

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

With comments, for the time being by
Steve((...))

ARCHIE MERCER c/o Harvey, 2 Stithians Row, Four Lanes,
Redruth, Cornwall, writes:-

Dear Laurelindenizens, Many thanks for the MALLORN. The cover, to me, is obviously Strider - though Beryl, who has quite a crush on Strider, says that's not how she envisages him at all.

Dave ~~Fyrodrake~~ Weldrake ((sic)) on "Dragons" is rather reminiscent of the "Man, Myth and Magic" style of treatment. Archie Mercer on Llasars and Llaesars and things looks confusing - but then confusion is one of my specialities. I must commend whoever cut those stencils on apparantly correctly following the variant spellings. ((Our typist has a Welsh mother - it was easy!))

In the Great Debate between Belladonna and Faramir, the lady comes off best. Faramir seems unsure of precisely what he's trying to defend, whereas Belladonna is in no doubt at all of where her targets lie! She expresses herself more clearly, too; Faramir is frequently hard to follow.

Though somewhat less neat overall, the magazine(or "zine", as some say!)has survived its removal and will no doubt proceed to take root and flourish 'mongst the glades of Lothlorien.

DAVE WELDRAKE 9 South View Terrace, Hill Head, Halifax Road,
Dewsbury, Yorks., writes:-

Yet again you've got it wrongly spelt (Shame on you!!).

Quote: "It should be ASTROLABE not ASTOLOBE." You misspelt that misprint, leaving out an R.

I agree with A.R.Fallone that we ought to have a few theme songs. There are a few already written... but I can't see "Belladonna's Blues" or "Reggae with Radagast" getting into the top twenty.

Modesty prevents me from saying anything about my article on dragons. Archie Mercers was fun, if a little confusing. I shall have to read that book sometime!! The Butterfleye was O.K. In fact it cleared up a misconception that I'd had since the age of six. I'd always thought that a butterfly was the zip on the side of a Lurpack. Out of B.T.'s postbag the only thing to pass comment on is the rough treatment that Rosie Cotton must give to her copy of LotR. I agree that a 30/- paperback is too big for comfort but mine's still in good condition even after I've read it twice and it's been round all my friends.

And now those hippy articles. First I think Belladonna's unfair about this matter of dress. Like it's not important if people dress in 'cultivated ragbag squalor'

"All that is gold does not glitter,
Not all those who wander are lost."

And whoever heard of anyone mentioning sex and Tolkien in the same breath before? I certainly haven't. It's a good job I'm one of these sweet innocent guys who knows nothing about sex! I always thought the Hobbit was a fairy story...

Finally, a point where I agree with Belladonna. LotR is "A moral, ethical book full of the old-fashioned virtues." If these are the values she holds, I'm she's not become a drop-out too. All that modern western society is concerned about is power, status and wealth. Love has no place in the establishment. You can only have love between individuals, and if they love does it matter if they're drop-outs or 'striaights'?

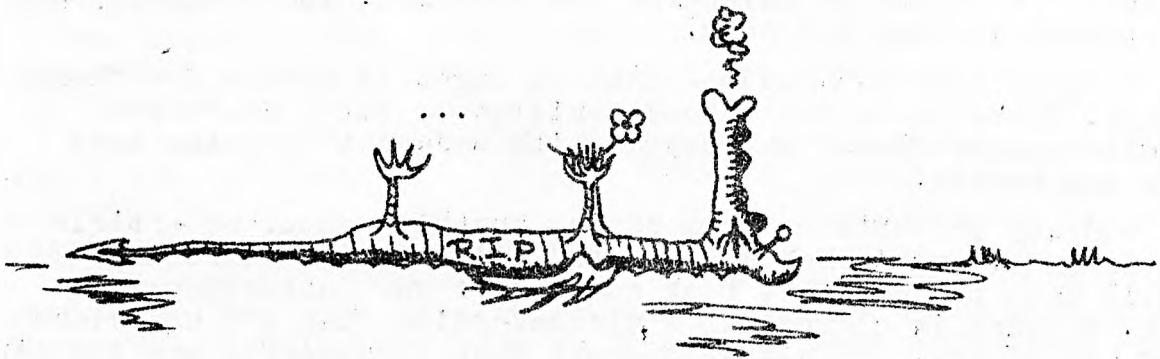
JOHN ABBOTT 32, Cornfield Avenue, Oakes, Huddersfield,
Yorkshire. HD3 4FY.

Thank you very much for sending "The Mallorn" Mk II, albeit in a long cylindrical form. Our small, spherical postman must have taken a dislike to it/me: the eagerly awaited journal arrived in a sorry condition. ((This issue's flat - if you want we'll cut off the corners and make it round, if that'll help...))

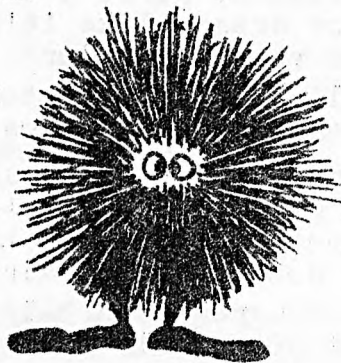
The cover was very striking. A.R.Fallone did a fine piece of work. (Is this Aragorn following the Paths of the Dead?) I enjoyed the letters, but would like to see at least twice this number per issue. ((If we don't get more, we'll start writing to ourselves soon. you have been warned...)) One could not but respond in some way to the invitation from ¹/₂A Crutloden and the Editors re. heraldic devices (a call to arms?) The enclosed sheets of miscellaneous items may offer the odd - very odd - emblem. ((Some of these are scattered about in the appropriate places...))

Archie Mercer's article could have been written by Alan Garner, with title by Spike Milligan. I liked it.

I've missed out Dave Wedrake's "The Dragon".
Interesting background information on ye balefulle monsters:
Dave has obviously done his homework. All good dragons
are thus:—



Re. the dwarf-women in Belladonna's Postbag (amazing
what she gets in there): Dis, the mother of Trili and Kili,
looked like so:—



Her sister was even more attractive. (There is no mention of this sister in LotR. The Dwarves were very secretive about most things, and kept particularly quiet about their women. And no wonder).

The short review of "The Last Unicorn" made one telling point - the humour of LotR is somewhat rare and cold, although there are a few homely touches. Yet provided he goes on writing such masterful stuff as the Trilogy, I for one wouldn't ask JRRT. to wear a red nose or practice a funny walk. I doubt if

I shall seek out "The Last Unicorn". Belladonna's "Hippies or Hobbits?" was a pleasant surprise and she made some very good points. (Really, BT. did not do herself justice in the "Belladonna's Broadsheet" of bygone days). The Butterfleye gave me quite a turn. I quickly turned the page and so was unable to bring my powerful mind to bear on the complexities of Kieth Bridges' epic... A.K.Fallone's reply to BT.'S article was masterly. I'm still comparing the two. There is obviously much more discussion to come!

Finally, could you please release the name of the inspired person who suggested the title "The Mallorn"? It could not be better as a symbol: a growing, developing creation with out-reaching branches... ((I rather fancy the idea came from the Pardoes. Correct me if I'm wrong)) Our Mallorn even seems likely to carry its complement of nuts...

J.D. COLLINS of COUNCIL of ELROND Smial, C.F. Mott College of Education, Prescott, Lancs., writes:

Love the covers - more please - many non-members have noticed them and were intrigued. Hope the letters pages will flourish as some folk (Like me) haven't the wit to wax literary on the world of Tokien, nor the knowledge to articulorise on things like "The Dragon" - very, very good, by the way. Archie Mercer's thing on you-know-who and family is quite stunning, I'll probably understand it when I read it again and again...

The Happy Hippy versus Hippy Hobbit thing was just too much - yes, and no Belladonna, or, if you prefer, no, and yes Faramir. Belladonna's postbag raises some interesting points:- how many folk in The States get the "Mallorn"? It would be nice if maybe they all did. ((250,000,000 copies should boost the circulation... Actually, only members of the British Tolkien Society get it; 5 in the States, and 2 in Canada.))

Ah! Please - a plea to anyone vaguely musical. Can you re-arrange the tune of "God rest you merry gentlemen" to fit the chant "A Elbereth Gilthoniel!"? The first line or so fits nicely and its a tune we can all sing without too much trouble, yet sounds almost plain chantish! ((I think it goes better to the tune of "Greensleeves" myself. You know, baa baa ba ba, bababa ba ba...sorry))

On "Mallorn 1"; "Brief Notes on Heroic Fantasy" were excellent, can Phil enlarge upon this please, or have a regular spot reviewing various books already on the scene (Or entering it)??? re. Belladonna's review of that Catherine Stimpson book, I liked it (the review), even though I don't know anything about the book itself. A cry to the heart though - what is "Beorhtmoth"? I assume it's some early Tolkien work, but can one get hold of it?? ((See the bibliography.(Thank you JBA).))

DAVID PEARSON 31, Main Street, St. Bees, Cumberland, writes:

Many thanks for Mallorn 2. I think all the articles were good, especially Dave Weldrake's "Dragons" and the battle between Belladonna and Faramir about the hippies. Both seem to bring out some very good points, but to my mind Belladonna is more on the right tracks, and her portrayal of LotR as the opposite of the ideal world of the hippy is correct.

The artwork was all good, especially the impressive cover. The most amusing point made was that of Rosie Turner, with reference to her suicidal copy of the paperback LotR. I share her troubles and also find that after frequent use the back curves round into a semicircle or worse. I have solved my problems now, though, by purchase of the 6gns. edition.((cor!))

I think the only thing the magazine could well have done without was Kieth Bridges' "little ditty", which doesn't seem quite right somehow!

David Pearson continues:

Phil Spencer makes an interesting point when he says (in his letter to the editor) that he dislikes analysis because it bores him and reveals faults. I would certainly disagree with the latter point. Analysis of Tolkien's works is one of my most absorbing hobbies. So far I have written (for my own amusement) 200 pages of analysis of everything in LotR, "The Hobbit", and "Tom Bombadil" beginning with "A" and "B". As yet I have never found any faults; the depth into which Tolkien has gone to write these books is surprisingly good and his accuracy amazing; I think it must be one of the reasons for my fanaticism about LotR.

ROSEMARY PARDOE 15, Selkirk Court, Whitley Road,
London N17 6NF writes:

The Artwork - what there was of it - was good. I especially liked the dragon.

The contributions were interesting and varied. One or two points about Alex Holdschmidt's review of "Last Unicorn" - I agree with him that it is a superb book. However I disagree with him when he says that "no-one else has ever heard of it": it has been reviewed in a number of fanzines. What's more it has been made into a song by Tyrannosaurus Rex ("She was born to be my Unicorn" on their "Unicorn" LP) - a very, very good song as it happens - I can recommend it. "Poetic license" changes 'bull' in the book to 'boar' in the song, but apart from that the song is very much based on the book.

On the "hippy" controversy. My view is that the more people who enjoy LotR the better - be they "hippies" (no one has yet been able to define that term to my satisfaction) or anything else. To a large extent I agree with A.R. Fallone's arguments, but I think they were a little disorganised.

Letters:- let's have MORE. (Of course you can't print 'em if you don't get 'em, so inactive members should wake up)((I agree entirely- the magazine tends to be a monopoly of a few members because they're the only ones who write.))

AUDREY WALTON 25, Yewdale Crescent, Coventry,
Warwickshire CV2 2FF. writes:

Loved the cover - admired the free-flowing lines - but weren't the hands too small? I was sorry when Dave Weldrake's dragon article ended, was just becoming completely absorbed when - hey presto - no more! What a pity as it was so interesting - the home doctor paragraph delighted me. Archie Mercer's family sort out was fun - but oh! those Welsh names! Belladonna Took has a very fine writing style and a clear head to go with it. I too think it is about time we got our sub-cultures sorted out and classified.

I thought it a very good touch to follow Belladonna's article by Fallone's. It is interesting to have more than one point of view to churn over in one's tiny mind. I prefer Fallone's vision of Middle-Earth myself. I like to feel that someone still has a poem singing in his soul, somewhere.

Surely Middle Earth lies on either side of the Birmingham canal and not in the Yorkshire Wolds as Dave Weldrake suggests?

HARTLEY PATTERSON Finches, 7 Cambridge Road, Beaconsfield,
Bucks. writes:

Dave Weldrake in "The Dragon" plainly barely touches on a large subject. Chinese dragons, and the real dragons on Sumatra. Makes a change from Unicorns!

Welsh mythology, as in Archie's article, is something I'm just beginning to find out about. There's some of it in LotR, though mostly hidden in the appendices...Araw, the Lord of Faerie, first introduced pigs to the world when he gave them to Pryderi - and Araw can be found in LotR if you look hard enough, in appropriate disguise

Hartley continues:-

As for the Great Hippy Debate - the Shire seems to me to be an excellent model for a drop-out society. The minimum of Governmental control, no laws except those of common-sense. A choice between communal living (the Tooks and the Brandybucks) and the family unit. No mass-media telling you how to behave, no nasty factories. The Hobbits have indeed 'dropped out', in that events outside the Shire are of no real interest to them, and they have no wish to be involved.

JAMES (MITHRANDIR) EAD 29 Uttoxeter Road, Little Stoke,
Nr. Stone; Staffs. ST15 8QX. writes:
Thank you for Mallorn 2. The whole society seems to be getting into perspective now, and the 'zine reflecting a wider field. All the articles proved interesting, as did the quality and originality of the illustrations and poetry included.

Belladonna had some good points to make about Hippies and LotR, but so did Faramir. LotR is not the only 'religious' book included in the hippies reading circles. Belladonna failed to point out that in America a Tolkien cult exists excluding hippies, where they chant prayers to Elbereth and TOLKIEN in 'temples' dedicated to this type of worship. I feel that these people are a greater threat to the Tolkien ideal of Middle Earth than a group of hippies who are looking for different forms of religious experience. I feel myself that LotR does bring about a religious awe to those who read it. These ideas, to me, bubble over in "Leaf by Niggle", which in my interpretation seems to be the judgement of souls by a God-like and a Devil-like figure. Perhaps professor Tolkien reflects part of his own theological ideals in his writing without realising it.

Thanks also for the sheet of Runic characters, I have for a while written in the Runic characters and this is useful. The only thing wrong is that mine are gradually fading, as things using a photocopier usually do. ((Of course, being Dwarf-runes, and written on paper, they may well turn out to be moon-letters too. Like Elrond said to Thorin and Gandalf, you'll have to wait for the right moon until they reappear, and even then only while the moon is out. Good luck))

A.R. (FARAMIR) FALLONE 7BroxburnRoad, Broadway Estate,
Warminster, Wilts.

Many, many thanks for the copy of 'Mallorn 2'. My name seems to be all over this issue in one way or another, or so it seems to my fame-at-last, egotistical eye. I wait atremble for the repercussions from my article. ((You should by now be in an acute state of self-gratification...))

To analyse the zine. Letters : Lin Carter's book on Tolkien is by far the best and, apart from a few mistakes when he attempts to retell LotR in condensed form, he certainly seems to measure up to the task. ((Yes - Belladonna lent it to me, and I found it very interesting)) Phil Spencer's letter mentioned Graves' 'White Goddess' which is damn good and which I have read all the way through four times, understanding about two words in six! I can't see the connection, however, with Bob Borsley's article which, as another contributor stated, was more or less a rehash of the index and appendix of LotR. Graves never did go in for Finnish, thank Cerridwen, or I would not have been able to understand more than one word in six - but I could follow Borsley's article. Phil is another Unicorn lover - am I alone in disliking this creature? ((No - JD Collins says in his letter that his "Grop" reckons the Unicorn is the "Benefactor of historical whitewashing"; I personally prefer wombats...)) I mean, it's only a nice white horse with a horn, after all... Am I to understand you have not committed great

slabs of Tolkien to memory and cannot recite "Earendil the Mariner" verse by verse? Shame.

In Belladonna's Postbag, Dave Weldrake's story of the murderous Pop of the Picts was charming, but Belladonna's bracketed comment as regards Cornish miners and gold prospectors was rendered hilarious due to the printing error. ((I'm very sorry about the missing word - I still don't know what it was; but I'll ask Belladonna.))

Dave Weldrakes article on Dragons (most apt subject for someone with a Drake in his name) was very good, clear, and informative. "Llasar Llaes Somethig and Family" was curious but interesting, having some resemblance to the mythological detective work of Robert Graves in the 'White Goddess'. Has Archie read 'Isle of the Mighty' by Evangeline Walton? If he likes that sort of stuff the book should please him, being a fictionalised version of the Irish myths. As for the other two articles, 'nuff said.

The review of "The last Unicorn"(dratted creature). I don't agree about there being little humour in LotR and more in this book - neither work is an attempt at a comedy. And I do not agree that it is a better book than Tolkien, although the literary standard is about the same. Peter Beagle's book has been around for quite some time; I read it over a year ago and was under the impression that it was quite well known. I place it in my top ten of most engrossing books read....even though it has as a central character one of those white-horned gee-gees!

Why should you limit the book reviews to only one per issue? ((It's hard enough to get letters, let alone book reviews! No, seriously, we'd love to print book reviews, and as many as we can)) I'm sure there are many members who would like to read short descriptions and criticism's of books in a similar bracket to Tolkien, not necessarily new books but maybe those that a lot of people haven't heard of.

Another thought - what about information about the leading lights or lesser luminosities of the Soc., personal details, natural habitat((He means Hobbitat)), haunts, maybe physical descriptions... anything to render the Soc. a little less faceless to those like myself who are stuck out in the wilderness far from London and any chance of meeting other members. Tell us what sort of creatures you be:- for all I know, Steve Thomson may be a homogenous crystalline being, constantly vibrating on the frequency of atomic hydrogen, operating his typewriter by telekinesis... ((Tick, tick, buzz. Actually, there's eight of us in Laurelindorenan, called, from the left; Caroline Algar, Matthew Kirkman, Rachael Mellar, Susan Phillimore, Elizabeth Rudd, Gillian Smith, Margaret Thackray, and last, Steven Thomson. We're all in the 2nd year sixth form at schools in Kingston. (That's right, A-levels in June)

Actually, our homogenous crystals are running at minimal output just now (☺ even more than usual)) and Telekinesis was never one of our strong points, which are mainly more in the line of strange meetings on the notorious Ham Common at dead of night, toasting marshmallows and mushrooms ((lovely combination)) over a camp fire. So much for intellect and hobbitat. Now for a description:- by far the most attractive of our fair maidens is some, Elizabeth, but generally speaking we're all pretty fabulous. As for the males? well, all I can say is there are two few of them, address any applications to join to Steve ((I've got a feeling he only lets the females join and vetos the rest)).