

The Journal



Leiden Exhibition Edition

Exclusive interview with John Howe • Five of the Best – Artist Spotlight on: Rodney Matthews, Roger Dean, Tim Kirk, Joe Gilronan & Ruth Lacon • Merton College • 2012 Tolkien Calendar



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The Festival journal returns! Hopefully we might be highly relevant, interactive and fast in responses to the changes in the world of Tolkien fandom, collecting and studies.

We are in the run-up to the Peter Jackson Hobbit movies, of which there will be a general 'how is it going thus far?' section in this issue, with updates on movie information where we can be sure it is reliable in future issues. For now, it is getting exciting to think that in December - mere months from now - the first of the Hobbit movies will be screened.

So to the editor's usual plea for submissions from contributors - to any who have an article or a review or a poem or a story out there - please send them in to the editor for consideration and inclusion. The wider we cast our net, and the more views we can showcase, the more representative of the Tolkien community as a whole we shall be. I am very supportive and will help any who are unsure of anything that they wish to submit. Just ask.

There will be some of the much loved items from the journal in the past as well as new inclusions in different areas of interest that should widen the scope of this publication. For this issue, we have fascinating interviews with artists Tim Kirk and with Rene Vink,

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Editorial

the Dutch author of a fascinating book just published on Tolkien and Wagner. Also a coup - a rare interview with none other than Daniel Grotta, the first biographer of Tolkien, all the more interesting because his biography was unauthorised and not based as all others seem to be on Humphrey Carpenter.

There is also a review of last years calendar - our artist reviewer Ruth Lacon shall carry out a reievw of the 2013 calendar as soon as it hits Amazon for sale. This will assist those who might have wondered what this years calendar signified.

There is also a humorous article by your editor about the door at Bag End - you won't look at the drawing in the same way!

There is poetry by Peter Kenny and a fascinating article by Chad Chisholm on Roger Lancelyn Green, one of Tolkien's students.

Plus a new idea - some riddles for you to puzzle over and write in with the solutions. We will publish those in the next journal and any who solve them.

In Fellowship - your editor, Alex Lewis.

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Commemorating the 75th Anniversary of The Hobbit

Festival in the Shire

a celebration of The Hobbit with original art exhibition,
bookfair, talks and music

**Free
Entry**

Thursday 20th - Saturday 22nd September 2012

**at Hartbrug Church, Romanuszaal,
Lange Mare, Leiden, Holland**

Opening hours: Thursday 12 - 21.00, Friday-Sat 10 - 17.00

Art exhibition featuring the work of world renowned fantasy artists, a bookfair with a large selection of books and Lord of the Rings movie merchandise, and a program of talks.

Confirmed speakers so far: Rodney Matthews, Roger Dean, Tim Kirk, Joe Gilronan, Peter Kenny, Renee Vink, Henk Brassien



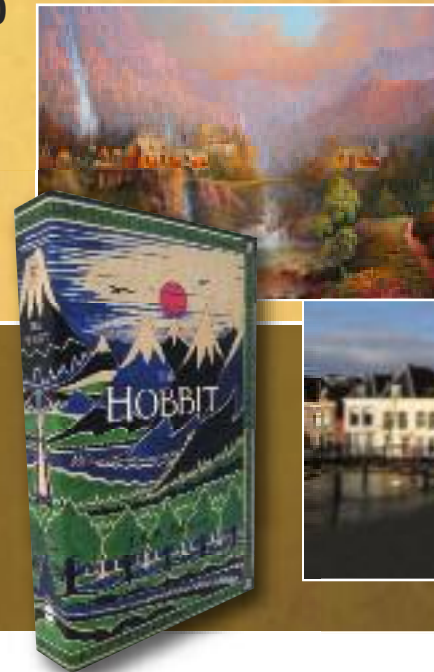
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The New Hobbit Movie – An exclusive interview with John Howe

John Howe has been illustrating Tolkien in the official calendars since the 1980s, and into 2001 he shot to prominence alongside co-artist Alan Lee as the artistic team behind the visualisations of the three Lord of the Rings movies by Peter Jackson. Anyone who had the good fortune to attend the show at the Science Museum in London after the final movie was released, will have been amazed by the sheer attention to detail in all the costumes and weaponry, as well as the scale models of things like the 'Scoured Shire' which appears for brief seconds as a vision to Sam Gamgee in Galadriel's mirror in Lorien – and yet there it was in amazing detail and made to such a fine degree of craftsmanship. These models, costumes and weapons were based upon the drawings and sketches made by John and Alan. Now of course the world is buzzing once more with the release mid December of the first of The Hobbit movies, where John and Alan once more teamed up with Peter Jackson in New Zealand to give artistic direction to the 'look' of Middle earth. Therefore it is a great pleasure and delight for us to be able to interview John Howe for the Journal.

I believe you were born and raised in Canada - how do you think your homeland has influenced your art, especially in respect to the Tolkien art?

I do wish I could say that Canada and Canadian

landscape plays a considerable role in my work. Possibly an appreciation of wide vistas is what I have brought from the Canadian west, but I find that the elements of the landscape itself from North America simply don't work for Tolkien. (They work wonderfully for other fantasy authors, such as Robin Hobb, though.) I confess that I find more inspiration in European landscapes for the Hobbit and the Lord of the Rings. Landscape is subtly shaped by human presence (and I don't mean our concrete-pouring obliteration of today) and that element implicit in a landscape renders it more appropriate.

I've always drawn pictures, as long as I can remember – which in itself, is hardly exceptional, since all children draw. I suppose the odd thing is that most children abandon drawing in favour of other methods of expression when their capacities are left far behind by their expectations. I'm still doing my best to catch up. I'll let you know when I get there.

I believe that you live in Switzerland now - do you find that country an inspiration for your artistic creativity?

I don't think many people would associate the reserved and hard-working Swiss with fantasy in any way! The profession of illustrator isn't even recognized where we live – I'm a "graphic artist" as



far as the local chamber of commerce is concerned. On the other hand, the landscapes are inspiring, very "vertical" in the Romantic sense, and quite wild when you get out of settled areas.



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Apart from Tolkien, you have illustrated many other fantasy authors as well as Norse and other myths. How does that differ to the work on Tolkien's world

Many of Tolkien's sources come from myth cycles, more specifically Northern European in his case, though the notion of the world being sung into existence originates from other myth cultures. Tolkien's "authenticity" comes from his incredibly thoughtful and intuitive (not a contradiction in terms, simply a balancing of source and conviction) use of ancient myth. Out of 13 dwarves, I think only two or three have purely invented names, and those are derivatives of existing names Tolkien chose from the Poetic Edda. (One of the dwarf names, Gandálfr, is very familiar, although Tolkien found a rather different character to go with it.)

That same depth of authenticity that can be aspired to in an illustration of an older myth can easily be transposed to Tolkien's wider world. I enjoy exploring both with equal enthusiasm.

How important is J.R.R. Tolkien to your artistic creativity and when did you first come across the Hobbit and Lord of the Rings?

I read the Hobbit early on, though honestly I cannot recall anything more than the Unexpected Party. Perhaps I didn't actually finish it, I can't remember, but I must have been around 9 years old. I read The Lord of the Rings when I was 12 or so, but couldn't

get the first volume, which was continuously on loan at the library, so I dived in to the second and third, and read the Fellowship last. (Very stupid, I concur, but I was eager to read them.) Most probably because of that catastrophic first reading, my interest in the books only came far later, when I re-read them again. I think I've read the Hobbit twice and the Lord of the Rings three times (including one episodic reading each to my son as bedtime stories).

How long have you been illustrating Tolkien's imagined worlds?

Since the First Age! Seriously, since I saw the Tolkien calendars way back in the 70's. I was still in high school when they first began to appear, indeed when fantasy-oriented art calendars first began to appear. They all appeared not only exciting and enticing, but full of promise for someone in high school hoping to make a life of illustrating.





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Was working on the Lord of the Rings movies different to producing art for, say a calendar, and in what ways?

Long answer required! The film work was more concerning with setting the stage, so to speak, preparing the scenes for the shooting. The actual story of course happens in front of the cameras and later on, in post-production. Most of the work done for the Lord of the Rings had an incidental quality, a sketch taking an idea a step further, never a definitive version, like one is obliged to produce for a finished illustration. As well, we had the incredible luxury to spend weeks designing a specific culture or location. In that sense we were able to go much farther than any illustration might warrant. We also had the privilege to be exchanging ideas with Peter, and seeking not only to provide what he was searching for, but to hopefully offer a surprise or two as well.

I believe you and Alan Lee will be co-illustrating the next official Harper-Collins Tolkien calendar for 2013 - will it be themed on the forthcoming movies

The calendar will be based on the upcoming novelization of the movies. Sorry, that was very silly. The calendar will be based on the book, of course, so don't expect any movie spoilers. I believe it will be out in September.

For those of us who have never been there, what is it like living somewhere like New Zealand for the

periods you have done?

What a fabulous country! I've found the time spent in New Zealand to be incredibly enriching. It is home to truly extraordinary landscapes of every kind. We've had the opportunity to see quite a lot of it, and I've have taken thousands of photos. I go for long walks, and try to get out and explore every weekend. We also had to chase Peter around the country for art department meetings when they were shooting on location, so we saw a lot of New Zealand then, not to mention the location scouts.

What materials do you work in when painting art and illustrations?

I generally work in watercolour and ink on a fairly standard all-purpose (but sturdy, and of course acid-free) paper. I enjoy working as big as I can (within reason of course). Sketches are often done in my sketchbooks, which have the advantage of being transportable pretty much everywhere (I think I've worked on sketches in every conceivable location in New Zealand), otherwise I prefer to sketch standing up. To that effect, I've built a sort of pulpit in the studio. I find it's the most comfortable way to sketch.

For those readers who have artistic aspirations of their own, what would you suggest they should do to improve or even to try and become professional illustrators themselves?

Now that is a question that needs a very long answer!



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Drawing is a natural reflex, it's the simplest form of artistic expression in a way, since you don't need to actually learn anything to do it. After that, for those kids who are lucky enough to survive mandatory schooling with an enthusiasm for drawing intact, it's a big step from the protective world where you're the little artist in the family to a much bigger world where artistic talent is taken for granted. I would, though, suggest art school in every case, principally to give the budding artist time to mature in a milieu where healthy artistic rebellion can remain unaltered by cynicism. (In other words, it's perfectly normal to be at odds with one's professors, but in a solid structure encouraging discovery and personal growth, rather than being thrust out immediately into the rather hard world of professional art.) The maturity acquired during that time is terribly important later. And let's not forget, it's wise to acquire academism before you can decide to dismiss it or not.

If you had a chance to illustrate any Tolkien work that you have not as yet tackled, which one would it be?

How long a list would you like? I would especially love to tackle some of the more epic and tragic events in the First and Second Ages. I enjoy the sensation of sweeping landscapes and a somehow "bigger" Middle-Earth, closer to John Martin or Francis Danby than to the quaintness of Hobbiton and the Shire.

You have been involved in re-enactment – could you give our readers some idea of what this entails, and does it help with your art also?

I was an active member of a little group called the Companie of Saynt George, which depicts the life of a small artillery in Burgundian service in the late 1470's. (Actually, I may even still be a member, if they haven't retired me for not appearing at events.) I enjoyed being with the Companie for the research side of it, and principally for the incredibly convincing visual aspects. Some of my most vivid memories are of the Companie in the evening, when the public has gone, and there are people talking or playing music, and every tiny detail is perfect, possibly as close as you could imagine being inside a medieval painting.

They are a brilliant bunch, you can see more of them here: www.companie-of-st-george.ch

What comes next for you, after the Hobbit movies?

I'm not sure, to tell you the truth. After all this time sketching in pencil and in pixels, I'm a little concerned that I might not actually remember how to paint!

I did leave a number of projects on hold before beginning work on the Hobbit, so hopefully they will still be patiently awaiting me when I finish up.

Who are the artists who have most inspired you to do the work you do?

Well, I had a personal pantheon composed of fantasy and comic artists when I was in my teens. I revered Frank Frazetta, and adored artists like Berni Wrightson, Michael Kaluta, Jeffrey Jones, Rodney Matthews, Barry Smith and Roger Dean. I bought their work wherever I could in the late 70's: rummaging through piles of used books in search of paperback covers, and of course purchased all those amazing books from Dragon's Dream and Paper Tiger – Views, The Studio... I even still have an LP of Lord of the Rings music with one of Matthews' covers!

My tastes in art and illustration range rather wider now. I'm especially fond of turn-of-the-century painters and illustrators; I won't bore you with a long list of names, but here are a few: John Bauer, Jean Delville, W. Russell Flint, Sidney Sime, Akseli Gallen-Kallela, Franz Von Stassen, Arnold Boecklin, John Byam Liston Shaw, Fernand Khnopff, Frantisek Kupka, Willy Pogány, Ilya Repin, Carlos Schwabe, Elihu Vedder, Franz Von Stuck, Ferdinand Keller and many many more.

This said, I find far more inspiration in landscape and in art, architecture and history in a wider sense.

And, to conclude, the best inspiration comes from those images that spring unbidden out of the reading of a story.



Getting a Round Tuit

Have you ever wondered how poor Mister Bilbo (and Frodo) Baggins ever managed at Bag End? Pity the pair of them if you will - for they had to put up with the awful vagaries that evolved from the design malpractices of Bilbo's father Bungo. He had "built the most luxurious hobbit-hole... that was to be found either under The Hill or over The Hill or across The Water".

Luxurious it may have been but he built it with a very large round door.

Now, we all know that round doors and windows are distinct hobbit design features, but if you will examine the drawing of Bag End, this particular door, or The Door, as we might call it, was huge - some eight feet in diameter (just over twice Bilbo's height) had only one hinge - The Hinge as it was known for miles around - (albeit long and sturdy-looking) at the broadest part of the right hand side (looking out of Bag End, that is) and just one lock - The Lock...? - on the left hand side at the broadest part, opposite The Hinge, as people for miles around called it. Now, that must have meant that even with all the nice bricks set about the doorway, it could hardly have closed well - anything that large held on two points is in effect pivoted and will "swing" top and bottom when there is any amount of wind at all, making Bag

End a rather windy and uncomfortable abode at the best of times. Not so much Bag End as Waggly End?

Then there was a second problem left to them by Bungo (perhaps his name was more a derivation of Bungler?) - note if you please the lantern placed in the roof just inside the entrance, The Lantern as many in the area knew it: how in the Four Farthings did Bilbo or Frodo ever get The Door shut? Each time that dratted Door was swung to on The Hinge, it must have caught and crashed into The Lantern, preventing it from closing. Mind you, reaching up to light The Lantern Itself must have provided them both with endless hours of fun and exercise. No wonder they were fit when they went off on their adventures! Not a chair that is visible in the hallway would be tall enough to give Bilbo or Frodo the added height to reach that lantern to light it (or blow it out). The would have required The Stepladders - ones at least six foot tall to carry out these tasks. Or The Splint on the end of The Pole... (okay, this is getting silly....).

There was also a third problem, if you examine the drawing of Bag End - there is a step, The Step (as it was never known anywhere else at all, but which shall be capitalised because Bilbo after all was a Capital Fellow!) that lies inside The Door (and directly below

The Lantern), and The Step would definitely snag The Door as it tried to close at its bottom-most point, preventing it from doing so. Indeed, it is a wonder that Bilbo was ever able to open and close the dratted thing!

So, I come to the only viable answer to the whole problem - the Bagginses were very rich, as was widely known, and their money and wealth must have come from somewhere, which nobody seems to be able to explain satisfactorily, and so I propose that Bungo Baggins was the inventor of the Round Tuit. This is, of course, as everyone knows, a special device that is fitted in smials and other similar structures to large round doors on one hinge and with a lantern hanging in the way and an awkward step below, which will allow The Door to close effortlessly and seal tightly and snugly, and also at the same time, light or douse The Lantern as wished, and somehow miss The Step. Just like magic! Bilbo evidently wasn't the only one with something unusual in his possession.

So, Bungo invented the Round Tuit, patented it, marketed it and sold it in enormous quantities across the Shire and Breeland, due to the bad design of smial front doors, and made his fortunes thereby. I would welcome all thoughts and comments on this audacious theory. Or is that an Audacious Theory? More Bodacious, actually....!



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A Mini-Festival at Leiden

Come to Holland and visit Leiden for a free entry mini-festival of all things Tolkien, and most especially artwork and collectables.

The event will take place from Thursday 20th to Saturday 22nd September 2012 at the Hartburg Church, Romanuszaal, Lange Mare, Leiden in Holland.

We are commemorating the 75th anniversary of the publication of *The Hobbit* with artwork, a book fair, talks and music.

It is brought to you by Festival Art and Books in association with Rene van Rossenberg of the Tolkienshop.

Enjoy a true feeling of fellowship amongst other Tolkien enthusiasts in this wonderful setting – come and join us there!



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Interview with Rodney Matthews

The artist as storyteller: Interview with Rodney Matthews

“His powers of description are an illustrator’s dream, just leaving enough unsaid to turn things into a joint enterprise. But most of all I believe J.R.R. Tolkien lived and breathed his stories—written from the soul—directed by the Spirit!”

Rodney Matthews lives in an extensive farmhouse perched high on the hills edging the Snowdonia National Park, Wales. He moved here from Somerset after gaining a persistent reputation for his high quality art, including posters, book covers and record sleeves for the likes of the band Magnum. The tone of his distinctive fantasy art is set by the dominance of a single colour. This is often from the blue-green



Gandalf and the Balrog

end of the spectrum, an influence of his hero Walt Disney. At the same time there is subtlety and depth to his creations, an inner quality that is his equivalent of Tolkien’s word-based sub-creations. Colin Duriez, who has known Rodney Matthews for many years, interviewed him for Festival in the Shire Journal.

Rodney, what led you into becoming an artist?

My interest in art followed a spontaneous artistic endeavour performed by my father in 1949, or thereabouts. We lived in a small council house in Somerset, the living room of which was papered with a slightly textured creamish wallpaper. For a reason never explained, my Dad entered the room still wearing his working overalls. Taking out a large oval-sectioned carpenter’s pencil he proceeded to draw ten-inch-high Walt Disney characters around the room, at child height! These accomplished renditions of Mickey and Minnie Mouse, Goofy and Clarabelle Cow, stayed with me until the room eventually was re-papered, and influenced my own artistic aspiration.

Your artistic influences, I believe, are varied, including Walt Disney, Arthur Rackham and Mervyn Peake. Who would you isolate as most significant?

Well of course it would be Disney. And it got even worse during the early fifties, when my elder brother took me to the

local cinema to watch Disney’s Snow White, Peter Pan and Alice in Wonderland. Arriving home from the cinema I would draw my own versions of scenes from the films and could even whistle most of the musical themes. (“The second star to the right” was my favourite.)

I couldn’t get enough of Disney’s stuff ... Sleeping Beauty (where my dragons come from), Pinocchio, and so on, on and on, over the horizon of infinite possibility!

You’ve illustrated posters, book covers (including my first book about Tolkien!), calendars, record covers for Magnum and other bands, and high quality prints and originals. What led to this diversification, and how did this influence the course of your future work?

Just to give you some background—upon leaving the West of England College of Art in 1962 I took a job at Ford’s Creative (Bristol), an advertising agency,





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specializing in point-of-sale. It was here that I endured an endless stream of mind-numbing, boring graphics jobs, which nevertheless taught me the disciplines of working on every conceivable format. So, unlike many fantasy artists, I am a natural diversifier, comfortable with many formats, but it has to be fantasy, sci-fi or fairy tale – and humorous.

How did one of your biggest projects, Lavender Castle, come about and how would you sum it up?

Lavender Castle was eventually made as a 26-episode children's TV series in stop motion animation with sets and some CG animation for space ships and other machinery.

I would describe it as an intergalactic comic adventure with a good moral code. It was screened on ITV in the UK commencing in 1998, and had taken two years to make, at a cost of 2.5 million pounds. I thoroughly enjoyed working on this project, particularly as I got to work with a number of very talented animators, model makers, technicians and similar.

Did your work on Lavender Castle, which was eventually produced of course by Gerry Anderson, come out of a desire to harness technical developments in your art?

Yes, I had always wanted to see my creations move and talk, taking on believable characteristics. Gerry Anderson was wonderful to work with and gave me

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a completely free hand with regard to all aspects of design. We currently have other animation intellectual properties awaiting the magic purse! These are expected to be done entirely in CG animation.

Fantasy films and games are becoming more and more technologically complex. You of course experienced state-of-the-art technology in working with Gerry Anderson. What do you think these developments have added and made possible?

The average top-flight computer game now costs 20 million US dollars, so that many of the larger companies are playing safe, with games derived from past successes or licensed from hit films. Not much room for untried ideas anymore! So regarding technology, this has been advanced greatly in games and film, but any amount of special effects will not compensate for a bad script, a dull plot, or an uninteresting game-play. It does, however, mean that on the occasion of my own involvement I can expect the computer-generated models to look more realistic and more like my original designs.

Was your involvement with Lavender Castle as a development of your work in new areas anything to do with the fact that you are a fundamentally a story-teller?

Yes, I think it must be. I was a drummer in a band I used to play for, and it's not very often that the



Gollum



Old Man Willow



Rivendell Black



Lord of the Rings / View over Isengard

drummer writes the lyrics! I used to read a lot of fantasy stories at that time, Tolkien, and most of the better-known fantasy and science fiction authors. And because I so much enjoyed the stories, I always wanted then to go away and illustrate them. So it's really, yes, I am a story-teller to some extent, but I'm not inclined to sit down and write the story like some. I'm more inclined to tell the story in a pictorial way. I don't lack imagination when it comes to inventing my own stories, it's just that I find it difficult to write them down.

Recently you've extended your illustrations of Alice in Wonderland to illustrate the whole book. Is this something you plan to do more with favourite writers? Does it mark a return to more print-based work?

Yes, the recent book of Alice in Wonderland brings together works illustrated over a period of twenty years, and in producing the later Alice works I had

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to maintain the same style as the early ones.

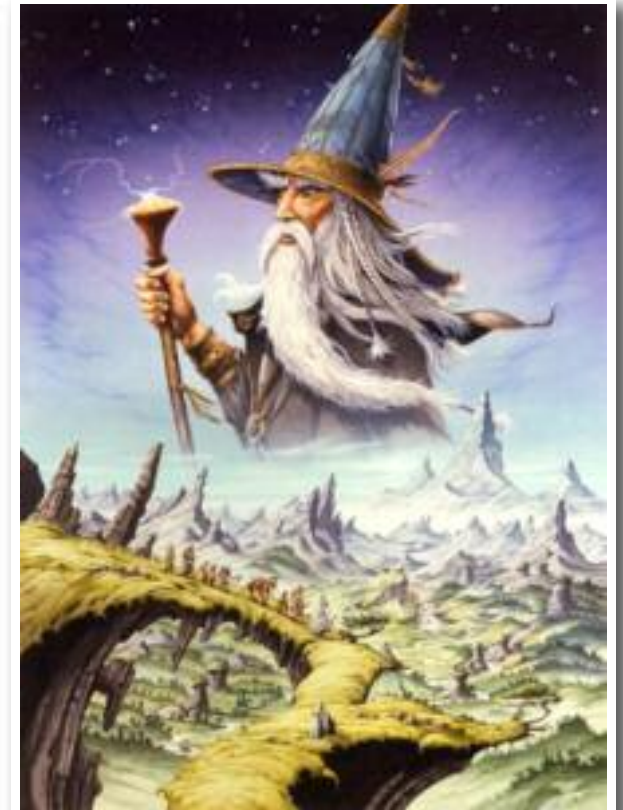
I think it does indicate a return to book illustration for me, in that I have loads of works based upon writings of classic authors such as Lewis Carroll, Peake, C.S. Lewis, and J.R.R. Tolkien that I am hoping to include in an anthology of great writers.

One of many writers you've illustrated extensively is Michael Moorcock. What was it like working with him? What led to his writing one of his Elric stories with you in mind to illustrate?

I haven't seen Michael for many years, but I know he is still active and very popular. My memories of working with him are all good; in fact I would say that his heroic fantasy tales helped to define my early art style in the 1970s.

As a great admirer of Michael's fantasy novels (most of which I read with enthusiasm during the seventies) it came as a wonderful compliment when he wrote that I had managed to capture not only the described detail of his work but in many cases the exact mood.

Elric at the End of Time was the highlight of this creative partnership. It is a short story written by Michael with me in mind. The original seed was sown by Peter Ledebor, boss of "Big O" Publishing, who wanted to publish such a book. Alas, "Big O" collapsed in 1980, but the book was published by Paper Tiger in 1987.



Nine Set Out

You famously have many illustrations from The Hobbit, The Lord of the Rings and The Silmarillion. How did you first get interested in Tolkien and then start illustrating his work?

My first encounter with Tolkien's work came about



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The Ring



The One Ring - Swords



The One Ring - Eye 2



The One Ring - Eye 1

on a rainy day on the Pembrokeshire coast. I was staying at a friend's hotel, and seeking to relieve my boredom I wandered into the small library. There, in the undignified status of a doorstep, was a paperback copy of *The Hobbit*. For years I had endured the endless chatter of members of my rock band discussing *The Lord of the Rings* in the group van as we travelled to gigs. So, as you can imagine, the sight of *The Hobbit* filled me with dread! For some reason I picked it up and gave it a quick scan, saying to myself, "Some of this stuff would look good illustrated." It went on from there ...

Explain the deep affinity you have with the writings of J.R.R. Tolkien.

When I had finished *The Hobbit* (and sketched a quick interpretation of the Battle of the Five Armies), I ripped into *The Lord of the Rings* as one converted.

I'm not sure how to explain the affinity I have with Tolkien's work. It is not something I can sum up with a significant statement.

His technique is relatively simple, yet his words carry an almost supernatural wisdom and authority. I enjoy the Christian allegory, which he said he did not use or approve of, and I admire his understanding of hope when all is almost lost. His powers of description are an illustrator's dream, just leaving enough unsaid to



turn things into a joint enterprise. But most of all I believe J.R.R. Tolkien lived and breathed his stories—written from the soul—directed by the Spirit!

Of your Tolkien-inspired works, do you have a favourite?

I haven't yet done my favourite Tolkien-inspired painting, but I would say that "Rivendell" would come a close second, and perhaps "Treebeard" third.

In all your work, what is your most popular illustration?

Possibly the Magnum cover, "On a Story Teller's Night".

As a fantasy artist, why do you think fantasy has such an appeal in our society?

There are a lot of people who can analyse this and come up with some impressive reasons, one of the most common being escapism. But the way that I look at it is that the universe is a wonderful place, and we've only seen a small part of it. I believe that God created



Unlikely Hero

that, and I believe that people are made out of something of the character of God, and have aspirations of being like God. I'm not saying this in some strange, religiously deranged way. What I'm saying is that God is the creator, I believe, and we, some of us, have a desire to be creators ourselves. God's creation is so much more wonderful than ours because it came from nothing, so to speak. But we see, I see, what God has created. I look around at all the animals, birds, plants and colours of everything, and I'm inspired by that to be creative myself, as a sub-creator. In doing so, because I'm not copying things as they actually are, I want to go a bit further than that, and do something of my own. So I end up as a fantasy

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artist, being anchored down to reality, the reality of the created world I see, but at the same time wanting to go a step further and do something which is different. So I assume that most fantasy artists, and people who write fantasy, must be approaching it from a similar viewpoint. They really feel, even though we're here on this ball of rock in space, that there is something else elsewhere. That can be anything for a fantasy artist; it's only limited by the amount of imagination you've got.

Going back to the wonder of the created world, how has it inspired you? You seem to be inspired by natural shapes or shapes of insects or roots. Is that true?

Yes, very much true. As I've said before, I use the creation as my main inference. But I don't believe that one should move so far away from it that you're actually into the realms of abstract design. What happens is that people know the normal things of the world. It's the ingredients of those things they know about, placed into a fantasy illustration, that makes it believable for them. They see the textures on a weird-shaped creature, very much like the textures on something they've seen. Maybe there are certain elements about the anatomy of a character that they recognize, even though it might be fused with something else, or coloured differently from what they're accustomed to. The fact is that this makes the fantasy piece believable, which is what I'm trying to achieve, and which is good story-telling.



Smaug

There is often a comic and "nonsense" element in your illustrations (as in the works of Lewis Carroll and Edward Lear). Why is this distinctive in so much of your work (your illustration, The Trunk Call, comes to mind)?

Michael Moorcock put it well. I have a vague memory of a conversation described in one of his Eternal Champion stories. The great-albino-hero-swordsman Elric is speaking to his accomplice (possibly Moonglum), saying something like: "I tire of this high and mighty guest. Oh to stand in a tavern and drink and fart with the men!"

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The Journal

News from Weta

News from Weta

This will be fairly brief, as people can look up much of this material online.

However, for a quick round up of where we are right now, this is a handy reference.

Firstly, there are to be three Hobbit movies made. Peter Jackson floated the idea at Comic Con this year, and it has since been confirmed. The first two movies will cover the story from the Hobbit. The third movie will form an historical bridge between that and the start of the Lord of the Rings, which happens 80 years later in Tolkiens chronology of Middle earth.

The movies will be in 3D – something that was much debated. However, for those who might worry about gimmickry, Jackson has developed the system used for Avatar and improved upon it and so we can look forward to a far more subtle use of 3D than in more recent movies screened.

The movies are being shot in 48 frames per second rather than 24, improving the resolution. This was a standard set by the physical limitations of movie film going through a projector and camera – nowadays with digital technology it is easy to increase the frame rate, though it has taken till now for someone to try it. There have been some interesting effects – if you go and see Peter Jackson's blogs, the make up used had to be biased towards the red part of the

spectrum. This is fascinating, because at the start of cinema back in the early 1900s the film used (black and white silent and crude by later standards) had a bias towards the blue end of the spectrum, and actors wore blue eye liner and shadow, lipstick and other make up to make them look 'natural' under the natural lighting conditions that movies were being made with. Lighting came later.

The first movie is being officially released countrywide on 14th December, with subsequent ones a year later. There are previews of course.

In honour of the forthcoming Hobbit movie, let us start with some riddles about that book:

1. I am Fili, who is my uncle?
2. I am Balin - what colour is my hood?
3. What other name did Laketown go by?
4. The Arkenstone was whose heart?
5. What did Bilbo find up a tree in Mirkwood?
6. What type of barrel was Fili packed in?
7. Who had the shorter nose, Fili or Kili?
8. Who picked up Bilbo by the neck?
9. Apart from blades and pots of gold, what else did Thorin and Co. get from the Troll's cave?
10. What is the final word in The Hobbit?



The Journal

Interview with Daniel Grotta

Interview – Daniel Grotta

Many thanks for agreeing to be interviewed by the Journal. Daniel Grotta for our readers was the first person to write a biography of Tolkien, though his was not authorised by the family – instead they authorised Humphrey Carpenter, and asked those they knew to not speak to Daniel Grotta – however, a lot of people who knew Tolkien resented being told to censor their memories of the great man, and so we have the only other independent biography of Tolkien written around the time of his death. Most others written were based more or less on the Carpenter biography. It is therefore fascinating to be able to interview Daniel for this journal.

When did you first come across Tolkien's works?

Back in 1968, I was doing graduate work in philosophy at the University of Cambridge, and was asked to flatsit for a friend at Christmas time. I was bored with my work (eventually abandoned, but that's another story), and perused his library, looking for something to read. I happen to see *The Lord of the Rings*, and being vaguely aware of its popularity in the states, I decided to look at it. I became so engrossed that I read it non-stop over a 24-hour period.

What made you decide to write a biography of J.R.R. Tolkien?

I had been working as a freelance editor for Running Press, a small publishing house that I had first encountered when I wrote a magazine article about its owners, brothers Buzz and Larry Teacher. (I was the book reviewer for Philadelphia Magazine.) One day, Larry asked me if I would be interested in writing, rather than editing a book. I answered affirmatively, and he then said that they wanted to commission a biography on J.R.R. Tolkien, who had died two years earlier. Intrigued and excited, I agreed to do the book -- despite the fact that I had never before written a biography.

When did you take that decision (i.e. was Tolkien still alive then)?

This was a year-and-a-half after his death, so I had never had an opportunity to meet or talk with Tolkien.

You came to Britain and visited Oxford for the research into your biography of Tolkien I believe? Did you ever meet Tolkien yourself?

I spent the summer of 1975 in London and Oxford, primarily at the British Museum Reading Room, the BBC, and various libraries and newspaper in Oxford. No, I never met Tolkien.



How long did it take you to research and write your biography?

Altogether, it took about seven months to research and write the biography, plus many additional hours editing, revising and correcting the work.

Carpenter apparently relied quite heavily upon Hilary Tolkien's information to write his biography – who did you manage to talk to who knew Tolkien?

The Tolkien family not only declined to talk to me, they contacted as many of Tolkien's friends, associates and former students as they could and asked them NOT to talk to me or provide any information. I did not know at that time that they were in contract negotiations with Humphrey Carpenter for an "official" biography and wanted to kill or sabotage any possible competition. However, I did interview two of the Inklings – Owen Barfield and Father



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Interview with Daniel Grotta

Gervase Matthew, as well as several of Tolkien's former students, an American friend from his Oxford undergraduate days who had survived the war, as well as he housekeeper and "batman". I also had access to some of Tolkien's private letters.

I believe that some of the people who gave you information did not in fact talk to Carpenter – could you let us know who that might have been and why their memories and information were important?

Owen Barfield provided many recollections of the meetings of the Inklings, as well as Oxford life during the 1930s and 1940s. Another person whom Carpenter did not interview was a former student who became a friend and colleague, a Polish professor at the Jagallonian University in Krakow. He gave me invaluable insights into Tolkien's Catholicism and its importance to The Lord of the Rings mythology and theology. I also interviewed several journalists who had known and interviewed Tolkien in his later years.

If you were revisiting Tolkien as a subject of biography today, what would you add to what you already wrote?

My biography was recently allowed to go out of print, so the rights have reverted to me. I shall be revising and expanding my biography and will probably be publishing it as an eBook next year, sometime before

The Hobbit is released. I will be correcting a few small errors, as well as adding a chapter called The Posthumous Tolkien. He has become quite prolific since his death, thanks to the creative work and imagination of Christopher Tolkien. I would also cover the phenomenal success of the Peter Jackson films, as well as a brief survey of important differences and divergences between the book and the movies.

What do you think of the works that have been published, both complete and unfinished, since Tolkien's death?

I have mixed views. Some works, especially the smaller ones, are literary gems, eminently readable and worthy companions to Tolkien's central masterpiece. Others should have been left in the drawer or trunk, despite Christopher Tolkien's heroic efforts to edit, expand and make them readable.

What is your assessment of Tolkien as a man and a writer?

I see Tolkien more as a storyteller and mythmaker than an author, because if truth be told, he wasn't really a very good writer. Stylistically, The Lord of the Rings suffers from inconsistencies, digressions, plus unresolved story, plot and character lines. It desperately needed a good edit to clean up the language. Despite this, The Lord of the Rings is perhaps the single most important literary work of

the 20th century.

As a man, Tolkien was a bundle of small contradictions. He was a dedicated scholar who published remarkably little in his career, an intellectual in the high-powered world of academia who really wanted a quiet, simple life in the English countryside, an armchair adventurer who was often befuddled and confounded by familial responsibilities, and a deeply religious person whose predilections drifted into the mystical realm. Despite the assertiveness of his literary works, his life was one of a somewhat passive, harried, befuddled and disappointed person with middle-class morals and sensitivities, surrounded by a changing world of which he increasingly disapproved and misunderstood. And he became great in spite of himself, not because he aspired to it.

There are still unpublished works out there, which would you particularly like to see appearing?

Frankly, if the Tolkien literary *deus ex machina* never produced or published another world, I would be happy. Only J.R.R. Tolkien could have united and finished the Middle-earth mythology. That, or someone completely outside the family who can bring fresh insights and creative energy to the Middle-earth mythology. Unfortunately, due to the family's proprietary interest and current copyright laws, we are not likely to see such an attempt in our lifetimes.



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Has the understanding of Tolkien changed in the years since he died?

Since writing my biography, my appreciation for Tolkien's genius as the fountainhead of what has become the quintessential English mythology continues to grow. Despite all the distractions and disappointments in his life, professionally and personally, this otherwise ordinary and pedestrian individual managed to produce the greatest English work since Shakespeare. What I think I understand better is that his writing was, vicariously, his personally attempt to live the life of hero in a heroic, albeit elsewhere and elsewhere, time. And he succeeded admirably.

Have you any plans to write more about Tolkien yourself?

I am occasionally asked to contribute papers on Tolkien, but so far, I have declined the honour. At this time, the only plan I have on writing further about Tolkien is to prepare a new edition of my biography.

Do you think the movies by Peter Jackson have helped or hindered wider understanding of Tolkien and his works?

The movies introduced Middle-earth to many, many millions would never have read the book, and for that alone, they are to be commended. And by graphically recreating and recasting the work in cinematic language, they have made it come alive for those who

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Interview with Daniel Grotta

lack the imagination and visual acumen to understand and appreciate what a cracking, exciting adventure it is. As for purists who feel that the movies somehow diminish or degrade Tolkien's work, I believe they have missed the point – The Lord of the Rings was destined to become the great English saga, and given how very few people have the patience or ability to read it in its original form, the movies are the only way to provide easy access. I look forward to enjoying Jackson's version of The Hobbit.

Tolkien was voted as the 'author of the 20th century' – do you see a longevity to his writings, a continuance of their relevance to people into the future?

Yes, but once the movies have run their course, Tolkien will, quite naturally, go out of style and popularity. He will then be rediscovered by a future generation, and the cycle of appreciation, adoration, and abandonment will begin again, and again, and again. Just as there is only one Shakespeare, there is but one Tolkien. Both are among the very few literary immortals who will be read (or viewed) so long as language endures.

Daniel, many thanks once again – it was a real pleasure to be able to interview you for the Journal.

Alex Lewis.

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Latest information on new Tolkien book!

There have been many rumours going around about a new book by J.R.R. Tolkien, which we knew existed from mentions of it in Carpenter's biography. There Carpenter gives about 4 lines from a poem entitled the Fall of Arthur. It is Tolkien's Arthurian retelling, and thus of great importance.

Rayner Unwin before he died told the Tolkien Society that he hoped that Christopher Tolkien would find the time to edit the Fall of Arthur for publication. We had almost given up on it, but a few weeks back rumours started around that in 2013 the Fall of Arthur would indeed appear in print.

Well, if you go to Amazon.com in the USA (NOT the UK one as yet) you will find the following information there:

The Fall of Arthur, by J.R.R. Tolkien:

\$69.53 – hardback deluxe edition.

- Hardcover
- Publisher: Harpercollins (May 23, 2013)
- ISBN-10: 0007489897
- ISBN-13: 978-0007489893

\$20.22 – normal hardback edition.

- Publisher: Harpercollins (May 23, 2013)
- ISBN-10: 0007489943
- ISBN-13: 978-0007489947

With ISBN numbers and a release date given, it means the book will be appearing – the date may be flexible, and perhaps it may yet not appear until, say, September, perhaps, but we can say for sure now that the Fall of Arthur will finally see the light of day.

Alex Lewis, with thanks to Colin Duriez for assistance.



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The Journal

Roger Lancelyn Green and the Possibilities of Literature

Roger Lancelyn Green and the Possibilities of Literature

Chad Chisholm

Among the members of The Inklings, Roger Lancelyn Green would probably not be considered as important as C.S. Lewis, and he certainly has not sold as many books as J.R.R. Tolkien, nor would most scholars believe him to be as profound as Owen Barfield, or as influential as Charles Williams. However, among all the members of this Oxford literary group, Green is probably the 3rd most read next to Lewis and Tolkien. Green's books *King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table* (1953), *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1956), *Myths of the Norsemen* (1960), *Heroes of Greece and Troy* (1960), and *Tales of Ancient Egypt* (1967) are still found in most bookstores and are common titles in libraries and nurseries in the United Kingdom, United States, and Canada. Furthermore, his authorized biography on C.S. Lewis that he coauthored with Walter Hooper was the first of many such works on Lewis.

In his brief biographical sketch, Walter Hooper somewhat laments that Green's "success as a compiler and reteller of tales has tended to overshadow his own stories for children," and this is probably because much of Green's original work, except for *The Luck of Troy* (1961), are long out of print and not always available at most public libraries. Nevertheless, Green's popular adaptations of legends and myths

reveal him to be a skilled narrative craftsman and his tales also illustrate some of the ideas of the Inklings on storytelling and the logos of the story itself. (Perhaps, if I make my case with enough luster, more scholarly attention will come to focus on Green's other work.)

After reading over a list of some of the humble careers that Green held (actor, bookseller, teacher, and librarian) in contrast to his long inventory of critical, biographical, editorial, and creative publications, it seems remarkable that Green ever got the time or leisure to create such a large body of literary work. However, Green seems not to have been a 'proletarian academic' who had to scramble to scratch out a living while writing his scholarship or creative works in his spare time. Rather, Green came from a family with an independent means of income. (To be independently wealthy was not altogether an unusual situation for scholars in Britain, America, and in much of Western Europe before the late 1960s.) Most of his life, Green lived at his family estate of Poulton Hall (built in 1652 and since has been incrementally enlarged), near Liverpool. While the Hall is almost 400 years old, the estate has been in the Lancelyn-Green family for much longer. Today the gardens of Green's ancient,

900-year-old estate are decorated with images from Green's favorite stories from children's literature such as Robin Hood, King Arthur, *Alice in Wonderland*, Sherlock Holmes, and Peter Pan. The gardens are open for tours twice a year for visitors. From his ancestral home and lands, Green lived with his family and worked as a career writer.

Green attended Merton College of Oxford University where Tolkien was a fellow, and it was he who supervised Green's thesis on Andrew Lang. Green also met Lewis after attending his 'Prolegomena' lectures on Medieval and Early Modern literature. Green also became close friends with Lewis and visited him often in his rooms at Magdalen College long after Green received his degrees (BA and B.Litt.) where the two men would talk over their manuscripts while drinking coffee or wine. During one of these visits to Magdalen on March 10, 1949, Lewis shared with Green an early draft of two chapters of what was to become Lewis's first Narnia novel, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. Green's reactions to this work-in-progress, which he recorded in his diary, were mixed: "[Lewis] read me two chapters of a story for children he is writing—very good indeed, though a trifle self-conscious" (Hooper, 402). Green's mixed feelings for Lewis' attempt at a children's book were



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probably deepened when he talked with Tolkien on the same Oxford trip. His old professor and thesis advisor, who from all accounts never seem to appreciate the notion of ‘drafts,’ said to Green,

I hear you’ve been reading Jack’s children’s story. It really won’t do. I mean to say, “Nymphs and their Ways, The Love-Life of a Faun.” Doesn’t he know what he’s talking about?

While Lewis was an accomplished scholar, fiction writer, and Christian apologist, he was at this point an unproven children’s author. Had he gotten the same sort of criticism from Green and others that he got from Tolkien, one wonders if Lewis might have given up on Narnia for good. But Green continued reading and providing suggestions that were constructive and descriptive. Sometimes Green would focus on a small detail such as the sort of fuel (coal instead of wood) for the enchanted fire in the Underland castle in *The Silver Chair* where Puddleglum brings himself to his senses by burning his foot and ending the witch’s spell by extinguishing the flames with his webbed, Marsh-wiggled feet. At other times, Green suggested larger changes such as eliminating an entire section of *The Magician’s Nephew* where Lewis had originally wrote a part where the boy Digory Kirk visits the cottage of Piers and his wife on one of his three (in this early version) visits to Charn. For several reasons, Green suggested that Lewis cut this entire scene from the book, mainly because he argued that the Piers part was ‘out of

harmony with the rest of the book.’ Lewis evidently put great trust in Green’s advice because he cut the section out even though Lewis was not certain (at least at that time) that Green was right.

Of course, Lewis also took a great deal of interest in Green’s writings and adaptations of legends and folktales, and advised him as well. The relationship between Green and Lewis was so close, that in early April 1960 the Greens accompanied Lewis and his wife Joy to Greece. While it is tempting to think of such a journey of literary minds as something of a romantic odyssey, Joy Lewis was seriously ill, her cancer had returned, and the trip to Greece was one of her lifelong wishes. Therefore, with such a shadow hanging over the trip as well as the difficulties that come with traveling with someone who is severely ill, such a trip was probably far from idyllic for the Greens. To add to this, Joy died three months after the trip and three years later Lewis, who had suffered from a series of medical problems from the summer of 1961 to the spring of 1963, died of a chronic kidney disease on November 22, 1963, one week shy of his 65th birthday. After the loss of Green’s friend and former professor, it is difficult to believe that the memory of such a Grecian holiday could have been anything more than bittersweet.

As a writer, Green shared many of the literary ideas of the Inklings when it came to narrative, conflict, resolution, and the philosophy of the story. While Green meant many of his books for a younger

audience, this is not to say that he tried to shape them so that none of the terrors or conflicts from his original sources came through in his retellings, but Green follows the authors he admired such as Lewis Carroll, J.M. Barrie, and Rudyard Kipling (as well as his friends and contemporaries Lewis and Tolkien) in integrating tension and escape into his stories for children. While the ‘tension’ was easy enough for Green to gather from his sources, the possibilities for escape—or ‘eucatastrophe’ as Tolkien often called it—was often grim, especially in the face of Arthur’s defeat at Camlann, Robin Hood’s reversal of fortune after the death of King Richard and the ascension of John, or the Æsir gods of Asgard’s foretold doom at Ragnarok. Green never belabors this point so that he overwhelms the reader, but he drops reminders that are brief, yet linger with us as we move through the narrative. For example, in the later chapters of *Robin Hood* when the pardoned Robert of Locksley goes into Nottingham to attend mass, not suspecting that King Richard is dead and that the vengeful John has set a trap for him, Green places Lady Marian “looking around the comfortable room and out at the trim garden of Locksley Hall,” and as she reviews the environment where she and Robin Hood have lived for a short time in peace, love, and comfort, she says, “I fear that the good days are ending” (266). The moment of foreshadowed doom is brief, but effective, and such moments are often found in Green’s tales of King Arthur where the glory of the Round Table is always contrasted with the coming doom and treachery, or



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the tales of the Norse gods where every adventure takes place in the looming shadow of Ragnarok where all that is beautiful will perish at the hands of monsters and other things that lurk in dark places.

This eventual defeat of heroes and civilizations is a theme that often appears in the medieval literature that Green, Tolkien, and Lewis loved, and it is discussed in Professor Tolkien's essay "Beowulf: The Monsters in the Critics." In his Royal Academy lecture, Tolkien tries to convey some of the rhetorical situation, as well as the collective imagination, that the Beowulf poet would have faced as he set himself to the task of compiling this long, narrative saga:

None the less we may still, against his great scene, hung with tapestries woven of ancient tales of ruin, see the hæleð walk. When we have read [the Beowulf poet's] poem, as a poem, rather than as a collection of episodes, we perceive that he who wrote hæleð under heofenum may have meant in dictionary terms 'heroes under heaven', or 'mighty men upon earth', but he and his hearers were thinking of the *eormengrund*, the great earth, ringed with garsecg, the shoreless sea, beneath the sky's inaccessible roof; whereon, as in a little circle of light about their halls, men with courage as their stay went forward to that battle with the hostile world and the offspring of the dark which ends for all, even the kings and champions, in defeat (18).

This ultimate scheme where men and all their accomplishments perish, or, as Michael Drout puts

it, this 'idea of a long defeat,' is an idea from the old mythologies and legends, and it sharply contrasts with many current fashions of thought about personal success or social welfare. Therefore, no matter how brave Sir Lancelot is or holy Sir Galahad can be, or how Robin Hood acts with cunning, or how glorious the Norse gods might be, given enough time all of them will be defeated.

However, as grim as this sounds, the fiction of Green, Tolkien, and Lewis often has the element of escape, or 'eucatastrophe' that saves the heroes from their defeat. In his essay "On Fairy Stories," Tolkien claims that the "eucatastrophic tale is the true form of fairy-tale, and its highest function," and therefore elements that set up the eucatastrophe, "however wild its events, however fantastic or terrible the adventures," should be woven into every fantastic tale:

The consolation of fairy-stories, the joy of the happy ending: or more correctly of the good catastrophe, the sudden joyous "turn" (for there is no true end to any fairy-tale) this joy, which is one of the things which fairy-stories can produce supremely well, is not essentially "escapist," nor "fugitive." In its fairy-tale...setting, it is a sudden and miraculous grace: never to be counted on to recur. It does not deny the existence of dyscatastrophe, of sorrow and failure: the possibility of these is necessary to the joy of deliverance; it denies...universal final defeat and in so far is evangelium, giving a fleeting glimpse

of Joy, Joy beyond the walls of the world, poignant as grief (153).

However, Green in dealing with some of his stories—particularly with Robin Hood and the Norse gods—had problems that Lewis and Tolkien, who were writing their own legends and mythologies, did not have, which presented him with all sorts of problems in creating the element of escape. While there is a silver lining to be found in fabric of Arthurian literature, that Arthur is the 'once and future' king destined to return, there is little at the end of Robin Hood or with the Norse gods to suggest this 'grace.' For example, what most of the countless films about Robin Hood fail to remind us of is that the story of the Sherwood hero is essentially a tragedy because while Lord Locksley is pardoned and restored by King Richard, his enemies Prince John and the Sheriff of Nottingham remain, and Richard's early death in France means that King John will make Robin Hood an outlaw once again. Green's final chapter "The Last Arrow," before the epilogue he added, ends with Robin Hood's hastened death at the hands of a treacherous prioress and this inscription on the archer's tomb:

Underneath this little stone
Lies Robert Earl of Huntington
No other archer was as good—
And people called him Robin Hood
Such outlaws as he and his men
Will England never see again.



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This is a rather bittersweet ending at best, but Green obviously wasn't satisfied with it because he wrote an epilogue to this ending, "King Henry and the Hermits," which by his own account in his Author's Note follows one of the old ballads, but "distantly and with license."

In his ending, Green takes us to the reign of Henry III, son of John, where the young king is hunting deer in Sherwood Forest, and, after chasing a stag for some time until sunset, King Henry is separated from his royal party and becomes lost in the "wildest parts of the forest." Somewhere in this foreboding wilderness, Henry comes across a path that leads him to a strange chapel and dwelling where two old hermits (one very tall, the other rather stout) live alone. While at first the two men are reluctant to be too hospitable to the young king, offering him only bread and cheese, less Henry see that they have broken the forest laws to get meat for themselves, but Henry promises not to betray them if they offer him a good meal because this evening he is very hungry. The king offers some wine from his saddle bags to the stout hermit, and after awhile they offer him some of their own wine and ale as well as some venison pastries and other cold meats. Soon all three men become quite 'merry,' and the three try their luck in an impromptu archery contest to see which one can split a willow sapling at 30 yards away in the dark. The tall hermit wins, and King Henry says, "I could almost believe that we were back in the days of King

Richard of the Lion Heart when bold Robin Hood ruled in the Forest of Sherwood of whom so many songs are sung and so many tales are told," and he asks the two old hermits if they know any of these tales. Once he asks this, then "the two old hermits seemed to grow young again" as they retell their guest of all the adventures that happened long ago in those lands. After dining with Little John and Friar Tuck, King Henry finds his hunting party and tells of his adventure, but they could never again find the hermits dwelling in Sherwood Forest.

While Green uses 'escape' or elements of 'eucatastrophe' elsewhere in Robin Hood and the rest of his retellings, what he is doing here is related but distinct to those concepts. John Poulakos, an American professor of rhetoric and language, argues that after any speaker "captures the appropriate and places it temporally," then he naturally "moves toward the suggestion of the possible."

The starting point for the articulation of the possible is the ontological assumption that the main driving forces in man's life are his desires, especially the desire to be other and to be elsewhere...Consideration of the possible affirms in man the desire to be at another place or at another time and takes him away from the world of actuality and transports him in that of potentiality (42-44).

French scholar Georges Poulet argues that human

beings find themselves in "Two realities which simultaneously exist at a distance and which reciprocally deny each other: the reality in which one lives and that in which one does not live, the place in which one has situated one's dream and the place where with horror one sees oneself surrendered to chance and ill luck" (239).

For Poulakos, this human condition that yearns for a possibility to be elsewhere is not a divorce from reasonableness into wishful thinking or dementia, but is something that spawns from our understanding of our actual world. "To be sure," he argues,

man walks on earth and his feet are a constant reminder of his connection to the ground. But at the same time, he looks at the horizon about him and perceives himself "not as he is, not where he is, but precisely as he is not and where he is not." Even though he functions daily in the world of actuality, he often finds himself concerned with his situation not as it is here-and-now but as it could be there-and-then. Thus, he participates at once in two worlds each of which opposes the other.

Poulakos argues that this "is where the rhetorician," or in Green's case, the novelist, "steps in and helps him resolve his existential dilemma."

By exploiting people's proclivity to perceive themselves in the future and their readiness to thrust themselves into unknown regions, the



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rhetorician tells them what they could be, brings out in them futuristic versions of themselves, and sets before them both goals and the directions which lead to those goals. All this he does by creating and presenting to them that which has the potential to be, but is not (43).

In philosophy, literary criticism, cultural studies, and pedagogy, the notion of possibility that Poulakos and Poulet draw on is usually discussed (if at all) only in the context of social or political possibilities, such as achieving social justice, though the concept is very visible in our popular culture beyond academia in the form of 'self-help' books or entrepreneurial courses on audio and visual sources. However, the concept of possibility that Green draws on is more universal and broader because it evokes the human imagination, especially as it exists in the mind before it has been through the process of cognitive negotiation according to the conventions we humans use to negotiate our thoughts for the purpose of making them intelligibly communicable to others. An example of this worth noting is Robert Frost's poem "Birches" that discusses the possibility of being 'a swinger of birches.' In the poem, the narrator meditatively describes the damage the ice storm has done to the wilderness, bending the birch trees, but there arises a conflict within the narrator's deterministic and imaginative interpretations of the natural events:

But I was going to say when Truth broke in

With all her matter of fact about the ice storm,
I should prefer to have some boy bend them
As he went out and in to fetch the cows—
Some boy too far from town to learn baseball,
Whose only play was what he found himself,
Summer or winter, and could play alone.

This fleeting glimpse of a wildly dexterous child at play within the icy forest (more like a Peter Pan, Robin Goodfellow, or one of the water-babies than a New England schoolboy) is more representative of a different sort of possibility, one which I believe is more common to human experience, especially among children. For example, as a child growing up in the Deep South of the United States, I spent lots of time near forests that were actually wooded wetlands because much of the year the rains drained into these lowland areas and transformed them into lots of wooded islands for dozens of miles that were inaccessible unless I were to get very wet and risk running into moccasins or a rare alligator. However, I remember often looking deep within those trees until I could finally not distinguish one from the other, and often contemplating (though even then I knew better) the possibilities of finding some way to wade-walk through all those wet islands, and I would ponder what would await me there. What if somewhere deep in that country I might find Robin Hood and his outlaws? What if I came across there a landing party of Long John Silver or Captain Nemo? Or some other sublime phenomena that would never

make a good story, but something that could captivate any human experience at a moment's notice—the same way Rat and Mole in *The Wind and the Willows* are captivated by the music of Pan so much so that Rat feels simultaneous joy and pain of hearing such wonder, and knowing that such a sound is only momentary and will never be heard again.

Green frequently draws on our innate human notion of the possible to complete his adaptations of legends, and he uses this to fill in the gaps whenever he perceives that 'escape' is lacking in the traditional narrative. However, I believe that further study and examination of The Inklings such as Charles Williams and Owen Barfield in the contexts of the literary theories and fiction of Green, Lewis, and Tolkien can reveal that this notion of the 'possible' and our human yearning to reach beyond the actual is the broader philosophy (or at least the thin common thread) of this important group of writers. Indeed, such a concept might be what sets the Inklings most squarely against their contemporaries who were part of the 'Lost Generation' of writers whose ideas of the 'possible' might be best typified in the final words of Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*: "Isn't it pretty to think so." Indeed, aside from the pleasure of reading some of Green's fiction and retellings, further study of his work can help us to understand the Inklings better as a countercultural literary movement.



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The Journal

Roger Lancelyn Green and the Possibilities of Literature

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Selected books from our Ebay shop: <http://stores.ebay.co.uk/Festival-Art-and-Books>

Rare Tolkien Books and Art					
	J.R.R. Tolkien, The Hobbit 1st Edition to 10th Impressions, w/ original jackets 10 Books- The Hobbit J.R.R. Tolkien 1937 1st Edition + GBP 49,995.00 <i>Buy It Now</i> Time Left: 11d 05h 44m		Tolkien Themed, Gandalf and the Balin, Original Painting by Rodney Matthews, GBP 16,995.00 <i>Buy It Now</i> Time Left: 11d 10h 51m		J.R.R. Tolkien, The Hobbit, 4th overall impression, 1946 GBP 995.00 <i>Buy It Now</i> Time Left: 18d 10h 08m
	J.R.R. Tolkien, The Lord of the Rings, First Edition Set, Impressions 1, 1, 1 GBP 11,750.00 <i>Buy It Now</i> Time Left: 23d 22h 07m		J.R.R. Tolkien, The Hobbit, 2nd impression, 1937, w/ original jacket! GBP 8,600.00 <i>Buy It Now</i> Time Left: 11d 06h 58m		J.R.R. Tolkien, The Lord of the Rings, 1951 box set GBP 795.00 <i>Buy It Now</i> Time Left: 14d 13h 14m
	J.R.R. Tolkien, The Hobbit, 3rd overall impression, 1942, w/ original jacket! GBP 5,600.00 <i>Buy It Now</i> Time Left: 18d 07h 12m		J.R.R. Tolkien, The History of Middle-earth, 1st, Vols 1-12 GBP 3,695.00 <i>Buy It Now</i> Time Left: 17d 12h 17m		J.R.R. Tolkien, Set For a Fall, A Pair of Original Oil Painting by Joe Gilronan GBP 695.00 <i>Buy It Now</i> Time Left: 13d 22h 06m
	J.R.R. Tolkien, The Lord of the Rings, First Edition Set, Impressions 2, 2, 2 GBP 3,295.00 <i>Buy It Now</i> Time Left: 14d 03h 02m		J.R.R. Tolkien, Fellowship of the Ring, 1955, 3rd impression proof, rare GBP 2,595.00 <i>Buy It Now</i> Time Left: 20d 08h 34m		J.R.R. Tolkien, The Lord of the Rings, 1959 box set GBP 850.00 <i>Buy It Now</i> Time Left: 20d 12h 36m
	J.R.R. Tolkien Theme, Smaug, Original Painting by Rodney Matthews GBP 2,595.00 <i>Buy It Now</i> Time Left: 18d 09h 26m		J.R.R. Tolkien, The Lord of the Rings 1955 Set, First Edition Impressions 4, 2, 1 GBP 2,495.00 <i>Buy It Now</i> Time Left: 5d 00h 01m		J.R.R. Tolkien, Anduin The Great River, Original Oil Painting by Joe Gilronan GBP 695.00 <i>Buy It Now</i> Time Left: 20d 09h 04m
	J.R.R. Tolkien, The Hobbit, 3rd overall impression.		J.R.R. Tolkien, The Lord of the Rings, 1/2.		J.R.R. Tolkien, The Ring Goes South.



Alex Lewis chats to artist Joe Gilronan



I believe you were born and raised in Chester, an old Roman city - how do you think your home surroundings have influenced you

art, especially in respect to the Tolkien art?

I have been very fortunate in that I have always lived amongst amazing scenery—Chester with its rich Roman heritage and its proximity to North Wales, in particular the Snowdonia National Park, the plains of Cheshire, and now Andalusia in Southern Spain. The landscape around me combined with Tolkien's writing has and always will remain the greatest influence on my work. I always try and find the magical in real and you will often find mountains, rivers, castles and the like from my surroundings turning up in my finished works.

When did you begin to draw, and how did you hone your skills and improve professionally?

For as long as I can remember, I have always found it

easier to express my thoughts through art rather than words. I make an effort to produce work on a daily basis even if it's just a child like sketch or a doodle, it's something I have always done.

You now live in Spain - does that influence your art? I am thinking in terms perhaps of the special light one seems to get there as well as surroundings.

The light in Spain is amazing in its clarity, but more importantly we average 320 days of sun a year; and as I only ever paint in natural light this has allowed me to be far more productive. Andalusia and its landscape is awe inspiring, it's just so big and is often referred to as a mini-continent, you can't help but be inspired.

Apart from Tolkien, what else have you illustrated and how does that differ to the work on Tolkien's world?

I have never thought of myself as an illustrator but an artist and before turning my whole attention to Tolkien I painted all sorts of things ranging from traditional landscapes to huge abstract pieces.

How important is J.R.R. Tolkien to your artistic creativity and when did you first come across the



Gandalf and Fireworks

Hobbit and Lord of the Rings?

Tolkien is everything to my work and it's the only subject that I am truly happy painting. I first encountered Tolkien through a reading of The Hobbit on a very famous BBC children's program called Jackanory; I was hooked straight away. However, my mother is adamant that it all started in the womb, she was reading The Lord of the Rings whilst carrying me.

You work in oils - can you give us an idea of what makes you choose that medium for your illustration? Do you use other media too?

I work mainly in oils as this is what my father used before me, he had a successful career as a landscape painter and I just sort of followed suit. I am at ease with most mediums including acrylic, clay, or whatever is to hand, so long as I am creating I am happy.



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If you had a chance to illustrate any Tolkien work that you have not as yet tackled, which one would it be?

My goal is to paint the whole of TLOTR followed by The Hobbit. If, and its a big if, I would like to explore The Silmarillion.

What else are you working on, and any exciting projects you have ahead?

I constantly paint and presently my full focus is on The Fellowship Of The Ring. I have several publishing firms interested in printing my work and next year should see my work featuring in a number of publications.

To receive a catalogue of this artist or further information please contact markfaith@festivalartandbooks.com

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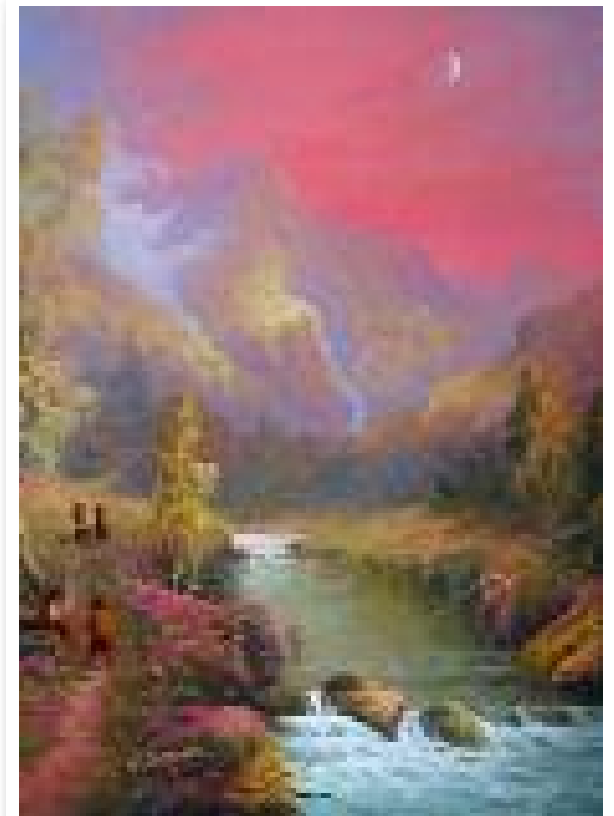
Interview with Joe Gilronan



Minas Tirith



Grey Havens



No Time for a Pipe



The 2012 Tolkien Calendar by Cor Blok

This is the second Tolkien calendar by this artist, and I've already said a good deal about his style and the problems which it may cause for some viewers as well as its potential to enlarge understanding among both modern-art lovers and Tolkien fans. I'd urge anyone who missed last year's reviews to look them up, as I'm not planning to go over the same ground again.

January: Isengard. In many ways this is an atmospheric and evocative work, using softly shaded yet subtly dissonant colours to suggest something askew in this landscape. Its balanced 'spot' composition is an unusual achievement for a modern Western artist, but perhaps not so surprising in someone who admires Mondrian as well as mediaeval art. However, sloppy paintwork mars some areas, the hills especially, where marks which can be read as snow are neither overtly descriptive in the mode of the rest of the image, nor possessed of enough calligraphic strength to work as abstracts. Overall, to a British eye this piece is distinctly Lowry-esque – and in the associations of that style with industrial wasteland, none the worse for the suggestions that brings.

February: The Company Attacked by Wolves. An awkward cross between post-Renaissance and mediaevalist-flat perspectives will make this hard to 'read' for many viewers, the suggestions of space

conflicting and producing unintended effects. The wolves are not emphatic enough to carry the composition as they appear intended to, but I do wonder if this may be due to change of pigments with age over the dark ground – far more experienced artists than Cor Blok was when he painted this have been undone by that problem. For myself I feel that the dark ground needed stronger crosslighting in reproduction to bring out subtleties now apparent only on very close examination in good light. On the positive side, this piece shows what Cor Blok can do in handling paint, as all its brush-drawing is applied with strength and verve. In potential, and perhaps at first in fact, this piece can be compared with the near-monochrome 'night scenes' of Early Renaissance artists from the Low Countries such as the brothers Limbourg, of the Trés Riche Heures du Duc de Berry.

March: Gandalf Relates his Adventures. It takes time and a close look to understand the innovative elements of this picture. Like a historiated initial in a mediaeval book, Gandalf becomes his own adventures, the outline of the figure containing several episodes of the story he retells to Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli. Narrative is expressed without theatricality, story unfolds within one scene with minimal repetition of figures – it's beautifully done. This is combined with taut placing of all the figures

on Blok's usual delicately shaded 'emotive cloud' ground to create a strong overall composition. Cor Blok's work often defies his own ideas about the necessity of pictorial art making its point to a single glance, and this is definitely a case in point. Simple as this picture seems, it richly repays close and thoughtful examination, reading as well as looking. It's one of my favourites in this calendar.

April: Tom Bombadil to the Rescue. From the sublime to the ridiculous... The single-colour background has perhaps just not reproduced well, but as it appears here it completely lacks the enjoyable subtleties which Blok's complex technique can lend to an image, relieving expanses of plain colour without distracting the eye. This just looks flat. Space is neither mapped nor represented. The composition, if there is one, is just woeful, artistically limp and narratively barely sufficient. I suspect that many viewers will find this lacks all emotional tension, since what the figurework lacks is conspicuously not made up for by the other elements. The problems are compounded by sheer sloppiness in the paintwork. Old Man Willow is bad enough, and is pushed into the 'background' by something which I would guess is supposed to be riverside vegetation, but ends up as pure scrawl with neither descriptive nor abstract force.



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I've talked about this before, and it may be worth taking this chance to explain a little. Talking about something so visual is difficult, so I'll try to suggest examples you can follow up. Brushwork can be descriptive without being realist; that was the key insight of the Impressionists. Look carefully and closely (in the original if you possibly can, at original size if not) at a work by Morisot or, more familiarly, Monet, and you'll see what I mean. Gestural brushwork of this sort was one of the post-Second-World-War discoveries which took abstract art in new directions with the likes of De Kooning and Franz Kline. These Abstract Expressionists used the mark, the brushstroke, for its abstract value first, its descriptive worth second if at all. They also drew on the rich resources of East Asian art, which in China and its neighbours had long since elevated calligraphic brushwork to levels which the West barely imagines. This area also has a long history of maintaining minimal descriptiveness alongside the compositional and painterly virtues which we associate with abstract art. Try looking up Hsia Kuei and Yü-chien's versions of the same subject, Mountain Market in Clearing Mist (and check their dates for a real surprise...). Brushmarks expressing snow on hill, as in January of this year's calendar, could very well be descriptive in the way the Impressionists pioneered, or decoratively strong in the manner of Japanese artists such as Ogata Korin, or as abstractly forceful as Yü-chien's. If none of the

above apply, if instead there are weak, wandering lines (often prone to creating Rorschach-blot unintentional extra imagery), that's what I call sloppy paintwork.

Overall, this is one of the ones I like least. It looks as if it has been dashed off without sufficient thought or care, and ends up merely clumsy.

May: The Journey Through Lórien. This is an unusual scene, one whose possibilities are well brought out by this fine picture. It successfully balances decorative splendour, painterly verve and narrative communication. I'd like to know how the original scale of this piece compares to that of others in this calendar – it feels markedly larger, in concept as much as execution. There are definite echoes of the late-19th-century artist Gustav Klimt, but his overdone Byzantinism has here been hauled under control by an eye trained on the landscapes of the Northern Renaissance, to markedly good effect. This is one of my favourite pictures in this calendar.

June: The Night at the Prancing Pony. Startling to a first glance, the roofless isometric projection employed in this image is in fact a classic Japanese illustrative technique, going all the way back to early 12th century Heian-era narrative handscrolls. Here, it's used with a sure hand to create 'space cells' within which several sequential events happen simultaneously. The composition is good, the narrative aspect is well-handled, and the rich

colourings are well-chosen to reinforce divisions in space, time and emotion. I suspect that this picture will deeply confuse many viewers, which is a pity. Live with this one, let it explain itself, and I do think that you will come to appreciate it.

Middle Page: A Tolkien Tapestry. This montage brings together small versions of many of Cor Blok's paintings inspired by The Lord of the Rings. As a single image, they blend into an awesome near-abstract mass, a flickering geometric colour-array which begs comparison with Mondrian's transitional works, hovering between the naturalism of his early years and the pure abstraction of his best-known later paintings. The text is in some ways useful, reminding us that all these paintings are the result of a staggering outburst of creativity over a very short period of time. However some of its assertions are less certain than it makes out. As a matter of fact, I know of at least one other 'multiple work' on this scale inspired by J.R.R. Tolkien's writings, Paul Gregory's polyptych containing 61 individual images, one for each chapter of The Lord of the Rings. It's also risky to say that many of the scenes chosen are unique representations. It would take very close and careful research to prove such a point. The limitations of publication have meant that even work by professional artists is not always widely known. As, indeed, the fate of Cor Blok's own work, only coming to light now some fifty years after its making, shows us.



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July: At the Ent-House. The idea of abstracted trees is a good one, but I am unsure about the execution here. Also, why is Treebeard in the classic one-leg-straight, one-knee-bent, arms-at-head pose of a reclining Venus (as seen in everybody from Titian's Venus of Urbino to Manet's Olympia and beyond)? It's a ludicrous visual 'quote', wildly out of place and character. The dark background is atmospherically effective, but as elsewhere, I'm starting to have worries about its effect on overlying paint after even this relatively short length of time. We may come to be very glad that these works were properly recorded now. Overall this is an awkward piece, hard to judge.

August: Kheled-Zaram. I really like this one. It's a delicately atmospheric work, quiet and reflective in more than its imagery, realised with near-abstract means which are nonetheless precisely expressive. The figures do exactly what is needed, no more and no less, carrying the narrative and adding to rather than detracting from the formal and emotional qualities of the painting. It's one of my favourites in this calendar.

September: The Encampment at Dunharrow. The idea and the form are interesting, making good use of a classic Chinese landscape format to convey a deeply awkward narrative which Western perspective finds hard to handle. The balance between realist and flat perspectives is well-handled. However, the picture is badly let down by the critical midsection of rockface, which is lamentably lacking in strength

and expression. It's hard to be sure of the cause of the awkward cropping at the top – it could just be a publishing mistake. As things stand, the result is to make a critical area look weak and unfinished. The lines of the mountain lack the force required to suggest continuation beyond the edge of the image, and the surrounding 'distant hills' are cramped and airless. For me, this comes very close to being a really good painting, but it falls awkwardly short.

October: Grima Dismissed. I'm sure this is not supposed to be funny, but to British eyes it has distinct comic verve. Gandalf, Théoden and company are the boot-faced 'straight men' while the almost dancing figure of Grima spits with a remarkable exaggerated force. This is another piece where I have to wonder if the image is already suffering with time; the 'sun' at top right lacks all compositional force as it stands, but the presence of brighter pigment atop the 'wrinkles' suggests deterioration.

November: the Watchers. The dark, sombre atmospherics of this picture are so exaggerated as to make it hard to read – is that Sam climbing over a rock at the bottom, or not? It also seems to suffer from reproduction below size, with detail in areas such as the Watchers themselves being lost to all but close examination. Also, like November: The Forbidden Pool in last year's calendar, it is very much 'of its time', in a style not easily evaluated now. It's very easily read as a 'Cold War' piece, with its

Kremlin-like blank red wall, dark, dank atmosphere and grim no-frills architecture. I can't say I particularly like this one, though I have to admit that may change on longer acquaintance. This is in many ways a well-composed, well-painted and evocative piece which deserves the fairer judgment that only time can bring.

December: The Destruction of the Ring. The startling 'game of two halves' compartmented composition of this painting allows dramatic use of simultaneous narrative. I happen to really like it, but it's going to confuse an awful lot of viewers. This is for me a highly ambitious painting let down by woefully sloppy paintwork. Uncontrolled marks scrawled onto the paper have no abstract expressive force of their own and too frequently create unintended humorous images either in their own positive line, or in the negative spaces they contain. (For example, in the lower left of the right-hand 'outside' compartment, the shadowy form of that great Scots bogey-beast the Wild Hairy Haggis looms over the shoulder of Mount Doom, complete with bag-pipes...) Sam is reduced beyond even Cor Blok's norm to an R2-D2-like expressionless blob, while Gollum's victory capers make him look as if he's been connected to the electrical mains circuit. If this came with 'Sketch' – or even, dare I say it, 'Impression' – prefixed to its title, I would cheerfully allow it considerable value as an inspired shorthand essay. It certainly suggests what could be done in this style,



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with this subject. But as this stands, for me it's a valiant failure.

In the Introductory Essay to this calendar, Cor Blok restates several points about J.R.R. Tolkien's opinion of illustration and the nature of his own art which were made before, a necessary concession to this being a 'second instalment'. I'm not going to look at this in detail here, as I have recently written a long essay on J.R.R. Tolkien's attitudes to illustration, their sources and their changes over time, as well as their potential implications for us today. That essay will soon be posted on the website of The Tolkien Library, if it has not already appeared there. One point though is I think worth picking up here.

Whoever was behind Cor Blok's comment that 'My pictures to accompany the saga of the Ring, at least, are not intended as sources of information about 'what things looked like (or might have looked like) in reality', in the sense that one goes to ancient Egyptian paintings to find out what ancient Egyptians looked like...', was seriously wrong in thinking that such a 'reality' can be shown for The Lord of the Rings at all. J.R.R. Tolkien himself made that impossible, by his fiction of the book as a translation, whose origin is a 'found manuscript'. This creates a situation wherein we are told that the real names of people and places are often not used, and that other names have been substituted. These occupy the same relation to each other that the real ones do, and their connotations are expected to be

recognisable to the reader as the originals would not be. So the 'imagined reality' which Cor Blok speaks of is already removed within the text, replaced by verbal imagery which the 'translator' expects us to understand and appreciate – verbal 'illustration', in effect. This is a strange idea indeed, a narrative strategy at odds with any simple understanding of The Lord of the Rings as either medieval romance or modern novel, or as a hybrid of the two. The critic might complain that it's an afterthought – but it's an afterthought by the author. It's a deliberate move to affect our understanding of the text now, regardless of (indeed radically separating it from) the process by which it was created. It was present from the beginning of the book's public existence in the very different First Edition Foreword, and it was expanded in the complexities of the Second Edition Foreword and Prologue. It's true that even a commentator as insightful and sympathetic as Tom Shippey has not always understood this strategy. If however you engage with the book, if you suspend disbelief and play along creatively for a while, then the facts and their implication become obvious.

This idea of 'translation' immediately interposes a veil between us and any supposed 'underlying reality' of the text. Our author tells us that we don't have the original, only a translation, and one which substitutes material that we are expected to understand and respond to, in place of the unfamiliar, alien and unreadable. 'Reality' here, in fact, is a concept as

dangerously slippery as the fish in the guarded pool of Henneth Annun. All the artist can ever do is to create a set of visual equivalences to that verbal translation. Begging Cor Blok's pardon for stating the obvious, style is the least important part of that process. What to my mind does count is the ability of the artist to create a clear, consistent and readable set of visual 'symbols', whether virtually photorealistic or ideographically abstract, that sit alongside the text and remind the viewer of that background pattern of relations and differences, just as the author's 'fiction of translation' does verbally. This is often information that is given once and not again, easily forgotten through the span of reading a long and complex tale. For instance, by the time we actually arrive in Gondor in The Return of the King, most readers are not even physically in the same volume as the description of Boromir, back at the Council of Elrond in The Fellowship of the Ring. It is also information that a reader may not pick up on, if they don't have the background which J.R.R. Tolkien expected us to share. The artist/illustrator can usefully restate it in the very different mode of visual communication, to help readers take in an event in its full complexity – the classic 'complementary information-provision' function of visual imagery alongside verbal text.

I would go so far as to say that it doesn't even really matter which set of visual translations we use, as long as they signal consistently the connections and



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differences that are an important part of the story. On the one hand, a narrow view of 'truth to the author' might suggest we 'should' keep to Tolkien's set of 'translations' – the familiar pattern of c.18th century hobbits, 5th/6th century Germanic Rohirrim, and 5th/6th century Late Antique Mediterranean for Gondor. On the other hand, practically nothing in the verbal descriptions within LotR actually gives us any idea of style. We recreate things according to our ability and knowledge (or lack thereof). As readers and especially as re-readers, we are continually applying imagery derived from our wider understanding of this book, to the story within it. Since we are 'translating' anyway, as soon as we step outside the references the author uses, any visual code that maintains the necessary set of connections and differences will do. We need not stick to Western history and art as a source; we need not even keep to any historically inspired style at all.

There is a long and honourable tradition in art of using 'conventional' figuration to represent persons and events. There's no reason why we should not do the same in creating art inspired by J.R.R. Tolkien's works, whether intended for the wall or the book, and there might be very good reasons to do so. Pauline Baynes' figures in her illustrations of J.R.R. Tolkien's books wear 'medieval' dress with no thought of accuracy of period, but a good deal of specificity to character. We do not get the information to say 'this is how it must have been'; we

do get enough information to recognise what is happening and who is involved – a whole different matter. Cor Blok himself did this, usually with considerable success. It need not though be restricted to such a style. Even remarkably 'realist' figures can be conventionalised in this way, their overriding 'unreality' signalled by costume which is recognised as of no time or place. It's true that we in the 21st century are thoroughly out of practice at painting and viewing such images, but it might well be something we could usefully reclaim from the past. No doubt any art-historically minded reader will gasp if I mention Cor Blok's Journey through Lorien and Claude Lorraine's mythographies in the same breath – but they are actually doing the same job with the same means. Why not pick that idea up and run with it, rather than getting bogged down in a fruitless debate over 'reality' and realism?

So, overall, what do I think? This calendar reinforces powerfully the point which I made last year – that Cor Blok's art is a standing rebuke to anyone who thinks that narrative and modern art don't go, or that 'fantasy art' is made up only of virulent sub-Hollywood realism. This is about as different as it gets, for both sides – and therefore, no doubt, it'll be driving a lot of people crazy. But I'd like to suggest you try very hard indeed to swallow your doubts, live with this calendar, and let it talk to you over the year. Weird as this art may well seem, at its best it has evocativeness, visual power and narrative strength.

When it fails, it does so challengingly; the worst pieces still drive us to imagine what might be. These paintings are, more clearly than ever, the work of a young artist in the throes of a truly remarkable outburst of creativity. If Cor Blok's reach sometimes exceeded his ability, well, that's how we learn. I can fully understand him not wanting to revisit this material, but nevertheless I do think that it's a great pity that in all likelihood, we'll never see what a mature Cor Blok could make of some of the many ideas he touched on in this body of work. The potential for development is obvious, and the results could be awesomely good.

To finish, let me quote myself from the 2011 calendar by the same artist, for I think this judgment still stands: 'This calendar is... likely to be as widely misread as admired. It is also by far the most challenging, interesting, and indeed inspiring calendar we've had for a long time.'

It is well worth having for itself, as a fine group of images from a strikingly unusual body of work. And I really do hope that Cor Blok's work will not stand alone for long. If this and the previous calendar start a new trend towards innovation in style and approach, in art inspired by J.R.R. Tolkien's works, we will all be the winners.

Ruth Lacon, B.A., B.Sc.

This review has appeared in revised form on the Tolkien Library.



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Interview with Tim Kirk

Interview with Tim Kirk

Tim Kirk produced artwork for the official Tolkien calendars some years ago, and is well known as working with Disney on various projects. It is therefore a real pleasure to be able to interview Tim for our readers – and to get to know more about his art and ideas and how he relates to the work of J.R.R. Tolkien.



Riddle Game

Where do you live and does that place influence your art style?

I'm a third generation native of Long Beach, California, and have lived here for most of my life (with brief stays in Wisconsin, Missouri and Colorado).

I've never felt particularly influenced artistically by geography, though places I visit in my travels often provide inspiration—sometimes in ways I don't expect.

When did you begin to draw, and how did you hone your skills and improve professionally?

I've been drawing (or trying to draw!) for as long as I can remember; I was an early comic book reader (mostly Disney—Donald Duck, etc.), and I wanted to tell stories with pictures, just like those comics. I still have several drawing tablets that my mother saved from that period of my life (when I was

4-7 years old), filled with adventure stories involving Mickey Mouse, pirates, aliens and dinosaurs. I drew and doodled constantly, everywhere and on anything. I took any art classes that were offered in primary, middle school and high school, and took art and illustration as my major in college, graduating with a master's degree in illustration.

As my career has progressed, I've branched out into other fields that my visual storytelling skills are useful for---particularly theme park and museum exhibit design. I was an employee of Walt Disney Imagineering for 22 years, and since 2002 I—and our company, Kirk Design Inc.---have been working for the Disney Company on a contract basis. One of the most enjoyable projects I've been involved with in the last 10 years (a non-Disney project) was the Science Fiction Museum and Hall of Fame in Seattle, Washington. I also worked on a Warner Brothers based theme park in the Middle East.

What acts as an inspiration for your artistic creativity?

An artist can derive inspiration from almost





Festival Art
and Books

anything: a book, a museum visit, a film, a landscape, a conversation, a dream (though I rarely get much useful imagery from those!) ...when I have a commission for a specific subject, I do a lot of research; I study the work of other artists and illustrators- composition, color, ways of rendering a surface or texture, etc. I begin a project as thoroughly prepared as possible.

How long does it take for you to complete a work usually?

The length of time it takes to complete a piece of art varies considerably. A simple black and white sketch or cartoon may take only a few minutes, if I have a good, useable idea; a color illustration may take weeks, and I have to balance and plan my time carefully when I have several projects going at once.

Apart from Tolkien, you have illustrated other fantasy authors. How does that differ to the work on Tolkien's world?

I treat every author I illustrate---Professor Tolkien, Lord Dunsany, H.P. Lovecraft, Mervyn Peake, C.S. Lewis, Ray Bradbury---with an equal measure of respect and careful attention. In all cases, I'm trying with my art to build and add to the level of (imagined) reality the author has established with his or her prose.....and I try to be as true as possible to my perception of what the author is really trying to say; to the inner spirit of the work.

The Journal

Interview with Tim Kirk

How important is J.R.R. Tolkien to your artistic creativity and when did you first come across the Hobbit and Lord of the Rings?

I first read Tolkien's work when I was in high school, in the 11th grade, as I recall — at a friend's recommendation. I was immediately hooked! I can truthfully say that reading "The Lord of the Rings" was a major factor in my deciding to spend my life as an illustrator and designer.

How long have you been illustrating Tolkien's imagined worlds?

As I read Tolkien's books (I was 16 or 17 at the time), I started doing illustration—sketches and, later, ink drawings for fanzines, trying to pin down my own impressions based on Tolkien's very vivid descriptions of characters, geography and events. For my master's thesis project in college, I did a series (more than twenty-five) of paintings illustrating "The Hobbit" and the Trilogy. I exhibited these paintings at a science fiction convention in Los Angeles, where they were seen by Ian and Betty Ballantine of Ballantine Books. Thirteen of these paintings were published as the Ballantine J.R.R. Tolkien calendar for 1975.

Was the calendar you produced pieces for a different kind of challenge to, say, book illustration?

I did my master's thesis paintings as if they were



Gandalf and Bilbo

intended for book publication, though I wasn't hoping for that at the time. The thesis paintings were done purely as an exploration of Tolkien's imagined world, and as a way for me to visualize it. When I actually illustrate for books or magazines, I have to take into account the publisher's needs: page size and format, printing process, deadlines, and so on.



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The Journal

Interview with Tim Kirk

What materials do you work in when painting art and illustrations?

I use pencil, pen and ink, acrylic paint, water colors and oils. I haven't switched over to digital illustration to any great extent—the available digital art programs still don't seem to me to be a significant improvement over more traditional media, and they don't feel intuitive enough. Digital art is simply one more tool – a good one – for the artist.

For those readers who have artistic aspirations of their own, what would you suggest they should do to improve or even to try and become professional illustrators themselves?

Being an artist has never been an easy way to make a living, but it can be done. For anyone who wants to become a commercial artist, the most fundamental advice I can give is to draw, draw, draw. Art is, at the most basic level, learning to see the world in a very intimate way. Learn to see objects as they really exist in space, and to render them. Study the work of other artists you admire. Don't depend on digital tricks or short cuts to do the job for you! Understand your subject from the inside out. Find your own style, and your own vision; don't slavishly imitate anime, manga, street art or whatever other artistic flavor-of-the-month is currently in vogue. Believe in yourself, and what you have to offer. Follow your passion; and never, never give up!

If you had a chance to illustrate any Tolkien work that you have not as yet tackled, which one would it be?

There are still a lot of Tolkien subjects I would love to explore—especially some of the smaller moments; I find them as appealing as the huge battles and cataclysmic events: Sam in his garden; Strider's first meeting with the hobbits in the Prancing Pony; the Barrow Downs...things like that.

Which artists or illustrators have influenced you and your style?

As I mentioned earlier, I was a big fan of Disney comic books at an early age. The best of these comics – stories of adventure featuring Donald Duck and his stingy, very wealthy uncle, Scrooge McDuck – were written and drawn by an artist named Carl Barks. I didn't learn his name until many years later; to me, he was simply the “good duck artist,” instantly distinguishable for his graphic skill and humor from all of the other Disney artists. So, Barks was my first great influence. As I grew older, I was deeply affected by the illustrators of the so-called “Golden Age” of illustration—a period that extended roughly from the

mid-1800's to 1940 or so. Artists such as N.C. Wyeth, Arthur Rackham, Sidney Sime, Howard Pyle, W. Heath Robinson, Aubrey Beardsley and Gustave Dore' became my mentors, and my imaginative focus; I always gravitated toward illustrators who

were strong storytellers and possessed distinctive styles. I have a number of favorites in contemporary (and recent) illustration, including Edd Cartier, Lee Brown Coye, Hannes Bok, Donato Giancola, George Barr, Michael Whelan, Alicia Austin, Charles Vess and Brian Froud. I'm a great admirer of the work of the brilliant Japanese animator, Hayao Miyazaki. And, of course, I'm a huge fan of Peter Jackson and the Weta Workshop!

What will you be working on next?

I've been working with Walt Disney Imagineering for the last year and a half on their new theme park for Shanghai, scheduled to open in 2015. I also have a couple of upcoming book projects, including one involving H.P. Lovecraft, and another about an event that occurred during the latter part of World War II.

I have been extremely fortunate in my career—in the projects I've had, and the people I've had the privilege of working with..... I have a lot to be thankful for.

Well, Tim, it has been a real pleasure interviewing you, and many thanks for taking the time to answer our questions.

To receive a catalogue of this artist or further information please contact markfaith@festivalartandbooks.com



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The Journal

Poem by Peter Kenny

The Last Lady of Numenor

Poem by Peter Kenny

From a dying Numenor you escaped,
With family, friends and the faithful;
To a new land, a new life, a new beginning.
But The Shadow was never far behind
Pursuing your family with great hate,
Bringing with it war, tragedy and grief.
In time The Shadow would be lifted,
The Dark Lord Sauron would be vanquished;
With joy and hope a New Age soon began,
At long last free people were rejoicing.

In fair Imladris you then dared to dream
Of a bright future that would come to be.
On your face lines of grief did soon recede,
In your eyes the light of joy could be seen.
The proudest of mothers you did become,
When friends talked and laughed with your youngest
son.
He soon accepted his grandfather's crown.
And Valandil ascended Arnor's throne.
With joy and hope a New Age soon began,
At long last free people were rejoicing.

A new light would now shine on the future,
A new light that would shine for many years,
With your rare gifts of wisdom and foresight,
You, fair lady, started that lasting light.
Late in your years and on the eve of war,
You conceived a fourth son to Isildur.
Thus the Elrosian line would prevail
And so would the kings of the Dunedain.

With joy and hope a New Age has begun,
At long last free people are rejoicing.
A new king has now ascended the throne.
King Elessar, his name means Elfstone.
Isildur's heir, descended from you he is,
You fair lady, the Last Lady of Numenor.

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The Journal

Loughborough August 2012

Loughborough August 2012: The Return of the Ring

This conference and get together for Tolkien fans, sponsored by the Tolkien Society, was held in the campus of Loughborough University. About 300 people from all around the world attended – I noted visitors from Japan, USA, Canada, Brazil, the Scandinavian countries and Europe as well as England. Indeed, it may well be that the overseas visitors outnumbered those from the UK!

The setting – in the James France and Edward Herbert buildings – was convenient, apart from those who had mobility issues, as getting up and down the hill between the two buildings was a bit of a trial at times. But that is a minor niggle in what was a very enjoyable 5 day event.

The speakers were much the same as those who spoke at the Festival in the Shire in August 2010 – Prof. Tom Shippey, Verlyn Flieger, Corey Olsen amongst many – though in addition Michael Tolkien the poet and grandson of J.R.R. Tolkien was there and spoke about his poetry and how it related to what his grandfather had written about in *On Fairy Stories*. Also Brian Sibley was there and many others.

The art show and sales area was large and varied – a good showing from artists old and new, as it were. Cor Blok and his wife were there with some of his art on show. Ted Nasmith's art was on display, as were

some pieces by Ruth Lacon, Sue Wookey, Jay Johnstone, and many others.

Sometimes the air conditioning in the hall seemed to be unable to cope, and over a hot weekend it did feel as though the humidity was causing problems for speakers and audiences alike in the lecture rooms. But the rooms provided were well appointed and all speakers were able to present their papers without any problems.

There were torch-lit processions in the evening on 2 nights running, and an evening of entertainments first night – though that perhaps might have better been scheduled for a later evening, as attendees seemed to be rather tired from travelling. The banquet on the Sunday night seemed to go well, and for those not eating on campus, there were many decent restaurants in the town centre to choose from.

For those wanting it, there was a whistle-stop tour of Tolkien's Oxford on the Sunday – in this case, it showed up the fact that Loughborough is not quite as well placed geographically as some places for reaching cities like Oxford.

All in all, those at the event seemed to enjoy themselves and there was a sense of fellowship and closeness and rapport built up over the five days.



In comparison to the Festival in the Shire in 2010, one would have to say that the setting of the Festival in the grandeur of Wales was difficult to match, and no one can say that Loughborough is 'beautiful', nor that a modern University campus can vie with the Snowdonia National Park, but both events were extremely well worth having and will be remembered with equal fondness in the years to come.

Was it – as some people have claimed – the best Tolkien event ever? No.

The best if you want to know it was the centenary conference in 1992 at Keble College Oxford, when we had Christopher Tolkien reading from *Lost Tales*, giving talks, and an amazing range of speakers and artists. Against that one, all the others are follow ons, in reality - but you can't bring the likes of Rayner Unwin and Carpenter back from the dead, or John Tolkien, to talk to us.



The Journal

Interview with Renee Vink

Interview – Renee Vink

Renee Vink has been involved with the Dutch Tolkien Society for many many years, and is well known internationally and highly respected as a scholar and translator. It was a real honour and pleasure to meet with her last year at the Unquendor Lustrum in Holland near Leiden, and to learn about her new book of Tolkien scholarship, on Tolkien and Wagner. We have been very fortunate to be able to interview her for the journal, and present her thoughts to our readers.

You are credited with the foundation of Unquendor, the Dutch Tolkien Society which is thriving and very vibrant. How long ago did this happen, and what does Unquendor do as a society?

To be precise, I'm co-founder together with Theo de Feber. At first the idea was to organise an overseas smial of the TS, but then we thought: why not found our own Dutch society? We had no idea if it would work, and how many people might be interested, but we decided to give it a try. So in 1981, on Bilbo and Frodo's birthday, Unquendor came to be. Writing this I suddenly feel a bit of a fossil, but our society is still going strong 31 years later. So founding it was an excellent decision, for which most of the credit goes to Theo (who, unfortunately,

is no longer active due to illness and other factors).

According to the statutes, Unquendor is supposed to 1) spread knowledge of J.R.R. Tolkien's works, 2) to provide a platform for discussion... and 3) to have fun! Nowadays the stress is mostly on 2 and, rather heavily, on 3. The members get together at the AGM in September, the Yule Feast in December (both single day events) and the Ending Feast in May or June (a whole weekend, which tends to involve lots of food & drink, talks, quizzes and if possible a camp fire with singing). Our grass root activities are the so called 'inns'. Members open their homes for fellow members for an evening or a day and read a brief, Tolkien-related paper, which is followed by a discussion and socialising, in combination with a dinner cooked by the host. We also have a yearly cycling tour, and every now and then members organise spontaneous tours to museums or even attraction parks, but on those occasions, the relationship with Tolkien is rather tenuous...

For those interested in creating a new Tolkien society somewhere in the world, have you any advice for them on how to go about it?

My most recent experience in society-founding dates back to the early 1980's - definitely the pre-internet age. So it's quite obsolete. I guess these days people

had best use internet forums.]

You are also well known as a translator - when did you start, and how did you become involved in this?

My first translation job dates back to my student days, somewhere in the late 1970's. I recall it was a Swedish thriller, long before the current hype, and I didn't particularly like the book. But I did like translating, and many books followed, often fantasy novels. Among others I translated novels by Guy Gavriel Kay, who worked with Christopher Tolkien on The Silmarillion, and George Martin's Ice & Fire books, which are currently being turned into a major TV series by HBO </commercial>.

As a translator, I didn't become involved with the Dutch publisher of Tolkien's works until the publication of The Legend of Sigurd and Gudrún; I missed The Children of Húrin, mainly because I failed to react adequately when it was first announced by HarperCollins. That I did get to translate the poems in The Legend was partly because the first person they asked declined to have his translation of the poems put side by side with





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the original - a demand made by Christopher Tolkien (He seems to put the same trust in translators as his father did in some of his letters...) I didn't mind, because I really wanted the job: it was Tolkien, and it was a wonderful challenge. Also, it was basically the same story as Wagner's Ring of the Nibelung!

Of late, I've been translating the film books of the upcoming Hobbit films, and I hope that any further Tolkien-related material to be published in the Netherlands will come my way as well.

When did you first come across Tolkien's works, and how have they influenced and affected you?

When I was fourteen, my best friend got the Dutch translation of The Lord of the Rings as a birthday present. She started telling me the story during our daily cycle rides from home to school and back, but at some point I thought: Wait a minute, I want to read this for myself! So I took all the pocket money I had, washed my father's car to earn some more. In the end I had just enough to be able to buy all three volumes simultaneously. By the time Gandalf and Pippin got to Minas Tirith I had caught up with my friend, but we agreed I wouldn't tell her how things ended.

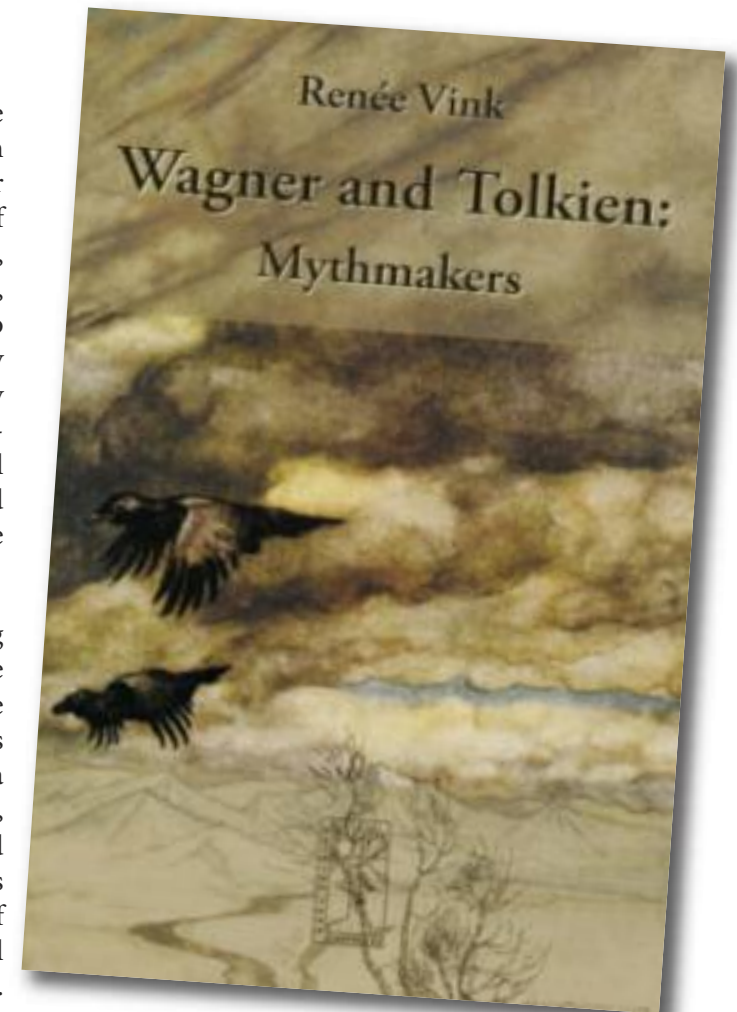
It was the reading experience of a lifetime - and at a crucial moment of my development, in early adolescence. This was exactly the kind of stuff I'd loved when I was younger, but LotR had a much

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Interview with Renee Vink

more mature approach and tone than any of those kids' books. It came just at a time when my childish imagination had to be transformed onto a higher plane, or shrivel. I didn't want to become one of those unimaginative adults I saw all around me, who seemed to have only one world to live in, instead of dozens. LotR showed me I'd be able to grow, to cope with the adult world in a mature way while still retaining those vast spaces inside my mind. Also, what was at stake felt truly important - there was a suggestion of real danger, inward as well as outward. It wasn't just make-belief. Finally, it had depth, which made it incredibly real, in a way more real than reality.

For many years, this remained the kind of reading experience I was looking for, and Real Literature didn't interest me all that much. Somehow over the years this changed, and I came to appreciate authors who are more mainstream, though often with a touch of the fantastic, the extraordinary, like Borges, Eco, Murakami, Auster, García Márquez and Saramago. And I've grown to like good thrillers quite a lot, too, especially Scandinavian ones, of which I've translated a number, but also historical mysteries, of which I've written some (in Dutch). But to me this kind of reading is an addition to works like The Lord of the Rings, it hasn't replaced them. There have been periods in my life when Tolkien only hovered in the background. But he never disappeared.



When did you start doing research and studies into the works of Tolkien, and what made you begin?

When we founded the Dutch Tolkien Society, one of



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Interview with Renee Vink

my requirements was that we would publish a fanzine of our own, Lembas. I became the first editor, and to give the 'zine some substance, I started to write articles and verses). As I recall, in the second issue I briefly compared one of the poems of the Rohirrim with a stanza from the Eddic lay Völuspá. After a while, as I began to read the emerging secondary literature on Tolkien and his works, the articles became more elaborate. When it dawned on me that his works could be approached in an academic way, these articles acquired footnotes and references. My first serious paper was written for the Lembas memorial issue of 1983, ten years after the Professor's death, for which I managed to find a real publisher. Believe it or not, it was about Tolkien and Wagner! Not too well-researched, especially not the part on Wagner, but this shows that my preoccupation with the subject of my book is really ancient.

Here in Britain Tolkien was voted author of the twentieth century. How important is J.R.R. Tolkien to literature in your opinion?

In the Netherlands the reading public voted The Lord of the Rings Best Book Ever Translated Into Dutch, to the chagrin of the literary establishment, which still fails to see the importance and the possibilities of fantasy literature. Tolkien gave an enormous impulse, not just to fantasy, but to reading itself. Harry Potter has been claimed to have done this, but I don't think he has sent back his readership to older literary genres, to myth, saga, legend, romance and

symbolism quite the way that Tolkien's works have, even though Harry may have reached a wider audience. (And of course LotR made Harry possible in the first place.)

I also feel Tolkien pulls the curtains inside people's heads aside to reveal great vista's and encourages them to explore those. I'd be surprised if the percentage of novels that contain fantastic elements isn't larger now than when LotR was first published. What Tolkien did, among other things, is showing that you could write realistic stories in an imagined world. Older fantastic literature didn't do that, which is part of the reason many people didn't like it anymore in this age of increased knowledge about the material world around us. Mentally Tolkien belonged to an older stage, yet he couldn't shed modernity, and this led to the happy marriage of the symbolical and the realistic in his world.

You have just published a book on Tolkien and Wagner - how did this project come about?

As I wrote previously, the subject has occupied me for a long time - from the moment my brain connected Wagner's Ring of the Nibelung with Tolkien's Lord of the Rings. I knew Wagner's music before I ever read Tolkien, as my mother played records of it when I was a toddler (much like Stephen Fry's mother did), but it wasn't until I started listening to records of Wagner's Ring and reading the libretti that I made the connection with Tolkien. Then I came across Tolkien's often quoted statement

about the two rings that only have their roundness in common, and I felt there was more to be said about the subject. So I wrote the article for the memorial issue to get it out of my system. For a long time this worked.

Then, twenty-five years later, in 2008, I came across Tom Shippey's article in Roots and Branches about Tolkien and Wagner, which didn't quite satisfy me. Something started churning in my mind. It came more or less to a boiling point when The Legend of Sigurd and Gudrún appeared in 2009 and I got the impression that the last part of the introduction was written to steer readers away from the comparison between Wagner and Tolkien. That was the moment when I said to myself: this demands a book! But I believe the moment would have come anyway even without this introduction, because essentially Tolkien's first poem is the same story Wagner tells in his opera cycle. The connection is too obvious to ignore.

How long has it taken you to complete the book on Tolkien and Wagner?

Between two and a half and three years: the decision to write it dates back to March 2009 and I sent the text to the publisher in late December 2011. More than a year was spent reading and making notes, so the writing itself took a year and a half. Initially, my plan was to have the book published in 2013, the upcoming Wagner year (he was born in 1813). Then I heard Christopher McLachlan was also writing a



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Interview with Renee Vink

book about the subject, and as I didn't want to lag behind too much, I sped up the writing process. Having the book available in the year of the first Hobbit film is not such a bad idea either. BTW, I've read McLachlan's book and I'm happy to say there's little overlap.

Could you explain to our readers what connections between Tolkien and Wagner you found most surprising and which where most interesting?

When you delve into it, there are surprisingly many connections: it's not just the Ring and its potential of world dominion, or a number of thematic similarities between the Ring cycle and Tolkien's epic. You've got their interest in Norse myth, and myth in general, a preoccupation with archaic language - though for Wagner this was a means rather than the end it was for Tolkien. There also is a nationalist element in both, much more sinister in Wagner than in Tolkien thanks to his own anti-Semitism and Hitler's admiration. But what I hadn't realised until I did all this in-depth reading was their mutual interest in immortality versus mortality 'and the escapes' as Tolkien puts it. Both have mortals who want to be immortal and vice versa, and both explore the problems this causes. For me, this is a very interesting theme. Another surprise was that both deplored and denounced the defilement of nature by self-seeking individuals, and that both connect this theme with that of light and darkness.

Where in Holland do you live - could you perhaps describe it for our readers to give them some idea of the area you call home?

At the moment I live in Hilversum, the town where most of our broadcasting companies are situated (I've worked for three of them as a free-lancer). It's situated in a slightly hilly landscape - not all of the country is flat - with woods and heather 20 miles southeast of Amsterdam, a part of the country that wouldn't flood even in Al Gore's worst case scenario. Hilversum has about fifty prehistoric barrows lying around largely untouched (http://www.hotspotholland.nl/noordholland_zeve_bergjes_hilversum.html), but I don't know about barrow wights... The town has lent its name to a bronze age culture (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hilversum_culture), but between then and the 20th century it has no history to speak of. The most interesting buildings were designed by the architect Dudok (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Willem_Marinus_Dudok).

I have to confess, though, that since my daughters moved out, I've been considering returning to The Hague, where I lived as a child, or to my old student town of Leiden.

Have you met any of the famous people in the Tolkien world, such as family or publishers etc.?

The most famous 'Tolkien person' I've met, as a first time attendant of the Oxonmoot, was Priscilla

Tolkien, when she still received people in her own house. She welcomed everyone personally, and we could walk around in her house and see all sorts of Tolkien-related objects. Later I met Rayner Unwin during an Unquendor dinner party in the town of Delft, in an historical establishment without any other cutlery than a knife. To my shame, I have to say I only remember his friendliness, not his actual words. For the 3rd issue of *Lembas* I interviewed the Dutch translator of *The Lord of the Rings*, Max Schuchart, as charming as Tolkien said he was in one of his letters, and in 1983 I spoke to Cees Ouboter, the representative of the bookselling firm Voorhoeve & Dietrich who had organised the Tolkien dinner in Rotterdam in 1958. He remembered, among other things, how Tolkien spontaneously translated some Dutch titles in the bookshop - one of them rhyming in English, though it didn't rhyme in Dutch!

Have you any advice for those readers who may aspire to write a book or even an article on Tolkien?

Well, I'd advise anyone aspiring to write a book to try and write a few articles first if they haven't done so yet, just to get into the habit and to find out if they've got staying power. But this is a difficult question for me, as I believe everyone has their own methods. Of course there are some basic rules: find out what has been written about your subject and don't reinvent the wheel. Once you start writing, begin with (a)



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clearly formulated question(s), if not on paper, then at least in your mind. If you don't have any, you haven't read enough yet. But don't stop reading once you've started to write. It keeps your mind from clamming up around your subject. Stay flexible; if the facts are in conflict with your ideas, change tack while you can. No foregone conclusions. Kill your darlings, especially if they lead you onto a side-track. Let others read what you've written and ask for their honest opinion. But I really have a feeling I'm stating the obvious here. Maybe one more: if you think what you've written is rubbish, leave it for a while and see if it looks better a couple of weeks (or months...) later.]

Which book or books are for you the most enjoyable out of Tolkien's works?

My favourite is The Silmarillion, though I didn't realise until my second reading what a great work this is. The first time I thought it quite off-putting. Which shows that the problem of the book is one of expectations. A friend of mine who read it first never had a problem with it.

How well does Tolkien translate into Dutch, and are there any amusing or interesting comparisons between the English and Dutch editions?

This depends so much on the book that a brief answer is impossible. But generally, it is difficult to get the tone right in Dutch, because it's less

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Interview with Renee Vink

conservative and more subject to change than English. Some things that were only slightly archaic in 1956 are practically obsolete in 2012. On the other hand, it is easier to avoid words of non-Germanic origin.

Regarding the poems in The Legend I can only say it was difficult to retain the terseness of the metre due to the fact that the number of unstressed syllables is much larger in Dutch than it is in English. Generally, the half lines have at least one syllable more in the translation than they have in the original, which means the metre of the translation tends towards *málahattr* rather than the *fornyrðislag* used by Tolkien. Also, I discovered that rhyme is easier to translate than alliterative poetry!

A possibly amusing detail for this translation was the gloss for 'wanhope' (despair) added by Christopher Tolkien. My co-translator, who did the commentary, left this out because the Dutch word is 'wanhoop'. I concurred, but the corrector of the printing proof put the gloss back, simply because it was there in the original - never mind the reason why.

What comes next for you, after this book?

Finding a Dutch publisher and translating it! And writing a mystery novel featuring a letter Tolkien wrote about Wagner which someone has been willing to kill for... ;)

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The Journal

Merton College Oxford: A Description

Merton College Oxford: A Description

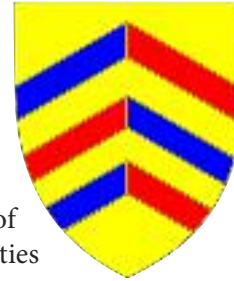
Merton College is one of the original constituting colleges of Oxford University. Its foundation goes back to the 1260s when Walter de Merton, chancellor to Henry the Third and later to Edward the First (Longshanks), first drew up the statutes for an independent academic community on the banks of the Thames and established endowments to support it. The important feature of Walter's foundation was that this college was to be self-governing and the endowments directly vested in the Warden and Fellows

In 1274 Walter retired from royal service and made his final revisions to the college statutes, and the community was consolidated at its present site in the south east corner of Oxford, and a rapid programme of building started. The hall and chapel and the rest of the front quad were complete before the end of the 13th century, but apart from the chapel they have all been much altered since that time. To most visitors, the college and its buildings are synonymous, but the history of the college can be better understood if one distinguishes the history of the academic community from that of the site and buildings that they have occupied for nearly 750 years.

The buildings

The "House of Scholars of Merton" originally had properties in as well as in Oxford, but it was not until the mid-1260s that Walter de Merton acquired the core of the present site in Oxford, along the south side of what was then St John's Street and now Merton Street. The college consolidated on this site by 1274, when Walter made his final revisions to the college statutes.

The initial acquisition included the parish church of St John (which was superseded by the chapel) and three houses to the east of the church and now form the north range of Front Quad. Walter also obtained permission from the king to extend from these properties south to the old city wall to form an approximately square site. The college continued to buy up other properties as they became available on both sides of Merton Street. At one time the college owned all land from the site of what is now Christ Church to the south eastern corner of the city. The land to the east eventually became the present day garden, while the western end was leased by Warden Rawlins in 1515 for the foundation of Corpus Christi college.



Merton College



Location of Merton College within central
OxfordCoordinates: 51.751062°N
1.252109°W51.751062; -1.252109



The Journal

Merton College Oxford: A Description

The chapel

By the late 1280s the old church of St John the Baptist had fallen into what was described as “a ruinous condition”, and the college accounts show work on a new church began in around 1290. The present choir with its massive east window was completed by 1294. The window is an important example of how the strict geometrical conventions of the Early English Period of architecture were starting to be relaxed at the end of the 13th century. The south transept was built in the 14th century, the north transept in the early 15th., and the great tower was complete by 1450. The chapel replaced the parish church of St. John and continued to serve as parish church as well as chapel until 1891.



Merton college chapel from north of Christ Church Meadow

This is why it is commonly referred to as Merton Church in old documents, and why there is a north door into the street as well as doors into the college. This dual role likely explains the enormous scale of the chapel, which in its original design was to have a nave and two aisles extending west.

Front quad and the hall

The hall is the oldest surviving college building, but apart from the door with its magnificent medieval ironwork almost no trace of the ancient structure survived successive reconstruction phases, first by James Wyatt in the 1790s and then by Gilbert Scott in 1874 in mock Gothic style. The hall is still used daily for meals and contains a number of important

portraits as well as a bronze bust of J.R.R. Tolkien, designed by his daughter in law Faith Tolkien the sculptress. Tolkien was Merton Professor of Anglo Saxon from 1945 until his retirement in 1949. The hall is not usually open to visitors.

Front quad is probably the earliest collegiate quadrangle, but its informal, almost haphazard, pattern cannot have influenced designers elsewhere. A reminder of its original domestic purpose can be seen in the north east corner where one of the flagstones is marked "Well". The quad is formed of what would have been the back gardens of the three original houses that Walter bought in the 1260s.



Merton College and chapel seen from the north from the top of St Marys church



Merton College as seen from the other side of Christ Church Meadows to the south.



Mob quad

Visitors to Merton are often told that Mob Quad, built in the 14th century, is the oldest quadrangle of any Oxford or Cambridge college and set the pattern for future collegiate architecture, but Front Quad was certainly enclosed earlier (albeit with a less unified design) and other colleges, for example Corpus Christi College Cambridge, can point to their own older examples. The old library occupies the upper floor of the south and west ranges of Mob Quad, and the original archive room is still in the north east corner; it houses one of the most complete sets of college records in all of Europe.

Fellows' quad

The grandest quadrangle in Merton is the Fellows' Quadrangle, immediately south of the hall. The quad was the culmination of the work undertaken by Sir Henry Savile at the start of the 17th century. The foundation stone was laid on 13 September 1608, and work completed by September 1610. The southern gateway is topped with a tower of the four Orders that is probably inspired by Italian examples that Warden Savile would have seen on his European travels. The main contractors from Torkshire were also later employed to work on the Bodleian Library and Wadham College.

Other buildings

Most of the other buildings are of Victorian or later vintage and include: St. Alban Quad designed by

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Basil Champneys and built on the site of the medieval St. Alban Hall and elements of the older façade were incorporated into the portion that faces onto Merton Street; the Grove building, built in 1864 by William Butterfield and the buildings beyond the Fellows' Garden called "Rose Lane"; several buildings north of Merton Street, including a 'real tennis' court and the Old Warden's Lodgings of 1903 as well as a new quadrangle in Holywell Street, some distance away from the college.

The gardens

The garden fills the southeastern corner of the old walled city of Oxford. The walls themselves may be seen from Christchurch Meadows and are an imposing sight. Among other things, the gardens contain a mulberry tree planted early in the 17th century, an armillary sundial, a n immaculately maintained lawn, and the old Fellows' summer house which is now a music room.





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The academic community

Foundation and origins

Merton College was founded in 1264 by Walter de Merton who was Lord Chancellor and Bishop of Rochester. It claims to be the oldest college in Oxford, although this claim is disputed between Merton, Balliol and University Colleges. The basis of Merton's claim to the title of oldest College is that Merton was the first college to be provided with "statutes", a constitution governing the College set out at its founding. Merton's statutes date back to 1264, whereas neither Balliol nor University College had statutes until the 1280s. Merton was also the first to be conceived as a community of scholars working to achieve academic ends, rather than just a place for the scholars to live in.

St Alban Hall

St Alban Hall was an independent academic hall owned by the convent of Littlemore until it was purchased by Merton College in 1548 following the dissolution of the convent during the reign of Henry the eighth. It continued as a separate institution until it was finally annexed by the college in 1881.

Parliamentarian sympathies in the Civil War

During the English Civil War, Merton was the only Oxford College to side with the Parliamentarians. The reason for this was Merton's annoyance with the interference of their Visitor, the Archbishop of

Canterbury. Because of this, the college was moved to London at the start of the Civil War and its buildings commandeered by Royalists and used to house many of Charles the First's court when Oxford became the Royalists' capital. This included the King's French wife, Queen Henrietta Maria, who was quartered in or near what is now the Queen's Room, the room above the arch between Front and Fellows' Quads. Differences were quickly settled after the war, however, and a portrait of Charles the First now hangs near the Queen's Room as a reminder of the role it played in his court.

The modern academic community

In recent years, the College has become the most academically successful College in the last twenty years, with more First Class degrees being awarded to its students than Upper Seconds. Merton college admitted its first female students in 1980 - largely due to pressure from the JCR - along with other traditionalist colleges such as Christ Church and Oriel. Since this time however men have predominated at Merton and it consistently has one of the highest male to female ratios of an Oxford college (around 3:2). However Merton was the second traditionally male college to elect a female Warden in 1994. Merton has traditionally had single sex accommodation for freshers, with female students going into the Rose Lane buildings and most male students going into 3 houses on Merton Street. However, this was changed in 2007, with all fresher

accommodation being mixed. Merton has had a reputation for having the best food in Oxford since an old Mertonian left money specifically for the improvement of the kitchens, and this budget was further augmented during the two years when Crown Prince Naruhito of Japan studied there (1983-85).

Lastly and perhaps most importantly for us, Merton College was where Professor J.R.R. Tolkien moved to from Pembroke College during the second world war in 1945, to take up the Rawlinson-Bosworth Chair as Professor of English and where he remained until his retirement in 1959. If one can gain a visit to Merton College there is a bust of Professor Tolkien in bronze, sculpted by his daughter in law Faith Tolkien in the College as has been mentioned above.

With thanks to Wikipaedia for information and pictures.

Edited by Alex Lewis.



Interview with Ruth Lacon

Ruth Lacon is a rare person, combining the roles of artist and scientist – holding a degree in each – and also combining the skills of Tolkien artist with Tolkien scholar – as she has co-authored three books on Tolkien's writings so far, with a fourth in preparation. Therefore it is fascinating to discover how the combination of scientific rigour along with artistic sensibility 'sees' Tolkien's world, and how her Tolkien scholarship impinges upon her art.

Ruth, you are perhaps unusual in having both science and visual art degrees. Do you see both these backgrounds active in your work in art and in your academic writing?

Very much so. Having gone through the courses for a science degree taught me a great deal that's been of real value elsewhere. As far as academic work goes, it taught me to approach my material with both rigour and imagination. Rigour, because if I missed the obvious on my science course, even at undergraduate level, my lecturers would have had my hide! That's a very valuable discipline to bring to the Arts side, which can be – how to be polite about this? – a little less careful about making sure it has covered all the background. Imagination, because a scientist as great as Albert Einstein could say that imagination was one of the most important things

to have. You don't make real breakthroughs in science by plodding along; you make them by asking, 'Yes, but what if ...?' That's how you can learn genuinely new things, in science or in the humanities. And of course that's the great question behind all speculative art and fiction too.

On a far more basic and practical level, all that time spent on a Zoology course learning how living things are put together taught me to use reference for my art. I don't work photo-realistically, but I do like to make sure there is a level of realism there. If I draw animals, for example, I really don't feel happy unless I know I've got the right number of legs moving in the right way, and the head and body in the correct accompanying pose. Having done a lot of scientific ecology, studying how whole ecosystems are put together, has been great for world-building too – I cheerfully admit to being a world-building junkie when I write fiction. The real world has an intricate elegance that is a huge challenge to even begin to match in a fictional construct.

Do you find there is a creative interaction between your analytic work on Tolkien's writings and your art inspired by him?

Absolutely. To take one good example, there are two paintings of mine with Arthurian subjects, both of

those sprang from doing some serious work on Tolkien's last major unpublished piece, 'The Fall of Arthur'.

There are five-and-a-half lines of it in Carpenter's Biography, and a one-sentence summary of the whole thing. Trying to work out what Tolkien was doing writing in that area at all, when if we take the famous Milton Waldman letter at face value (something which I don't actually recommend – it's always worth looking a little harder) J.R.R.T. really didn't like the Arthurian legends, is tough enough. Trying to work out what might actually be in 'The Fall of Arthur' is a lot harder still. Even so, the hard, nitpicking grind of the evidence-gathering for the analytical work led me to a lot of exciting and interesting ideas. One of those was the driving force behind the making of those two pictures. 'Sir Gawain Steals the Ship Guingelot' is a picture about a tale that doesn't exist except as a construct pieced together from the real medieval legends, the information we have about The Fall of Arthur, and Tolkien's known thinking – and I've gone off and illustrated it.

Has Pauline Baynes – illustrator of Tolkien and C.S. Lewis – been an important influence on your





artwork? In a way she harks back to medieval narrative art as you seem to do, transforming it with a modern idiom.

Pauline Baynes must have been an influence somewhere along the line, because her illustrations are so much a part of Tolkien's books. Several haven't yet been illustrated by anyone else. So I knew Pauline Baynes' art from a very early age. She's never been consciously someone I tried to copy or develop from, however. By the time I became a seriously dedicated artist, there were a number of other, much more definite and more important sources for my developing style.

What or who then are some of the important influences on your illustrations?

The first important influence was certainly medieval European art. I'd been reading around in art books for many years, but one event in particular was really formative. Very early on in my Science course at Aberdeen University, our library was encouraging people to use it more. As part of that, the Special collections held an open day, and I went along. This very senior gentleman came along and asked what I would like to see, and I took a deep breath and said, 'Something about Medieval manuscripts, please.' Ten minutes later I was holding a 15th-century Book of Hours. I was totally swept away by the colour, the page design – everything. And I've never looked back. The next step was the discovery that other than

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biblical stories, there isn't much published narrative illustration in the European medieval tradition. (Note to the Bibliotheque National in Paris – will you PLEASE publish your illustrated histories and Arthurian legends?!). So that led me to medieval Persian and Islamic art. From there I moved on into Chinese and Japanese art. I do have some recent European influences – nobody who works in black-and-white can get away without at least name-checking Aubrey Beardsley! – but most of my really important influences are much older.

For many years your painting and writings have focussed quite a bit upon Tolkien's work, both his scholarship and his fiction. How did you discover Tolkien and why has his work played such a large part in your life?

Actually, Tolkien wasn't where my interest in the fantastic started. The real origins lie in the folklore of the Scottish Borders, where my family comes from. My grandfather on my mother's side was a wonderful man, I'm not sure if you'd call him an amateur folklorist or a storyteller – or both – but he knew all the old folktales. But he died when I was quite young, eight or so, and I was left knowing that I had heard only parts of some stories, and no more than the titles of others, because of my age. So when I started using my local library at home in Edinburgh, I was looking for stories like Grandad's. Most fairytale books were for younger children, most folklore books for adults – and I sort of stumbled over fantasy fiction in the



Rivendell Looking West

middle – Tolkien, Lewis, Joy Chant, Andre Norton on the sci-fi side – I read anything I could get my hands on. Which wasn't always much in the mid-seventies, but there you go. And I simply found that out of all of them, Tolkien's world was one that I really liked, one that I could share with my best friend – one where I slowly realised there was room for me to play too. Reading the Appendices to The Lord of the Rings with their huge vistas of an imagined history was a real eye-opener. Reading The Silmarillion,



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blithely unaware at age twelve that this was a ‘difficult book’ (well, next to Victorian books on Borders folklore, trust me, it wasn’t) was another. I’ve stayed interested because there are few if any other modern writers who give you that sweep, that scope, that room for ‘other hands and minds’ as Tolkien himself put it. If you want that, and I do, then apart from Tolkien you pretty much have to go back to the likes of Geoffrey of Monmouth and Homer.

Take us through a characteristic piece, “Niggle’s First Sight of the Tree”.

Oh, Colin! Did you have to pick that one! Okay, here goes ... Any picture of mine has two roots; the text, and my visual, imaginative response to it. In this case, well, if you’re going to have the chutzpah to tackle ‘Leaf By Niggle’, with its creative manifesto, that is the central, iconic scene, the one that encapsulates more of the message of the book than any other. From there, it was close reading of the text, and trying out possible compositions in very rough drawings. You have these elements – man, tree, bicycle, forest, distant mountains. In the first rough sketches I’m trying to work out what goes where. Then slowly the piece is refined, in more and more detailed drawings, until I know what its outlines are and what size it needs to be (if as here it isn’t set by a commissioning patron or editor). For some pieces I’ll do quite extensive colour roughs, trying out variant colour schemes over copies of a drawing (a great excuse to

slosh loads of watercolour around). For others I don’t; if I’ve got a very clear picture in my head, then I can go straight on. The final piece is on watercolour paper, stretched on a board so it won’t warp while I’m working. How each one is built up can vary quite a lot, again usually depending how sure I am that I can ‘see’ what I want, or not. ‘Niggle’ is mostly in gouache, an opaque watercolour paint, but there is some acrylic, my other medium. I don’t normally use the two in the same main-panel of a picture like that, but ‘Niggle’ needed it. Rather unusually, there are quite a lot of small details in it that weren’t forecast in the initial drawings – I knew there had to be birds in the tree, but the different kinds I ended up with are nothing like the ones in the drawing! The border is very carefully worked out, and it’s not fully complete for a reason – I haven’t got the pride to say such an image by my hands could be complete. Like Bishop Eadfrith of the Lindisfarne Gospels, I left a corner not fully worked through. The saints in the corner panels were very carefully chosen to match Tolkien’s interests and the message of the story – another little bit of analytical work feeding into the artistic side.

I think I’ve gone a bit much on the technical end in my answer. Any piece of art is a marriage of inspiration and practical craft – inspiration most in the initial choices, craft in following that out. I picked ‘Leaf by Niggle’ because it is such a great statement of support for the role of creativity in the world, but it doesn’t have the problems for a visual artist that ‘On

Fairy-Stories’ does. And of course it is a story; it lends itself to narrative art as an essay like ‘On Fairy Stories’ doesn’t. But which scene to show, what to choose – that was decided by inspiration, by visual imagination. I could see that scene, as much as appreciating its centrality to the tale from a literary, word-driven viewpoint. I wanted to paint it, and the rest, as they say, was history. It’s after that that the craft kicks in. Then you have to work your way through the process of taking that inspiration, that flash of vision, and turning it into a real object, a painting. That’s hard work but great fun at the same time – if it all goes well! – seeing what was only in my head slowly materialising on the paper in front of me.

Can you pick out some examples of your illustrations which illustrate the different concerns of your art?

Umm. Depends what you want to call different concerns, I suppose. The Preview pieces fell into very clear groups. ‘Dinas Bran’, Gwraig y Gogledd/Woman of the North’ and ‘Kelso races’ are probably the closest thing to straight art that you’ll see from me. All of these do have underlying narrative, but it’s not less important than the formal, visual aspects of the image, just less than usually visible, partly because of a much more abstracted though still representational style. Those three are what I call ‘British Aboriginal’, inspired by Australian Aboriginal art (yes, I grew up with a lot of Australian around, courtesy of a father



The Desolation of Smaug

who at one time was deep-sea with the merchant navy), but working with a very different colour range, and my own choice of formal and symbolic language. That's based absolutely on my 'country', the landscapes and their legend of Britain and British archaeology too.

Apart from those, the acrylic pieces such as the two Arthurian ones have much more painterly, emotional concerns, whereas the gouache pieces such as 'The Sunken Palace' are far more precise, dryer, more narrative.

Your subjects clearly are much wider than Tolkien-inspired illustration, but usually seem to retain an affinity with his work. How are your pieces that are concerned with folklore, myth and sacred or historically special places linked with your

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specifically Tolkien-inspired work?

Well, for one thing, you don't look far into Tolkien's work without discovering its links to the whole web of medieval story, and that takes you deep into folklore and philosophy on all hands. It's one way to get a good education, actually! So there are deep-lying links, but they can be very thin, several links in a chain down the line from something learned from studying Tolkien's works. Or they can be quite close. It very much depends. Sorry if that's a woolly answer, but there really is no one answer to that; it's quite individual to the piece.

OK, onwards and upwards!

Design seems to be a unifying and constant feature of your visual work. What is the relation between design and narrative in your art?

They're equally important, to put it simply. Composition, design, is the 'bones' of a picture. Narrative is the subject, and gives you the elements which hang around the design, the 'flesh' if you like. You have to get both right.

Your strong, bright colours seem to be part of the uniqueness of your work among Tolkien-inspired artists. How have you developed colour as part of the meaning of your art?

As I mentioned, I started out with an interest in medieval art, first European and then Eastern. That will teach you not to be scared of colour if anything

can! When any colour was so hard won, all colour mattered, and some colours could be as valuable as gold. Vermilion, ultramarine – using those was a mark of expense used and pains taken. I suppose with that background, and two media which both allow very strong colour (gouache is fairly close to medieval tempera, acrylic is cutting-edge paint chemistry), I see no reason not to use colour. This isn't something 'long ago and far away', it's something intensely visualised, in full colour, just like real life. So why not?

I love the way that you take your public into new and mystic paths. Your "A Portent at Persepolis" is a particularly evocative work. What is your own interpretation of it?

'Your guess is as good as mine!' she says cheerfully. 'A Portent at Persepolis' is something quite unusual, a painting with no text behind it. It just grew like Topsy on the paper. What does it mean? You choose... It has many possible meanings, and all are valid. What I think of it, I'll keep to myself – just this once I rather enjoy challenging my audience.

Your work has a huge range of reference -- including Shakespeare, Tolkien, Arthurian legend, Welsh folktale, medieval illuminated manuscript and even Eastern folklore. How on earth have you managed to hold this rich and eclectic mix together?

The same way most of us can believe six impossible



Festival Art
and Books

things before breakfast and hold mutually contradictory ideas in creative tension. I can't really give a good answer to this one, it just happens! What dominates in any painting springs in part from choice of subject and consideration of the text (not always in the obvious direction – I've gotten some very good results looking at Tolkien through the lens of my understanding of Japanese art – but then Carpenter does say Tolkien collected Japanese prints at one time, so maybe that isn't as off the wall as it might seem). It also depends on which medium I'm using, and frankly, what I would like to do just then. Again, go back to Tolkien; study him and you learn how wide and how genuinely international medieval art and literature was. Stories could migrate from India to Iceland, transforming as they went. So I'm working in an honourable tradition.

Tolkien and his close friend C.S. Lewis were constantly hoping that their writings would capture glimpses of what lies 'over the wall' of the world. Do you have a similar hope for your work?

In my wilder and more ambitious moments, yes. If something I did ever made one person look beyond the mundane and ask some of life's more fulfilling questions - that would be a real achievement. If anything my hands had made could capture something of the eternal verities, then like Niggie I'd have to say 'It's a gift!' I don't think you can ever really say that came from inside you. You have to open up

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to the wider universe to catch a spark of it in your work, wherever your creativity lies.

To receive a catalogue of this artist or further information please contact markfaith@festivalartandbooks.com



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