss of knowledge with the fall of Osgiliath did not hamper their Guilds from research, making a supposition of expanded trade seem reasonable.

A final subject to look at is the idea of specialisation. Although most areas of Middle-earth seem to have been self-sufficient in food production and the necessities of life, other areas did specialise. The dwarves had a large natural comparative advantage in the production of all metal products and also coal production, and they exploited it. Dale specialised in toy production, and as a market for people to buy the produce of the Lonely Mountain. Even the men of Rohan specialised, with their vast herds of horses which they may have traded with Gondor and the men who lived in the areas surrounding their land. This last proposition can be put forward because of Sauron's attempt to buy steeds for the Nazgûl, something he would not have done unless trade was normal for Rohan. These areas sur-

vived by being able to purchase food and other necessities from local areas where surpluses existed. They purchased this with the money made on their trade, and the dwarves also probably sold coal and farm implements to the people living around their homelands. The people who could afford the services of these specialised peoples seem to have been the old wealthy groupings like the elves of Greenwood and the men of Gondor (for example for the rebuilding of the gates of the first level of Minas Tirith). Given this limited market, it is not, perhaps, surprising that so many dwarves dug coal or made agricultural implements.

Thus in conclusion it can be said that the west at the time of the WotR had a number of modes of production. Only one area was close to the point of industrialisation, and that was being hampered by the 'wasteful' (in terms of capital) war against Sauron.

If anybody has any criticisms of this article or any points they wish to be more fully developed please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Ian Alexander

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Thanks:

To those who attended the meeting on Friday 24th January 1986 at the Eagle public house for their helpful discussion on these topics.

* * * * *

A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

The 1986 Minas Tirith Smial

PUNTMOOT

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for further details contact Mike Percival
at the address on the back cover.

* * * * *

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ANOR Issue 10

Editor: Mike Percival

Artwork: Per Ahlberg (front cover), John Ellison, Maggie Thomson,
Duncan McLaren

Calligraphy: Julian Bradfield

Typesetting: Julian Bradfield

Produced by the Cambridge Tolkien Society (Minas Tirith). Typeset with the program \TeX , developed by D. E. Knuth at Stanford University, produced with Martyn Johnson's DVIT0VC program, running under Phoenix/MVS on the Cambridge University Computing Service IBM 3081. Printed by the Cambridge University Computing Service Bookshop.

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