



AN OR

Issue 20

# EDITORIAL

Welcome to Anor 20. I hope you like the new style, which is forced upon me by the fact that unlike my predecessor, I do not have access to a Mackintosh. I get wet when it rains!

It may seem churlish to begin my time as editor with an appeal for more material, but next issue is the 21st, and while it might not be as important to the Society as the 33rd, I would like it to be special. In particular, I would like to see more articles, fiction and poetry, now that the backlog of reports are out of the way. If you want to write something, but can't think what, just contact me. Hopefully too, issue 21 will see the return of Uncle Mike's Book Corner ... how else will I know what to read?

Duncan McLaren

## Credits

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## II Steward s xxii

And it came to pass in the first year of the stewardship of Monica Proudfeet that the Book of Anor, that had lain forgotten in the libraries of White Acre, was found again and brought with speed to Monica, and Monica read it. Therein she read many marvellous things, even learned treatises concerning mining, concerning the revered Books of Tolkien, yea even concerning economics (though she comprehendeth it not), written in the days of the Steward Ian, before the Wet Summer. And moreover she read therein of ancient customs, remembered only by the elders, and greatest of these was the Expedition to Egladil, which is translated in the common tongue as Puntmoot to Grantchester, and it is written;

*Whan that June with his shoures soote  
The droughte of May hath perced to the roote,  
Then specially from even Shire's ende,  
From Middle-earth to Granteabrigge they wende,  
The grene derke Granta for to seke,  
That whan they fall in, hem dooth maken seeke.*

And Monica was minded to revive this custom, being filled with the memory of former joyous times, and sent out messengers through all of middle-earth that all who wished to accompany her on this Expedition should meet again in the sixth month at Minas Tirith which in the common tongue is translated Cambridge. And many came from far and wide, veterans of former Puntmeet, and amongst them were Mike of the Towers, Martin the Smith of Oxenford, Graham the Tailor of the Burg of Peter, Andy the Strong-armed and many others besides, and they met friend with friend, though one, the flame haired berserker of Rohan, Streetsy, had passed over the waters (not for once, into them), and another, the new Keeper of the Book of Anor, detained in foreign lands by urgent business with Floyd the Pink. And they did meet together with those who dwell in Minas Tirith in a hostelry under the arms of Portland to tell tales of their marvellous deeds since last they met, and did make merry, until at last the landlord of that place (being weary of their drunkenness and boasting) did send them back to their lodgings.

Now when rosy-fingered Dawn was spread over all the earth, then did Steward Monica Proudfeet summon her trusty retainers into the abode of Ruth the Lily, that they might assist her in the preparation of vittals for the journey. And they laboured mightily - all save one, William by name, of the Wood of Hur, who arrived when the work was already done - for it is said that Monica numbers many of hobbit blood amongst her ancestors. Then did they join the assembled company at the bridge of Trinity, and did hear troublesome news, even that Edward the Well-born had not yet arrived, wherefore the boatkeeper of that Hall would not entrust even a single vessel to the Expedition. And there was much wailing and gnashing of

teeth. Yet all was not lost, for Graham the Tailor, by his entreaties, did procure numerous craft from the Hall of John, where he had aforetime been wont to dwell. And these craft were swiftly laden with ale and cyder and many good things to eat, and they departed rapidly, for the boatkeeper of the Hall of Trinity did look upon them with unsavoury countenance.

With the strength of their arms they did traverse the portage way at the place which Men call the Weir, or Rollers<sup>1</sup>, but in the Gods' tongue is called Rauros, and they made their way apace towards their goal. And the sun did bless those happy travellers with his brightness, and did cause many to put aside their raiment, yea even the steward herself, who did seek to escape the heat and swim in the cool waters. Others, emboldened by this example did do likewise. And all did anoint themselves with the elvish liquid called by some Nivea<sup>2</sup>, since their skin had grown unaccustomed to the heat of the sun. And the air was filled with the noise of their merriment.

At length did they come to Egladil which is called Grantchester, and did set out their sumptuous fare, even sandwiches<sup>3</sup> of cheese, of pate, of honey, and of many other wondrous things, and fruits and lembas, which Men call Crunchy Bars; and they did fall to the eating thereof with great eagerness. As the feasting drew to a close, then did Steward Monica present a gift to her faithful minister Mike du Percival, in recognition of his many years devoted service to Minas Tirith; and this gift was an image of a dragon, such creatures being the especial delight of du Percival, and the companions did voice their approval with loud cheering.

Now there was aforetime a custom that those partaking in the Expedition, when they had eaten their fill would play a strange game with fruits and the paddles of their vessels (wherefore indeed were they brought, for there is a law that these paddles may not be used to propel the craft, but poles alone). And this game is called by the Dwarves Krikit. But in those days was krikit out of favour throughout Middle-earth, for strange men of outlandish tongue from the far south, who drink a mysterious and foul beverage which is called in their tongue Forex, had but lately come and vanquished all who would challenge them to this game. And so when they had put off the desire for food and drink, the companions fell to playing instead a Dwarvish game which is called in Khuzdul: Phriz-Bhi, and they did play first on the grassy slopes of Egladil and then indeed in the cool waters of the Anduin.

1 Editor's note: a peculiar name thought by many to refer to the peculiar practice of placing the vessels on rollers to assist their portage, but in fact pre-dating this practice and referring to the ancient elves who used to roll barrels into the river and raft them down to the men of the Halls of Magdalene.

2 Editor's note: thought to be named after its discoverer, Nivea the Wrinkly.

3 Editor's note: the source of this name is unknown.

At last it was time to return, and they embarked once more. Their journey homewards was marred by but one mishap; the consort of Steward Monica did reach after his goblet which had fallen in the river, and having drunk his fill - and more besides, methinks - of cyder, did loose his footing and did plunge unwittingly into the waters; and alas, when he returned to the surface he bore no more those palantiri which he was wont to wear about his head, and they were lost forever in the murky depths.

And so they did return at last to Minas Tirith, and the companions did part and go their separate ways, some to meet again at Oxenford, others to return again to Minas Tirith in the following year, hoping by their tales to put it in the minds of others, who knew not of the pleasures of the expedition, to accompany the Steward when next a Puntmoot should be announced.

Steve Linley



## Punk Trolls and Pantomime Dwarves

*The Hobbit - an Upstart/Nottingham Playhouse Production  
Adapted for the stage by Graham Watkins and Rony Robinson.*

One fine evening in May, there foregathered in a certain inn in the fair town of Cambridge a company of strangely clad folk - or at least, two of us were quite strangely clad, and not a little cross that everyone else had wimped out! Once the foregathering part of the proceedings was over, we made our way to the Arts Theatre to watch Graham Watkins' and Rony Robinson's stage adaptation of The Hobbit.

The performance began promisingly enough with the ingenious device of using Bilbo's Party Speech as a 'frame' for the action, presumably picking up the idea that the book is based on the hobbit's memoirs. Bilbo himself (Donald McBride) was generally well played, although his (obtrusively Lancastrian) accent seemed inappropriate for a "very well-to-do" inhabitant of the Shire (sc. Warwickshire). Unfortunately with the entrance of Gandalf (Anderson Knight) and the dwarves, things began to go downhill (or should that be underhill?!). The opening scenes set the tone for the rest of the play: the action was so compressed as to seem rushed, and the dialogue so heavily cut as to miss much of the genuine humour of the original, such as Bilbo's extreme reluctance to get dragged into anything so unorthodox as an adventure, or the comic contrast between his comfortable middle-class respectability and the 'heroic' dwarves. In lieu of this, pantomime-style slapstick abounded. Most of the dwarves, and also the elves and goblins, were played by members of a local Young Theatre Group, which meant that, of the thirteen dwarves only three had speaking parts. This had the effect of making any attempt at characterisation impossible; even obvious characteristics like Bombur's immense weight and Fili and Kili's youth were neglected. So for most of the quest, Thorin and Bilbo simply traipsed around with a small crowd of undifferentiated hangers-on in train. Thorin (Peter Gould) was suitably pompous, but supremely lacking in anything other than pomposity; even his deathbed scene, which always used to make me cry as a child, was completely lacking in pathos.

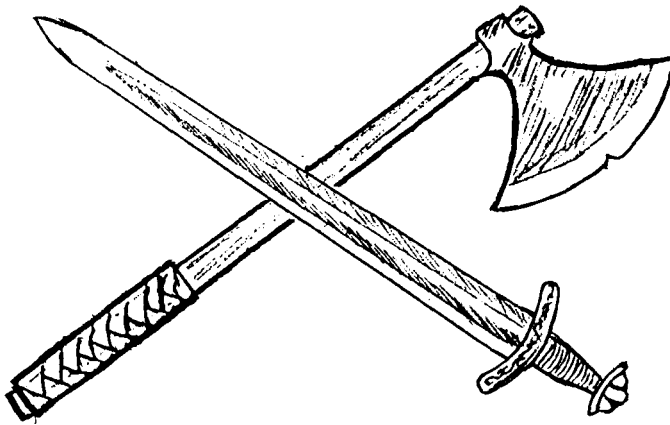
The worst moments of the evening, however, were undoubtedly reached as the company approached Rivendell, and encountered ... the elves ... I'm afraid that the only word which adequately describes their antics, as they pranced about the stage, complete with pointed ears and squeaky voices, is YUK! Probably the less said about them the better: I will only add that the Elvenking's distinct androgyny might provide a fruitful topic for future 'bad taste' evenings, now that the subject of Glorfindel's sexuality is getting a little 'well-worn' ...

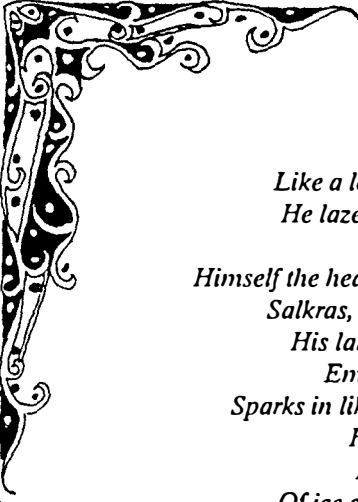
The performance did have redeeming features, though: the 'punk' trolls (distinctly reminiscent of Vyvyan in *The Young Ones*) were hilarious; Beorn (Zac Holton) was an impressive figure, and his skin-change was well managed, even if the result was a bit like an overgrown teddy-bear; the goblins were suitably hideous, and convincing despite their brief

appearance; and Eric Nordell made a passable Elrond, despite the dreadful clanger of being given the line "Who's Durin?"!! The music, by Stephanie Nunn, was generally excellent (I particularly liked the goblin's song), if a little 'staged' in performance for my tastes. Special mention must also go to the thrush (or was it a seagull?), which after being laboriously wheeled on at the appropriate junctures, signally failed to fulfil its role by telling Bard where to shoot the dragon! Smaug himself, although cutting an impressive figure, was also less than magnificent: like many of the other scenes, his conversation with Bilbo was too compressed to allow much depth of characterisation.

Compression was, in fact, the production's major fault. Both dialogue and plot were very heavily cut; all but Gollum's final riddle and Bilbo's question were lost, effectively destroying any tension in the scene; the Eagles were skimmed over, and the passage through Mirkwood and the dwarves captivity in the Elvenking's halls, which together form a significant part of the book, were presented in the form of a flashback: flash being the operative word! Clearly cuts were necessary in adapting such a long book for the stage, but they could have been better managed - perhaps with less music and more action. The result was that while most parts were competently played, there was little or no character development, and the play completely failed to capture the gradual heightening of tone towards the 'heroic' climax, which, along with the development of Bilbo's character, is such a essential feature of the original.

Monica Gale





## Garaklir

*Like a lord who has overeaten  
He lazes in his gaudy cavern,  
Languid,  
Himself the heart of the unconquerable peak,  
Salkras, ageless witness to time.  
His lanterns are diamonds,  
Emeralds, sapphires,  
Sparks in likeness to his dreadful eyes.  
His music is the  
Drip, drip, drip,  
Of ice clear droplets splashing  
Plink,  
Into an unseen subterranean pool,  
Distorting the crystal interpretation of  
The lime-pillared grot.*

*Upon his jealously gathered hoard,  
The lord of Dragons sleeps,  
Garaklir the aged, Garaklir the wise...  
Garaklir the terrible.*

*As the dank air rushes  
Through his twitching nostrils,  
His soft belly, filled with cattle, deer  
And warriors, rises and falls,  
His glistening scales ripple and quiver,  
The golden armour of Dragons.  
Beneath his sleeping form,  
His slumberous bulk,  
Lies immeasurable wealth;  
Goblets, jewels, heirlooms,  
The crown of a forgotten king  
Sparkling in the dim light  
Which enters the cavern  
Through some unknown fissure,*



*Piercing the duskiness with stabbing fingers.  
Ceaselessly he maintains  
His vigilant watch over his prizes,  
Save when he is wrecking homelands.  
But no man or Dragon would dare  
Enter Salkras  
And trespass in the lair of Garaklir,  
Lord of Dragons.*

*A snort,  
A malevolent eye darts left, right.  
He stirs.  
Garaklir, Lord of Dragons,  
Stirs, and rises,  
Majestic, splendid, terrible to behold.  
As he hisses, softly, menacing  
The cloak of weariness falls from his back.  
The fires of a hell long destroyed  
Burn in his eyes.  
He leaves his cavern.  
Garaklir, Lord of Dragons,  
Leaves his cavern, and seeks the daylight*

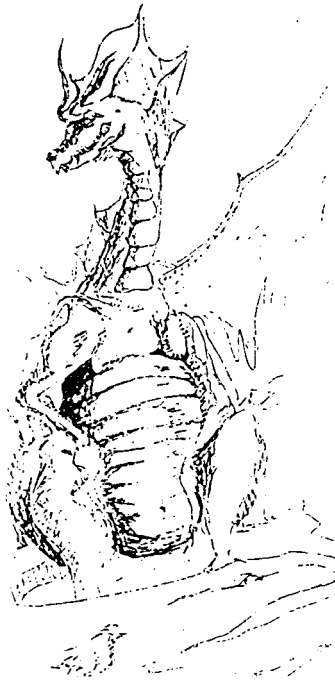
*A fountain of flame  
Erupts from the silent mountain.  
He is come,  
All save the foolish must flee.  
As he emerges from the darkness  
He casts fire upon the blasted  
Slopes below.  
He unfurls his great wings,  
They are vast, and throw black  
Shadows upon the land.  
He is a god.  
He smiles,  
And rises into the still air.  
Circling high he speaks with the sun.  
Who shall feed him?  
The lame old man scuttles in terror,  
But his flesh is bitter.  
The warrior he consumes,  
But a willing meal does not satisfy Garaklir.  
The screams of an innocent daughter please him,*



*As he grasps her frail form  
With his bloody claws,  
And feels her tender flesh.  
In his cavern she will amuse him,  
Before he devours her with delight,  
And lays down his head,  
And sleeps.*

*Rest ye well, Lord of Dragons.  
Know ye not your fate.  
For one shall come  
who shall be hailed  
Tornis Garaklir!  
He who hath slain  
Garaklir, Lord of Dragons.*

Graham Dann



# The Norse Dwarf in Tolkien

As many readers are probably aware, the names of most of the dwarves<sup>1</sup> in Tolkien's works are represented by dwarf names from Scandinavian myths. In particular, all the dwarves who appear in *The Hobbit*, with the exception of Balin, are taken straight from a list which occurs in the *Voluspa*, a tenth century poem. Dwarf-like creatures are common in many mythologies, but clearly they differ widely in conception from place to place. Indeed, the only universal attribute is being smaller than humans, and how much smaller is itself variable.

The fact that Tolkien chose to use Norse names for his dwarves is significant. He was very careful about his choice of names, as is witnessed by his continual alterations to manuscripts. He would not have used such names if he had felt them to be inappropriate. So we should ask two questions: 'What were the characteristics of a Norse dwarf', and 'To what extent do Tolkien's dwarves resemble Norse dwarves?'

In answering the first question, we must be careful. Dwarves appear in many legends from Scandinavia and it would be a mistake to assume that they are portrayed consistently. Having said that, there are enough common ideas to give a reasonable answer.

The word 'dwarf' has cognates in every Germanic language. So the conception of small man-like creatures must be very old. Together with the giants, who were naturally much larger than humans, they are the main monsters of Germanic myth. The elves were considered as minor deities, so are more important to religion than to the stories in which dwarves appear.

After their size, the most noticeable characteristic of dwarves is their greed. They were prone to hoarding gold. Indeed the Rhine Gold, which features in the Ring Cycle which Wagner set to music, was the hoard of a certain dwarf, Andvari by name. The tragic deaths which occurred to the later owners of this hoard were said to be the result of a curse which he laid on it when it was wrested from him. The ring which formed part of this hoard was said to be able to multiply wealth - no doubt this was the origin of the 'Seven for the Dwarf-lords in their halls of stone', which were reputed to have the same power.

Along with greed, the dwarves seem to have had considerable lust. In one of her more shameful moments, the goddess Freyja obtained her priceless necklace from four dwarves in return for sexual favours. This lust may have stemmed from the absence of dwarf women. Unlike the giants, who had many women, some of great beauty, there is no mention of a

<sup>1</sup> I shall use Tolkien's spelling of dwarves throughout this paper. Any other convention would either fail to do justice to him, or leave me hopelessly confused.

female dwarf in any Norse story. There is also no indication of how they were born, although the original dwarves were said to have appeared in the earth like maggots in meat.

The dwarves seem to have been a fairly magical race. As well as laying an effective curse, Andvari was able to turn himself into a fish. Some were also very wise. But more importantly, the dwarves were considered as a race of smiths. All the treasures of the Gods were made by them, including their mighty weapons. Many real swords were reputed to have been crafted by dwarves in the distant past. The Scandinavians had no major deity of craftwork, except the shadowy Volundr, so dwarves probably served to bridge this gap in the mythology.

Presumably this smithying would have required considerable strength, but the Norse dwarves never used this strength for fighting. Unusually in a culture where violence and death were a way of life, these monsters never seem to have taken part. Unlike the giants, who were always battling against the gods, the dwarves never took sides. Their only contribution was the forging of weapons. Perhaps it was their small size which led to the idea that they would not fight. But whatever the reason, this is undoubtedly the most surprising characteristic of Norse dwarves.

The final important fact about dwarves is that they live underground. This is not so often in mines or burrows as in natural caves, although there are references to a large colony under the rule of a certain Durinn. They rarely visit the surface, and if so it is at night. In many accounts they are affected in the same way as trolls by sunlight - they are turned to stone at daybreak. But it must be said that this is not universally so. Indeed one poem refers to a colony of dwarves living above ground, who clearly cannot be affected in this way.

One attribute that Norse dwarves are not mentioned as having is beards. This is not to say that they lacked beards, but they were not significant. So the emphasis which Tolkien places on the size and majesty of the dwarves' beards owes nothing to Scandinavian literature. It probably stems more from medieval folk tales, where dwarves were depicted as little old men with ridiculous names. This may seem a trivial detail, but it leads on to something more. In The Hobbit there is a tendency to portray the dwarves as comic characters. This is not something which occurs in Norse myths. But all the characters in The Hobbit tend towards comedy, so this is not such an important difference.

The greed of dwarves is important in all Tolkien's works. Even Durin's folk, who are said to be the most decent among dwarves, descended to great depths of greed. Although they did not sit on hoards, they had a love of finery about their person. They were also prepared to go to great lengths to recover stolen treasures. Linked to this was a love of vengeance and an urge to restore lost honour. These are not specific traits of Norse dwarves, but they were important values in Scandinavian society, so there is no doubt that these dwarves would have sought vengeance. Tolkien is just giving his dwarves characteristics which readers of Norse myths take for granted.

This is perhaps why Tolkien lays emphasis on the warlike nature of his dwarves. Particularly in the use of axes and the wearing of chain mail, he is imitating the Viking warrior. But as has been mentioned, Norse dwarves rarely resorted to violence, and never to an open fight. So the belligerence which Tolkien attributes to his dwarves owes nothing to Scandinavian mythology. It appears early in his writings, in the story of the Necklace of the Dwarves. At this time they were considered a wholly evil race, in alliance with Morgoth. It is impossible to say how this aspect of violence arose, and it stands as the largest contrast with Norse tradition.

The idea of the dwarves being evil is compatible with Scandinavian stories. Even more appropriate was the later idea that the dwarves were only interested in material gain, and would not support good or evil in war, but sold weapons to both sides. This appears in The Shaping of Middle-Earth. It is only in the final Silmarillion that the dwarves begin to support the forces of good. This is probably the influence of their portrayal in The Hobbit, which is reinforced by The Lord of the Rings. The fact that Thorin and his friends seem to be decent folk, except when they are overcome by greed, is definitely at variance with Scandinavian mythology.

The existence of dwarf-women is one of the less important differences. This was clear attempt by Tolkien to rationalise the stories. He mentions that there is a common belief that there are none, but dismisses it as ridiculous, along with the belief that dwarves were spawned from rock. He wanted to portray dwarves as a race similar to our own. This also accounts for why his dwarves do not use magic. Their wondrous inventions are due only to skill, and they have no fantastic powers. The idea of the dwarven curse remains, but is of minor importance.

Two aspects of the dwarves are retained with considerable fidelity. Tolkien portrays them as master smiths, second only to the Noldor in crafting things of beauty, and second to none in making weaponry. While they no longer have the opportunity to forge for the gods, this is a considerable similarity between Norse and Tolkien's dwarves. The underground dwelling places provide further agreement. Obviously there is no longer any trace of the effects of sunlight, since this would contradict his portrayal of dwarves as ordinary creatures. But this was not consistently displayed as a characteristic of Norse dwarves, so is less important.

So it would appear that the dwarves in Tolkien's works, particularly the later ones, owe less to Norse mythology than one might expect. It is ironic that it was these later dwarves that came to bear names from Scandinavian literature. This must be due in part to the image of them as Viking warriors. But it could well be that he wanted to name his dwarves in The Hobbit quickly and consistently, so resorted to the existing list in the Voluspa. This would explain why Gandalf also bears a name applied to a dwarf in this list.

This survey would not be complete without reference to the earliest portrayal of Mim. In The Book of Lost Tales 2 he is set to guard over the hoard of Glaurung in Nargothrond. After the dragon's death, when Hurin arrives at the caves he slays Mim. But with his dying breath he

curses the treasure, and this is held to be the cause of the slaughter which accompanied the Necklace of the Dwarves. There can be no doubt that this story owes much to the Ring Cycle. Mim is a non-combatant dwarf much like Andvari. The association of this story with the dragon-slaying, which is an imitation of Sigurdr killing Fafnir, again from the Ring Cycle, leaves us in no doubt that Tolkien's dwarves stemmed from Scandinavian literature, even if they later diverged.

Jeremy King



Suppine for þa marce

# 1989 Annual General Meeting

This year's AGM was held on Saturday the 11th of March. In contrast to last year's poor attendance, there were no problems reaching the quorum. Thus we were able to start almost immediately, instead of messing around dithering about whether anyone else would turn up before the bar shut.

The minutes to last year's AGM were agreed, and we moved rapidly on to the Steward's report. This was pretty optimistic about the year and the future, and was greeted by a chorus of general approval. (This term has so far proved her optimism to be well founded). Monica suggested that last year's success was probably due to the wide range of events organised. These included a trip to Mountfitchet Castle, video showings, debates, a mass trip to see the Hobbit stage play (See elsewhere in this Anor for a review); and many more. The Steward also placed some of the credit on her enthusiasm for promoting social interaction within the society.<sup>1</sup>

The only 'matter arising' was in relation to the "Uttermost Darkness" debate. This referred to a letter recieved (presumably from an irate Mordor poll tax-payer), which argued that Nazgul have red eyes because Mordor is so sunny that they get eyestrain, and in fact all their actions can be explained by the fact that they were searching for their sunglasses. The debate required participants to select an evil character and defend him, her or it.<sup>2</sup>

The Treasurer's report revealed that the society was still on a reasonably sound financial footing, although the apparent profit was due to the fact that the Lent Term's Anor had not yet been produced. Matters arose quite rapidly: particularly the question as to why Anor 19 had not yet appeared. The editor was unfortunately not present to defend himself against the charge of sheer incompetence. The Treasurer also reported that the names on the society's bank account had still not been updated. A motion of censure was proposed, which after some discussion censured Lloyd's Bank for being Lloyd's Bank, for being incapable of changing names and addresses in the records and for generally messing the society around during the year. This was passed nem con.

Motions were then debated. The first was the now traditional changing of the titles of the committee, on the grounds presumably, that no-one can think of any other changes to the

1 Editor's note: strangely enough, the minutes record a different phrase ... 'going out drinking'.

2 Scribe's note: for example the Witch King of Angmar was just working for Rentokil!! (I don't understand it either. Wretched, isn't it?)

society that would make it seem less academic. Following the previous year's changes of Chairman to Steward and Officer-without-Portfolio to Bill the Pony, this year's suggestions, proposed by the Bill the Pony, Vanessa Gale were to retitle the Secretary as "Keeper of the Red Book", in deference to the fact that the minutes book is red in colour; and the Treasurer as "Smaug". Both constitutional amendments were passed by large majorities. The second motion, also traditional, was to increase membership fees. The increases by 50 pence to £2.50 for one year and £5.00 for life were supported by the argument that without them the society would probably run into a negative profit situation<sup>1</sup> in the current year. The motion was passed nem con.

The penultimate item on the agenda was the election of the new committee which was relatively painless despite there being no (accepted) nominations for the post of Bill the Pony. Steve Linley was "elected" as Steward; Vanessa Gale as Secretary, now Keeper of the Red Book; Jeremy King as Treasurer, now Smaug. The new committee members promised to "approach various members of the society to ask"<sup>2</sup> them to be Bill the Pony. (Eventually Gary Savage was persuaded, despite the fact that he had not actually come up to Cambridge at the time).

Finally, the 'other business' section rolled around. This consisted mainly of a motion of censure of Mike Whitaker (Anor Editor) for several things, not least of which was being Mike Whitaker, but also including "for failing to read last year's minutes and so not knowing about last year's motion of censure"! This was passed nem con. Duncan McLaren offered to take over as editor of Anor, and this appointment was agreed on the spot by the outgoing committee, being still in possession of executive power. A motion of thanks was proposed and passed ... nem con of course. The outgoing Secretary was requested to update the constitution to take account of the name changes, (I'll get round to doing it soon, honest guv! The final item was an enquiry concerning a pair of boxer shorts left at the Foreyule Feast (obviously I fell asleep during the wild bit of the party...)). No-one, however, was willing to claim them.

And with that, everyone swarmed off to prepare for the annual dinner, making this possibly the shortest ever AGM. Certainly of all the CTS AGMs (dig those TLAs, man) I've ever attended, this was by far the most recent.

Paul Treadaway (outgoing Secretary)

1 Editor's note: a loss.

2 Editor's note: this is understood to be a polite euphemism for 'approach them in a dark alley, armed with a selection of sharp instruments and coercion...'





## Oxonmoot 1989

This year's Oxonmoot, otherwise known as the national Tolkien Society's annual booze-up/meeting/convention in Oxford, took place on the weekend of the 22nd-24th of September. As is traditional, the proceedings began on the Friday evening at the Turf Tavern ... except for those of us who had been foolish enough to get involved in the play which was to be performed the following evening, and who therefore had to spend three hours rehearsing at the Town Hall instead. Still, your scribe made up for it by consuming three pints of scrumpy in record time when we finally got to the Turf.

The Saturday morning dawned bright (too bright for some of us...) and clear. Proceedings at the Town Hall began at an unseasonably early hour with the Smials' Forum and an orientation session for first-timers. These were followed by a range of activities to suit almost anyone: talks and a discussion for the intellectually minded, 'Mordopoly' (based on a well-known boardgame) for the competitive, 'martial arts' (a.k.a. hacking) for the violent, plus sales stalls and an arts and crafts display, the highlight of which were Ted Nasmith's original paintings for next year's Tolkien calendar. I spent most of the day listening to various talks, which were generally of a very high standard. We heard an interesting, if somewhat controversial account of 'Technology in Middle-earth' presented by Greg Tingey, 'Another Look at Aldarion and Erendis' presented by Denis Bridoux; some thoughts on the deeper insights to be gained from 'Re-reading the Lord of the Rings' from Christina Scull, and finally a slide show, also by Christina, on illustrations of Gollum and Galadriel. Much hilarity was caused during this last by the cover illustration of the latest American paperback edition of *The Hobbit*, whose depiction of Bilbo and Gollum was universally thought to bear a stronger resemblance to those well-known denizens of the lower house: Nigel Lawson and Norman Tebbit!

Everything stopped at midday for the reception which is generously given every year by Tolkien's daughter Priscilla. There was plenty of food and drink, even for all the hungry 'hobbits' present, and Priscilla made an effort to try to talk with everyone there. She also addressed the company briefly and received presentations from various Tolkien Society members.

The evening entertainments began at about 7.30 with 'The Ham Actors' production of 'Farmer Giles of Ham' in honour of the fortieth anniversary of its publication. Since your scribe had been roped in to appear as an anonymous peasant, I cannot really comment on the play, except to say that Brin Dunsire made a superb Giles, and the audience seemed to enjoy it ... or maybe they were just cheering because we had finished! Then came the more traditional entertainments: Alex Lewis and Ted Nasmith (a man of many talents) sang for us, Mike Percival danced in his remarkable dragon costume and there were a couple of hilarious sketches. Then we were free to join in the 'community singing', or just wander around admiring each others' costumes ... many of which were absolutely stunning, as those who have seen the photographs will know.

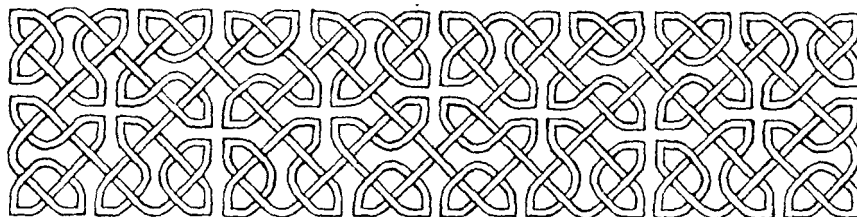
The official party at the Town Hall ended at 11.15, but was only the start of the fun. Various unofficial parties followed at Pembroke College where most people were staying. Your roving reporter started off at the room of a certain northern member of the society (who shall remain nameless ... until someone buys me a pint at the next innmoot), which was easy to find because its host, allegedly somewhat 'under the influence', spent most of his time hanging out of the window shouting "bring on the nubiles"! When no nubiles were forthcoming, he suggested that we go in search of 'Smutmoot', which we duly found. Or at least, we found a party in the next block where some very dodgy goings-on, involving a whip and some stocks, were underway. At this point I draw a veil over the rest of the evening for the benefit of any readers of delicate sensibilities.<sup>1</sup>

On the Sunday morning we were all ferried over to Wolvercote cemetery for the serious part of the weekend: the 'Enyalie' ceremony at Tolkien's grave. The Chairman of the Society, Alex Lewis, gave a short speech, then wreaths were laid, and Denis gave a moving plain-chant rendition of Galadriel's Lament.

First-timers were then invited back to Friscilla's for drinks and the chance to see her fascinating collection of Tolkien memorabilia. The rest of us headed back to round off the weekend with lunch at the Turf, where our beloved Steward was seen to be on the orange juice, such had been the indulgences of the weekend; at least until he discovered that it cost nearly as much as the beer.

If you think this sounds like fun, why not come along to next year's Oxonmoot? For details, or more information about the national Tolkien Society, please contact the Steward.

Monica Gale



<sup>1</sup> The author wishes to point out that he is, however, open to bribes...

# The Cambridge Tolkien Society and Anor

The Cambridge Tolkien Society (Minas Tirith) 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. Residents of the United Kingdom may become full members of the Society on payment of £2.50 (Annual) or £5.00 (Life membership, but only covering three years' subscription to Anor). Those not resident in the United Kingdom may subscribe to Anor at a rate of £2.50 (surface) or £3.50 (air mail) per year.

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