

ISSUE 3



THE BRIDGE AT KHAZAD-DUM

# ISSUE 3 *ANOR* ISSUE 3

## *Contents:*

- 3: Oxonmoot report: Iwan Rhys Morus
- 4: A parting gift from Master Sharkey: Meneldur en Forod
- 6: The University of Osgiliath in the Fourth Age: Brin Dunsire
- 8: Tolkien the Fascist: Iwan Rhys Morus
- 10: The Last Parting: Calligraphy by Julian Bradfield
- 11: Puntmoot report: Palantir

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Editor: Phillip Davenport

Covers: Per Ahlberg

Calligraphy: Mike Whitaker, Julian Bradfield

Additional artwork: Tim Duckworth

Cartoons: Iwan Rhys Morus, Catherine Hooley

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Any articles or artwork for future editions of Anor should be sent to:  
Phillip Davenport, Emmanuel College, Cambridge.

# Oxonmoot

by *Julian Rhys*  
MORUS

## REPORT

Eventually staggering out of Oxford station, still muttering wild threats at the Balrogs of British Rail, after arriving two hours behind schedule, I wended my way through the town to my lodgings at Pembroke College only to find that with the efficiency so typical of Oxford educational establishments they had lost the lists and wouldn't give me a room until they had clarification from a Committee member. Visions of cold steel rose irresistibly in my mind as I slouched off in search of the Turf Tavern and the rest of Oxonmoot.

Inside the Turf a horrifying sight met my bewildered eyes. The spectacle of more than a hundred members of the Tolkien Society grimly going about the business of enjoying themselves should not be contemplated on a weak stomach. Inside the bar-room and in the courtyard outside pile upon pile of grinning, gesticulating revellers were stacked rafter-high. The air was positively awash with alcohol. A hobbit would, I think, have enjoyed the general atmosphere. And would have had the added advantage of being able to duck between people's legs and get at the bar.

Next morning at the Town Hall where Oxonmoot proper was to occur, the Fabulous Four from Cambridge (Mike, Catherine, Julian and myself) split up to sample the various delights on offer. Mike and Catherine descended into a dark and dreary dungeon, where I later joined them, whilst Julian and I spent an interesting hour or three discussing vital issues of life and death such as the exact definition of the word "smial" at the Smials' Council. Seriously 'though, the Smials' Council is a worthwhile innovation which I hope will develop in the future. The afternoon passed away happily enough in hacking up the remains of poor Yak's dungeon, rehearsing for the evening's festivities and watching an educational film which included a short sequence from LOTR - not at all bad, 'though I have some difficulty in relating to ringwraiths with pale red faces!

After a short interval in which to change, an elf-lord, a minstrel, an elf-maiden and a penguin (sorry Julian!) strode into the middle of Oxford Town Hall and the festivities commenced! An Oxonmoot party is not an experience to be missed. It isn't often nowadays that such a diverse collection of barbarians, elves, dwarves, hobbits, dragons..... come together for a good old-fashioned piss-up. If you've never seen an elf-maiden smoking a cigarette or a Ranger

carrying an instamatic camera, then Oxonmoot is the place to be. The festivities were occasionally interrupted by organised activities, the only one of which I'll mention is Mike and Catherine with their stirring rendition of various Middle-Earthian ditties. Well done folks!

Oxonmoot drew to a close the following morning with the usual moving ceremony by the grave of Professor Tolkien. The lucky few with invitations then made their way to a final party at the house of Priscilla Tolkien, and so the tenth anniversary Oxonmoot ended. Roll on '84!

j m  
a



# A PARTING GIFT FROM MASTER SHARKEY

The beautiful thing had lain long in the mathom-house at Michel Delving, admired by all who saw it, not least among these being old Tom Halfgirdle, the Keeper. Will Boffin was no exception either. Indeed, from the first he saw it, he was captivated by it and he questioned old Tom long on its history.

"Well lad, it's been there a might long time, that's for certain." he said.

"At least it's been there as long as I can remember or my dad afore me, and that's saying something. Why, I reckon it's been here since the days of the Old Troubles or maybe longer".

"And who made it, do you suppose, master Tolman?" asked the young hobbit.

"Well, there's no-one in the Shire as ever made anything like that, I can tell you. If you asks me, I reckons it was brought back by Mad Baggins from one of his adventures in foreign parts, maybe." replied the mathom-keeper.

"Perhaps it came with Sharkey". suggested Will, for he knew his hobbit history, having been taught it by old Holfast Gardner.

Oh I shouldn't think so," replied old Tom. "No, not at all. Why all Sharkey ever brought was trouble and ruin. He were a dark, bad man if you believe the old tales. Well I've no more time for talking, young Will, so good day to you". and at that he left to go about his duties.

Still Will stood and gazed at this thing, entranced by its beauty. And, as he looked, a longing grew in him to possess it. It was wrong for it to stay here in a dusty and shabby museum, he decided, and he would come back for it. That night, a chance wanderer passing through Michel Delving might have been surprised at the sight of a young hobbit out late on that moonlit night, creeping from shadow to shadow, conspicuous by his attempts to stay hidden. But there was no-one to see young Will making his way to the mathom-house. Nor was there anyone to see him open its unlocked and unbolted door and slip in.

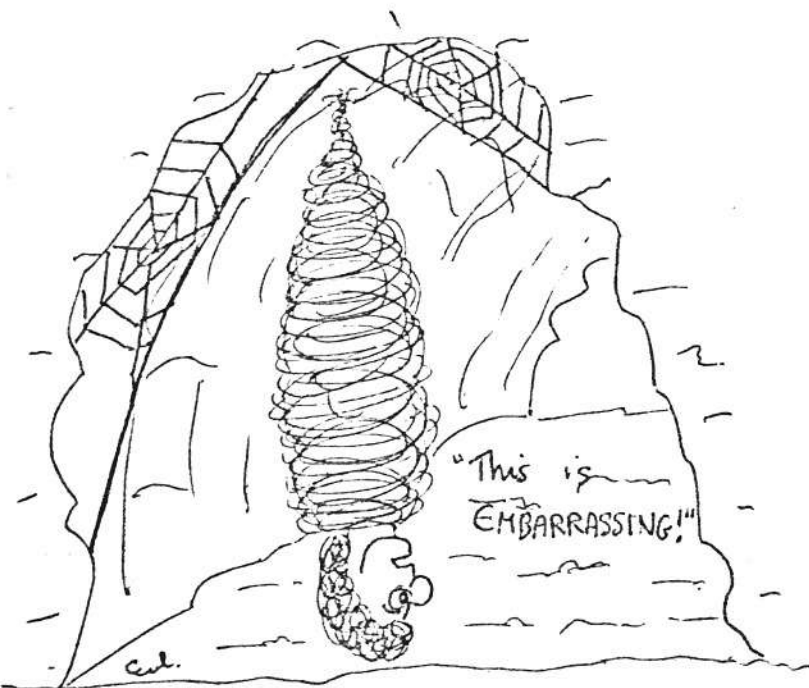
Silently, he made his way to the case where the precious thing lay and broke the glass with a rock. Will jumped back at the sudden noise, terrified lest it alert the Keeper. But old Tolman in a nearby room just grunted and rolled over in his sleep, untroubled by any thought of burglary.

Will stretched out his trembling hand and took the thing. Then, heedless of all stealth, he fled in terror of discovery. On, on he ran, to the eaves of Bindbole Wood, and there, in a silent moonlit dell, he stopped to look at what manner of thing he had taken.

Will held the thing up in the moonlight and its stone, which had seemed quite colourless in the dull light of the mathom-house, now blazed forth in many colours. Red, blue and green it shone under the bright moon.

"What a beautiful thing," chuckled Will, "My precious ring".

MENELDUR EN FOROD.





# THE UNIVERSITY OF OSGILIATH IN THE FOURTH AGE

By the end of the first century of the Fourth Age the ancient capital of Gondor had been rebuilt and repopulated.

Osgiliath had seemd ill-fated. It was burned in the Kin-strife of 1436, and two hundred years later its population had been devastated by the Plague; the royal court had removed to Minas Anor in 1640 and the city fell into ruins. It was taken by Uruks in the assault of 2475, and although regained by the first Boromir it remained desolate. The great stone bridge over Anduin had been broken. In 3018 Boromir II fought an heroic rearguard action against the Nazgul while the last surviving bridge was cast down, escaping by swimming to the west bank which was held for a while ; nine months later the armies of Sauron swept across the river in fleets of boats, and threw temporary bridges across Anduin for the passage of heavy military equipment to be used in the siege of Minas Tirith. Hasty strengthening of the pontoon bridges and the eastwards defences after the victory on the Pelennor Fields fortunately proved needless, since the war was finally resolved far away in Mordor itself.

The wisdom of Elessar Telcontar foresaw that the establishment of peace in Gondor and all the westlands would eventually result in pressure of population on Minas Tirith, the expansion of which was constrained by principally geographical factors. As soon as essential works of repair in that city were completed, therefore, he encouraged many artisans to set about the rebuilding of Osgiliath, sixteen miles away. With the aid of the Dwarves of Erebor and Aglarond, a new bridge of many stone piers was built to carry the main highway across the River, and new harbours and wharves cut to receive traffic of ships from the North, which was expected to increase ; for it was another great scheme of Elessar's to have a paved road laid by the River to by-pass Sarn Gebir and Rauros. Gifts of land and trading rights caused many folk to settle in Osgiliath and within fifty years it supported a thriving community. Eventually it was destined to become a secondary capital for the regions of Ithilien and Emyn Arnen.

The seat of government remained in Minas Tirith. It was the conscious policy of Elessar and his heirs, however, that Osgiliath should become a centre of art and learning as well as of trade. The restoration of the monarchy and renewed contact with other races had brought about a great re-awakening of interest in the history of Gondor and the North, and the lore-masters of Minas Tirith found many students anxious to explore both their libraries and their memories. So it was that the King established an academy in Osgiliath wherein men might study the arts of peace ; and many noble halls and courts were erected to meet the needs of assembly and seclusion. The Dome of Stars, which had formerly housed the lost Palantír of Osgiliath (never found, despite much searching of the River) was rebuilt ; its ceiling was black and jewels of Aglarond were set therein in the patterns of

the constellations. Here were held the convocations and councils of the Academy. Around it were grouped the constituent Colleges, the first two of which were named for the King and Queen of Gondor. The great hall of the King's College was indeed a splendid triumph of architecture derived from the study of Elvish building in antiquity. Most of the Colleges followed its pattern of a green lawn or garden surrounded by colonnaded walks and fair buildings adorned with spires and buttresses.

King Elessar took the keenest interest in the development of the Academy, and not only in an official capacity as its founder and patron. It was not unknown for doctors and students eagerly discussing philosophy, law, medicine, art, history, geography or the diversity of tongues to be quietly joined by a tall Man wearing a wide-brimmed hat or hood (with the short black cloak which was the mark of Academy members) who would listen to their speech for a while before making some observation or correction which bespoke both learning and a perceptive wisdom. Eventually it was realised who this was, and some embarrassment ensued; but the King discreetly made it known that on such occasions he wished for no ceremony or deference, and thereby doubled the respect and loyalty felt by those who taught and studied at the Academy which he had founded, and which continued to grow and flourish under the encouragement of his heirs after his passing.

Note: The width of the River Anduin at Osgiliath is nowhere stated. In the light of bridge-building technology probably available at the time, and the fact that Boromir was able to escape by swimming after an exhausting fight, I would suggest that 100-200 yards would be about right. Barbara Strachey's map of the Pelennor Fields shows it at about 400 yards. The students of Osgiliath took much pleasure in expeditions upon the River's shallower reaches in long flat-bottomed boats, which they propelled and (more or less) steered with lengthy poles.

Brin Dunsire  
BA (Hons) Cantab.

*Lúthien's Song before Mandos*  
*With feeling, tragic yet beautiful*

by Catherine Holey and Mike Whitaker.

Ai! End-or-e tu-pe mor-ni-e. Su-  
-li Hin-i-on Il-u-va-tar-o yan-rer sil-dr  
mi-ri Var-do quan-tar lum-bul-i-on. Ai!  
Man-dos! Nai an-nal-ya Er-u-hin-i-on nai en-cui-re aur-  
-e-o



# Tolkien the Fascist ?

It seems to have become fashionable among certain people recently, those woolly-minded, middle-class and 'liberal' people who think that socialism means giving money to Oxfam and joining CND, to accuse Tolkien of being a Fascist and of subjecting young people to right-wing propaganda in his works. I am a Marxist and a member of the Young Communist League, but have also been an avid reader of Tolkien for the past nine years and have never found anything which contradicts my own beliefs, or which in my opinion could adversely affect the judgement of any intelligent young person. Tolkien's critics seem to be falling into the trap; so assiduously avoided by Tolkien himself, of grossly underestimating the intellectual capabilities of young readers. They would also seem to have rather naive conceptions themselves of what if anything LOTR has to say about modern society.

Robert Westall, the author of 'socially-concerned' books for children, thinks that in LOTR: "Good and evil are separated like oil and water.....the enemy are totally evil.....nor do we find any evil within the goodies." Has Mr. Westall actually read and considered the book at all? Almost all the major characters of LOTR succumb to some form of temptation in the course of the action, and Tolkien makes it clear that the lure of the Ring is no excuse. When Pippin pleads that he had somehow been drawn unwittingly to look in the palantir and had no idea he was doing wrong, Gandalf immediately contradicts him: "Oh yes you had...You knew you were behaving wrongly and foolishly; and you told yourself so, though you did not listen." The fact that a temptation exists is no excuse for succumbing to it.

Looking further afield in Tolkien's books (which I don't suppose Robert Westall has) Fëanor and his sons provide an example of 'grey' characters in whom impulses of good and evil are inextricably mixed. Even in LOTR a study of characters such as Gollum, Denethor, Boromir....shows that good and evil are not as clearly separated as some people like to think. Westall also believes that Tolkien's world is a world without mercy. "What then does he think Tolkien means by the words: "A sudden understanding, a pity mixed with horror, welled up in Bilbo's heart: a glimpse of endless unmarked days without light or hope of betterment," What is Bilbo doing if not being merciful?

The general charge of Fascism is easily refuted by reference to 'The Scouring of the Shire' in *TRotK*. Tolkien's obvious feeling of affinity with hobbits in general seems to me to indicate that hobbit society as represented in LOTR, is a fair approximation of his personal ideal for an ideal society; a rural community

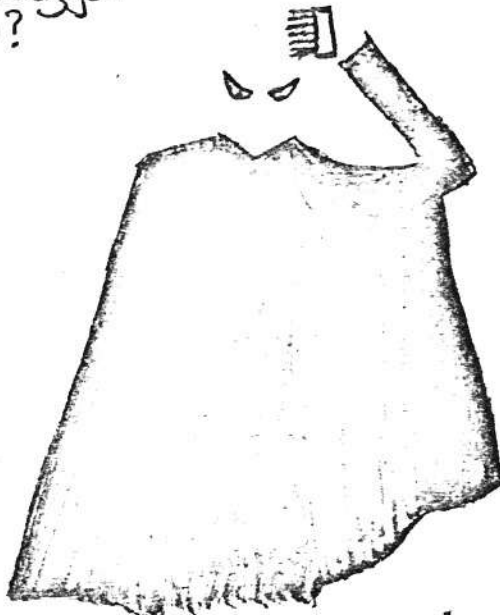
based on a great deal of mutual co-operation and very little governmental restriction. As he himself says in his letters: "My political opinions lean more to Anarchy (philosophically understood, meaning abolition of control..." and again: "If a ragnarok could burn all the slums and gas-works, and shabby garages, and long arclit suburbs, it could for me burn all the works of art-and I'd go back to trees."

In all this Tolkien is much nearer to Marxist Communism than he knew. Not of course that Tolkien was a Marxist: the few times he mentions such things in his letters make it obvious that Tolkien knew very little of Communism, and that what he knew was mostly mistaken.

To return to the point: all this seems to me to imply that the degradation and gradual destruction of hobbit-society as represented in 'The Scouring of the Shire' is the antithesis of Tolkien's utopia. The nature of the takeover of the Shire by Saruman's Ruffians is unmistakeably Fascist. Fascism as a philosophy (if such a word can be used) is based on the right of one small group or class of society to absolute power and authority. All opposition is silenced brutally and without any regard to justice. It is impossible for the ruling class to commit any crime since they are the law. Such is the state of the Shire when Frodo and company returns.

The Ruffians under Sharkey, rule for their own benefit only, and have no regard whatsoever for the rights of the hobbit majority: "This country wants waking up and setting to rights.... you need a bigger Boss.... Then your'll learn a thing or two, you little rat-folk." The only justification offered for their actions are greed, hatred and contempt for other thinking creatures. To equate Tolkien with such people and to see LOTR as a vindication of such actions betrays a gross misunderstanding of his works.

Q. What does a Nazgul  
do his hair with?



A. A KHAMÛL HAIR BRUSH!

©H  
C.S.R.

# THE SONG OF PARTING

Farewell sweet earth and northern sky  
for ever blest, since here did lie  
and here with lissom limbs did run  
beneath the Moon, beneath the Sun,  
Lúthien Tinúviel  
more fair than mortal tongue can tell.  
Though all to ruin fell the world  
and were dissolved and backward hurled  
unmade into the old abyss,  
yet were its making good, for this—  
the dusk, the dawn, the earth, the sea—  
that Lúthien for a time should be.

# Puntmoot Report by Palantir

10.30 a.m. ,Saturday, June 11<sup>th</sup>

Your scribe , having only just hauled himself out of his nice warm bed, grabbed breakfast and an anorak, is faced with an orc (sorry, porter) on King's back gate. Swiftly, his hand twitches aside his cloak to reveal .....a Tolk Soc. membership card! Confronted with this awesome sight, the orc shrinks back in terror, hurriedly opening the great iron gate and almost falling over himself to avoid our hero, who, card in hand, strides past the cowering orc and makes for the bridge of King's.

I needn't have hurried - there were only three others waiting on the bridge when I got there. By eleven, however, the party had assembled, and Joe had been despatched (with the able assistance of Stephanie and our noble chairman) to scrounge a third punt from Trinity College. The rest of us were kept thoroughly entertained by the punting skill (or lack of) of a puntload of students turning graceful pirouettes on the river, and and the loss and subsequent (rather stylish) recovery of someone's punt-pole. The burning question was - would we be any better?

This latter was answered in the affirmative as Joe appeared from under Clare bridge at a fair pace (and moreover in a straight line). The rest of us scrambled into our punts and, driven along with not inconsiderable skill by Mark Tilletson and Brin Dunsire, set off upstream to the rollers. By now, of course, it was raining, and various people were casting envious glances at the secretary, who in a fit of justifiable pessimism, was the only person who'd seen fit to bring along a 'brolly (Everyone else was more preoccupied with bringing large quantities of booze).

At Sarn Gebir (Scudamore's rollers in the Westron speech) everyone disembarked, hung up their respective jackets and hauled the punts over the portage way to the upper river. Having completed this without serious damage to anyone or anything, we set off towards Grantchester. We lost Joe's punt fairly soon as he relinquished the pole to Peter, who although he put up a very creditable performance, couldn't keep pace with Brin and Mark.

The Great Horn of Master Dunsire was filled with good mead, and toasts drunk to the glory of the Mark, the Valar, Professor Tolkien and anything else we could think of at the time. The Lady Eowyn (the secretary) then raised her voice in song, and all were amazed at the beauty of her singing. Then Brin remembered where he'd left his jacket....!

After the departure of Brin the swift, on winged feet towards Sarn Gebir,

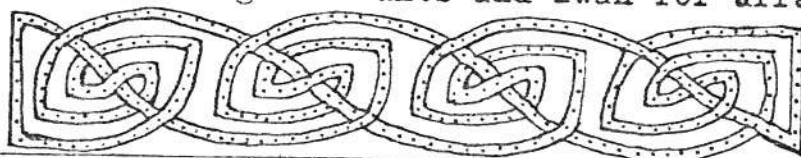


we continued on our (by now fairly merry) way to Granchester. Marcus relieved Mark of the punt pole, and we proceeded at a much more leisurely pace - so much so that Joe's punt caught us up and burnt us off. This so shook Marcus that, a few minutes later, he narrowly escaped total immersion (OK, so someone, who shall remain nameless, moved at the wrong moment). Marcus was drying out on the bottom of the punt when we were hailed from the bank by a strange, yet familiar, figure.

"What news from the North, Punters of Rohan?". For lo! 'twas Brin, complete with jacket, newly returned from Sarn Gebir and desirous of passage to Granchester. He got it, but he had to work for it! At Grantchester, we repaired to the Red Lion for lunch where Brin read out two poems (one of his own composition) on the subject of punting. Then back in the punts, we set off at a fair pace back to Minas Tirith, leaving the Trinity punt trailing behind. (It is said that Julian Bradfield himself took the pole when Iwan was wearied, and that the punt itself did quake beneath his feet as if in fear). Meanwhile farther downriver, our two punts were joined together, with the combined energies of Mike T. and Mark driving us nearer the great city. All that saw this great war machine fled before its coming, and the battle cry of Mark Towers rang out time and again.....

"WALLIES AHEAD - STAND BY TO RAM!"

Sarn Gebir was negotiated safely (even Brin's jacket made it) and after frightening a couple more puntloads of tourists and several ducks (Brin's idea of feeding them duck pâté sandwiches didn't seem to appeal - neither did cries of 'orange sauce'), we made safe landfall at King's landing (despite Mike Towers' attempt unsuccessfully to join the ducks). Thanks are due to Brin, Mary, Martin, Mike and Mike for coming, to Mark Tilletson for his excellent work with a punt pole and to Joe, Steph, Catherine, Mark for booking the Punts and Iwan for arranging it all.



### Beren's Theme

*Slow, with quiet dignity and feeling.*

by Catherine Hobday and Mike Whitaker.

