



EDITORIAL

Welcome, all and sundry, to the first *Anor* of this academic year! With luck and a following wind, there may yet be another!

An especial welcome goes to those for who have just joined the Cambridge Tolkien Society now. This is the Society's journal, and I hope that in time you will become as accustomed to its shining nuggets of knowledge, warmth and silliness as to an old friend.

This issue is replete with poetry and song, such as would perhaps please the Professor, but we do have other content too, some of a more discursive or even cinematic bent. Much awaits within!

Happily, there has been a wider variety of contributors than at certain points in the past, so I can say without deception that this is *not* a monograph. My gratitude goes out to all contributors, and to all members of the Society, who so frequently endured my repetitive and piteous pleas for content throughout the past two terms with calm and inexhaustible good cheer.

Penultimate mention must go, of course, to Samuel Cook, our storied once-and-perhaps-future King – now known, for his occupation, as Bill the Pony – without whom this would have been a decidedly shorter and sadder issue.

I should hope that you all have a wonderful Christmas holiday, and perhaps – who knows? – in a far green country, under a swift sunrise.

With warmest regards,

Daeron
alias Samuel M. Karlin, Editor of *Anor*

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THE SONG OF FRESHERS

Samuel Cook

Editor's Note: Modified from "The World was Young, the Mountains Green" from The Lord of the Rings, more commonly known as the Song of Durin

Michaelmas was young, the freshers green,
No strain yet on the face was seen;
No words were laid on reams untouched,
Of drinking there was far too much.
They named the countless throng unkenned,
They ate in mighty halls olden,
They stood and punted on the Cam,
And saw the Chronophage in all its glam;
As time marched on remorselessly
And lectures straight ahead were seen.

Michaelmas was fun, the freshers young,
In early days, before Week One,
And the fall of deadlines ironclad,
Essays, supervisions sad,
Led to stress, crises and great woe;
Michaelmas was fair in Week Zero.

Epicures they were and partied hard,
In nightclubs strobing in the dark,
With drinks not cheap and sticky floor,
And burly bouncers upon the door.
The light of neon and UV,
And shining bulbs of LED,
Undimmed by clouds or sight of day,
Illumined their eternal play.
There exams meant nothing at all;
There 'lab' did into nothing pall;
There forged were friends and bound were mates,
Holidays planned, futures embraced.
There cardboard, pritt stick and balsa pale,

And foil wrought like metal real,
Duct tape and hairbands, glitter bright,
All to bops were brought in moonlight.

Michaelmas is grey, the freshers old;
Cindies' bright fire is ashen cold;
No parties hum, no discos grind;
The deadlines dwell on freshers' minds;
Supervisors breathe on their necks,
In Cambridge, their brains a wreck.
But still, far off, there lies May Week,
After exams their horrors wreak;
The pledge of fun once more renewed,
Then summer's rest, and free time too!

THE FALL OF SONS OF THRÁIN

Choong Ling Liew-Cain

Editor's Note: Modified from "A Little Fall of Rain" from the musical Les Misérables by Alain Boublil and Claude-Michel Schönberg, based on the novel of the same name by Victor Hugo

Thorin

Don't you fret, my dear burglar,
I don't feel any pain.
The fall of sons of Thráin
can hardly hurt us now.
You're here. That's all I need to know.
And you have brought us here,
And you have kept us close,
And rain will make your gardens grow.

Thorin

Bilbo Baggins, farewell to thee.
Forgive me, forgive me.

Thorin

This rain can't hurt me now
The rain
will wash away what's past.
My people now are safe,
And victory is close,
I'll sleep in Erebor at last.

The rain that brings you here is heaven-blessed.

Bilbo

But you will live Thorin,
My greatest friend
And I'll stay by your side
until the end

Bilbo

But you would live centuries more
If I could show you how.
I won't desert you now.

The mountain free again and I'm at rest.
A breath away from where we are,
I've come home from so far.

Thorin

So don't you fret, my dear burglar,
I don't feel any pain.
A little fall of rain
can hardly hurt me now.

Thorin

That's all I need to know.

Thorin

And you have brought us here,
And you have kept us close,

Thorin

And rain

Thorin

Will make your gardens

Bilbo

Hushaby, dear Thorin,
You don't feel any pain.
A little fall of rain
can hardly hurt you now.

Bilbo

I'm here.

Bilbo

And I will stay with you
whilst you are healing.

Bilbo

And rain

Bilbo

Will make my gardens
Grow.

THE BALLAD OF BOROMOR

Samuel Cook

Editor's Note: A clarification is in order for the unwary reader. This is something of an in-joke. In times of yore, when the light of the Two Trees had freshly fallen and the world was young, the Society's attention was drawn to an anonymous Rohirrim soldier who died in a particularly gruesome manner in the Battle of Helm's Deep, and, for reasons that are lost to history, it was resolved that he would thenceforth be named Boromor. This tradition has persisted to the present Age, wherein, during the Society's latest Annual General Meeting, amidst the multitude of other motions was one to "make Boromor more of a thing". To that end, our very own Bill the Pony, known to the uninitiated as Samuel Cook, has composed this piece, to the tune of "Gil-galad was an Elven-king".

Boromor was a Rohirrim.

Of him does no-one sadly sing.

The first to die so freakishly
in PJ's Two Towers movie.

His hair was long, his face unseen,
remembered only for his scream.

In Théoden's entire army,
he was completely ord'nary.

But one moment he briefly blazed
due to the odd way he was slain,
hit by that fateful grapnel shot
at Helm's Deep, where Uruk-hai rot.

THE MIDDLE-EARTH EXPANDED FILM UNIVERSE 2: FILM HARDER

A Tar-Palantír-Nanofilos production

Directed by Bill the Pony and Hazad Longbeard

It was the sequel they said could never be made. An undertaking of humongous proportions. But, finally, after literally minutes of ceaseless toil, it comes: THE MIDDLE-EARTH EXPANDED FILM UNIVERSE 2: FILM HARDER. With more spills... thrills... deaths... romance... terrible puns... tenuous links... spurious footnotes¹... and crass humour, THE MIDDLE-EARTH EXPANDED FILM UNIVERSE 2: FILM HARDER is the cinematic sensation of the millennium. Catch it in an *Anor* near you now!²

Gil-Galadiator

In which a great Elven hero played by Russell Crowe is captured and taken to the fighting pits of Gondor³, from which he uses his epic fighting skills⁴ and gruff manner to try and restore all that is good. There is some sort of plot to do with serious politics and the overthrow of a corrupt king⁵, but the main thing is that the film has lots of zany ahistorical action scenes⁶. Particularly grand moments include the roar “are you not entertained?” at which point Quickbeam is released into the ring⁷, and, of course, the final duel in which Gil-galad has the chance to get his revenge...

The Túrinator

The mechanical, emotionless killing machine that is Túrin (Jason Statham) travels back in time to kill his own mother or his younger self, because he’s just that messed up. However, he can’t remember which name he was using at any given point in time or where she was after leaving Dor Lómin, so ends up wondering around Middle-earth, killing random people in his pique after discovering they’re not “Tur-ambar⁸”. For reasons never entirely explained, he’s also naked and needs your clothes. Eventually he’s snapped out of his misanthropy after Beleg (Jonathon Pryce), who was also sent back in time by a rival faction, finds him and knocks some sense into him, though not before he’s become his own father in a brief liaison with a young Morwen. Túrin then vows to protect his younger self

¹ Like this one.

² This entire paragraph works best if read in the classic American trailer voiceover style, with appropriate mental images inserted at each ellipsis. Otherwise, it just reads as if we’ve gone (more) insane.

³ Totally canonical. Let’s just assume it was during the reign of Castamir the Usurper. He was a bit evil.

⁴ With spearz, innit.

⁵ See, definitely Castamir the Usurper!

⁶ Gil-galad gets a medieval zweihänder at one point, using it to decapitate Saruman, before riding a chariot to run down the Mouth of Sauron. ALL THE ANACHRONISMS.

⁷ Teenage Ents don’t get angsty, just really angry. Rebel without a Gorse? Oh dear, that really is a bad pun.

⁸ Look, you try to make a pun on “John Connor” out of one of Túrin’s names. At least Turambar is the right number of syllables and almost works.

and decides the best way to do this is to become the very spirit of Arda, which he achieves, though, in the process, shrinking and developing a curious preference for yellow boots, nonsense rhyming and blue feathers, quirks that engender more terror than his scowling visage and Gurthang ever did¹.

Ironfoot Man

In which Dain Ironfoot (a shrunken Robert Downey Junior) uses his dwarven technical knowhow and vast wealth to create a hugely powerful sentient armoured exoskeleton² whilst trapped fighting the Variags of Khând. He later uncovers various nefarious deals to smuggle Dwarven weapons to the Easterlings³, but in a climactic twist of fate he nearly loses control of Erebor Industries to the nefarious plots of someone he once trusted as a friend. Fans expect a great superhero-team sequel as Elrond⁴ turns up at the end of the film to discuss the White Council initiative...

Avathar

The Valar (Ocean's 14) finally decide to explore Avathar, after they eventually work out it was where Ungoliant had come from. They find it's inhabited by a load of space smurfs, who have a massive pile of Silmarilli⁵. Overcome by desire for the gems and the chance to heal the Two Trees, they declare war. After lots of pointless deaths and an incipient quasi-genocide, some of the Maiar, who had taken the form of the smurfs, change allegiance⁶ and summon a vast spider-horde of the spawn of Ungoliant to defeat the armies of the Valar. The Valar, deciding it was all more trouble than it was worth, especially when they realised the "Silmarilli" were just shiny rocks⁷, withdraw and leave Avathar to return to its lightless, god-forsaken state. The whole affair is hushed up and then the Valar flood the place, because they can and are a teensy bit vengeful.

The Seven-Hundred Year Itch

Elrond (Steve Buscemi) and Celebrían (Meryl Streep) have been married for a little while⁸, when Elrond, who has having a fourth-millennium crisis, reads a treatise by the famed Elven psychologist, Brúbeicur. He becomes convinced his marriage is doomed to failure, so, whilst his wife is away in Lórien and being molested by Orcs, he starts pursuing a young Elven-maid (Daisy Ridley) who is in Rivendell to advertise the delights of Malgalad's hotel⁹,

¹ Yes, we have just mashed up all the Terminator plots to some extent. Also, Bombadil as a repentant immortal Túrin is no more insane than any of the other theories about him.

² Possibly with some superficial similarity to a very large pig. Maybe.

³ The Variags have axes in LOTR. Coincidence? WE THINK NOT.

⁴ Wearing an eyepatch for no apparent reason.

⁵ They just do. If Fëanor can make them, why not space smurfs?

⁶ They were Maiar of Manwë. They liked blue. The space smurfs were just so blue.

⁷ The "Frobisher Phenomenon". Martin Frobisher went on three voyages to the Arctic in the 16th century and brought back 1550t of "gold". Back in England, it turned out it was all iron pyrites...

⁸ By Elven standards.

⁹ See? Cross-franchise linking. MARVEL, EAT YOUR HEART OUT. Just ignore the fact that we've entirely messed up the chronology of Middle-earth and go with it.

whilst wearing a particularly-wafty dress that flies around at any breath of wind. Meanwhile, increasingly-desperate messages from Celebrian arrive, asking to be rescued, but Elrond ignores them, depressingly infatuated with his unrequited love. Eventually, he realises he's being a complete tit, gets back to looking all stern and eyebrows-y, deports the Elven-maid and sends Elladan and Elrohir (Chris and Liam Hemsworth) off to rescue their Mum, forbidding anyone to talk about quite how stupid he'd been.

Fastitanicalon

In which a romance blossoms between a stereotypical poor rogue from the docks of Pelargir (Danny Dyer) and a high-class lady of Númenorean descent (Keira Knightley) as they voyage out on the seas¹. The captain (who bears a striking and frequently-commented-upon resemblance to Théoden of Rohan) realises too late, however, that the island they land upon is not all it seems, and it turns out—even worse—that giant turtle-fish do not come fitted with sufficient lifeboats². Will the budding romance survive the catastrophe and the cold water?³

The Red Book

In this tear-jerking classic love film, an elderly hobbit sits in his garden and reads from the Red Book to an elderly lady hobbit, now suffering from dementia, the story of how Samwise Gamgee and Rosie Cotton met. Flashback scenes tell much of the story, including how Samwise (now played by Ryan Gosling instead of Sean Astin⁴) went to Mordor⁵, and how he finally managed to gain, through much pain and loss, the house at Bag End that he had always dreamed of living in⁶. But the real heart of the film is displayed when the identity of the two old hobbits is revealed to be the same as the characters in the Red Book's story, and it is shown how strong love can overcome all barriers.

The Best Exotic Malgalad Hotel⁷

Malgalad (Taron Egerton), the energetic young king of Lórien, decides to promote his realm by opening a new hotel for those tired of life among the travails and turbulence of Middle-earth. A series of ageing grandees decide to take him up on his offer, though are disappointed with the flet-based facilities, having hoped for some walls and a roof. A succession of entirely-inconsequential human interest stories then occur, as the mismatched rabble of guests learn to appreciate the natural beauty of their surroundings and to get on with each other, despite species, language and diplomatic barriers. Eventually, they all decide to stay for ever, and help Malgalad to better manage his hotel

¹ On the White Star Line's flagship express route between Umbar and Rómenna, in their newest, biggest ship, the Turuphanto 2.

² Or, indeed, any, lifeboats not being an evolutionary imperative for giant turtle-fish.

³ Spoilers: No. At least Danny Dyer dies.

⁴ Ryan's just more photogenic.

⁵ Simply walking there, incidentally.

⁶ As well as his other desire of a half-century of supreme authority over The Shire.

⁷ This one's going right over your head if you haven't read *Unfinished Tales*. Malgalad is probably Amroth who was probably king of Lórien before Celeborn and Galadriel arrived, or possibly was their son. Tolkien was, entirely unsurprisingly, a little unclear on the matter.

and realm, such that all will profit. In a dark twist, two of the guests, Celeborn (Alan Rickman) and Galadriel (Helen Mirren), encourage Malgalad to go to the Battle of Dagorlad and take over his kingdom when he dies¹.

Catch me if you Khând

The Easterling trickster, Khâ-something-vaguely-Arabic-sounding (Khâsvas, played by Idris Elba), gallivants around Middle-earth, forging coinage left, right and centre. He catches the attention of the Fraud division of the Erebor Secret Service (ESS), who send their best dwarf agent, Karlli (Danny DeVito), to catch the fraudster. Karlli trails Khâsvas, just missing him on several occasions, though realises his target is an Easterling when he overhears someone in Bree comment that a non-Caucasian with a predilection for chariots had been in town recently. Divining that being non-Caucasian must mean the man was morally questionable², Karlli waylays the main road east and catches Khâsvas, dragging him off to prison in Dale, where it turns out Khâsvas is just misunderstood and lonely. They become best friends and Khâsvas ends up working for the ESS to help catch other counterfeiters, which it turns out is a waste of time, because this is Middle-earth and trade doesn't really happen.

Minas Girls

A young Gondorian noblewoman (Lindsay Lohan) returns with her parents to Minas Tirith, where Ioreth³ warns her off associating with the "mithrils": Arwen (Rachel McAdams), Eowyn (Lacey Chabert), and Lothíriel (Amanda Seyfried)⁴. She nonetheless enters the backstabbing⁵, highly-quotable world of Minas Tirith's elite society, and learns what price fitting in can come at. Watch and chant along with classic quotes like "Stop trying to make Dwarrows happen", "Boo, you horselord", and "On Wednesdays we wear chainmail⁶". Also with memorable cameo part for Sansa from *A Song of Ice and Fire*, who it turns out doesn't even go here.

Editor's Note: For those who do not have an encyclopaedic knowledge of the Society's in-jokes, (1) Hazad Longbeard and Nanofilos and (2) Bill the Pony and Tar-Palantír are noms de plume of (1) James Bailie, known for his fondness for Dwarves, and (2) Samuel Cook, alias "the King". The Middle-earth Expanded Film Universe, to which this is a sequel, can be found in Issue 45 of Anor, Lent Term, 2015.

¹ It's Middle-earth. It can't end happily.

² Within the internal logic of Middle-earth. Not outside it. Before anyone thinks we're being really racist.

³ Everyone's favourite wise-woman-cum-chatterbox.

⁴ Now there's a gang you don't want to mess with.

⁵ Occasionally literally.

⁶ Though Eowyn wears chainmail every day. She's just so badass.

AN AGE-OLD QUESTION

Samuel Cook

Reading *LotR* again¹, an apparent inconsistency struck me²: who is the oldest character in *LotR* and Middle-earth more generally³? This might seem a pretty straightforward matter—surely Tolkien would be clear about this? But he isn't⁴. As it turns out, there are three possible candidates whose exceptional age is referred to in the course of the book: Tom Bombadil, Treebeard and Círdan. I think the evidence does allow you to work out which one is actually the eldest, but doing so also reveals some interesting⁵ points about the chronology of the earliest days of Middle-earth and the nature of some of its inhabitants.

So, first, what is the evidence for each of these characters being the oldest? In the case of Bombadil, he is described as “oldest and fatherless” (*LotR*, p.258) and himself says he is “Eldest” and existed “before the river and the trees... the first raindrop and the first acorn... the Big People and... the Little People...the Elves passed westward... the seas were bent... the Dark Lord came from Outside” (*LotR*, p.129). At the same time, however, Gandalf describes Treebeard as the “oldest living thing that still walks beneath the Sun upon this Middle-earth” (*LotR*, p.488) and tells Théoden that when he meets Treebeard, he will “hear the speech of the oldest of all living things” (*LotR*, p.545). In addition, from *The Silmarillion*⁶, we know Círdan was the original leader of the Falathrim when they split off from the host of the Teleri in the Great March, so was possibly one of the original Elves to awake beside Cuiviénen to have obtained such status so early in Elven history⁷. This is further

¹ For the umpteenth time, where umpteenth is defined as “a number too embarrassingly-high to remember”.

² And, this time, it's not some obscure bit of the Appendices, but in the main narrative!

³ In other words, excluding the various denizens of Valinor and Eru and all his little fan-spirits swanning around beyond the Circles of the World.

⁴ This should not surprise anyone. If you are surprised, just try to come to a definitive answer on what Bombadil is and see how quickly you end up believing he's the Witch-King...

⁵ For a given value of “interesting”, depending on how interesting you find recondite Tolkien lore.

⁶ So I lied about this not being obscure. At least it's mainly not too obscure...

⁷ The leaders of the Three Hosts, Ingwë, Finwë and Elwë and Olwë, were all indisputably original Elves. Of the leaders of the splinter groups (the Nandor and the Falathrim/Eglath (later the Sindar)), less is known. Lenwë, leader of the Nandor is simply “one in the host of Olwë” (*The Silmarillion*, p.54), though his name ending in -wë implies originality. Círdan, who was akin to Elwë and Olwë in some fashion, possibly through a shadowy third brother, Elmo (who is also possibly a forebear of Celeborn), appears originally to have been the leader of those Teleri who most wanted to search for Elwë (*HoME* XII, p.386), delaying the arrival of the whole Telerin host at the shores of Beleriand.

implied by him being bracketed with Galadriel and Gil-galad as one of the three greatest of the Eldar to whom the Elven-rings were entrusted from the first¹ (*LotR*, Appendix B, p.1059). The real conflict arises, however, because Treebeard says “the Elves...cured us of dumbness long ago” (*LotR*, p.461), implying the Elves pre-existed the Ents and that Treebeard is not therefore the oldest living thing.

Consequently, what we have is someone who is apparently the oldest, except not living, and a tree that is the oldest living thing, but was apparently woken up by someone who is either not as old as they might be or who is also not, in fact, living. The trivial conclusion is that Bombadil and Círdan are both zombies and thus don't count, making Treebeard the oldest². This, however, seems rather unlikely³. How, therefore, are we to read this riddle?

The first step is to disentangle Bombadil and Treebeard⁴. The clue here, I think, is in the word “living” in Gandalf's description of Treebeard. What this means, it seems to me, is not that Bombadil, who, based on descriptions of him, certainly should be older, is some sort of undead zombie thing, but that he belongs in a different class of beings to Treebeard and is, consequently, not directly comparable with him.

Effectively, what Gandalf means is that Treebeard is the oldest creature created in Middle-earth, i.e. the oldest creature not of the order of the Ainur or in some way pre-existing Middle-earth itself⁵. The implication, it seems, is that Bombadil was the first thing to walk in Middle-earth and is, as is said, therefore the “oldest” thing there in the sense of “having been there the longest”, but is not *of* Middle-earth—in

When the majority of the Teleri then eventually crossed the sea, those who stayed behind split into the Falathrim, led by Círdan, who stayed for love of Ossë and lived by the sea, and the Eglath, those who still refused to give up on Elwë and lived in the hills and woods, and had no named leader. It certainly seems impossible that Círdan could be younger than a second-generation Elf, given his prominence. We do know that Círdan's original name was Nowë (Círdan is just the Sindarin form of a nickname, Ciryatan, meaning “Shipwright”), but his exact parentage is never made clear. The fact that he has an apparently-meaningless name ending in -wë certainly suggests he must be one of the earliest Elves, but whether he is original is not definitely discoverable.

¹ Though Círdan later (~2800 years later) surrenders his ring, Narya, to Gandalf, when he arrives in Middle-earth. And he is certainly older than both Galadriel and Gil-galad — Galadriel was born in Valinor and Gil-galad either there or in Middle-earth after the exile of the Noldor.

² Círdan is described as “grey and old” when Frodo meets him at the Havens (*LotR*, p.1009), but no mention of missing limbs or BRAAAINNS. Likewise, Bombadil seems a bit sprightly to be undead.

³ And very silly.

⁴ Not literally. Though slash-fic of that almost certainly exists somewhere.

⁵ Which, by the same token, means Gandalf is not “living” in his sense of the word, being a Maia. The same would be true for Sauron.

some sense he existed before it and thus had, one might say, an unfair advantage. Treebeard, meanwhile, is the oldest thing whose life began in Middle-earth—the oldest living thing, as Gandalf says. This also tells us something about the nature of both Bombadil and Treebeard. Bombadil must be either a Maia or some sort of expression of the spirit of Arda itself¹ if he pre-existed Middle-earth². By the same token, it means that Ents are definitely not lesser Maiar inhabiting trees, but of the same order as the other Speaking Peoples of Middle-earth³, with, one presumes, a distinct *hröa* (body) and *fëa* (spirit). Given what appears to be an immortality similar to that of Elves⁴, we can only assume that there is a corner of Mandos that is forever Entish. As Ents were essentially the result of Yavanna being sulky because Aulë had got away with creating Dwarves and she was worried all her trees and plants would be chopped down, unable to defend themselves⁵, it seems sensible that Ents would be covered by similar arrangements as the Dwarves and would be, metaphysically, the same sort of being⁶.

So, what we can conclude is that both Bombadil and Treebeard can be “oldest”, depending on what you mean by it, without causing a fatal runtime error in Middle-earth⁷. However, adding Círdan into the mix opens up a whole new world of speculation. Any apparent conflict between Bombadil and Círdan can be explained by the above argument—Círdan is a “living” thing created within Middle-earth, which Bombadil isn’t, so both can be the oldest in their respective orders. Unfortunately⁸, no such neat resolution is possible to explain the discrepancy between Treebeard and Círdan’s claims to be oldest.

¹ Both hypotheses advanced to explain him.

² If he’s some sort of Earth spirit, arguably he came into existence at the same time as Middle-earth, rather than pre-existing it, but he would still not be of Middle-earth, not in some sense subject to it, but of an equal order of creation.

³ Elves, Dwarves, Men/Hobbits and (controversially) Orcs and Trolls.

⁴ Certainly Treebeard doesn’t indicate that old age is something that afflicts Ents. And he’s seemingly tens of millennia old, so it would appear a pretty safe bet that Ents don’t just time out like Men. They can, it seems, be killed or hurt badly enough to die, as with Elves, or go tree-ish and just sort of gradually fade away, which would seem to be an analogue of the Elvish mode of death through grief.

⁵ When Yavanna gets her wish granted by Manwë and tells Aulë that his children will need to beware, his response is great. To paraphrase, it’s “Face. Bovvered?”

⁶ And it is recorded that the Dwarves do have a special corner of Mandos to themselves (*The Silmarillion*, p.44), so it seems reasonable to expect something similar for the Ents.

⁷ I’ve spent too much time looking at model code recently. If only the errors in that were so easily-resolvable.

⁸ Depending on whether you regard this article as tiresome or intriguing.

Well, that's not quite true. If we assume that Círdan was not one of the original Elves, the entire problem goes away. Sort of. As long as none of the original Elves still exist. Which they do. All the original Vanyar, as far as we know, remain sitting beneath Taniquetil gazing adoringly at Manwë's imperial blueness¹. At the very least, Ingwë does. And some of the original Noldor and Teleri² seem likely to still be knocking around too. Now none of these are necessarily (or indeed likely to be) in Middle-earth, so Gandalf's statements about Treebeard could still be true, if one assumes that his qualification about Treebeard being the oldest living thing in Middle-earth, applies to his more general second statement, though this is not specifically said³. However, what happens if we assume that Círdan was an original Elf⁴ and/or that Gandalf's second statement does include the Elves in Valinor?

Timing issues. Effectively, for everything to be internally self-consistent in that case, the Ents have to exist before the Elves, which *The Silmarillion* implies is not the case: "Behold! When the Children awake, then the thought of Yavanna will awake also, and it will summon spirits from afar, and they will go among the *kelvar* and the *olvar*, and some will dwell therein, and be held in reverence, and their just anger shall be feared." (*The Silmarillion*, p.46)⁵. It therefore seems clear that the Ents are contemporaneous with the first Elves. It could be that the thought of Yavanna woke a few minutes before the Elves, making Treebeard very slightly older by a technicality, but this seems a little unsatisfactory⁶. However, we either have to accept this explanation or that Círdan was not one of the original Elves and that Gandalf's description of Treebeard should really read "the oldest of living things not pre-

¹ So I find the Vanyar a bit soppy and boring...

² Olwë presumably lives. One imagines that, if he'd been killed in the Kinslaying at Alqualondë, it would have been mentioned.

³ The remaining original Elves are still "living" things, i.e. of Middle-earth, even if they don't happen to live there anymore.

⁴ As I would like him to be.

⁵ Notice this talks about generic "spirits", so this doesn't really explain what Ents are in any useful sense.

⁶ And not really fitting with the tone of *The Silmarillion* or *LotR*. Note that the Ents (and thus Treebeard) could have existed before the Elves started talking to trees and taught them language. My reading of that issue (which seems to be supported by what Treebeard says on the matter) is that the proto-Ents existed before the Elves found them, but were still very tree-ish, and that it was only through interaction with the Elves that the Ents first acquired a language and were "woken up", as such, becoming the go-getting creatures we see in *LotR*. So the Elves greatly speeded up Entish cultural development, but they did not directly create the Ents themselves, resolving that particular contradiction. Just because Treebeard is apparently the oldest thing that speaks, it doesn't necessarily mean he was the first thing to speak—he could have learned language later in life.

existing Arda and not currently in Valinor”, which is a little wordy. Or that Tolkien wasn’t entirely internally self-consistent¹.

To my mind, Círdan not being one of the very first Elves seems the best explanation, if an unsatisfying one. It seems unlikely that Tolkien would have deliberately named Treebeard oldest (twice!) in error or not mentioned the fact that Círdan was the oldest, given his later writings on the character (*HoME XII*, pp.385-7). As Círdan was related to Elwë and Olwë, it seems possible that his kinship would have given him enough authority to be seen as a leader of the Teleri and to thus become leader of the Falathrim without him having to be one of the original Elves, though the form of his original name and his so-high status still seem to me to imply that he was. However, that road leads only to more problems, so I will concede the point.

In conclusion, it seems fairly clear that Bombadil is actually the oldest being encountered in *LotR*², but that he existed before Middle-earth in some capacity, so doesn’t really count. Out of “living” things (in Middle-earth, not including Valinor), the oldest is either Treebeard or Círdan, depending on what one believes about each of them. Given the repeated references to Treebeard being the oldest living thing, it seems most likely that Círdan was not one of the very first Elves and that Treebeard is, in fact, the eldest. Or that Tolkien deliberately left it unclear. Or just didn’t notice. Both of which are possible, if unlikely. So, the answer to the question is Bombadil. Or Treebeard. Or just possibly Círdan, depending on exactly how you phrase it. I love a definite conclusion.

¹ Who knew?

² Again, ignoring any definite Ainur that pop up or are mentioned.

POETRY FROM THE EASTER 2016 EAGLE DEBATE

Samuel Cook and Jack Robinson

Editor's Note: Most terms, the Society holds an Eagle Debate. According to this format, a question is chosen (e.g. "Which of Tolkien's characters is the best wizard?"), each participant picks a character or group of characters who they believe to be the answer, and several rounds are held wherein one participant is eliminated—or, to put it more colourfully, thrown off the eagle—every round, with the winner being the last person standing. Typically, these debates are rather silly; for the aforementioned wizards debate, one of the rounds was a job interview for a wizardly teaching position. That of Easter 2016, concerning "Who is Tolkien's most lethal character?", was no exception. It did, however, have a poetry round, and some of the entries to that were really quite impressive, especially considering that our poor poets were only given five minutes to write!

Samuel Cook

Turambar was a lethal man
From him did everybody scam
He felled the Great Wyrms like a toy
And Nargothrond he did destroy

At the end Morgoth he will slay
And all his vileness repay
For twenty-nine years of great pain
And fifty-thousand beings slain

A man, a sword, a temper quick
In many many ways a dick
In fact, in sum and overall
The most lethal person of all

Jack Robinson

A star, a flash in the Void
whence I, favoured among my kind.
My heart, nevertheless, sought more, and destroyed
all those of this world whom my will would not bind.

My servants, my progeny,
beings of my will,
to whom I gave my very soul
and sent, and commissioned,
their task of an unmatched simplicity;
my malice, my unbounded desire to control
and to fill
all Arda with the elegant darkness of my ambition.

Ash nazg durbatulûk—these words, though not mine,
found in me their profane inspiration
and Telperion, Laurelin, burned at my word
and for Finwë, Fingolfin, fey mourning was heard
as my exhilarating dissonance by angels was served—
all hearts quail at my name's incantation.

Editor's Note: Jack Robinson spoke for Morgoth Bauglir, the elder and more terrible Dark Lord, while Samuel Cook spoke for Túrin Turambar, the cursed human hero who inadvertently brings doom to almost everybody he encounters.

CONSEQUENCES

Various members of the Society

Goldberry met Fatty Bolger at the Battle of Nanduhirion.

Goldberry said: "Oh, Fatty Bolger, what big ears you have!"

Fatty Bolger replied: "I have not walked through fire and death to bandy crooked words with a witless worm."

They launched an attack on Valinor itself, in a hopeless quest for the immortality they could never attain.

As a result, everything burnt.

Thranduil the Party King met the Witch-king of Angmar on the face of an Oliphaunt.

Thranduil said: "Why is your hair so shiny?"

The Witch-king of Angmar replied: "You think you've got problems?"

They downed three kegs each of Thranduil's wine.

All in all, it was decided it could've been worse, although Ilúvatar would never look at them quite the same again.

Lobelia Sackville-Baggins met Galadriel in a hole.

Lobelia Sackville-Baggins said: "Galadriel, I am your father!"

Galadriel replied: "You're worse at parties than Mandos."

They agreed to make Lobelia Sackville-Baggins's son a puppet king.

As a result, the Dark Lord raised his dark hand over dead sea and withered land.

Hapless Kullervo met Háma at Sméagol's birthday party.

Hapless Kullervo said: "All that pipe-weed has addled your brains!"

Háma replied: "Cool. Cool cool cool."

Hapless Kullervo slit Háma's throat, then jumped into the fires of Orodruin.

As a result, the whole of Middle-earth was plunged into an ice age, and the Hobbits built a giant snow-Hobbit on the Brandywine Bridge.