Fall 11-15-1969

The Shire Post

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Authors

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Chapman et al.: The Shire Post

I am greatly disturbed by the appearance in London of a magazine cailling itself Gandalf's Garden, which is devoted to the protest of youth etc., but is permeated with drug-taking and the psychedelic cult. It advertises Bob as the psycodelicable masterpiece - and uses much of the terminology of 'the books' in a context of 'taking trips' etc. The very last thing the author would ever have in mind or approve of. I wonder if you or he, have encountered this? I feel this misuse of the name and the book should be stopped.

I feel very strongly that these books are most emphatically wholesome and sane, and that it would be a tragedy to let them be smeared in any way with the psychedelic cult and the prevailing obsession with mental disorder and that thing which seems to me rather worse than the death-wish. the deliberate wish to be insane. Let us keep the Shire clean from all such!

MARTHA MUEENCH | 261 South Batavia | Orange Calif 92668

Tolkien does get to you! Last Saturday I was in L.A. and happened to look up toward the Hollywood Hills. It was unmistakable; there on a mountain throne' was Minas Tirth! The edifice was actually Griffith Park Observatory, but the architecture was close enough to pass for something Middle-earthish.

CHRIS JONES | Ny Ny 10027

Thanks for publishing my synopsis- it looks fine except that the last paragraph got slightly garbled somewhere along the line. The 68 Yule Moot was great, especially Sister Pauline's paper. Incidentally, Gimli's devotion to Galadriel was not courtly love! Courtly love was simply a form of glorified adultery, like Lancelot and Guinevere.

IAN COLLINS | Stanhope House | Stanhope Place London W.2, England

A copy of The Green Dragon No. 5 dated December 1968 reached me recently and I was interested to read your advice to non US Tolkien addicts on how best to obtain the Caedmon recording of Poems and Songs of Middle-earth. I think I should point out that, we as Caedmon's licensees in this country, have published this record. We have publicised it and it is selling very well but no doubt there are still some Tolkien enthusiasts who aren't aware of its existence, and a note in one of your Tolkien-oriented publications would bring it to their attention, and serve both our causes. The catalogue number is TC1231 and the price in the UK 43s. 9d. It is available only though record dealers, not direct from us.

ROGER BLACK | 617 Homm Street | Bethalto Illinois 62010

The 1969 World Book Encyclopedia Year Book's Dictionary supplement has the following two entries:

HOBBIT: any of an imaginary race of small people who love peace, pleasure, and beauty, described in J.R.R. Tolkien's trilogy, The Lord of the Rings (1954-56); Hobbits (are) three feet high with long hairy feet (New York Times).

NAN SCOTT | 2712 Century Dr | Lawrence Ks 66044

Thanks for the latest Green Dragon. But you make a statement

Published by SWOSU Digital Commons, 1969
Not too long ago I received my order for the back issues of the Journal and, after perusing them, I would like to make some comments on one of the articles, Jan Wojcik's 'Samwise--Halfwise?' in Vol. III, no. 2. The major item which tends to overampify Sam's importance, in my opinion, is the change in viewpoint between Book IV and Book VI of the Trilogy. Thru all of the Books to number IV, when in the company of Frodo, Tolkien allows us to read his thoughts and emotions, until that is, the last chapter of IV, The Choices of Master Samwise, where, for obvious reasons, Frodo has no conscious thoughts, only darkness and foul dreams.

But throughout Book VI, we observe only Frodo's outward actions and expressed thoughts. The reason for this is, because, as the Hobbits penetrated deeper into Mordor, the Ring gained greater and greater possession of Frodo. I begin to see it in my mind all the time, like a great wheel of fire, and x later, I begin to see it even with my waking eyes, and all else fades, until finally, 'I have come... But I do not expect now to do what I came to do... The Ring is mine!' To put it simply, to narrate a single obsession thru 50 pages makes for a bored reader, particularly with so much outside action occurring. After the destruction of the Ring, Tolkien does not return to his previous viewpoint for two reasons; consistency and, because Frodo has been 'wounded' with knife, sting, and tooth, and a long burden, his thoughts would be completely, or nearly so, beyond our ken. If an arsonist burn his house down, it is a rare person indeed who will not demand retribution.

As for Samwise the Gardener, he tends growing things in the Earth, and, by extension, may be regarded as the Earth--Middle-earth--personified, and his desire to be free from Sauron's Evil, The change in gender (we are accustomed to regard Earth as female--the Great Earthmother) may be derived from North European legend. Note the changes in traditional gender in Frodo's song about the Merry Old Inn when first in Bree. For name derivations I once ran into Gimli in an unabridged dictionary and found therein a meaning appropriate to the traditional passing of the dwarf from this world: Gimli--the Nordic term for Heaven.

I'm glad that you're interested in seeing a copy of the Oz Club magazine, The Baum Bugle. I really have much too unorganized a mind to ask my brother in Chicago, who handles the mailing, to mail you a sample of the autumn issue, which will be out in about a week, and you really need to see more than one issue to get an idea of the publication. So today I write Fred M. Meyer, the Club secretary, I'll send him a check for $25.00 to cover a year's membership and subscription, as a gift from me. [It is an interesting magazine.]

I respect D. Usselman's opinion stated in his letter to the Shire Post (Vol. III no 3) on illustration of characters and situations from LoTR etc, but I am afraid I must disagree with (illus?) Usselman states 'Tolkien was never overmeticulous in describing dress and architecture' and that is true to an extent: the Professor doesn't need to be meticulous in order to make his reader see his scenes and think. Of course, each reader will see somewhat differently, and that's what makes the illustrations done by TSA (etc.) members so interesting... It's surprising just how similar and yet how different artists' conceptions are to the pictures we see in our own minds when we read LoTR.

I was pleased recently to see my own illustration of Galadriel adorning the recent Tolkien Conference circular... pleased and surprised, for I was able to see just how much my own conception of the Lady has changed in the last few months. If I were to draw her now, I'm afraid she would be less like, as Sam said, a 'lass in spring' (or something closely akin) and more East and topographical something. Anyhow, the last chapter of the drawing, that's the way Tolkien's magic worked on me. That's the beauty of it all--it works on everyone differently. I don't see Elrod's House the way Tim Kirk sees it either, but then he probably doesn't see Galadriel the way I do. Besides, some of the loveliest drawings I've ever seen illustrate The Hobbit--and were drawn by J. R. R. Tolkien himself!

In "The Adventures of Tom Bombadil" J. R. R. Tolkien has written a comment on every poem except one. This one is among the most interesting. It is The Measuring. Any comment I make would be mere speculation. No illusion to anything in the books--B Foster.

On an enlarged map of the Middle-earth made by Ballantine Books there is something strange. On the Western side of the Ered Luin Mountains, in Forlindon there are the Angerthanian letters and on the East the Ered Luin Mountains in Harlindon are the letters. What do they mean? [Sheer stupidity on part of Ballantine.]

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sent his work with such hasty, ill-conceived artwork. This may mean to hurt anyone's feelings, because I'm sure the artists do the best they can, but I believe it would be better to publish a smart-looking Journal with no art at all, than to continue in the present vein.

Otherwise (to avoid ending on a completely negative note) the present volume is rewarding reading. Keep it up!

JOHN STEPHEN MADDUX | Box 263 | University of Dallas | Dallas Texas 7506L

17 # 8 was the best I have read. Mrs. Howes' work of dating of invaluable worth. The earlier attempt recorded in your journals were plainly wrong, both on extrinsic evidence (a character in Lewis's That Hideous Strength places the fall of Numenor before the ice ages) and on internal.

DAVID DAMROCH | 119 East 74th St | New York, NY 10021

... saw a letter, in The Tolkien Journal (Astron, 1966), concerning the relative ages of Tom Bombadil and Fangorn (Treebeard to come). The answer is this: Celeborn--and Gandalf--are wrong. Tom Bombadil is eldest. My reference is Ballantine Books paperback edition. On p. 89 The Two Towers, Treebeard says: "... but there are hollow dales in this land where the darkness has never been lifted, and the trees are older than I am." This proves Gandalf wrong (p. 209: For Treebeard is Fangorn, ... and when you speak with him you will hear the speech of the Oldest of all living things), and Celeborn is also incorrect.

As for Tom, "he remembers the first raindrop and the first acorn", "fellowship of the Ring, p. 102; just above that: "Mark my words, my friends: Tom was here before the river and the trees." Tom was here before the trees; Fangorn not until somewhat later: Old Tom Bombadil is Eldest.

Tom was also here before the seas were bent (vol. 1, p. 182).

JAN C. SCOTT | 2712 Century Dr | Lawrence Kansas 66044.

...will follow your suggestion about reading Lloyd Alexander as soon as I can get hold of the books in proper sequence from the library. Meanwhile, I'm looking into George MacDonald. So far I rather like The Princess and the Goblin, but at the Back of the North Wind nearly drove me up the wall. Little Diamond is surely the most irritating literary creature I've ever encountered since that bugling Reepi-Cheep in Narnia books. Better than MacDonald I like E. Nesbit's books, which I discovered just last winter, and The Wind in the Willows, which in some scenes has a cozy flavour of the Shire and hobbit life about it.

That brings me to my main question on comment. Are any of your other readers interested in Tolkien's world of nature and landscapes? Most of the people who write to Nieksas and TJ seem to focus either on topics of language and linguistics or are most interested in SF and/or fantasy. For me the biggest attraction in re-reading the books (the narrative excitement was paramount in my first reading) is Professor Tolkien's treatment of the physical world and the relationship he establishes between his characters and nature. Certainly the beautiful and powerful language of the books helps to establish this, but apart from language-for-its-own-sake (names, etc.) Professor Tolkien seems to have observed and understood nature in a way quite uncommon today. There are no pretty description passages for there own sake, other, his. characters live closer to nature than we do, and trees, birds, mountains, and weathers are more palpable and important part of their existence.

I suppose all of us have wanted to enter into Tolkien's world more fully, have wished we could be transported from the 20th century into the 3rd age of Middle-earth. In what small way I could, I have entered that world. Besides beginning to notice trees and plants for the first time in my life, and besides emulating Sam and adding a bit of green to the world by making my first gardens, have-along with two friends-be gan to go "hobbiting". I know that Peter Beagle has gone in for this sort of thing. Has anyone else?

Picture if you can hear to, three faculty wives between the ages of 25 and 30 setting off on the road with back packs and bed rolls, bacon and mushrooms, walking through shadows to the edge of sight and making camp under the elvish stars. Our longest trek was 24 miles (on the occasion there were only two of us and we got scared in the woods--two damnfool little girls- and came back the same night). On another occasion friends with a farm provided a breakfast after we'd slept in their orchard in 34-degree westher. On our most recent trip we were surrounded at night--fall by fireflies and whip-poor-wills in a most elvish moonlit glade in an oak woods. Two of us--Judy Quinn and I--have even taken horseback lessons. It's easy to pretend that the beasts are hobbit ponies, and it certainly increases one's respect for the endurance of the nine to ride long distances! Perhaps if Nellie, Judy, and I were to set out now, we just might make it to Bellnap by mid-October. (Probably the only way we could afford to come. . . !)

My thanks to everyone who offered suggestions on the breeding habits of orcs. [in Nieksas-ERM]

ROBERT KARP | 1875 SW 35th Place | Gainesville, Florida

In the tale of the years it says Samwise Gamgee, after Rose died, went to Westmarch and then over the sea. Yet in the tale of Aragorn and Arwen, Arwen says she could not go over the sea if she wanted because no one would be left to take her, how then did Sam go?

DAIN S. BISENIEKS

How come I never heard anyone mention that Smith of Wooton Major is in the December issue of Redbook? It doesn't seem either, that I've heard of an album titled "Down to Middle-earth" by The Hobbits (Decca DL 74920) The cover is (ptui) psychodelic, and the contents seem to have as little to do with JRRT as H. P. Lovecraft has with HPL. Haven't listened to it, wouldn't waste my time--I just spotted this in a record store and took a quick look.

CHRIS JONES | Ny Ny 10027.

In answer to Bob Foster, the "swollen brooding thing" in the ant-hill is the queen ant. Robert Heinlein's Starship Trooper describes a highly unpleasant insect-like race which also has "swollen
things" or rulers. Bob was also wondering whether Sauron was always incapable of good. No, indeed, as Gandalf said at the Council of Elrond (Bal. I-361), "Nothing is evil from the beginning. Even Sauron was not so." I've always felt that Sauron's fall, which presumably was brought about by Morgoth, was a great tragedy, for he was clearly brilliant and strong-willed. I find it hard to imagine him a servant of Morgoth or anyone else. He could have been truly the 'great', and noble. So, of course, could Morgoth. This all has its parallel in Christian theology; Lucifer was one of the greatest of the angels before his fall.

Personally, I think Sauron probably was one of the Valar. He might have escaped destruction the same way the Balrog did. (Of course I don't know how that was.) As for his remaining alive in a weaker form, I don't see why this should be a problem. If Morgoth did not remain similarly alive (and maybe he did; Gandalf says in Bal III-190 that Sauron is "but a servant or emissary") it is probably because he was overthrown by more powerful forces than Sauron was--forces that could eliminate him completely.

I think I'll retract that suggestion that Morgoth survived in some form, and that Sauron was still his servant--it doesn't seem right on second thought. But what does Gandalf mean by his comment? Is he referring to a person behind Sauron, or to an abstract conception of evil which inevitably must exist in the world? The latter sounds very un-Tolkien.

Tolkien may not arouse much pity in Sam; but Sam does spare him on Mount Doom, and this was after Gollum had betrayed them to Shelob. I like Jan's article. We could use a 'Samwise Loves and Gardens button--and maybe an 'Aragorn Rules,' or even a 'Shadowfox Runs.' Whatever happened to Shadowfox by the way? The last we saw of him, he's carrying Gandalf to Tom Bombadil's home. Did Tom keep him, or did he go back to Rohan? It seems rather unlikely that he went with Gandalf overseas.

Mrs. Howes article is stunning. Does she know that Tolkien says Stromboli is Mount Doom? [Dick Plotz reported this at the Dec. 1966 meeting] 'This volcano is on an island just north of Sicily. The correlation with Mrs. Howes' maps is pretty close--I think Stromboli would come near Minas Morgul, which is good enough,

[John Forrest | 198 Larchmont Ave | Larchmont NY 10538]

[I think this is an answer to the Ballantine poster map] If I read correctly, Henneth Annun was on the west side of the north-south road, and certainly Frodo, Sam, and Gollum walked from there to the crossroad on the west side of the road, not on the east side as presently pictured on the map. [Quite true. Everything wrong with the map couldn't be corrected because technical printing problems-8 Poster]

Owen Clayton | 623 I-House | 2299 Piedmont Ave | Berkeley Ca 94721

I ran across something interesting the other day while reading Malory (the edition from the Winchester MS); there is therein a tale called 'Balin, or The Knight with Two Swords.' Strange that the name of the would-be Lord of Moria should by happenstance pop up in the Arthurian legends, isn't it? I also came by a clipping from Sept. 22 Los Angeles Times noting that the L.A. Mythopoeic Society was holding Bilbo's Birthday Party, which was evidently, quite an event, to get into the papers.

And, oh yes, in Gustav Davidson's A Dict ionary of Angels--a very nice book to have, though expensive--there is listed an angel called Elberith (more commonly Balberith), who is said to be an ex-prince of the order of Cherubim and to be now the chief notary public in Hell. It makes me wonder how much angelological lore Tolkien knows.

SUSAN SHWARTZ | 237 Outlook Ave | Youngstown Ohio.

There is something I would like to throw open for comment. Recently I wrote William Ready, author of the Tolkien Relation, asking whether he thought that Denethor, Saruman, Sauron, Boromir, and even Frodo were punished for hubris in making desiring, or otherwise messing with one Ring. Classicists at Mount Holyoke College all thought that there was some value to the idea, but to quote Mr. Ready's letter, hubris is Levantine and hence, he said, irrelevant. But I can't see throwing out the idea that fast, especially when I think it has some value. Whether anyone else does however, is a moot point.

(Read Lin Carter's book on Tolkien; it's great, especially the part in which he traces the heroic tradition from Callimachus on. Hubris there on my part.)

Max Grober

Although the translation of the word "Silmarillion" is dreadfully obvious, Lin Carter seemed completely unaware of it when he discussed the new book in his Look Behind the Lord of the Rings. Your pardon if I ascribe his faults to the Socie in general.

The root is, of course, silmari, great jewel, the suffix is ion, as in Eldarion, Anarion, Tar-Aldarion, etc. where, (pardon the unprofessional terminology), it serves to convey the idea of the third person. Thus we have "he of the Silmaril," or "the idiot with the silmaril," strikingly parallel, I think, to "the Lord of the Rings."

Dainis Bisenieks

Did you know there is a Green Dragon Inn near Shooscombe Old Place? Holmes and Watson stayed there.

Beth Myers

During the past year or so it has been one of my main past-times to make up slogans similar to 'Gandalf for President', and Hobbits of the World-Unite!

The Red Eye should use Murine, Gollum has a rip to it. Anarion has 99% less nicks and scratches with his blade (Anduril). Smaug does business clash and carry. The Mouth of Sauron should use Scope, Shelob has green blood--is she Vulcan? Sam has flower power. Pippin is an honest fool. Friele is a nut [see Tolkien Reader, poem 16].

Art by Katherine MacFarlane
In an article in TJ#2, it says that a Mr. Dick Tedham named his dog Samwise. I doubt if Tolkien or Sam would appreciate that. But what really startled me is that he named his firstborn daughter Arwen Eleanor. Boy, that guy must really take LotR seriously, although Arwen is a beautiful name. Who is that on the cover of TJ#9 (Vol 3, #3)? If you say it is Frodo and Sam, I won't believe it. [It is, I think ERM]

They look like two 'widdle boys', not at all what I pictured Frodo and Sam to look like. Also, who is the sketch on the back of no. 9 supposed to be? [No one in particular, ERM]

In the Shire-Post, there is an article by D. Musselman, stating that he thinks all the associations of food and drink is a little bit astute, in so many words. Well I hate to say this, but I agree to some extent on the food part. Seed Cake Balin, Apple Tart Bilfur, Pippin's White Cake. Oh Really????? However, I see nothing wrong with buttons and Happy Birthday Frodo and Bilbo.

I have uncovered some characters of LotR and Beowulf. I realize that others, more qualified and more precise than myself, have undertaken the same task and have reported numerous LotR names in Beowulf. [See for instance, Shire Post in TJ#9 ERM].

For that reason, I hesitate to express any importance in my information, but I hope it may be of some aid. All my research was done in Beowulf, Widsith, And The Fight At Finnesburg, published by Barron’s Educational Series, Inc., 1962 (Great Neck, NY.). For this letter I shall list the names, each followed by its literal translation and where it was found in Beowulf, Widsith, And The Fight At Finnesburg. [Those mentioned in TJ#9 are omitted, ERM].


Coldwater Mich 49036

I have been compiling a list of references to Tolkien in books, magazines, etc. One is in the introduction to Kennedy’s translation of Beowulf, published by Oxford Press. In this case there is an excerpt from Tolkien’s scholarly masterpiece, Beowulf: The Monster and the Critics. In the Penguin book The Earliest English Poems in which the appendix includes a passage from Tolkien’s Preparatory Remarks to J. R. R. Tolkien’s translation of Beowulf. In this case the selection is concerned with Anglo-Saxon Metric.

Two more recent additions to my list are the inclusion of LotR in Frank N Magill’s Masterpieces of Literature in Digest Form, series 4, which isn’t quite as bad as it sounds, including fairly accurate summaries of the three volumes with fair notes. Last of all is the inclusion of Tolkien in a new edition of the Readers Advisor. Included is a list of Tolkien’s works, a few short comments on the works, mention of other Tolkien materials ( maps, posters, etc.) mention of the TSA and TJ, and a listing of books about Tolkien.

KARL- GUSTAF LOFVANDER | Dr. Forsellius gata 54 | 413
26 Gothenburg Sweden.

I am writing this letter on behalf of The Tolkien Society of Sweden, in order to establish contact and correspondence with you personally and with our fellow organizations in USA. Our Society is only a little over a year old, so we are glad for all kinds of information we could possibly get from you. Please spread this out, and tell everybody that we are interested in any kind of correspondence on Tolkien subjects.

JONATHAN GLASON | 54 Prospect Ave | Ardley NY 10502

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DRUSILLA MCKINNEY | 1722 No 122 | Seattle Wa 98133.

I’m the President of the Thomson Hobbit Society. This club was formed when a few students found out that they all had the J. R. R. Tolkien books in common.

So far we have gotten letters from almost every state and outside the USA from people who would like to join our club, but our club is not well formed. We have between 25-30 people. [How did they hear of your group? ERM]

Let’s make Snoopy an honorary Hobbit.

DAVE BOERSEMA | c/o Munroe Boersema | Colony Apts.

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