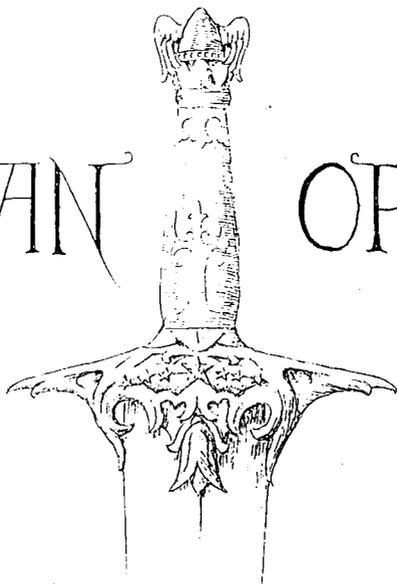
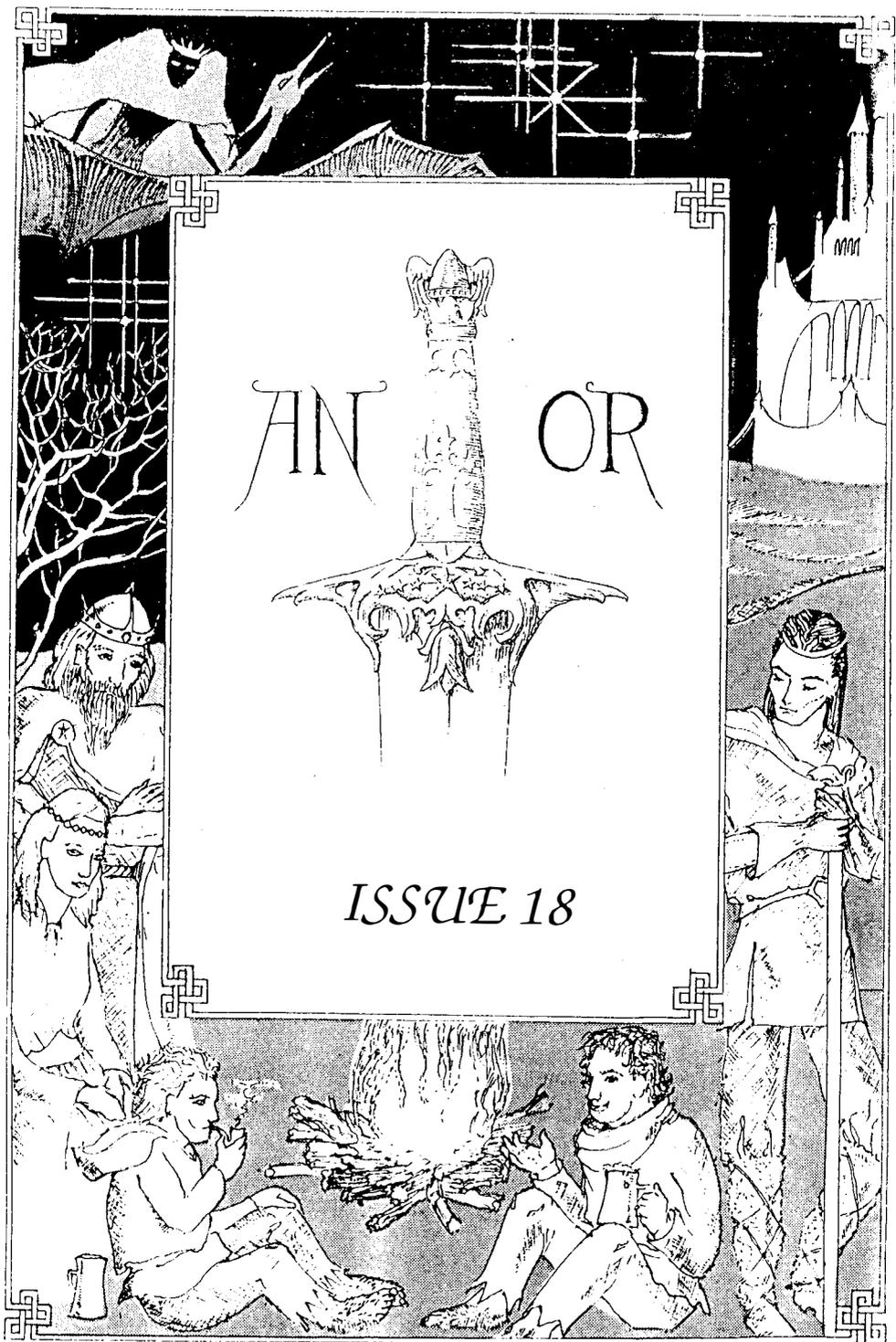


AN OR



ISSUE 18



Tolkien and Romanticism

A report on the Cambridge Tolkien Society Workshop 1988
by Graham Taylor

The third National Tolkien Society Workshop began with an Innmoot in the King's Arms. The committee had hired a private room, complete with bar, so there followed an enjoyable evening with more than 50 Tolkien enthusiasts present. Toward the end of the evening entertainment was provided in the shape of the latest version of the 'Ex-chairman's sketch'. This takes the form of an interview of two Tolkien 'experts' to discuss the latest publications of Tolkien's works, including such undiscovered treasures as 'The Senile Ramblings of an Old Man' and the infamous 'Long Lays of the Gay Elves'. Any similarities to certain recent books by a certain Tolkien relative are, I am sure, entirely coincidental.

The Workshop commenced the next day at the Department of Earth Sciences. Following a short introduction by the Workshop Committee Chairperson Iwan Morus the first of the day's six talks on Tolkien and Romanticism began. It was given by Paul Bibre who drew attention to a number of themes common to The Hobbit and LotR. In both there are underground journeys followed by forest journeys then by waterbourne journeys. This and other similar themes show up a 'natural' relationship between the symbolic elements of wood, earth and stone in Tolkien's writings.

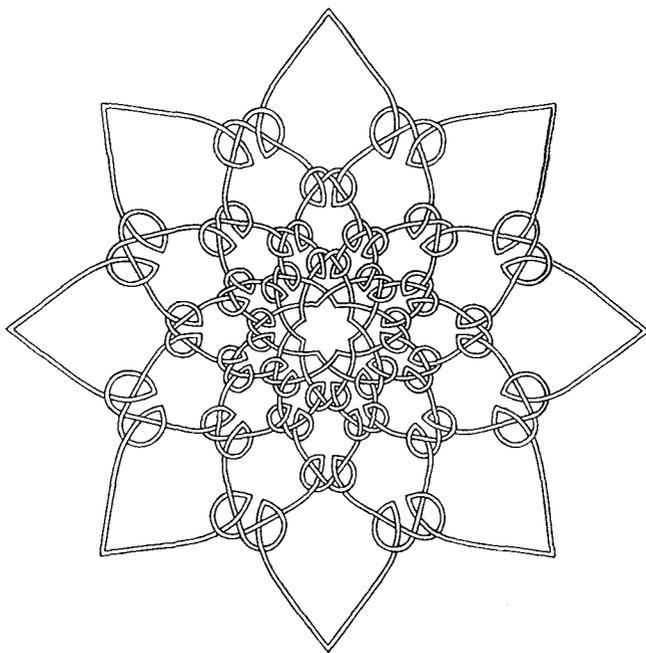
After a break Alex Lewis, the National Tolkien Society Chairman, spoke on Tolkien and the development of romanticism. This centred mainly on the religious ideas present in Tolkien and led to a lively discussion which unfortunately had to end before all the many questions raised could be answered for the next talk. The next speaker was John Ellison who spoke on the similarities in the impact of Tolkien on romantic literature and Wagner on romantic music. He also commented on the similar themes present in LotR and the Ring Cycle.

A buffet lunch was provided by the committee in the department with ample supplies of meats, cheeses, quiche and of course mushrooms followed by home made cakes. When the afternoon programme began Dr. Judy Weiss spoke on the friendship of Tolkien with C. S. Lewis. Their differing likes and dislikes in literature and criticisms of each others works made an influence on both writers. In particular it was Lewis who inspired Tolkien to persevere with LotR during the periods where his enthusiasm for it was waning.

After this Iwan Morus spoke on 'Natural Models of Language' and how opinions on whether words are in a sense natural or artificial have differed through the ages. Following a short break for afternoon tea, David Doughan concluded the presentations with a talk on Elgar (or 'Elf-spear') and his music. In particular a play for children was set to his music and the 'twee' lyrics to the songs show how bad entertainment for children was in the early years of this century.

In the evening a party was held in Alex Wood Hall, the local Labour Party building, with more spontaneous entertainment. Alex Lewis had brought his guitar with him and played a selection of songs with a Tolkien theme finishing with a challenge to all but veterans of the Smials' Quizes - the chorus was a sing-a-long with the names of the twelve companions of Barahir as lyrics.

Finally I would like to thank the committee and speakers for all the work they put into making the Workshop a big success.



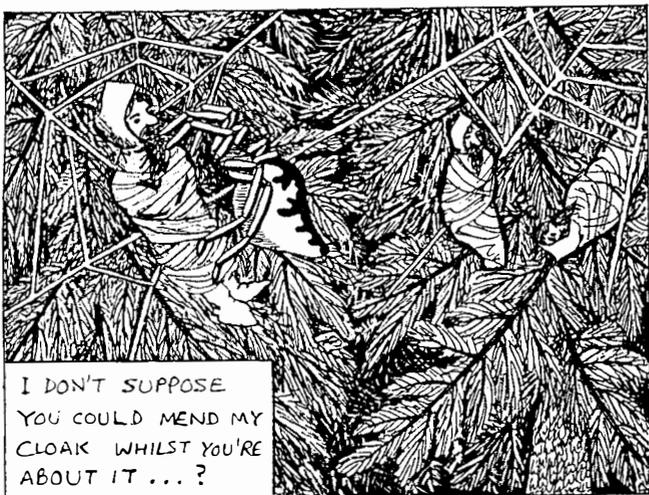
The Puntmoot or There and Back Again

*The Cam flows ever ever on
Down from Johns, where we began
To gather punts to voyage on
And reach Grantchester if we can,
Pursuing it with eager draughts
Of Westons and of IPA,
On quite excessive five-punt rafts
Which well and truly blocked the way.*

*The Cam flows ever ever on,
Over rollers, under skies
(In which, for once, the June sun shone),
Under swarms of gnats and flies;
Past hawthorn bushes which did tear
Our company, and t-shirts rent,
And one companion, red of hair,
Into the murky water sent.*

*The Cam flows ever ever on and on
To sausage roll and crunchy bar;
Yet feet that bridge-hopping have gone
Turn once more to home afar:
Hands that cricket games have played
And pears at other punters thrown
Turn at last towards Kings Parade
And certain inns they long have known...*

Monica Gale



I DON'T SUPPOSE
YOU COULD MEND MY
CLOAK WHILST YOU'RE
ABOUT IT ... ?

MIDDLE EARTH REVISITED



GEE MR. GANDALF, DO YOU
REALLY MEAN I CAN HAVE
THIS SOLID MITHRIL DAGGER
ALL FOR MY VERY OWN?!

THE FALL OF KING THROR

Being an account of Thrór son of Dáin's journey to the Mansions of Durin, to Moria, where he was slain and branded by the orc-lord, Azog. As told by Nár, the companion to Thrór and bearer of tidings to Thráin son of Thrór.

*Like a Wind from the North,
Smaug came upon us.
Under fear under fire
To leave we were forced.
Bitter and scornful,
We wandered uncaring.
Our maps had no meaning,
Our banners no tower.*

*Long brooded Thrór,
On the halls of his fathers.
Long played the Ring
On his desperate mind.
To Thráin was the treasure
And vengeance bequeathed.
With Nár went King Thrór
Durin's mansions to find.*

*From the hillstones of Dunland,
Through the shadows of mountains,
Over Redhorn and last
Down the valley we came.
The gate beckoned wide
Into Moria's darkness.
Though of peril I warned him
His heart was enflamed.*

*And so under the arch
To the pages of legend
Walked the heir of his people
Thrór son of Dáin.
And for days though I lingered
Alone and unlooked for,
As I'd feared from the blackness,
He came not again.*

*On the darkling stairs,
As the sun revolved slowly,
I lurked in the shadows,
Afraid now to breathe.
From the void came a shout,
And a horn burst asunder
The silence that so long
Had dwelt in my ear.*

*Recoiling I watched
As out from the doorway
The carcase was thrown
Of a dwarf I once knew.
Then kneeling I gazed
Once again upon Thrór
Though his head now was severed
With no honour subdued.*

*Amid howling and laughter
That spewed from the doorway,
My heart wept in hatred
At that which I saw.
For burnt on his forehead
In arrogance branded
The name of the 'king'
That had stolen our throne:*

AZOG.

*As I stooped then in reverence
To take up our master
The 'king' from the hollows
Deined Thrór his tomb.
And hurling some coins
As a fee and an insult
Cried "You'll be my messenger
Leave your kin and be gone."*

*Weeping, I fled
Down the Silverlode's shoreline
As out from the gates
Came a host of our foes.
Unsheathing scimitars
They hacked Thrór to pieces
Hurling his flesh
To the circling crows.*

*Southward I flew
Fearing shadows behind me,
Bearing fell tidings
To Thráin son of Thrór.
For seven days silent
His anger grew torrid
Till standing he bellowed*

"THIS CANNOT BE BORNE."

The Mines of Moria - Further Thoughts

Mike Percival

In Anor 16 Ted Crawford provides some further thoughts on my article "The Draining of Moria" in Anor 15. While I am in total agreement that the technology required to make use of geothermal power is considerable, I cannot agree that the use of an adit is possible, and so I have to stick to my original idea.

Considering first Crawford's calculations for the depth of flooded workings, on which the possibility of an adit depends, I have to dispute several of his figures. Firstly, the altitude of the West Gate. Estimates of this height essentially start from an estimate of the height at which the Company of the Ring were stopped by snow on Caradhras. This event took place on 11th. January, 3019TA, on the Western side of a range of mountains separated from the ocean by nothing but flat countryside. Barbara Strachey (*Journeys of Frodo*) gives the height of this as just below 5000 feet, and from this obtains a height for the West Gate of 4500 feet, in good agreement with Crawford's estimate. However I can't agree with the height of the blizzard, and therefore feel the West Gate must be lower than this. Aragorn expresses surprise that they should encounter snow so low in the mountains, and says that this path should be open throughout the winter. But the western side of a mountain range in January is exactly where one would expect snow to fall, since this is where moist air from the sea would be forced upwards, cooling it and leading to precipitation. In the Alps in January, which, in terms of latitude and location relative to the main source of weather, i.e. the western ocean, are very comparable to the Misty Mountains, one would certainly not be surprised by snow at, say 3000 feet, or 1000m, any more than one would in Britain by snow at 200 feet, and Alpine passes as low as 4200 feet are expected to be closed by snow in November, even given modern snow clearing equipment. Thus I would argue that in order that the company should be surprised by the snow they could not have been more than, say, 3000 feet above sea level. They then descended a considerable distance before climbing back to the West Gate, which must be at least 1000 feet lower than the point at which they turned back from the pass, i.e. 2000 feet above sea level.

The descent from the West Gate to the guardroom is more difficult to estimate, but if the passage descended noticeably for a horizontal distance of 20 miles (as estimated by Strachey), the drop must be at least 1000 feet, and probably more, giving a maximum altitude for the guardroom of 1000 feet above sea level.

We now come to the depth of the well in the guardroom. Here I am afraid that Crawford's comparison with the Avon Gorge Suspension Bridge is totally irrelevant. The well is indoors, silent, and most importantly acts as a wave-guide, channelling the sound back up to the listener. We are told that Pippin's heart beat "many times" before the stone landed. Suppose "many" is twenty, and that hobbits, being smaller than men, have a higher heartrate, say 120 beats a minute. This gives a fall-time of 10 seconds (ignoring the time for the sound to return, which is negligible within the accuracy of this estimate), or a depth of 500m - 1500 feet, or three times the depth given by Crawford. According to this estimate, the top of the water in the well (the "height of top of flooded workings" given by Crawford) is 500 feet BELOW sea level. Thus an adit is not a possibility.

However, even if you prefer Crawford's figures to mine, and so place the water in the guardroom above sea level, an adit is not a reasonable possibility, since Crawford has neglected one important fact - the water table is not a flat surface at

sea level, but actually follows the topography; see for example Holmes, Principles of Physical Geology, Third Edition, paperback p.263. The fact that Swanfleet marshes are marshes provides evidence that in this region the water table reaches the land surface. As Crawford's adit passes from Swanfleet towards Moria it rises only very slowly (500 feet in 100 miles), while the ground above it rises much more rapidly. Thus most if not all of the length of the adit would be under the water table as the later rises up under the Misty Mountains. Given this, it would serve only to increase the permeability of the rock - it would not remove water to an area which was not already saturated, but would merely speed up the movement of water within the saturated area, and that only marginally, unless a very extensive network of adits was dug, which seems unlikely. Thus the adit proposed by Crawford might reduce the level of the water table under the Misty Mountains slightly, but it would certainly not lower it to the level of the top of the adit, as Crawford suggests.

Crawford argues against my suggestion of geothermal power on the grounds that the technology involved was beyond the scope of the dwarves, drawing comparisons with the current development in New Zealand. Firstly, I don't consider "real world" comparisons to be quite fair, any more than I think that the mines were 12,000 feet deep, as suggested by Fonstad, quoted in Crawford's article. However steel technology certainly was available in Middle-earth - the Númenoreans used hollow steel bows and steel tipped arrows. While contact between men and dwarves may not have been great, it seems unlikely that the Númenoreans, who practised many forms of art and technology, should have surpassed the dwarves, who specialised in metalwork, and who had a head start of several thousand years research, as well as a special relationship with Aulë. Thus it seems to me that the dwarves probably did possess sufficient technology to make use of geothermal power, and they certainly had the incentive - in the quest for Mithril, anything was worth the effort.

Moving on now to a separate but related waste disposal problem, that of the rock removed during the digging of the mines. Now it is possible that vast slag-heaps outside the West Gate had, over the years, become weathered and covered in vegetation, but I want to suggest an alternative which may seem unlikely, but would have fostered good relationships between the dwarves and the elves of Hollin - that much of the extracted rock was used to build dwellings for the elves.

A back-of-an-envelope calculation supports this idea. Suppose the Twenty-first Hall, in which the Company spent the 'night', was 30m long by 10m high and 10m wide, giving it a volume of 3000m³. This was on the seventh level, and there were at least three 'deeps' below the level of the gates. If each level had a total volume equivalent to two such halls, this would give a total volume of 3000 x 2 x 10 = 60,000m³. The actual volume would be much larger than this, since this estimate ignores the actual mines below the living areas, and all the passages leading westwards into the mountain, but this figure may be taken as a reasonable estimate of the amount of useable building stone which might have been extracted.

I believe that the elves of Hollin probably lived in extended households, numbering perhaps 100, living in a house say 50m by 25m and 10m (three stories) tall - this is equivalent to a fair size stately home in our world! If the walls of such a dwelling were 1m thick, reasonable for dry stone construction, then the volume of rock in the external walls of each 'house' would be 1500m³. Thus the 60,000m³ would build 40 such dwellings, sufficient for 4,000 elves, which seems a reasonable estimate of the population of Hollin. Of course there would in fact be smaller and

larger houses, and some elves might live in wooden dwellings, but the very reasonable numbers which come out of this calculation provide evidence, I suggest, that a large proportion of the waste rock from Moria was used to build houses in Hollin.

Comment

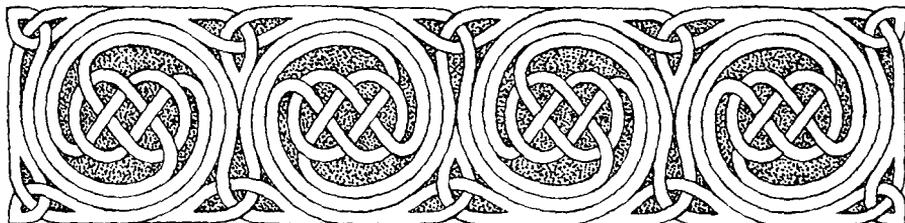
Just the one letter of genuine comment this issue – a transatlantic missive from our old friend Gary Hunnewell. His main reason for writing, apart from being one of those rare and wonderful people who listens when I ask for more material, is to comment on Mike Percival's article on the Maiar.

"I don't agree with Mike's thoughts that Eonwe was left out of the Valar because the Elves chose to draw the line at seven Valar rather than eight. We have plenty of supporting evidence after the Silmarillion that he was begotten of Valar and therefore came afterwards. One gets the feeling that he was just not as "great" as the Valar. (As an aside, I am thinking of coming up with the Guinness' Book of First Age Records: Beren's leap, Fëanor's love for his father, Eonwe's might in arms, etc., etc.) Also, elves had a fondness for 12's, not 7's or 14's.

"I think it is a mistake to leave Tom Bombadil out of the ranks of the Maiar. I suppose that we should remember who wrote the Silmarillion (i.e. the Valaquenta) and it seems that Bombadil could have been easily left out, as it seems that he was in Middle-Earth, not Valinor where the Valaquenta was written. His omission may have been by ignorance rather than design.

"Shelob could surely be a Maia of sorts. I believe she was a child of Ungoliant. If not, why the term 'last child'? If Ungoliant could have great enough power to challenge Morgoth, couldn't she have found another 'dark' Maia and forced him to change into her form in order to mate. If eagles, dragons and werewolves could be created for Morgoth's purposes, then why not something similar for Ungoliant. Also, Ungoliant's fate is on p38 of The Shaping of Middle-Earth - there's no need to wait for The New Shadow.

"Mike does, however, do a good job with the rest of the article and I don't have much else to add to it."



A dragon (not long for this world)
Retired to his cave, where he curled
Inspecting each scale
With the tip of his tail
And keeping both wings neatly furled.

Along came a scurrilous knight
Who lifted his sword and did smite
With many hard blows
The poor dragon's nose
And gave him a horrible fright.

The dragon woke up with a snort,
"Must be hailing indoors!", he thought.
So his body he dried
And by accident fried
The knight (whom the flames also caught).

Of course all the townsfolk exclaimed
"Tis the dragon who ought to be blamed!"
For the sake of one breath
They did put him to death,
And thus are the innocent framed.

by Arthur Pendragon

...Uncle Mike's Book Corner...no.10...

A somewhat minimal Book Corner this time. One solitary trilogy. That's right, just one. Excuses – well, two. First, I have been a busy little Uncle Mike of late, doing Uncle Mike-ish things (best left to the imagination, honest) and not getting much time to read. Secondly, this particular trilogy is so good that everything I've picked up since has been slung in a corner after twenty pages or so with a "nah, - not a patch on.....". "On what?" I hear you ask. Well, it's:

"The Fionavar Tapestry" - being "The Summer Tree", "The Wandering Fire" and "The Longest Road" - by Guy Gavriel Kay, published by Unwin at £2.95 for the first two and £3.50 for the grand finale.

The name of Guy Gavriel Kay should be familiar to most serious Tolkien readers, as he (if I recall correctly) assisted Christopher Tolkien with the production of the Silmarillion. The book, unsurprisingly, gets compared favourably in the publisher's blurb to 'Lord of the Rings' – for once, I think they're right. The whole thing is seriously 'unputdownable', if you'll pardon the phrase – I read it over 4 or 5 evenings with the occasional break to enthuse about it to my flatmate (who had already read it and dumped it on me, saying "READ! NOW!").

So why the fuss? Well, this is high-class epic fantasy, Good in one corner, Evil in the other and many a slip before Evil finally gets nobbled by Good. It also contains the 'modern people visit fantasy world' motif. This is a recipe for mediocrity in unskilled hands, but has such potential when handled properly – what happens if the characters form attachments in the other world? – how does a completely alien culture change the characters? Kay deals with both these excellently. Fionavar, the world in question, is 'First of All the Worlds', the one on which all others are based. It has strong elements of the Celtic myths, and those of Arthur, all interwoven into a cohesive whole.

It's difficult to give a plot summary without spoiling the book if you haven't read it. Apart from anything else, there is so much going on – the plot is amazingly skillfully interlinked and crafted, and no loose threads are left at the end - every single 'plot token' is used. One thing I do admire Kay for is his courage in killing off his principal characters. In one case, he has one of them die, completely 'by surprise' (although in hindsight it is clear why it has to happen) and leaves the reader watching with half an eye for the next two hundred pages, thinking "he's bound to come back" till it eventually becomes clear he isn't. He kills off a minor, but sympathetic, character in such a way that you can see it coming for ten pages or so - and still makes it hurt when it happens.

OK, enough incoherent ramblings. Suffice it to say, this is brilliant – the only reason it's a trilogy is that it won't fit into one book. If you only read one fantasy book this year, make it this one.

Next issue we'll be back to sanity and normality, and a selection of shorter and less over-the-top reviews. Till then, have fun...

Mike

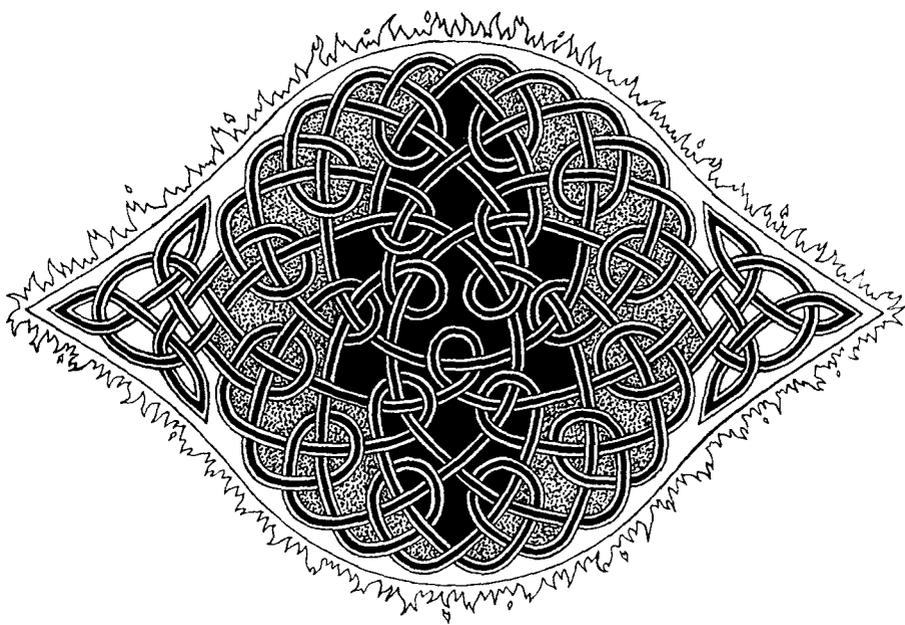
The Cambridge Tolkien Society

The Cambridge Tolkien Society is a University registered society whose aim is to further interest in the life and works of J. R. R. Tolkien.

Meetings are held approximately fortnightly during full term.

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For further information, contact the Chairman, Monica Gale (Girton), or Mike Percival at the address below. Subscriptions should be paid to the Treasurer, William Hurwood (Christs) or via Mike Percival at 20, Mulberry Close, Cambridge, CB4 2AS



The Eye of Sauron