

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Consisting mainly of letters to the last Editors and LOCs on MALLORN 1.

ARCHIE MERCER, (address elsewhere) writes: "The first Mallorn has arrived at last, proving (if proof were needed) the truth of the old saying: "Leave the Mallorn, and they will come home". Anyhow, thank you. All Mallorns gratefully received.

Let's see now. The artwork dept., of course, is not yet anywhere near the same class as that of TOLKIEN JOURNAL and similar publications, despite the Big Name on the cover, so I'll leave it at that for now. ((As you probably guessed, front cover this time was done on offset-litho, and we hope to continue this, although all other illoes were done on ordinary electro-stencil))

Editorials. Not much that one can say about these. I'm very sorry that you, whether jointly or severally, don't see that you can continue editing the thing. You've done a satisfactory editorial job on the specimen, anyway.

Sam Long's "Heraldry" article I have already commented on when it previously appeared, so I'll just say that I found it adequately interesting.

"JD" Collins's article on Gollum was even more interesting, pointing up a possible interpretation of Gollum's character that I hadn't previously considered. The idea of Gollum's being listable as one of the Ring-Bearers, incidentally, I had previously considered, and I agree that it can only be valid. In fact, he is in a sense a "submerged tenth" member of the Company of Nine.

Belladonna persuades me in a very literate way that it would be a waste of time for me to read Miss Stimpson's book should it ever show up under my nose. (I wonder why people who write books about Tolkien never seem to be able adequately to measure up to their subject? Or when somebody will who can.)

"Brief notes on Heroic Fantasy" is just that, apparently a feeler for reactions. My view is that a "Tolkien" magazine should use a little discretion: some writers (Lewis and Garner to name a couple) are near enough in one way or another to the Tolkienish mainstream to be considered in their own right, to a certain extent. ((I think here that he means in the Mallorn or the like)) Edgar Rice Burroughs and the "Sword'n'sorcery" writers, on the other hand, are far enough away from the Tolkienish mainstream for consideration in a Tolkien-oriented magazine only for strictly comparative purposes. Thus, the way Burroughs or Howard handles a certain situation could be contrasted with the way Tolkien handles a similar one. (And not necessarily to Burroughs or Howard's detriment, I may say) But articles on Burroughs or Howard per se would be misplaced. (Besides, they have their own literary camp-following complete with excellent magazines attached) ((Whoever else is written about in MALLORN, there will never be more than half not on Tolkien, or the Society.))

"The Languages of Middle-earth" I found interesting in a general way rather than in detail. Thus, I had not previously realised that Quenya was in any way akin to Finnish, for instance. ((Professor Tolkien acknowledged the debt to Finnish in the Radio programme 'Now Read On', on 16th December; and also Welsh.)) But not having any Finnish, I cannot concentrate to any degree on what Bob Borsley has to say about its inflections etc. compared with Quenya ones. This article, however, is very much the sort of thing that should form a proportion of the contents of a publication such as the Mallorn.

A short and vaguely Wormish lettercol. ((We've got two now! I've always wanted to add little double-bracketed comments in the middle of a letter by Archie Mercer, after reading the "WORM"; revenge is sweet...)) A poem or three - Ro's in particular seem to have something, though I wish she'd use metre and rhyme. Thus, to quote Darroil, THE MALLORN.

(Why not an "Advice to the Mallovelorn" column? By "Auntie Galadriel" perhaps?) ((ugh!...)) (I didn't mean it, I tell you!!!)



PHIL SPENCER (Address elsewhere) writes: "Now a loc on Mallorn. Overall I enjoyed the zine but I can't help but think that a Society zine suffers somewhat from being impersonal... this is general and is no criticism of your efforts as such but I am sure that you will see my point. Mallorn has got an editorial presence which is more than some I've read (eg Vector) but it just does not seem the same as say Seagull. I suppose an editor cannot make it too personal otherwise it ceases to be a society zine. Whoever does ((edit)) it is treading a very narrow line and it would be all too easy to stray to one side or another, preferably of course to the personal side. ((I agree, but don't try and get personal with me, except you be a passing fair Hobbit-maid, readers.))

As to the contents, well, I am not too qualified to comment here. I have enough problems trying to cope with the "White Goddess" at the moment, and so only read a bit of Bob Borsley's article... It seems very good but I don't go that far with reading a novel and analysis has several drawbacks... It can be too detailed and bore people (lay readers like myself), it can reveal the writer's faults by looking too hard at what is only a piece of imagination of the writer, and it can read too much into trivialities.

Sam Long's piece on heraldry is about the limit that analysis can go with me, it was clear and EASY TO READ which helps. I liked most of the rest especially the unicorn poem.

I have not read the book Belladonna was reviewing... sounds like I might like it !!!!!

B's Postbag... nothing outstanding here though I really am looking forward to seeing Belladonna's article on Hippies... now that I will go to town on when I loc next issue. Well that's the Loc.. sorry I haven't provided much comment, but I confess to only having read Tolkien and not memorising it. ((glad I'm not the only one)) One last thing... Great cover.. I really was impressed by the Gaughan drawing.

DAVE WELDRAGE of 9 South View Terrace, Hill Head, Halifax Road, Dewsbury, Yorks., writes: ((and later to Belladonna, and even an article if you look hard)) : "Thanks for the copy of the 'Mallorn' There's a fair selection of material. I think you've done a fair job of editing - seems a pity you won't be going on.

About the articles themselves:-

The heraldry article was O.K. Perhaps it was of specialised interest but it was light and easy to read so everybody should have got through it, which, I reckon, is more than can be said for Bob Borsley's article. Doubtless it's competent and accurate but I reckon very few people will make the effort to read it all. I didn't. I got as far as the end of the first page then skipped the rest.

I've got nothing to say about Phil Spencer's article or "The importance of being Gollum" except they're both O.K.

However, I reckon the book review was unfair. I mean people are entitled to dislike Tolkien if they wish and equally they're entitled to write books about why they dislike Tolkien. B.T.,

((sorry about that gap)) boiling over in her wrath, seems to overlook that point. I suppose it was inevitable really - the appointment of a Tolkien-hater to review Tolkien's books may produce idiocies, but do you really think that appointing a Tolkien-lover to review the critics work is going to produce Gospel-truth and not similar idiocies?

Out of the postbag there is only one point which I'd like to mention - this business of 'hippy ideas' which the society is supposed to reject entirely. I wish someone would get to the point and make it clear what we are supposed to disassociate ourselves from. I suppose Belladonna's article will make it clear but here are a few points of my own. ((Follows two pages, most of which is repeated in ARF's article))

Finally, my poem had a misprint in it. It should be ASTROLABE not ASTOLOBE. It's a thing for working out planetary orbits.

STEWART BAILEY, of 18 Willow Crescent East, Willowbank, Uxbridge, Middx., writes: LoC: Very good! Full marks! You can't not continue the editorship, Ro.

The article on heraldry of the LotR is very interesting, and it would be interesting if any one could make up shields atc (say one for the society) on heraldic lines.

"The Importance of Being Gollum" was very good. The review on the book was interesting in that it also showed an interesting side of Belladonna. The article on LotR languages was a re-hash of the appendix of LotR but still very interesting. Altogether a fanzine I approved of (will the society live up to the quality of the fanzine?) will it go on like this? ((see next week's thrilling constitution!))

A.R.(FARAMIR) FALLONE, of 7, Broxburn Road, Broadway Estate, Warminster, Wilts., writes: "Thank you for sending me the first issue of Mallorn, which I thought was good, a great step up from BBS, but obviously still bearing a few rough edges. Getting down to actual criticism of the contents of MALLORN, the article on Heraldry was good and clear as was the one on languages. Phil Spencer's bit on Heroic Fantasy was also good but not long enough and more or less repeated what he said in his Gamma. The bit on Gollum was nice and well written but also short. Belladonna's annihilation of Miss Stimpson's book was marvellous - there is nothing I enjoy reading more than the expert dismemberment of a bad book. I suppose it is the sadist in me. As for the poems, I am afraid that I have had just about enough of unicorns to last me for a while and I liked them very little at the best of times. ((In which case you will love the book review elsewhere in this issue - I don't think!)) They always struck me as rather randy beasts, always chasing after virgins, and not even virgins of their own kind... I agree about the constitution, it is long and involved but whether it should be or not I am not qualified to say never having seen one of the breed before. All in all, not bad, but as they say, onwards and upwards...

Perhaps we should have a theme song, like Nilson's "Everybody's Tolkien at Me" or "Bilbos and Bangles" or "Band of Gold" or something. After that I think I should shut up and close. ((In a later letter, he writes concerning his article :-))

"I have a feeling some of the things I have put in my article will raise a little controversy to get your letter columns working - but then, like Phil Spencer, I could see the society stagnating a little and I reason that it either needs a shot in the arm or a Kick up the backside to get it moving. I may not be the right person to put the boot in, or the boot may not be of the right sort, not enough hobnail, perhaps, but as dear old Gandalf would say, "We shall see, We shall see..." "

ARTHUR CRUTTENDEN of Idiocy Couchant, 11 Heath Lodge Site, Welwyn, Herts., writes: "Ta 4 Mallorn, had begun 2 think th@ I'd been 4gotten. 1st impressions - bit large 'ennit? Good layout, clear print but illoes a bit dark.

Ur editorial - as I say in the Qaire, too much emphasis on fantasy by other authors would dilute the zine. If people have an interest in fantasy in general let them 4m the British Fantasy Soc. or join the Cabell Soc. Sam's article is thought provoking. I've tried, since reading it, 2 design some arms 4 various characters - with much non-success - they neither look nor "feel" right. Hope others have tried and submit same. ((My arms certainly feel all right!! Seriously though, if anyone has drawn up some arms, we can publish some in the next issue - see note on illustrations elsewhere.))

"Gollum". I'M going to reread "The Rings" b4 commenting on this.

Belladonna's review is excellant and somewhat different 2 what I who has only read her broadsheets & not met her might expect.

"The Languages" is both erudite and interesting. It shows the almost unbelievable care JRRRT took in constructing "The Rings". This type of article should be encouraged.