

# THE LORD OF THE RINGS

FAN CLUB OFFICIAL MOVIE MAGAZINE

ISSUE NO. 6  
DEC-JAN 2003

CHRISTOPHER LEE

CASTS A SPELL

RICHARD TAYLOR

THE BRUTAL WEAPONS OF THE URUK-HAI

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P.O. BOX 11000, AURORA, CO. 80042, USA.

The Lord of the Rings Official Fan Club Movie Magazine #6,  
DECEMBER/JANUARY, The Lord of the Rings Fan Club Official  
Movie Magazine is PUBLISHED BIMONTHLY BY DECIPHER FAN  
CLUB STUDIO, P.O. BOX 56, NORFOLK, VA 23501. IT IS SENT  
OUT FREE OF CHARGE TO ALL MEMBERS OF The Lord of the  
Rings FAN CLUB. APPLICATION TO MAIL AT PERIODICALS  
POSTAGE RATES IS PENDING AT AURORA, CO.,  
AND ADDITIONAL MAILING OFFICES.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:  
The Lord of the Rings Fan Club Official Movie Magazine  
PO Box 11000, Aurora CO. 80042 USA.  
EDITORIAL INQUIRIES: (757) 664-1133

Photo Credits  
All photos, unless otherwise noted courtesy of New Line  
Cinema. The Lord of the Rings still photography by Pierre Vinet.

Special Thanks to:  
Jan Blenkin, Melissa Booth, Gillian Brooks, Jacq Burrell,  
Claire Cooper, Daniel Falconer, Elisa Greer, David Imhoff,  
Peter Jackson, Stephen Jewell, Erin O'Donnell,  
Mark Ordesky, Gibson Paterson, Gordon Paddison,  
Glen Sharah, Richard Taylor, Pierre Vinet.

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Decipher Inc.  
253 Granby St., Norfolk VA 23510  
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PRINTED IN THE USA

# A Taste of The Two Towers

The Two Towers is almost here! Hasn't it seemed like an eternity that we've been waiting for the second installment of *The Lord of the Rings* film trilogy?!

In honor of this long-anticipated event, we've put together an exciting lineup of articles for this issue. We were planning to bring you two special articles on *The Two Towers*—one on the making of Treebeard, and the other, an interview with Andy Serkis about his portrayal of Gollum. But the months before a movie comes out are a whirlwind for the folks behind the scenes, and we realized that we would be able to bring you even more complete and comprehensive coverage with extensive imagery if we waited until 2003. We hope that you will agree that with the input of the many talented people who worked on bringing these extraordinary (and challenging) characters to life, these stories will be well worth the wait!

For this special *Two Towers* premiere issue, we're pleased to bring you several in-depth pieces to prepare you for the long-awaited second motion picture! For starters, Peter Jackson spoke with us at length about the new film, answering some of your questions and sharing great behind-the-scenes stories; we think this is our best interview with the director yet.

This issue's *Artifacts* feature will illuminate the Battle of Helm's Deep—one of the most spectacular sequences in *The Two Towers*—as Richard Taylor and John Howe talk about the painstaking design process that helped to make the Uruk-hai translate to film in such a terrifying and brutal way.

In addition, we are introducing you to one of the actors making his *The Lord of the Rings* debut in *The Two Towers*: Bernard Hill (Théoden) was charming and forthright as he told us how he got involved in the project—he was less than enthusiastic in the beginning. He also shared what it was like to join the filming that was already well under way in New Zealand.

We're also excited to bring you a very familiar face on our cover this issue: On Halloween, appropriately enough, Dan Madsen spent an hour talking with legendary actor Christopher Lee about everything from the nature of evil to his work on *The Lord of the Rings*. Peter Jackson's "Saruman" didn't have to do much research for his role: The actor first read *The Lord of the Rings* 50 years ago, and has read the books every year since. He even met the author in a pub once. Lee was thrilled to be part of the film production and says he was in awe of Jackson, the writers, and the crew, which is high praise indeed coming from a performer who has worked with many directors, writers, and crews on literally hundreds of films.

I'm off to the theater!

Carla Atkinson

CARLA ATKINSON  
Managing Editor





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This may be our favorite interview yet with *The Lord of the Rings* director. You won't want to miss Jackson's revelations about a certain actor who is injured as the camera is rolling and yet doesn't miss a beat; the day he had to film without seeing; what it's like to him to attend a premiere; and much more.
- 34 SEEKING SARUMAN  
Legendary British actor Christopher Lee says he doesn't play villains—he plays people. Lee tells us that Saruman, his character in *The Lord of the Rings*, is not a villain, but a “great man brought low by his lust for power.”
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— *An Interview with Bernard Hill*  
The delightful British actor says that working on *The Lord of the Rings* was a singular film experience on many levels. He shares behind-the-scenes tales and insights with us just in time for his debut as Théoden in *The Two Towers*.
- 54 ARTIFACTS — *Uruk-hai Weaponry*  
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— *The Business of Blades*  
Justin Pakes talks with the artisans of United Cutlery about the challenge of making replicas for fans and collectors that live up to the painstakingly detailed swords and other weapons created by the Weta Workshop for *The Lord of the Rings*.



# Mailbaggins

## LETTER FROM LURT'Z

Dear Viggo,

It must have been one of my off days if that blow wasn't so effective [Mailbaggins, Issue 5]—either that, or those spherical contact lenses I had to wear were blocking my line of vision! ... I couldn't see anything with those on! Not to mention the fact that I hit you with my left hand—and I'm right-handed! However, the show must go on, and like a trooper, you soldiered on ... much to my demise.

And if I didn't say it then, I will say it now. Sorry, my friend.

Kia kite ano, brother Viggo!

Arohanui,  
Lawrence Makoare

deserves. Lastly, I want to thank him because after reading the article, he has inspired me to pick up my pencil and draw and write again—not for other people, but for myself. Thank you, Viggo Mortensen and *The Lord of the Rings* magazine.

Sabrina Tolbert  
Erie, Pennsylvania, USA

I have been anxiously awaiting an interview with Viggo Mortensen, and Issue 4 did not disappoint. While I had been familiar with his acting career, his higher profile portraying Aragorn in *The Fellowship of the Ring* introduced me to his poet/painter/photographer side. It was the highlight of my summer to

meet Viggo at his last gallery opening in New York City and view his works. He is indeed a marvelous artist! He is always gracious and giving to his fans, and that day was no exception, as

he signed books, posters, and posed hour after hour with his many fans (myself included).

Denise Price  
Adamstown, Maryland, USA

## COSTUME KUDOS

I greatly enjoyed the article with "Lady of the Golden Thread" Ngila Dickson! (Issues 3 and 4). Her descriptions of the different costumes and fabric were simply fascinating. I got the sense that the costumes were live woven creatures with real passion and individuality. I was truly engrossed!

If I may provide a response to this comment from her article: "Wormtongue ... I wonder what you will all think of him? I love Wormtongue. That costume has wonderful fabric." Let me just say, when I first saw Brad Dourif's Wormtongue costume, I cried! It is just breathtaking, and Mr. Dourif looks just so delightful wearing it! Thank you for your wonderful words and grand costuming! Among my other favorite costumes are Gandalf's pointed hat, Saruman's highly detailed robes, Arwen's beautiful dresses in *The Two Towers*, and Eowyn's white medieval dress. The scene where she is about to descend the stairs of Rohan is sheer magic! The way the fabric catches on the breeze ... I am in awe, and I cannot wait to live at the theater.

Leona Rivet  
Circle Pines, Minnesota, USA

The third issue of *The Lord of the Rings* magazine was just as brilliant and awe-inspiring as the first two. I really enjoyed reading every page of it—it was very complicated for me to choose my favorite part of the magazine, but it would probably be the costumes. It was just so awesome to learn how each costume was chosen to fit each character. I have deeply enjoyed belonging to this Fan Club.

Atira Welles, Age 14  
Fallbrook, California, USA



PHOTO: VIGGO MORTENSEN

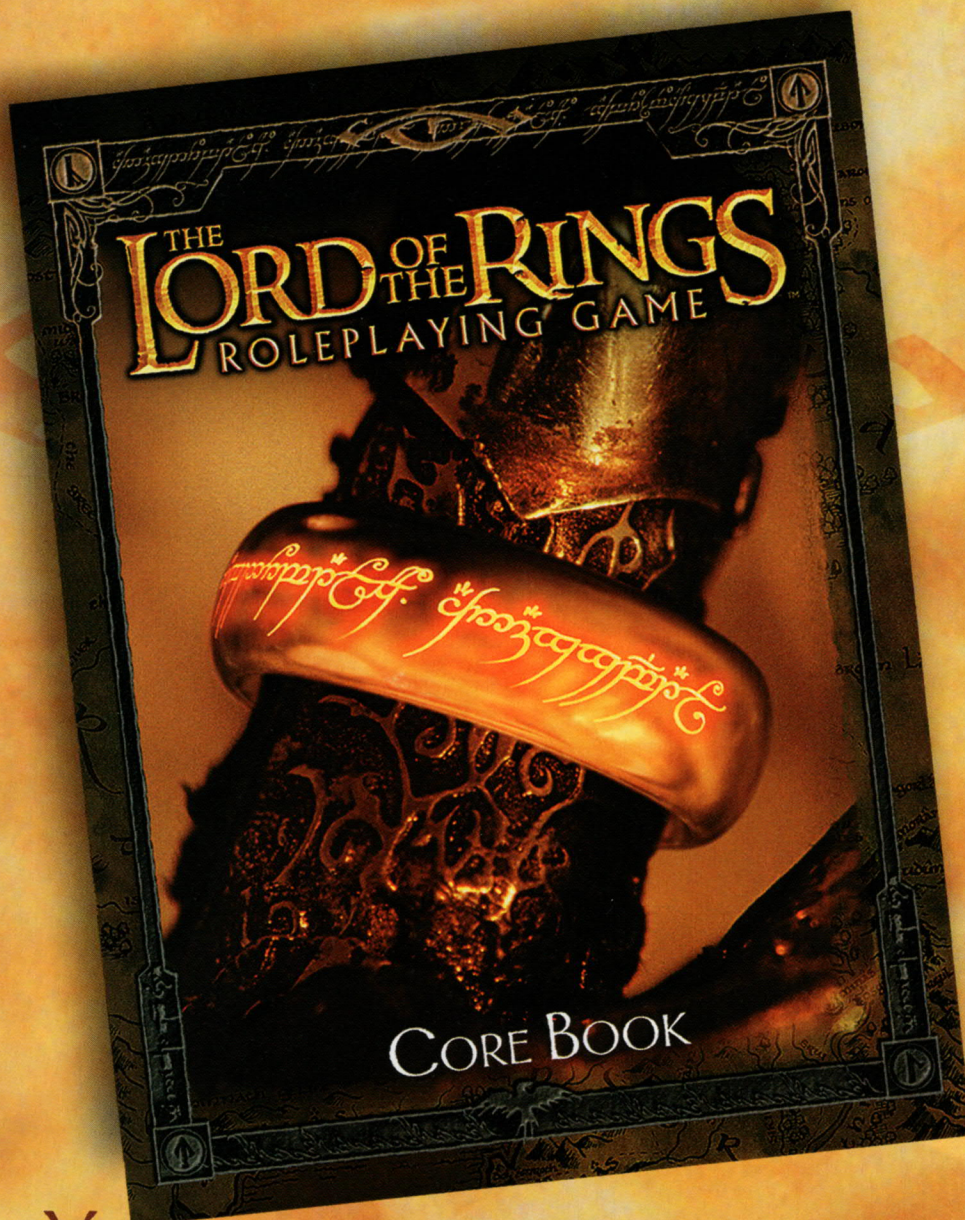
## A LIVING DIARY

A Living Diary: The Art of Viggo Mortensen" was wonderful! I have been waiting for a really good article about his art and was very happy to receive my August/September issue. His books are extremely rare, and I probably will never see his art in person, so I am grateful for this article. He is a talented actor/artist, and I am glad he's finally getting the recognition he

We're eager to hear your feedback, so please write to us via email at [editor@lotrfanclub.com](mailto:editor@lotrfanclub.com) or by regular mail at *The Lord of the Rings Fan Club Official Movie Magazine*, Attn. MailBaggins, c/o Decipher, Inc., PO Box 56, Norfolk, VA 23501, USA. We will assume that we can publish your letter in the magazine, along with your full name, hometown, state, and country, unless you state otherwise. Letters may be edited for the sake of brevity and clarity. We look forward to hearing from you!



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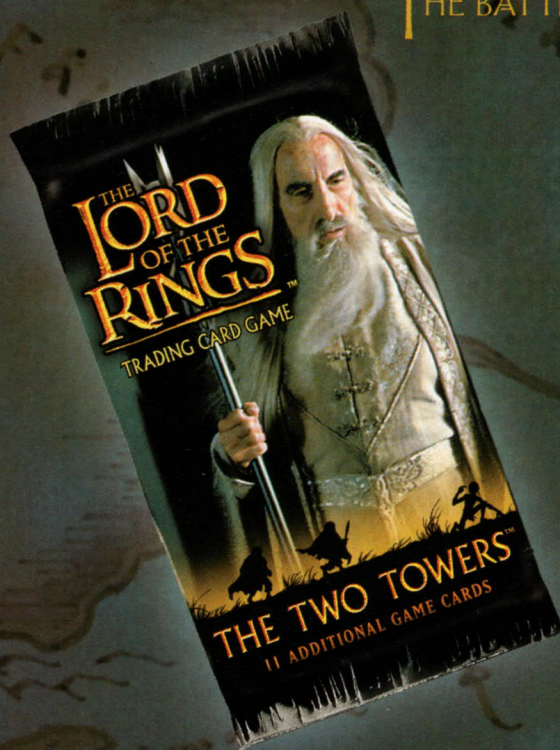


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# News

## FROM MIDDLE-EARTH

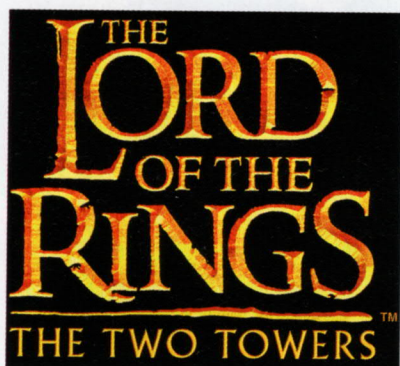
### Win a trip to Middle-earth!

Want to go to New Zealand? For free? And take a friend? Here's your chance.

The Lord of the Rings Fan Club is holding a sweepstakes competition to coincide with the December 18 release of *The Two Towers* in North American cinemas. Working in conjunction with Cinemark Theaters and New Line Cinema, the Fan Club sweepstakes promotion offers entrants a chance to win great Decipher *The Lord of the Rings* products, as well as a grand prize of a trip for two to New Zealand, the home of Middle-earth!

Look for competition details on cardboard "standees" (upright displays with tear-off leaflets) in Cinemark Theaters beginning in early December, or visit [cinemark.com](http://cinemark.com) to link to an entry page.

Don't forget to pack your Elven cloak! ☾



## A Premiere Experience

### The Two Towers Set to Debut in New York

BY STEPHEN BLACKMON

Excitement is building across the globe as the much-anticipated release of *The Two Towers* approaches!

The major theater release on December 18 will be preceded by several star-studded premieres: The world premiere is set for December 5 at the Ziegfeld Theater in New York City, and New Line Cinema expects all of

the major *The Lord of the Rings* stars to be in attendance!

A European premiere will follow December 10 at Le Grand Rex Theatre in Paris, and industry notables will be privy to a premiere in Los Angeles on December 15.

Last year's *Fellowship of the Ring* premiere at the Leicester Square Theater in London was glorious in its extra-





"THE HOBBIT ROOM ... HAD A LONG BUFFET TABLE WHERE YOU COULD GET HOBBIT-SIZED PORTIONS OF POTATO SALAD, CHICKEN PASTRY PIES ... **This was what it must have felt like to eat at Bilbo's birthday party!**"


gance and attention to detail. The honored few who were privileged to attend walked the red carpet through a lane of large burning rings on pedestals. After viewing the film with the cast and crew, they traveled a few short miles in heavy traffic to a riverfront banquet hall where they were treated to the feast of all feasts. The premiere dinner

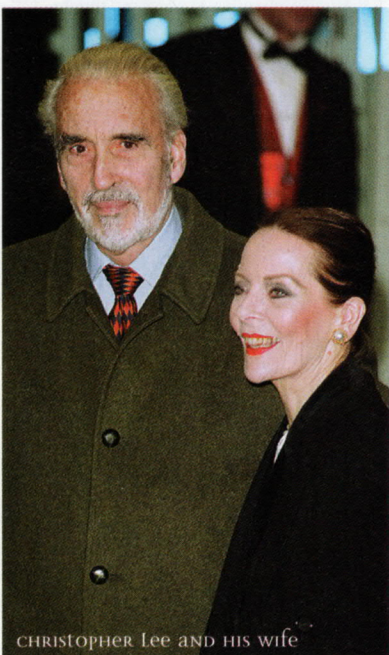
party featured five elaborate rooms —each with a distinctive Middle-earth theme. The original sets were flown in from New Zealand, and guests dined at Barliman's or experienced Elven food in Rivendell, complete with lembas, gourmet fish, and other delights; still others ate the remains of Bilbo's memorable birthday celebration in their own small corner of Hobbiton.



ORLANDO BLOOM

"The Hobbit room ... had a long buffet table where you could get hobbit-sized portions of potato salad, chicken pastry pies, and regular salad with a creamy dressing," one guest reported. "This was what it must have felt like to eat at Bilbo's birthday party!"

How will *The Two Towers* premieres compare to last year's festivities? We'll tell you in 2003! 



CHRISTOPHER LEE AND HIS WIFE

## "Card-Playing Marathon" Record Set

Decipher Team Sets Guinness World Record with *The Lord of the Rings* TCG!

**T**hink you'd have fun playing Decipher's *The Lord of the Rings* Trading Card Game for a couple of hours? How about 32 hours non-stop? That's how long a Decipher team of four players played to earn a new Guinness World Record!

In the months following the debut of Decipher's *The Lord of the Rings* Trading Card Game, a number of players inquired via decipher.com about setting the record for the longest card-playing marathon. A group of Decipher gamers was curious, too, and sent off an inquiry in April to the folks in charge of the famous Guinness record book. A month later, the Decipher staffers got a reply via email, outlining the necessary steps to set a new world record (Guinness also noted that the previous record of 28 hours was held by a Swiss group playing "Jass"). When the email arrived, a plan was put into action to make the card-playing marathon happen over the upcoming Memorial Day weekend.

Guinness' basic criteria were simple enough: players, judges to record and monitor the event, and written



KYLE HEUER





THE GUINNESS team: (L to R) DAN BOJANOWSKI, BRIAN KALLENBACH, KEVIN REITZEL, JOE ALREAD, PAUL EVANS AND KYLE HEUER

medical certification that all players would be sufficiently healthy to endure the rigors of an attempt on the world record (no kidding!).

Four players immediately rose to the challenge: Kevin Reitzel, Dan Bojanowski, Joe Alread, and Kyle Heuer. Brian Kallenbach and Paul Evans volunteered to serve as judges. Pulling off the required physicals wasn't as easy, but in the end, the team located a doctor who could do the job the very next day—just in the nick of time.

# Celebrity Tracks

BY KYLE HEUER

**RICHARD TAYLOR** and Weta Workshop are bringing their exceptional special effects and costuming work to bear on the Peter Weir film *The Far Side of the World*. The film reunites Weta and *The Lord of the Rings'* Billy Boyd, who portrays the character Bondon. The film is an adaptation of the series of 20 novels by Patrick O'Brien. Chronicling the seafaring adventures of British Royal Navy Captain Jack Aubrey (played by Russell Crowe) and his ship's surgeon, Stephen Maturin (played by Paul Bettany), the film is set against the backdrop of the Napoleonic wars.

Just when you thought **ORLANDO BLOOM** had enough to keep him busy, along comes another project for the new "hardest-working man in show business"! Bloom has signed on as a heroic pirate out to save the woman he loves in the new Disney picture *Pirates of the Caribbean*.

Johnny Depp teams up with Bloom to thwart the schemes of the evil Captain Blackheart, portrayed by Geoffrey

Rush. We also heard this fall that the *Pirates of the Caribbean* sets on the Disney lot burned down! Our thoughts go out to those involved in the film, and we hope that the folks at Disney will have things back up and running without incident.

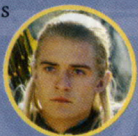
On the first anniversary of the September 11 terrorist attacks, **SEAN ASTIN** traveled to the nation's capital to host—along with Kelly Clarkson of "American Idol" fame—a special event at the Lincoln Memorial. Earlier in the day, Astin appeared with President George W. Bush and other dignitaries at the Pentagon for national memorial services. Astin is a major advocate of community service and talked about how important community service is, especially now.

**ELIJAH WOOD** will soon be featured in the film *Try Seventeen*, directed by Jeffrey Porter. Wood plays Jones Dillon, a young man who goes off to college and ends up learning more about life and love from the tenants in the apartment building

where he lives than he does in class. Try *Seventeen* also stars singer/actress Mandy Moore and Debbie Harry of the '80s rock band Blondie.

**LAWRENCE MAKOAARE** (Lurtz) will probably be easily dispatched by Pierce Brosnan in the new James Bond thriller *Die Another Day* (directed by Lee Tamahori), but that won't stop us from enjoying every minute of his screen time. Makoare poses a serious threat to Bond as 007 attempts to stop a traitor from starting a war of catastrophic consequence. *Die Another Day* also stars Halle Berry (*Monsters Ball*, *Swordfish*) as the newest Bond girl, Jinx.

**BRAD DOURIF** (Grima Wormtongue) wrapped up on-location shooting in Prague early in the fall for the movie *Vlad*, directed by Michael Sellers; Dourif portrays Dr. Hyman Radiescu. He also has back-to-back projects with Jennifer Tilly (*Bound*, *Monsters Inc.*) in *El Padrino*, the story of the life of a drug dealer. Tilly and Dourif also reprise their roles in the movie *Chucky 5*, playing the voices of Chucky and Tiffany, the evil dolls bent on carnage.





By Saturday—Game Day—the only thing left to take care of was logistical support for the players over the long weekend. Party Central (a.k.a. Decipher staffers and friends) came to the rescue, providing moral support and sustenance. We're talking plenty of serious snack food here, along with the mandatory supply of caffeine!

Once supplies and attire were taken care of, and a deck of *The Lord of the Rings* TCG cards was at the ready, the judges signaled the official start at 4 pm Eastern



Standard Time on Saturday, May 25. The following day, after a brief celebration upon breaking the standing record of 28 hours, the players decided unanimously to press on for a bigger record. At midnight on Sunday, May 27, 2002, the game officially ended after 32 hours (plus one minute) of continuous play! Each player is now the proud "owner" of this hard-won Guinness World Record ... until another team manages to break it, that is! (Any fans out there looking for a challenge?!) ~ Stephen Blackmon

## A Fan Club Wedding!

*The Lord of the Rings* Fan Club is very pleased to announce the wedding of our very own Dan Madsen to Fan Club member Karen Stettner!

Dan and Karen, who goes by the nickname Des, met at *The Lord of the Rings* Oscar night party in Hollywood on March 24. Dan was there to represent the Fan Club, and Des was part of the "Fellowship of 22"—a group of Fan Club members who had traveled from all over the world to cheer on *The Lord of the Rings* and meet other Ringers. The rest, as they say, is history!

Following the party, the two started a long-distance romance between Arizona and Colorado, and soon, the couple was engaged, and Des was headed to Dan's hometown of Denver!

Adding a special note to the September 21 ceremony—held in Dan's parents' backyard—was the presence of Des's old friends, James Putney and his wife, Lin. James serves as chaplain at UCLA's Jonson Comprehensive Cancer Center, where Des worked for five years as a supervisor in the oncology unit. James and Lin, both ordained ministers, conducted the ceremony in front of a small group of friends and family, including Dan's 11-year-old son,

Hayes, who served as—what else?!—the Ringbearer!

The Madsens say they carried with them that day "the good wishes and support of an entire community of Ringers who made us feel especially blessed. For that, we thank you with all of our hearts and wish each and every one of you a fairy tale of your own!"

Who knew that the Fan Club would bring such unexpected benefits?! 🐉



## Calendar of Events

**NEW YEAR'S GATHERING**  
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Activities currently being planned include a meet-and-greet dinner with entertainment, optional visits to historical sites, a group viewing of *The Two Towers*, and a New Year's Eve party. Visit [stef.newsome.com/newyears-plan](http://stef.newsome.com/newyears-plan) for full details.

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**LONDON, ENGLAND, UK**  
**FEBRUARY 9, 2003**

At press time, plans were underway for a Fan Club gathering for the world-exclusive performance of music from *The Lord of the Rings*, performed by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and conducted by the score's composer, Howard Shore. For more information, contact Maria at [sam\\_wood63@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:sam_wood63@yahoo.co.uk) or Ian at [ian.smith@irascian.com](mailto:ian.smith@irascian.com) or call (020) 77876123 for more information. 🐉



# PRODUCT UPDATE

## REVIEW Electronic Arts: *The Two Towers* video game

BY JUSTIN PAKES

If you are looking for a computer game that will immerse you in *The Lord of the Rings* films, Electronic Arts has what you crave. *The Two Towers* computer game grabs you from the start, opening with the powerful prologue from *The Fellowship of the Ring*—including Howard Shore's award-winning score and Galadriel's haunting narration. The now-familiar scenes of the last alliance of elves and men marching to war under the shadow of Mount Doom morphs into a computer rendi-

tion of the battle, placing you in the armored boots of Isildur as



you battle beside your comrades against a throng of Orc warriors. The time for spectating is over: To arms!

The interspersing of movie clips and harrowing player battle sections is the true strength of this impressive

fighting title.

Most missions

permit you to choose to

play as either Aragorn,

Legolas, or

Gimli

(more

char-

acters

are appar-

ently avail-

able in the

Game Boy

Advance

version of

the game, but

our demo was a PS2 build), and you cannot help but be drawn into Middle-earth as your journey moves through film clips and battle sections at Weathertop, Balin's Tomb, and Amon Hen, and then takes you all the way to the mountain stronghold of Helm's Deep, as depicted in *The Two Towers*. Instead of spoiling the surprise, it is the player's knowledge of the films that is often the source of breathless suspense. Try tiptoeing around the murky puddles outside of the Moria gate as the horrible knowledge of what lurks beneath those waters plays with your heart rate. In Balin's Tomb, you find yourself battling



beside your Fellowship companions, knee-deep in hordes of orcs, and still you cannot help but glance furtively at the dark doorway, wondering when the Cave Troll will make its appearance (and rest assured, it will).

This action/adventure title has done a great job of pulling the musical and visual flavor from the films and then building upon it with strong graphics, tight fighting controls, performance rewards (experience points earn you



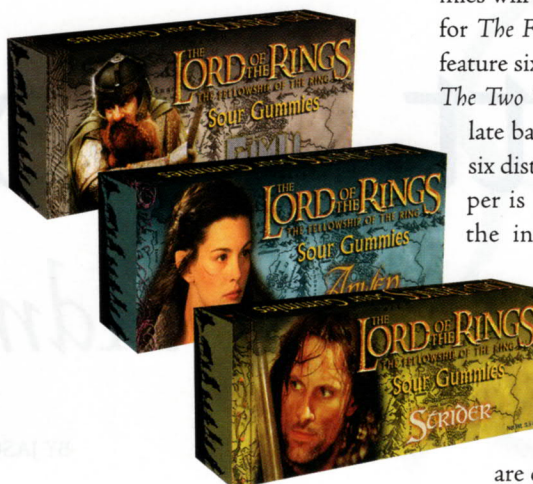
fighting power-ups), and an excellent depiction of the many enemies assembled to thwart you. This initial title (EA plans to release additional titles on multiple platforms in 2003 and 2004) is available on Playstation 2 and Game Boy Advance, and with 13 levels of movie-inspired mayhem and joystick-thumping delight, it should keep the action-oriented fan busy!



## The Lord of the Rings FAN CLUB STORE

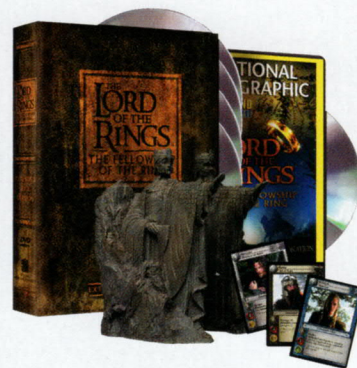
A beautiful new collectible will bring Middle-earth to life for the casual fan and collector alike. "Maps of Middle-earth" is an extraordinary collection of maps drawn by renowned illustrator Daniel Reeve, the artist responsible for the cartography in the New Line Cinema films; the six collector's maps created by Reeve depict the lands of western Middle-earth in vibrant and painstaking detail.

The collection includes six 17" x 22" archival-quality maps covering all of western Middle-earth, including the Shire, West Gondor, East Gondor, Rohan, Eregion, and Mordor. A 32-page guide to the lands of Middle-earth, including keys to each of the maps included in the set, accompanies the maps.




## DVD NEWS

If you haven't already scooped up a copy of *The Fellowship of the Ring* Platinum Series Special Extended Edition DVD, what are you waiting for? This extraordinary version is on the shelves at stores across the globe and is also available through the Fan Club store ([lotrfanclub.com](http://lotrfanclub.com)). The Extended Edition includes 30 minutes of additional, brand-new footage, documentaries on the actors and crew, making-of videos, and other goodies. It even uses new music and a host of effects made expressly for the special edition.



## TRUE CONFECTIONS

To celebrate the release of the second film in New Line's trilogy, True Confections is releasing *The Two Towers* versions of their *The Lord of the Rings* Sour Gummies, as well as a new line of chocolate bars. The sour gummies will be similar to the set released for *The Fellowship of the Ring*, but will feature six different packages based on *The Two Towers*. The gourmet chocolate bars also come in six flavors in six distinctive wrappers. Each wrapper is printed on both sides, with the inside featuring a full-color "mini-poster" of a character from the film. Even the boxes holding the chocolates—made of strong corrugated cardboard with brass hinges—are collector's items. 



# UNSUNG HEROES



# Matt Cooper

## *Location Administrator*



BY JASON FRY, WITH REPORTING  
BY DAN MADSEN





The soaring peaks and rolling green hills of New Zealand have proved an excellent stand-in for Middle-earth in *The Fellowship of the Ring* and *The Two Towers*. But sitting in the audience, it's easy to forget that all those vistas belong to somebody—whether it's the government of New Zealand or a private landowner. Finding the ideal setting to serve as Hobbiton or Dagorlad is just the beginning; after all, the ideal setting is worthless unless you get permission to bring in all the people and equipment required to shoot a movie there.

Enter Matt Cooper, location administrator for *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, and his colleagues in the location department.

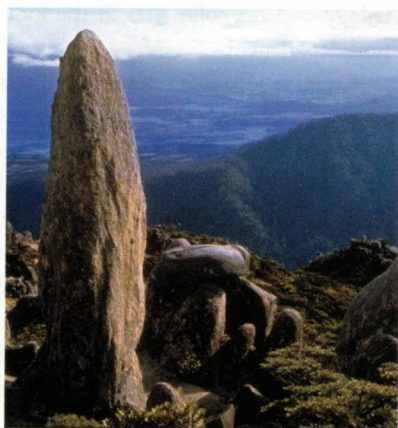
Cooper's job, as he describes it, was to work with the various departments that make up Peter Jackson's production company, figure out where they wanted to go and what they wanted to do there, and then convince whomever needed to be convinced that the crew should be allowed in.

"I would put together some of the submissions and applications to make sure we could do what we wanted to





Gaining access to some of the locations WOULD PROVE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT. "ONE OF THE LOCATION MANAGERS DESCRIBED IT AS BEING AKIN TO landing a 747 jet on a dirt runway, AND THAT WAS WHAT IT WAS LIKE," COOPER SAYS. "BUT we just had to try and make it work."



do—that Peter Jackson could go and film and have flexibility to build sets and create Middle-earth," he says.

Typically, Cooper would come in fairly late in the process. The first person to a potential site was a location scout, who would take photographs for Jackson. If Jackson or another unit director decided they liked the look of a potential location, they'd go take a look for themselves and decide whether or not they wanted to shoot there. And if they did, Cooper says, "then that's when they'd come to me."

His task was to negotiate filming rights with the person or agency that controlled a particular site. In some cases, such as the village of Hobbiton, the site was on private land, meaning he'd wind up talking with an individual landowner. In many other cases, Cooper would be off to talk to New Zealand's government—the Department of Conservation, for instance, manages the nation's national parks and reserves, while local councils are responsible for many of the country's regional parks.





areas that people can't go to, laying down matting, just negotiating all those environmental conditions that help get us in there, because that's what it's all about."

One crucial promise was that when the crew left, the location would look exactly as it had when they arrived—or be solidly on the way to its original state. While care needed to be taken, Cooper notes that compared with the overall budget of *The Lord of the Rings* movies, the costs of restoring landscapes were minimal.

That doesn't mean the crew took such requirements lightly. "I wouldn't say it was easy, because we had so many locations, but it was a case of thinking about those things ahead of time," Cooper says. "In a way, I was there to just sort of remind people of what we had to do."

One big help, he notes, is that in most cases "the government agencies and the landowners were very supportive of the film because it's a home-grown New Zealand production." And in general, Cooper says, the crew didn't have to worry too much that a landowner might blame a pre-existing problem on the film production.

"People in New Zealand have what you might call a relaxed attitude," he says, adding that in some situations, the location department would take "before" photographs to compare with conditions after the shoot. "But mostly it was all done in good faith." With individual landowners, he says, formal agreements weren't always needed—and sometimes a tray of beer was negotiated instead of money.

While the process may seem straightforward, it was an immense challenge, given the sheer scale of the effort needed to film three movies at locations across New Zealand. "We had more than 150 locations, including 50 government sites, all these big set builds, moving the crew around—just the logistics and, of course, the legal

issues with getting them in everywhere," Cooper says.

And then there's the small matter of timing. "We were running from Day One in the locations department," he says, "just locking up locations week by week and day by day. And sometimes, we'd only be 12 hours ahead of the crew ... just getting the permissions" because of last-minute changes.

Jackson would sometimes show up at a location, Cooper says, and find that the spot where he was supposed to film a scene wasn't quite what he had in mind—but a spot a few hundred



A key to getting permission, Cooper notes, was reassuring people that the film crew—which he admits is comparable to an army—wouldn't wreck the landscape.

"Naturally, when you first approach people, they are a bit reticent," he says. "Also, because of the size of our crew and set-up—as far as the number of trucks goes, there's never been anything so big—that can be overwhelming."

What's more, many of the areas Jackson chose were pristine or had never had a large film crew in residence. "We had to convince some of the agencies that we were going to behave and that we were going to protect the environment and restore any damage that occurred," Cooper says. "But fortunately, there wasn't much."

Cooper would work with the landowner or agency to establish conditions for the shoot, i.e., "cordon off

meters away was ideal. That would require Cooper to secure permission for the change from the landowner or controlling agency—sometimes while the crew was waiting.

"I'd literally be in my car on my laptop drafting a change and sending it off and trying to get them to come to the site so we could show them what we wanted to do," he says. "Nobody wants to hear that it can't be done."

So how do you prepare for a job as location manager? Cooper's preparation was reading J.R.R. Tolkien's books when he was a boy of 10 or 11



and then being in the right place when he heard Jackson was making them into movies. "I was a big fan, so I decided I would try and get on the project," he recalls. "But I didn't really know how to do it, so I just wrote a letter to Dan Hennah, the art director, and to Peter Jackson. They put me onto the production manager, and it took off from there. I just pestered them and got offered a job and wound up doing all these locations." (While many on Jackson's crew have similar tales, Cooper is being a bit modest; after all, he was a lawyer in Auckland before joining the production, which would prove invaluable experience in negotiating agreements.)

Cooper also worked with some very experienced location managers, who knew that access to a location was as crucial as having the right look. "You've got to be able to build roads, or you've got to be able to fly your gear in," Cooper says. "Most of the time you want to have trucks—the camera trucks and the lighting and grips truck." Gaining access to some of the locations would prove extremely difficult.

"One of the location managers described it as being akin to landing a 747 jet on a dirt runway, and that was

what it was like," Cooper says. "But we just had to try and make it work."

Cooper went with the crew to some of the larger locations. Hobbiton, he says, was one of the easier locations—the farmer who owned the land was "quite happy to have us come in, and they completely re-landscaped the area." Cooper also negotiated with park rangers for the right to shoot in Kaitoke Regional Park, which serves as Rivendell in the films. Kaitoke is "a good example of the art department and how it worked," he says. "After the sets were taken out, we replanted 200 or 300 native plants and re-landscaped it. It's going to look beautiful in 20 years."

A more difficult location—by far—was Ruapehu, in Tongariro National Park in the middle of New Zealand's North Island. In the films, it serves as the backdrop for the Dagorlad battle scene between the men of Gondor, the Elves, and Sauron's forces that anchors the prologue of *The Fellowship of the Ring*; some Mordor scenes from *The Two Towers* and *The Return of the King* were also shot there.

Because Ruapehu was a conservation site, Cooper recalls, "we had to build tracks, we had to build platforms



for the crew to walk on, and we had to plan where we were going to park our 50 trucks. "We had up to 600 extras who had to be fed, clothed in armor and weapons, and kept warm," he adds. "It was an alpine environment, so we also had issues with snow and high winds."

And how. "We were working between 16 and 20 hours a day, and the elements were battering us, and we were out in the elements shifting units around from one side of the mountain to the other," Cooper says, adding that Ruapehu "was the location that nearly broke everybody."

The location he's most proud of? That would be Edoras, the stronghold of Rohan's King Theoden. In real life, it is a place called Mount Potts on New Zealand's South Island, in the Canterbury region. "Walking onto the set for Edoras right at dusk or in the beginning of the day, it really felt like walking back 2,000 years into medieval Europe or like something out of a Norse legend," he says.

King Théoden's hall—where the film crew was fed, incidentally—was a huge structure capable of withstanding winds of 130 kilometers [more than 80 miles] an hour. It's also the object of a full-circle "helicopter shot" in *The Two Towers* that Cooper predicts will "blow people away."

"People will see it and say, 'That's an amazing blue-screen shot,' but it isn't a blue screen," he says. "I think it will have that 'real' feel."

Cooper is happy to think that *The Lord of the Rings* crew's "performance" may someday help other filmmakers who turn to New Zealand for their projects.







“Walking onto the set for Edoras RIGHT AT DUSK, OR IN THE BEGINNING OF THE DAY, IT REALLY FELT LIKE WALKING BACK 2,000 YEARS INTO MEDIEVAL EUROPE, OR  
like something out of a Norse legend.”

“It’s a good thing for the New Zealand film industry because we haven’t left a mess behind, so in the future no one can turn around and say, ‘Those damned film crews—don’t let them in because they make a mess,’” Cooper says. “We didn’t make a mess, and most of the stuff that happens is very temporary—the odd vehicle tire tracks, a bit of trampled vegetation—but it’s generally very minimal.”

“We got a lot of support throughout filming,” he adds, “I think that ... they know us now, and they know that we’re

responsible and that we’re going to do a good job of protecting the environment.”

Perhaps the greatest compliment that can be paid to Cooper is this one: Peter Jackson got to shoot at each and every location he wanted. Not one landowner said no. Now, granted, some of them took a long time to say yes, but persistence is part of a location administrator’s job, and Cooper’s paid off.

“Mount Potts, where we shot Edoras—it took me 12 months to get us in there,” he says, adding that the production needed to build 5 kilome-

ters [more than 3 miles] of roads, construct two sets of bridges, and build sets on top of the mountain.

“We had to convince the local council that ... we could do it safely, and that when we were finished, we would take all the sets away—which we did,” he says. “We took them away and replanted 10,000 plants, and we performed a restoration program for six to eight months. If you went back there tomorrow or in a week’s time or next year, you would find very little sign that we’d been there.”

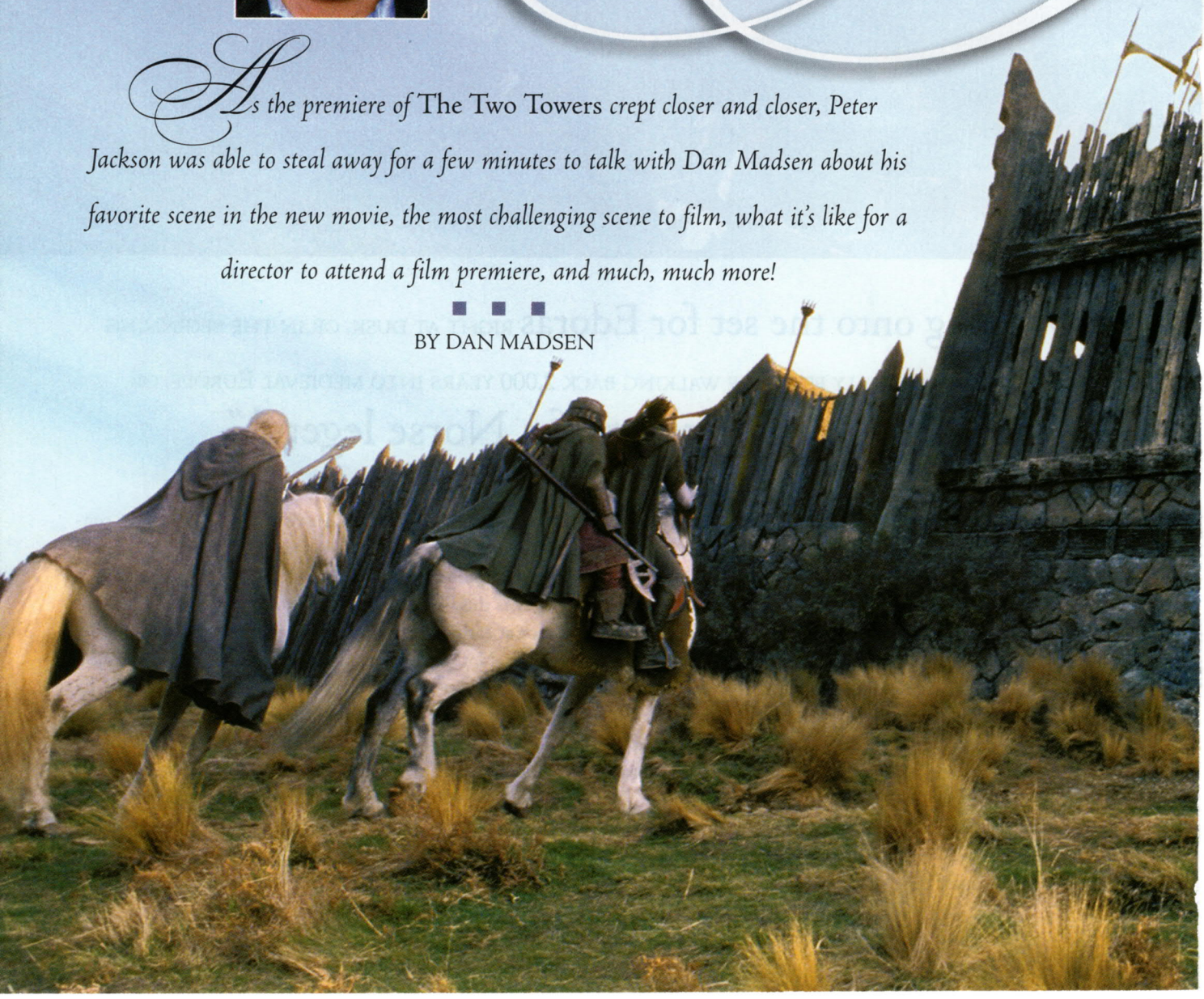


# UPDATE *with* PETER



*As the premiere of The Two Towers crept closer and closer, Peter Jackson was able to steal away for a few minutes to talk with Dan Madsen about his favorite scene in the new movie, the most challenging scene to film, what it's like for a director to attend a film premiere, and much, much more!*

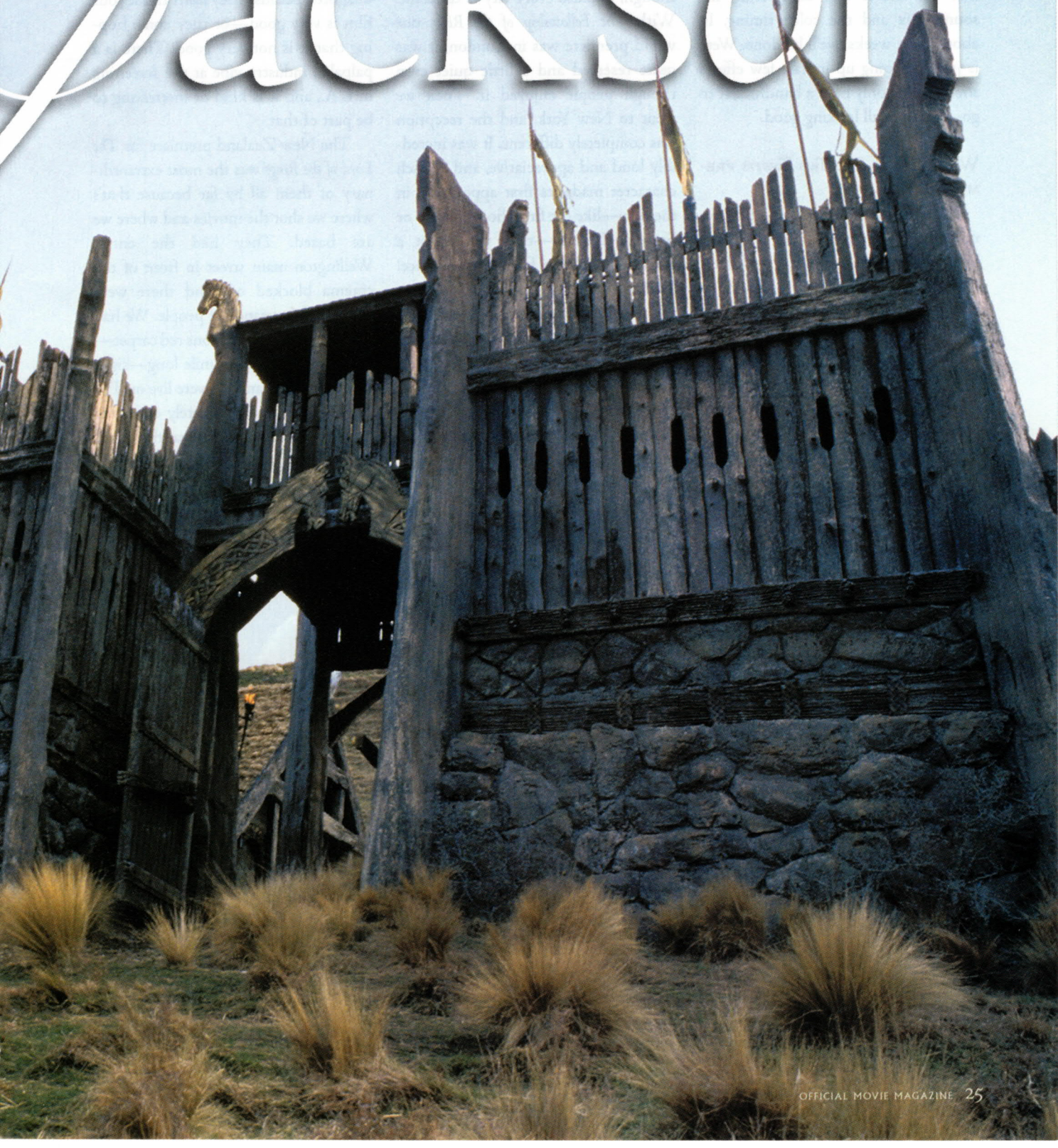
■ ■ ■  
BY DAN MADSEN





INTERVIEW | DIRECTOR

# Packson





**PETER, I UNDERSTAND YOU HAVE BEEN IN ENGLAND FOR MANY WEEKS NOW.**

Yes, we came over to do the music score with Howard Shore. We're now finishing up the last few things, which basically consists of putting the music into the movie and completing the sound mix and the color timing. In about three weeks, we'll be done. Weta is just wrapping up its last few effects shots—they only have a handful left to go—and it is all looking good.

**WHERE WILL *The Two Towers* PREMIERE?**

The plan is to have the world premiere in New York, and then the European premiere will be a week later in Paris. There is probably also going to be a Los Angeles event screening, and there will be a New Zealand premiere just before the opening.

**AS THE DIRECTOR, WHAT ARE THESE PREMIERES LIKE FOR YOU? ARE THEY DIFFERENT WHEN THEY ARE IN**

**WELLINGTON VERSUS, SAY, NEW YORK OR PARIS?**

I find them rather stressful. I am always expected to go up and make a speech, which I always get pretty nervous about; it's always something for me to get past that hurdle. It is interesting, though, because every city is different. With *The Fellowship of the Ring*, our world premiere was in London; it was quite reserved and a little quiet even though people enjoyed it. Then we went to New York, and the reception was completely different. It was incredibly loud and appreciative, and as each character made its first appearance in the film—like the first shot of Frodo or Sam or Legolas—they would get a round of applause from the audience! This wasn't a fan screening; this was the American premiere in New York. To tell you the truth, it was that screening that made us think that we would like to do the world premiere of *The Two Towers* in New York; it was such a fantastic experience. The warmth of the audience and the appreciation they

had for the movie was really strong, and we liked that very much. In Los Angeles, the screening is for industry people, so it is different as well. You get the feeling that they are coming to check you out. There are other studios there that are either jealous, or they are delighted because they don't think your film is very good—or they come hoping that it is not very good! There is a palpable industry vibe at the screening in L.A., and it is kind of interesting to be part of that.

The New Zealand premiere for *The Lord of the Rings* was the most extraordinary of them all by far because that's where we shot the movies and where we are based. They had the entire Wellington main street in front of the cinema blocked off, and there were crowds of thousands of people. We had to walk down an enormous red carpet—which seemed to be a mile long—signing autographs, and we were live on TV. It was something completely out there and pretty amazing. That was the last of our screenings for *The Fellowship of the*







“In Los Angeles, the screening is for industry people ... There are other studios there that are either jealous, or they are delighted because they don’t think your film is very good—or they come hoping that it is not very good!”

*Ring*, and, in a way, it was nice because we had saved the most spectacular and emotional screening for the very last.

**IT MUST BE AN INCREDIBLE FEELING TO SIT THERE IN A DARKENED THEATER AND WATCH THE AUDIENCE REACT TO THE FILM YOU HAVE WORKED SO HARD TO MAKE.**

Yeah, but you are always nervous the first time around. You get a little bit less nervous after the first screening. Particularly since we haven’t previewed these movies to audiences, we are faced with the situation that the premiere is literally the first time that a “civilian” audience gets to see the movie, and it is our first experience watching it with an audience. The premiere, for us, is a rather nerve-racking time because we really don’t know whether the film is working or not until these screenings happen. After the first screening, when you do feel that the film is working,

and people come up to you afterward and say nice things, you kind of relax a bit, and the subsequent ones aren’t quite as bad. But, in a way, you are sort of dreading the first premiere for all those reasons. They are stressful occasions—they are not the big kind of buzz you might expect they are. When you are the filmmaker, it’s not that much fun, really.

**WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER TO HAVE BEEN THE MOST CHALLENGING SCENE TO FILM IN *The Two Towers*?**

There are a lot of challenges, and they are challenging for completely different reasons.

If you are talking about sheer physical endurance, then the Helm’s Deep battle, which was shot over two or three months during night shoots, was obviously tough. There wasn’t really anything in *The Two Towers* that was physically tougher than that, but there

were a lot of complexities with the Gollum sequences. We had the situation of ultimately having to put in that computer-generated character in place of Andy Serkis, and that was very complex. We had to shoot quite a few of the scenes of Gollum with motion-control cameras, which are very time-consuming bits of equipment to set up. They tend to drag the day down to a slow pace, so you find it hard to get the momentum going.

Also, the Edoras sequences were hard because Edoras was built on top of a real hilltop in front of mountains—it wasn’t in a studio. It was a very distant location, about an hour-and-a-half drive from the nearest town, and, even then, it was a very small town.

It was right up a mountain valley, and it was incredibly windy. You’ll see in the movie that the actors are getting blasted around—which makes it look



“Legolas,  
Aragorn, and  
Gimli chasing  
the Uruks  
who have  
kidnapped Merry  
and Pippin ...  
When you watch  
the movie and see  
all the running  
shots of those  
guys—they are  
doing them  
with broken  
bones!”

pretty wild and amazing—but that was real, and it was tough to shoot. I remember one day we were filming there, and my glasses got blown off my head, which has never happened to me before! I was just standing there on the set, and this huge gust of wind came, and suddenly my glasses were ripped off my face. I turned and saw them flying over the cliff. I didn't have a spare pair with me, so I had to direct the rest of the day with sort of short-sighted, blurry vision, just peering at the actors through an out-of-focus haze. It took me two or three days to get a new pair of glasses.

Also, another kind of kooky coincidence happened with *The Two Towers* that I found very ironic: I had always looked forward to shooting the scenes where Legolas, Aragorn, and Gimli are chasing the Uruks who have kidnapped Merry and Pippin—it's like the three hunters running across the plains of Rohan. It is so vividly described in the book, and it is an iconic part of *The Two Towers* where these guys just run and run and run across the plains of Rohan in their pursuit of the Orcs. We had this great location on the South Island of New Zealand. After our 18 months of shooting, we reached the point where I had to shoot the three hunters doing their running across Rohan. We allowed a couple of days for it—doing nothing but running shots. We had Viggo [Mortensen] and Orlando [Bloom], and, for the wide shots of

Gimli, we had a stunt double, Brett Beattie, who was doubling for John Rhys-Davies. Brett was 4 feet tall, and had the right scale for Gimli. It just so happened that right before we were due to start shooting this, we had been shooting other scenes, and the guys had gotten hurt—all three of them! Brett had dislocated his knee, Orlando had fallen off his horse and had cracked his ribs, and Viggo had broken his big toe. I couldn't believe it—the day we had to start shooting the running scenes, these three guys turned up limping and groaning and were in pain! But I tell you, they just ran their hearts out for us for two days with a broken toe, broken ribs, and a dislocated knee! Every time I would yell, “Cut,” they would stop and go, “Ahhh, ohhh, I am so sore ... Ow!” Then they would groan and limp back to the start mark again. When you watch the movie and see all the running shots of those guys—they are doing them with broken bones!

In fact, Viggo breaking his toe is actually on film. There is a scene where Aragorn, Gimli, and Legolas arrive at the site where the Rohirrim have ambushed the Orcs on the edge of Fangorn Forest—it's like a small battlefield strewn with discarded shields and swords and debris. There is a pile of charred Orc bodies; they come across this carnage, and they obviously assume, at that point, that Merry and Pippin are probably dead, and they are stricken with grief. I suggested to Viggo that it would be great if, out of his grief and anger, he could kick one of the Orc helmets that was lying on





the ground. He said, "Sure, that's great." I set up a camera a little farther down the hill, and I said to Viggo, "Why don't you try to kick the helmet as close to the camera as you can, because it will look great if this thing comes flying past the lens." We did one take, then two takes, and Viggo was kicking it wide. It was a fiberglass helmet, so it

turned it into part of his performance, into a display of grief for Merry and Pippin. But he was sore, and when he took his boots off, he had this big swollen foot with a broken toe. Because that was so powerful, I put it in the movie—so when you see that shot in the film, he is actually breaking his toe right there on camera.

for 500 years, he has become this twisted creature, but there is still a remnant of his original personality; Smeagol is still there. He has these sort of schizophrenic conversations with himself; sometimes, he is Smeagol—especially when he is treated kindly. Other times, when he is suspicious, Gollum sort of dominates.



wasn't that heavy. We did three takes, and then we did a fourth. Take number four was pretty close and looked quite good. I was about to say, "That's it—we got it," but then I thought, "Let's just do one more, because every time he has done it, we have got it a little bit nearer the camera." So Viggo said, "Sure, let's give it one more go." He kicked this helmet, and the thing just whistled right by the lense of the camera—it was a great shot! Then Viggo did something different, something he hadn't done on any of the other shots: He lets out this anguished scream, drops to his knees, and is clenching his fist ... he is in total grief for the death of Merry and Pippin! He hadn't done that before, and I thought, "Wow—this is cool! This is really good—cut!" Then I found out that on that particular kick, Viggo had actually broken his toe. When he was yelling, he was yelling in pain because he had just broken his toe! He sort of turned it into acting because he didn't lose the character of Aragorn—he just stayed with it and

#### ANDY SERKIS HANDLES THE ROLE OF GOLLUM. WHAT CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT HIS PERFORMANCE?

Andy is in a very unique position. I think he has provided a performance on screen in a way that no other actor has in that he has created the character of Gollum. He has ended up not looking like Andy Serkis but looking like a computer-generated character. It is him, though; he owns the character. It really is the first time that an actor has completely controlled and been the prototype for a computer-generated creature. When people see the film, they will realize just what Andy's contribution has been to the movie.

#### DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE MOMENT IN *The Two Towers*?

My favorite scene is one that Fran [Walsh] wanted to write. We really liked what Andy Serkis was doing with Gollum in the sense that he was really exploring, in an interesting way, the relationship between Gollum and Smeagol. Obviously, owning the Ring

Fran had this great idea of a scene where, basically, Smeagol casts Gollum out. Frodo and Sam are sleeping in Ithilien, and Smeagol, for the first time, actually dominates Gollum and essentially drives Gollum away because he doesn't want Gollum around anymore. He wants to be friends with Frodo; he doesn't want to have bad thoughts and bad feelings, so he gets rid of Gollum temporarily. Fran wrote this scene, which was not in the book—it is one we just did for the movie. We shot it with Andy Serkis on set, with him performing it completely. It is about a two-and-a-half minute monologue where he is just doing Gollum/Smeagol, Gollum/Smeagol; it's like an internal conversation. We then gave it to the Weta animators and said, "In every detail of every muscle twitch and facial movement and every tiny flick of his eyes, just absolutely match Andy's performance." They had these big close-ups of Andy, and they animated the Gollum face to capture everything Andy was





“The Ringwraiths’ screams ... sounded okay, but [weren’t] as really hoped. ... Fran [Walsh] said, “Look, I have a pretty good don’t we just try to put a more human element into hear the Ringwraiths screaming, it is actually Fran screaming!”

doing—it is actually an extraordinary scene. It is probably the first time in a movie that you have seen a computer-generated character give a really complicated and complex performance. He’s acting as well as Sir Ian McKellen or Elijah [Wood] or Viggo in the film—he’s absolutely holding his own as an actor with the great actors we have in the movie, and he is, basically, a computer guy. It looks amazing! He looks so lifelike. His performance is so subtle; it is quite remarkable to see it.

IT WASN’T THAT LONG AGO WHEN THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN IMPOSSIBLE TO DO.

We couldn’t make that happen even a year ago. We have been working so hard on Gollum. People at Weta have been spending huge amounts of time—months, even years—refining the computer-generated process to such a degree that we were able to pull this off. It is demanding, and it is an incredibly subtle performance. When you look at a human being acting—a close-up of an actor on the screen, just the subtle nuances of how they use their eyes—they have energy coming out of their eyes, and so much of the power of their performance comes out from their eyes. They hardly have to move their faces or, if they do, there are just very subtle nuances that they

reflect in a delicate performance. I wanted Gollum to be able to do that. I wanted him to have the mechanisms, with his computer muscles underneath his computer skin, to give a very subtle and very detailed performance, just as a human actor would give. That’s never really been possible before, and I think with Gollum we have done it. People are going to be surprised by Gollum because I don’t think that at this point, people are expecting Gollum to be what they are going to see in the film. He will come as a surprise to people.

IT SOUNDS LIKE TREEBEARD WILL BE A SURPRISE TO PEOPLE, TOO.





spine-chilling as we had scream. Why it?" ... Whenever you

Treebeard has worked out really well. I really love Treebeard. I just love his character and his personality. I can sort of relate to Treebeard! He is quite humorous, quite fussy; he is a little bit on the pompous side, and he is fun. We have ended up with quite a good sequence of the Ents destroying Isengard as well, which is something that we always wanted to do. In the book, it is reported in flashbacks, but we are able to show, in all its spectacular detail, the Ents attacking Isengard.

PETER, AS ALWAYS, OUR MEMBERS HAVE SUBMITTED QUESTIONS FOR YOU. THIS ONE COMES FROM JADE VALOUR OF RELLINGEN, GERMANY:

BEING A VOICE AND SOUND ENTHUSIAST, I WOULD LOVE TO KNOW HOW YOU DECIDED ON AND THEN PRODUCED SOME OF THOSE WONDERFULLY GRUESOME AND SPINE-CHILLING VOICES, I.E. THE RINGWRAITHS AND THEIR HORSES, THE CAVE TROLL, THE BALROG, THE ORCS, ETC.?

We have an incredible sound design team that is responsible for creating those sounds. The Cave Troll and the Balrog are based on real creatures. They are a combination of various animals—bits of lions, bits of tigers, bits of hyena. Everybody knows how you can create Gollum in a computer or make dinosaurs or a spaceship, but computers can also be used for sound, of course. The sound design team has a library of incredible animal sounds, and they can blend them. They can take elements of the best part of a lion roaring and combine it with a hyena growling—this creates a hybrid creature noise you have never heard before but is nevertheless built from real sounds. That is the approach the sound design team takes—most of the sounds in the film are not fake. It is simply a matter of taking very interesting and provocative sounds and designing the soundtrack in a way that they seem original and sound like creatures you have never heard before. You can slow a tiger's growl down or speed it up or change the pitch of the tiger's voice a little bit to make it sound weird.

The scream of the Ringwraith, which was pretty distinctive in the first film, has a very interesting story. They had created some sound effects for the Ringwraiths' screams, using animal sounds such as a possum and a weird donkey that is kind of groaning. It sounded okay, but it wasn't as spine-chilling as we had really hoped. We were doing the final sound mix for *The Fellowship of the Ring*, which is the last thing you do before the film is finished—you are literally in the last two

or three weeks of the job. We were mixing in the sound effects, the dialogue, and the music, and we were hearing the completed soundtrack for the first time. Fran and I were getting a bit worried because we didn't think the Ringwraiths' screams were actually chilling enough; their scream is a very distinctive part of the character. Fran was particularly worried. We would go to the sound guys who were there at the mix and say, "Look, can we just see if we can beef these screams up or come up with a different idea? We know it is the very last minute." They would go away, try something, and then play it for us, but it still was not the right sound. Finally, Fran said, "Look, I have a pretty good scream. Why don't we just try to put a more human element into it?" It had become quite an animalistic sound by this point. So the sound effects guys went off to a recording room with Fran, and she just belted out a few huge screams. Fran has an incredibly piercing scream—you literally have to cover your ears! She screamed, and the sound guys just slightly treated her screams—I think they slowed it down a little bit and changed the pitch. So whenever you hear the Ringwraiths screaming, it is actually Fran screaming!

DARREN HEPWORTH OF WARRINGTON, ENGLAND, ASKS: THE CASTING DECISIONS MADE FOR THE FILMS HAVE BEEN INCREDIBLY SUCCESSFUL. BRAD DOURIF AS WORMTONGUE IS ONE OF THOSE. WHAT WAS THE THOUGHT PROCESS BEHIND THIS CASTING DECISION IN PARTICULAR?

We have known about Brad's work for a very long time, particularly since he tends to work in the genre that I am very fond of—horror movies and thrillers. We had met Brad and auditioned him for a role in *The Frighteners*. Ultimately, we didn't cast him; we chose Jeffrey Coombs instead. We met him back in 1995 for that audition and always wanted to work with him. He



just seemed like a great fit; when you think of Wormtongue, and you imagine actors who could actually play that part, he automatically comes to the top of the list. There are not that many character actors who could bring Wormtongue to life in that way, and Brad had the role virtually from Day One. We auditioned him, but we knew we wanted him.

**DR. JOSEPH CRABTREE ASKS: HOW DID THE FOLIAGE NATIVE TO NEW ZEALAND AFFECT YOUR DESIGNS IN CREATING TREEBEARD AND FANGORN FOREST?**

They didn't really affect us at all, because both Treebeard and the forest itself are completely artificial. We didn't actually shoot Fangorn in any location forest—we built it all in the

studio. Most of the other forests in the film are locations—they are New Zealand forests. We saw a lot of those in *The Fellowship of the Ring*. We wanted Fangorn to be very special and atmospheric and have a mood of its own, and we couldn't find a forest that we felt was right. All of the forests we went to felt too normal, so we created Fangorn. Therefore, it doesn't have any basis in New Zealand foliage—the trees in Fangorn were designed by [Conceptual Artist] Alan Lee and are made out of fiberglass and plaster. We also built a huge model of Fangorn that almost filled a studio. It had model trees that were about 6 feet high, and we had a camera on a snorkel lense—this camera films out of a very long tube with a lense on the end, which means you can poke it in amongst models without the bulk of

the camera getting in the way. We shot a lot of Fangorn scenes in the miniature forest, which was built to match our full-size set. We then superimposed the actors or Treebeard afterward.

**DARRAN HEPWORTH OF WARRINGTON, ENGLAND, ASKS: WAS THE CHANGE OF PACE FROM *The Fellowship of the Ring* TO *The Two Towers* DIFFICULT TO TRANSLATE INTO FILM CONSIDERING THE FACT THAT IT HAS TO APPEAL TO THE SAME AUDIENCE AS THE FIRST FILM?**

Well, the answer to that really lies in the fact that we shot all three films at the same time. We weren't consciously aware that we were making three different movies—we were really making one big, long story and dividing it into three pieces. The three books do have different characteristics, which definitely define the movies as individual films. *The Fellowship of the Ring* is a fairly linear story where we follow the Fellowship, whereas the Fellowship is broken up in *The Two Towers*. There are three different stories happening with Merry, Pippin, Frodo, Sam, Gollum, Aragorn, Legolas, and Gimli. In a sense, what J.R.R. Tolkien wrote defines *The Two Towers* as being very different in its structure and feel from *The Fellowship of the Ring*. However, they were shot as one continuous story with the same cast and the same director basically working on one big story. I think they have purity—that's what I like about them. *The Two Towers* is not a sequel that we made because *The Fellowship of the Ring* was successful—it wasn't a situation where we would be trying to figure out what people liked about *The Fellowship* and then put that into *The Two Towers* just because that is what you do with a sequel. We didn't have any of the usual influences. When *The Fellowship of the Ring* was released last year, *The Two Towers* was in the can. There was little we could do at that stage to alter or







“We wanted Fangorn to be very special and atmospheric and have a mood of its own. All of the forests we went to felt too normal, so we built a huge model that almost filled a studio.”

affect what that film was, and now, people are going to see that film. It is the natural next step to the adventures of these characters.

**MATT KEARNEY OF CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, ASKS: WOULD YOU SAY *The Lord of the Rings* HAS BEEN A LIFE-CHANGING EXPERIENCE FOR YOU?**


Yes, it has. To some degree, I have found that [to be the case] every time I have made a movie. Obviously, my earlier films have been much smaller in scale and in ambition than *The Lord of the Rings*, but they nonetheless change you. They change you because you have that film under your belt and the way that people see you has been altered in some way. It enables you to move on to

another film and hopefully a bigger and better film. That's sort of been the story of my career since I started making movies 16 years ago.

*The Lord of the Rings* has affected me in the same way but on a bigger scale. I am definitely a different filmmaker coming out of *The Lord of the Rings* than I was going into it. That has been true of all the films I have made but on a much more modest scale. This has been more of a quantum leap. I was sort of an unknown filmmaker—apart from a sort of cult audience—going into *The Lord of the Rings*. Now I am much better known coming out of it; I am being recognized on the street a lot more, which is not a particularly enjoyable thing. But this film has

given me a sense of confidence. Every film is hard, and every film is a lottery as to whether it's going to be a good film or not. You try your hardest to make it a good film, but you never know; it will always be like that, though. I am very sure that I am making the hardest films that I will ever make in my life. This is tough. I can't even think of any project that would be tougher to do than this. You are making three films, and each one is enormously complicated—way beyond anything I have ever done in the past.

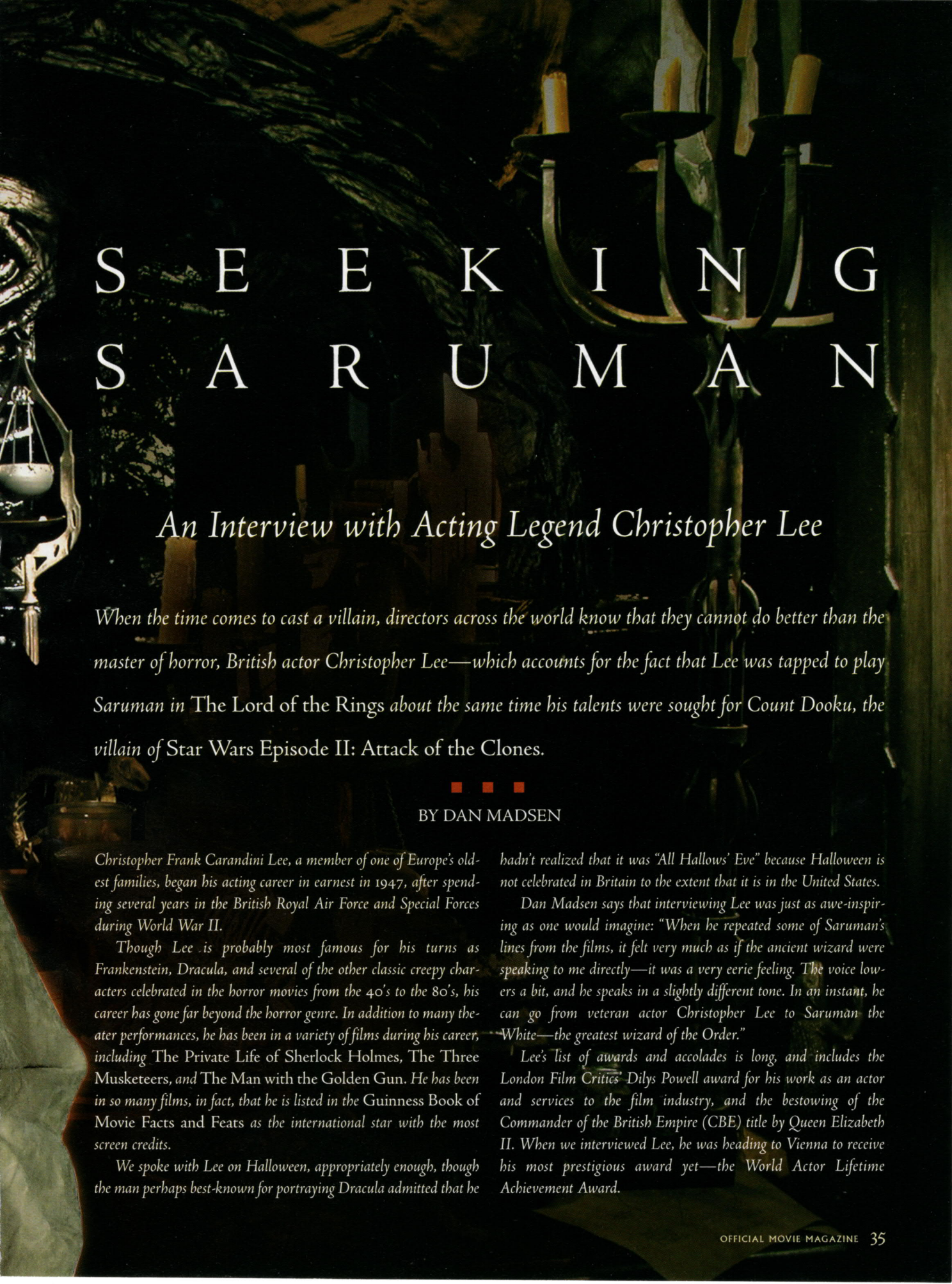
**PETER, THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR UPDATING US.**

No problem. My pleasure. 









# SEEKING SARUMAN

## *An Interview with Acting Legend Christopher Lee*

*When the time comes to cast a villain, directors across the world know that they cannot do better than the master of horror, British actor Christopher Lee—which accounts for the fact that Lee was tapped to play Saruman in The Lord of the Rings about the same time his talents were sought for Count Dooku, the villain of Star Wars Episode II: Attack of the Clones.*

■ ■ ■  
BY DAN MADSEN

Christopher Frank Carandini Lee, a member of one of Europe's oldest families, began his acting career in earnest in 1947, after spending several years in the British Royal Air Force and Special Forces during World War II.

Though Lee is probably most famous for his turns as *Frankenstein*, *Dracula*, and several of the other classic creepy characters celebrated in the horror movies from the 40's to the 80's, his career has gone far beyond the horror genre. In addition to many theater performances, he has been in a variety of films during his career, including *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes*, *The Three Musketeers*, and *The Man with the Golden Gun*. He has been in so many films, in fact, that he is listed in the Guinness Book of Movie Facts and Feats as the international star with the most screen credits.

We spoke with Lee on Halloween, appropriately enough, though the man perhaps best-known for portraying *Dracula* admitted that he

hadn't realized that it was "All Hallows' Eve" because Halloween is not celebrated in Britain to the extent that it is in the United States.

Dan Madsen says that interviewing Lee was just as awe-inspiring as one would imagine: "When he repeated some of Saruman's lines from the films, it felt very much as if the ancient wizard were speaking to me directly—it was a very eerie feeling. The voice lowers a bit, and he speaks in a slightly different tone. In an instant, he can go from veteran actor Christopher Lee to Saruman the White—the greatest wizard of the Order."

Lee's list of awards and accolades is long, and includes the London Film Critics' Dilys Powell award for his work as an actor and services to the film industry, and the bestowing of the Commander of the British Empire (CBE) title by Queen Elizabeth II. When we interviewed Lee, he was heading to Vienna to receive his most prestigious award yet—the World Actor Lifetime Achievement Award.



YOU HAVE BEEN AN ACTOR FOR 56 YEARS NOW—IS THAT CORRECT?

Yes, that's long enough! I think it adds up to something like 290 credits in front of the camera.

WHEN DID YOU FIRST REALIZE THAT ACTING WAS A CAREER CHOICE FOR YOU?

About 1946, after the war.

WHAT INSPIRED YOU?

Five years of war. A relative of mine said to me, "What are you going to do now that you have been demobilized from the armed forces?" I said, "I don't know." He said, "Have you ever thought of being an actor?" I had been an actor in school plays and things like that. I thought it was a good idea. Why not do that? I love imagery and imagination. I am very inventive. I have good instincts. All of those things matter enormously [if you want] to be a real actor. The idea of being different people in different stories appealed to me very much. So, I thought, "Why not?" I then started on that path. Of course, the first 10 years, I didn't really achieve anything except the most important thing of all—by playing small parts in small and big movies, and traveling about all over the place, I learned what it was to be an actor in a studio or outside in front of a camera; I learned the craft. That is something very few people are prepared to do today. They all want to be rich and famous in 24 hours. I learned so that when the time came for me to play something, I didn't expect it, but I was ready.

IS IT TRUE THAT YOU HAVE MORE CREDITS THAN ANY OTHER ACTOR?

Any other actor alive, perhaps—not of all time, though. People like John Carradine have done more. He told me he had done more than 400 films, but when he started, he probably was doing

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two-reelers or whatever they called them then. He might have done five or six a month. It was possible to do that many in those days, and John died in his 80s. It is not possible now to do that many films.

YOU HAVE DONE MANY FILMS ACROSS MANY GENRES, BUT MANY PEOPLE FOCUS ON YOUR WORK IN CLASSIC HORROR FILMS.

Yes, that is true, even though I haven't done one for 27 years. It is merely a phase, but it has been a very useful part of my career.

IT IS AMAZING THAT AFTER SUCH AN ILLUSTRIOUS CAREER, IN A YEAR'S TIME, YOU HAVE STARRED IN TWO OF THE BIGGEST FILMS OF ALL TIME: *The*

*Fellowship of the Ring* AND *Star Wars Episode II: Attack of the Clones*.

It will be more than that when the next few chapters of both of those sagas come out.

ARE THERE ANY SIMILARITIES BETWEEN *The Lord of the Rings* AND *Star Wars* FOR YOU?

No, they are totally different. One is terrestrial, and the other is galactic and [has to do with] outer space. There is no comparison except that, in both stories, like most stories, you have a dark side and a light side. I just happen to be on the dark side of both of them.

ONE OF THE THINGS THAT PEOPLE LOVE ABOUT YOU IS YOUR VOICE. IT IS VERY DISTINCTIVE AND WAS VERY



PHOTO: RETNA/CONTRAST





PHOTO: ANDRÉ FRANZO / CORBIS SYGMA

POWERFUL FOR YOUR ROLES AS SARUMAN AND COUNT DOOKU. HAVE YOU EVER TAKEN VOICE LESSONS?

I have never taken voice lessons, but I have certainly used my voice a lot. The older I get, the darker and deeper it gets, which happens with everybody's voice, I think. I have done a lot of singing, too. People say I have a distinctive voice, and that may well be so, but I can change it; I can make it light, I can make it dark, I can make it amusing or alarming. I am an actor.

HOW FAMILIAR WERE YOU WITH J.R.R. TOLKIEN'S WORK PRIOR TO GETTING THE ROLE?

I read the three books of *The Lord of the Rings* when they were first published. I have read them every year since they came out, and that is nearly 50 years. So I think you could say I am

fairly well acquainted with them. I think it is one of the great literary works of all time! I think it ranks up there with the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. I met the man who wrote it briefly.

HOW DID YOU MEET J.R.R. TOLKIEN?

I met him once with some friends at a pub in Oxford that he used to go to and said, "How do you do?" I was quite overcome as you can imagine. I had read the books many times at that point. He was quite charming and said, "How do you do?" to each of us—I think there were five or six of us at the time. He then went off to join the people he had come in to meet. He was exactly as you see him in the pictures—smoking a pipe and benign and extremely polite. What an incredible mind! You have to realize that he did something unique in the history of lit-

erature. He didn't just invent new worlds and new races—both mortal and immortal. He invented new languages that you can actually read, write, and learn to speak! No one has ever done that. So, in answer to your question, I would say that I was probably more familiar with *The Lord of the Rings* than anybody else connected with the films. They were always trying to catch me out with questions just for fun! You know, "Who was Frodo's father?" They never beat me, and Richard Taylor will confirm that! They all tried, but they never did.

AS YOU READ THE BOOKS OVER THE YEARS, DID YOU EVER ENVISION YOURSELF PLAYING SARUMAN?

When I read the books, I was nearly 50 years younger. I think the first book came out around 1955. When I





first read it, I wondered if these books would ever be made into films because it would be so wonderful. I felt, though, that it probably would not happen, because there wasn't the technical knowledge to do it, and it would've cost so much. As an actor, I naturally said to myself, "My God, wouldn't it be wonderful if I could play Gandalf?"—along with a few thousand other actors! I could've played him, but not now; I am too old. I couldn't have done it physically. I couldn't have walked around in the snow on the top of a mountain. Ian McKellen is 17 years younger than

I am. That makes one hell of a difference, believe you me! He is a very fine

Gandalf, so if I wasn't going to play Gandalf, I was delighted to be offered the part of the other wizard who, in many ways, certainly at the beginning, is not only the head of the order but also the most superior of them all.

WHAT WERE YOUR FIRST THOUGHTS WHEN YOU WERE OFFERED THE ROLE? WAS THERE ANY TREPIDATION?

No trepidation whatsoever. I couldn't wait to get started. Where in the story we started—in the middle or the beginning—didn't worry me; as it happened, we started at the beginning, which doesn't happen very often. Every actor has a little bit of trepidation because you hope you are going to bring the character to life immediately on the first day and do what the director wants and contribute to the story. That is not easy when you are working with people who have already been working for four or five

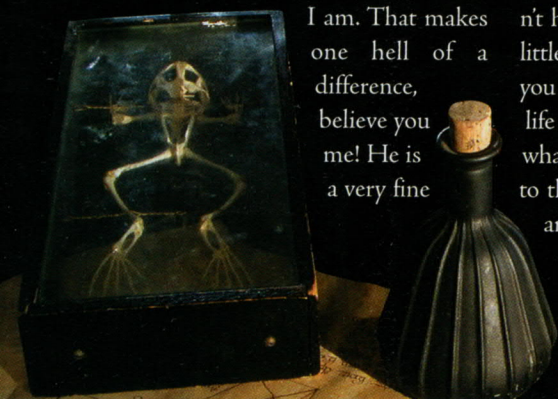
weeks and have found their characters already. But I knew the books and the characters so well. Regardless, I certainly didn't find it easy, and I was as nervous as any other actor is on the first day. I was just determined that I was going to be J.R.R. Tolkien's character.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE SARUMAN TO SOMEONE WHO HAS NEVER READ THE BOOKS?

I would describe him as a great man brought low by his lust for power. God knows, that has happened enough!

I DON'T SUPPOSE PETER JACKSON KNEW HOW FAMILIAR YOU WERE WITH THE BOOKS PRIOR TO CASTING YOU?

Probably not. When I met him in London while he was casting, a long time ago, I told him how much I loved the books. I think he may have





**“... I DON’T PLAY VILLAINS—I PLAY PEOPLE. THEY ARE EITHER IMAGINARY OR HISTORICALLY ACCURATE, BUT THE SAME THING APPLIES.”**

had in mind my playing Saruman right from the beginning. Then, when he realized how much it meant to me and how much I loved the books, I think that probably helped him to make up his mind.

ONE OF OUR FAN CLUB MEMBERS, STEVE GIBBS, HAS SUBMITTED A QUESTION FOR YOU: IN WHAT WAYS DID YOU DRAW FROM THE BOOKS, THE SCRIPT, AND YOUR OWN EXPERIENCE PLAYING VILLAINS IN ORDER TO KEEP SARUMAN FROM BECOMING SIMPLY A CARICATURE OF EVIL?

Well, I don’t play villains—I play people. They are either imaginary or historically accurate, but the same thing applies. You have got to present a character that the audience can believe, which is one of the problems with a film like *The Silence of the Lambs*. I saw the first one of those films but haven’t seen the other two. It was a very well-made film, but I didn’t believe it—although there are people like that and the character was based on a combination of real people.

PEOPLE DON’T START OUT EVIL. THEY HAVE THEIR OWN MOTIVATIONS, WHICH MAY EVENTUALLY LEAD TO SOMETHING DARK AND SINISTER.

Oh, yes, I agree. I don’t think anybody is born totally wicked, although the theologians tell us that we are all born with original sin. But I don’t think anyone is born totally wicked. In fact, I have a great sympathy for people who are “bad,” for lack of a better word. It is something they can’t control. I think there is a total sadness about them ... a terrible loneliness. Sometimes, it is total schizophrenia, and they really don’t know what they are doing. At other times, they are driven to do these things, and they can’t stop.

You had a recent case of that in the United States with the sniper shootings. Why were all these people being killed? He must have been a very sad, lonely, and unhappy man. But why do people do these things? Why did Jeffrey Dahmer do what he did? We have such people here in England as well—Jack the Ripper, as well as others. We will probably have these types of people with us forever; the only way

to deal with it, in my opinion, is punishment. I don’t think rehabilitation is necessarily the answer. Once the seed is planted, it is not going to go away. There have been so many cases of people who have committed the most awful crimes who have apparently repented and become better and then are let out and have immediately done it again. It is a kind of compulsion that they can’t control. I think that was the problem with Saruman. He lost his self-control. He thought he could become the Lord of the Rings. He thought he could take over the power from Sauron and, as frequently happens in real life, he made a big mistake.

WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER TO BE THE MOST CHALLENGING ASPECT OF THIS ROLE?

To make it believable. Actually, you could say that about any part, really. You know, wizards are not human beings. They are immortals in human bodies. Gandalf has obviously accepted that more or less. Saruman has not. He resents being imprisoned. He says the lines—which are probably in the DVD—“Within this frail human body, does not the spirit of the Maiar not live?” He is basically saying, “Here I am, imprisoned in this ridiculous cell. It’s all right for you, Gandalf—you don’t seem to mind. But I do.” I







think it is one of the things that drives him to this insatiable desire to become the Lord of the Rings. He isn't a human being, and people are inclined to treat him as one. One immortal can take over from another. Don't forget that Sauron is not immortal. Sauron was the lieutenant of Morgoth. Morgoth, or Melkor, was one of the immortals of Aule, and he is the one who went into the darkness. Sauron was his servant. Sauron, as far as I know from the stories, was human, although, for the purposes of the film, after he lost the finger with the ring on it, he disintegrates. You couldn't show him as a human being because there really is no description of him other than he was "black-skinned and burning hot." That, in itself, is a very frightening thing to contemplate. There really is no description. As far as I'm concerned, Sauron was originally a lieutenant of Morgoth and probably human and, eventually, becomes a sort of evil entity in the form of a lidless eye. You really can't get into a long discussion or argument about that because I don't think anybody knows the answer.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE WORKING WITH SIR IAN MCKELLEN?

I enjoyed it enormously. He was very supportive and very helpful, and that is not always the case these days. Here is a man with an enormous amount of experience as a classical actor, and he's also done quite a few movies. He was playing, essentially, a classical role just as I was. He couldn't have been nicer.

WAS THE FIGHT SCENE WITH GANDALF AND SARUMAN PHYSICALLY DEMANDING?

We did a lot of it ourselves, and it wasn't easy, especially when you are in your late 70s, as I was! It was demanding and difficult and tough. But I have

"I AM A MEMBER OF THE ACADEMY [OF MOTION PICTURE ARTS AND SCIENCES], AND I THOUGHT IT WAS A COMPLETE DISGRACE THAT THE DIRECTOR AND THE FILM DID NOT WIN AN OSCAR THIS YEAR. IT WAS DISGRACEFUL."

a done a great deal of that in my career. Even now, in *Attack of the Clones*, everything you see on the screen and in the light-saber fights is me. In *The Lord of the Rings*, there are only one or two moments where the bodies are flung backward through the air, and we obviously did not do that.

WHAT WAS THE HARDEST PART OF BEING INVOLVED WITH THESE FILMS?

Well, really, it was to play the character that Tolkien had in mind, to do what the director wants, and to present the combination of that to the audience and convince them.

PETER JACKSON HAS SAID THAT EVERYTHING THAT WAS SEEN IN THESE FILMS NEEDED TO BE GROUNDED IN REALITY.

Well, that is true. When you look at the cast, you can't envision anyone else playing these parts. When you look at the film, you really do think it is real. You are not looking at actors dressed up. You believe it, and that is what I think Peter was saying.

AS YOU WERE READING THE BOOKS MANY YEARS AGO, DID YOU ENVISION SARUMAN APPEARING AS THE CHARACTER DOES IN THE FILMS?

Yes, I think so. He is tall and wears slightly off-white clothes. Although he is Saruman the White, the head of the order, he's been that for a few thousand years, so his clothes are beginning to lose their brilliance and whiteness—which is subsequently taken over by Gandalf. I think the way I looked and

the way I played the part was the way I saw it when I read the books.

ARE YOU HAPPY WITH THE WAY THE FILMS HAVE BEEN TRANSLATED FROM THE BOOKS?

Yes. You can't put everything on the screen. It would be impossible. You have to make allowances, and you have to make cuts—you have to condense. This is why I think the three scriptwriters did such a brilliant job. They had to condense the stories, but they still kept the spirit and the very essence of Tolkien. I think he would be delighted; I definitely think he would like the films.

DID YOU KNOW EARLY ON THAT *The Lord of the Rings* WOULD BE SO SUCCESSFUL AT THE BOX-OFFICE?

The films will be viewed as classics. The way they were made is unique. The best thing I can say about it is that during all my visits to New Zealand, never once did I see anybody throw a temper tantrum or show any degree of impatience. I never saw anybody in a bad mood—never—on either side of the camera. Obviously, everyone was very tired and overworked, but I never saw a sour expression.

That's very rare. That comes from the top. A combination of Barrie Osborne and Peter Jackson and all the people around them—particularly [Weta Workshop Director] Richard Taylor—[being] so extraordinary that I think it was unique in terms of making films. The fact that one man, basically, made three gigantic films at the same time with several different





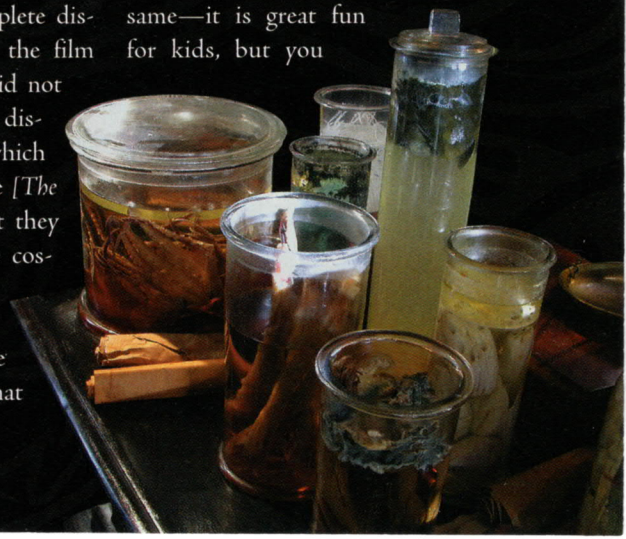
units—I just don't know how Peter did it! He is a very strong man physically, and he has enormous stamina. He is also a very stable individual. But even he must have become excessively tired. No human being could do what he has done—and is continuing to do right up until December of next year—without being somewhat exhausted. I don't believe any human being has done what Peter has done—being able to keep the picture in his mind while leaping between one film and another, one scene and another. At one point, he might shoot a scene on one stage, watching it on a monitor and watching it on the floor as well, and, when that is done, he might look at another monitor that may show a scene I am doing on another stage, and then he might look at another monitor [showing] what is being shot 30 miles away. Then he looks at yet another monitor that shows rushes from the night before.

Of course, a lot of credit also must go to New Line for giving the project the green light and believing in it, but the absolute guiding light is Peter. Look

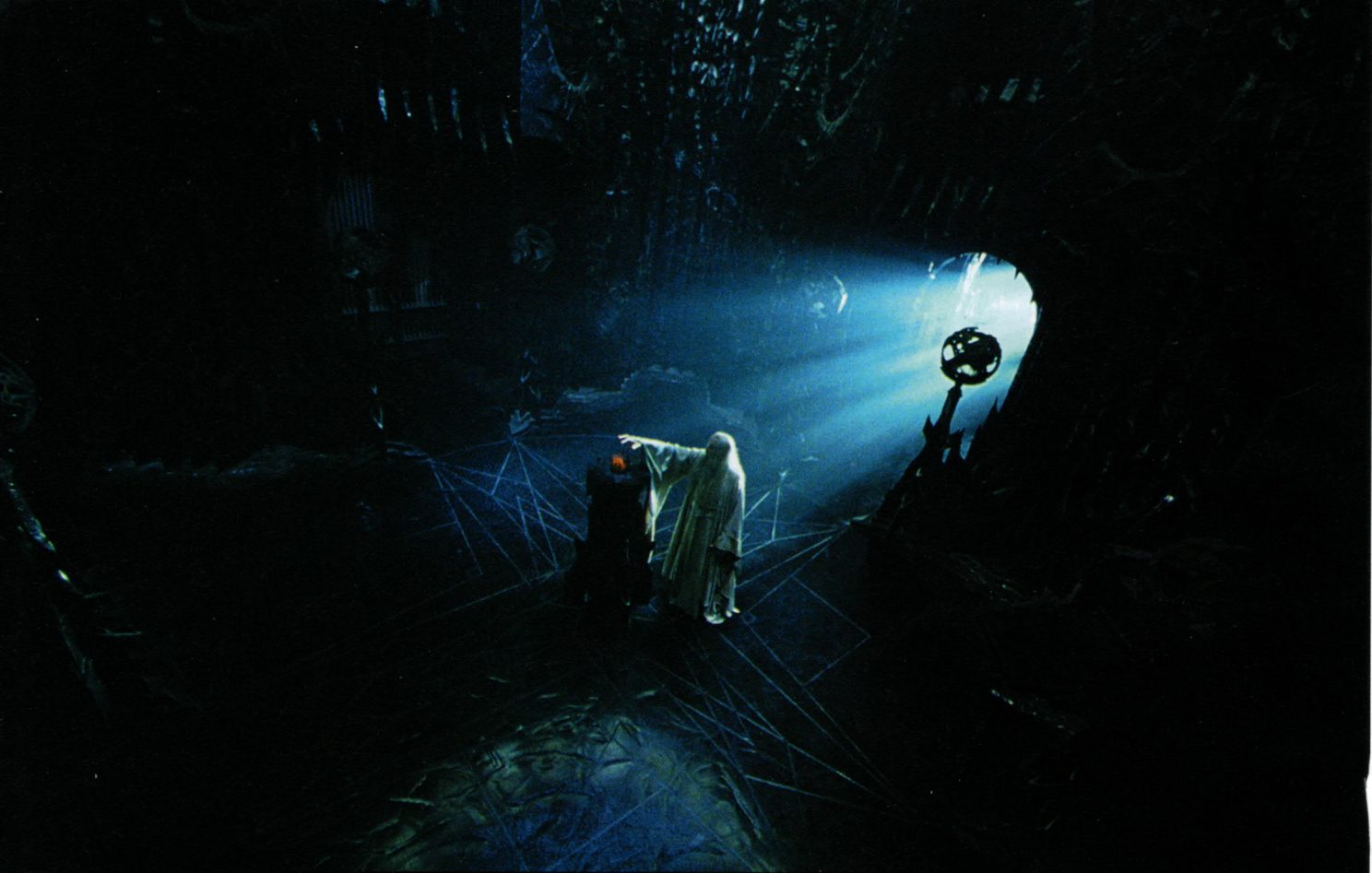
at the success of the first film! It outstrips *Harry Potter*, it outstrips *Spiderman*. Maybe in the first weekend or the first week, those other two films outgrossed *The Lord of the Rings*. But the press doesn't tell you why—I know why. *Harry Potter* had more showings per day than *The Lord of the Rings*, so of course it is going to make more money. But that is not the point. It's not how a picture opens—although that is important—[but rather] how it continues. *The Lord of the Rings* is going to outstrip every film ever made.

I am a member of the Academy [of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences], and I thought it was a complete disgrace that the director and the film [*The Fellowship of the Ring*] did not win an Oscar this year. It was disgraceful. They gave Oscars, which were richly deserved, to some [*The Lord of the Rings*] people, but they didn't give an Oscar for the costuming, which was a tremendous mistake! The costumes and the armor were so superior to anything else that

had been made for years and years. Richard Taylor quite rightly got an Oscar, but [Costumer] Ngila Dickson should have got one, too. Peter Jackson should have got one, and the film should have got one. I went on about this at some length whenever I was asked, and I always got the same answer: The Academy has never given an Oscar to a fantasy film. Don't ask me why! My answer to that is, "Well, they're going to have to! They can't ignore it." *A Beautiful Mind* is a good movie, but you couldn't compare it to the sheer achievement of *The Fellowship of the Ring*. *Harry Potter* is the same—it is great fun for kids, but you







can't compare it with the extraordinary living/breathing reality of *The Lord of the Rings*. There is no comparison. Everyone said it was impossible to do for years and years and years. At one time, it would've been. There were not sufficient advantages in CGI [computer-generated imagery].

DO YOU THINK THAT THE BOOKS ARE BEING READ MORE NOW, AND BY A NEW GENERATION, BECAUSE OF THE SUCCESS OF THE FILM?

Oh, yes, there is no question about that. Sales of the books have rocketed. Fantasy is a form of escapism from the rather disagreeable realities of everyday

life. You are going into an enchanted world, and that's why people love reading *The Lord of the Rings*.

WHY DO YOU THINK TOLKIEN'S WORK HAS SURVIVED FOR SO MANY YEARS?

It is a great work of literature. I do think the film will lead to more people reading the books, and people who have already read it will want to see the film—it works both ways. I haven't seen any indifferent review anywhere.

YOU'VE READ THE BOOKS EVERY YEAR SINCE YOU FIRST PICKED THEM UP. ARE YOU ABLE TO WATCH *The Fellowship of the Ring* TIME AND TIME AGAIN AS WELL?

I've watched the film three or four times on the big screen, twice on DVD, and then, of course, the extend-

ed DVD comes out in November, and I shall watch that, too. There might be a bit more of me in it. I am also looking forward to seeing *The Two Towers*. I don't know what happens. I have no idea. I know what is on the printed page, but a lot of it may be taken out and a lot more put in. Things may be changed around. Who knows? It is wonderful to see it all come to life on the screen and see all the new characters, which is terribly important. I'm particularly looking forward to seeing Gollum.

WHAT WERE YOUR IMPRESSIONS OF NEW ZEALAND?

I have been to New Zealand four times now. Before *The Lord of the Rings*, I had been there only briefly. I think it is the most beautiful country in the world! And it has the nicest people. It's like we all used to be in the '50s—polite, courteous, helpful, well mannered, and friendly. All of those things.





"POLITICAL CORRECTNESS ... A GREAT DEAL OF IT IS COMPLETE AND ABSOLUTE NONSENSE AND FORCED ONTO PEOPLE WITH THREATS ... I DON'T KNOW WHY—WE DON'T ALL WANT TO BE THE SAME. WE SHOULD BE CELEBRATING OUR DIFFERENCES."

WHY HAVE THEY REMAINED THAT WAY, AND WE HAVEN'T?

Because they are at the other end of the world and not so much influenced, I assume, by all the ridiculous fads and fashions that have, I think, lowered the moral standard and, to a great extent, the educational and behavioral standards of the West ... the dumbing-down of the world. A journalist was talking to me the other day about political correctness. To be perfectly truthful, I didn't know what he was talking about. I had heard the phrase, but I didn't really know what it meant. When he started telling me, I said that I hadn't heard such rubbish in all my life! It gets to the point where people can't say practically anything in case it offends someone somewhere. Some of it is okay and is something that one can accept, but a great deal of it is complete and absolute nonsense and forced onto people with threats—"If you don't do this, we will prosecute you for the abuse of human rights, sexism, racism, ism, ism, ism, etc." It just goes on and on. I don't know why—we don't all want to be the same. We should be celebrating our differences.

HOW DO YOU SPEND YOUR FREE TIME THESE DAYS?


(Laughs) What free time? I have just come back from Denmark, where I gave a concert with the Tolkien Ensemble and an orchestra and a choir that has written music. I sing on the record and recite the poems from the books because, of course, they are not in the films. It was a

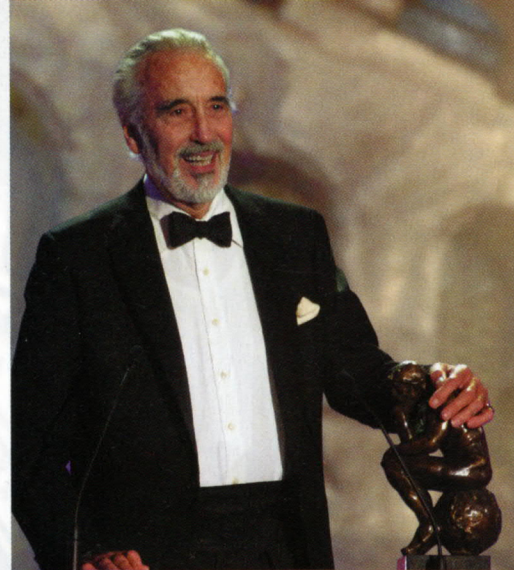
live performance, but it will be on a recording eventually. Before that, I was in Monte Carlo, where I received an award for the "Best Interpreter Onscreen of Literary Works," and that means Shakespeare and Moliere, as well as Ian Fleming and J.R.R. Tolkien, if you like. It was a great honor.

IS THERE ANY TRUTH TO THE RUMOR THAT YOU ARE UP FOR THE ROLE OF DUMBLEDORE IN THE NEXT *Harry Potter* FILM?

That is totally without foundation. It is all over the Internet, magazines, and papers, and on radio and television. I was never approached to play Dumbledore. Richard Harris played him twice. In view of Richard Harris' sad death, obviously he has to be replaced. But, in view of the fact that he died only a few days ago, it would be indelicate and distasteful even to discuss it. I put that message up on my Web site. If I were approached, I would be only too delighted to do it, but I have not been asked.

MR. LEE, THANK YOU FOR THE INTERVIEW. IT IS ALWAYS NICE TO FIND THAT THE PEOPLE WE ADMIRE LIVE UP TO OUR EXPECTATIONS WHEN WE MEET THEM!

We are, all of us, two different people, and actors are more [so] than most. They have their professional lives and their private lives. Fortunately, mine don't overlap and never have, but I appreciate the compliment. 



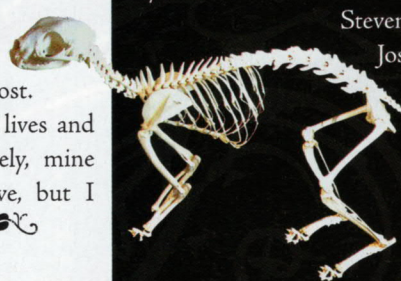
## LEE HONORED *with* WORLD AWARD

Joining the likes of Steven Spielberg, Paul McCartney, and Luciano Pavarotti, Christopher Lee was honored with a World Award on November 2 in Vienna.

Lee accepted the Actor Lifetime Achievement Award, an honor presented to "internationally recognized film and stage actors for outstanding performances as well as their continued commitment to their craft," at a ceremony at the imperial Hofburg Palace.

The World Awards are affiliated with Men's World Day, a global initiative led by former Russian President Mikhail Gorbachev to change the attitudes, image, and role of men in society through support for the causes of peace, freedom, and tolerance worldwide. Awards are bestowed each year on extraordinary men "whose sustained engagement in a variety of fields has helped contribute to a better world." This year's voting assembly included Maximilian Schell,

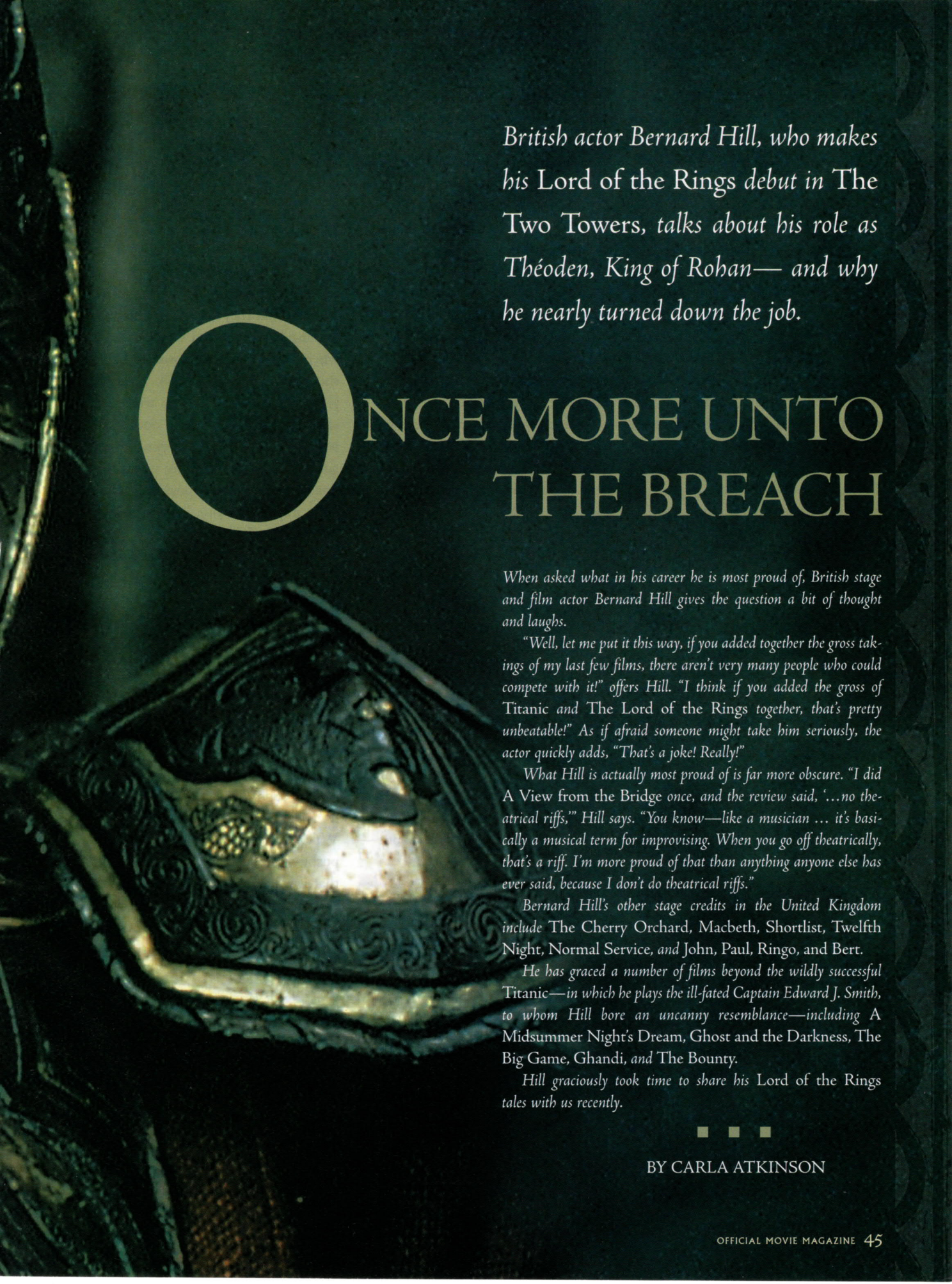
Steven Spielberg, José Carreras, and many other prominent figures.











*British actor Bernard Hill, who makes his Lord of the Rings debut in The Two Towers, talks about his role as Théoden, King of Rohan—and why he nearly turned down the job.*

# ONCE MORE UNTO THE BREACH

*When asked what in his career he is most proud of, British stage and film actor Bernard Hill gives the question a bit of thought and laughs.*

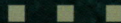
*"Well, let me put it this way, if you added together the gross takings of my last few films, there aren't very many people who could compete with it!" offers Hill. "I think if you added the gross of Titanic and The Lord of the Rings together, that's pretty unbeatable!" As if afraid someone might take him seriously, the actor quickly adds, "That's a joke! Really!"*

*What Hill is actually most proud of is far more obscure. "I did A View from the Bridge once, and the review said, '...no theatrical riffs,'" Hill says. "You know—like a musician ... it's basically a musical term for improvising. When you go off theatrically, that's a riff. I'm more proud of that than anything anyone else has ever said, because I don't do theatrical riffs."*

*Bernard Hill's other stage credits in the United Kingdom include The Cherry Orchard, Macbeth, Shortlist, Twelfth Night, Normal Service, and John, Paul, Ringo, and Bert.*

*He has graced a number of films beyond the wildly successful Titanic—in which he plays the ill-fated Captain Edward J. Smith, to whom Hill bore an uncanny resemblance—including A Midsummer Night's Dream, Ghost and the Darkness, The Big Game, Ghandi, and The Bounty.*

*Hill graciously took time to share his Lord of the Rings tales with us recently.*



BY CARLA ATKINSON



There isn't a great story behind how he came to play Peter Jackson's Théoden in *The Lord of the Rings*, Bernard Hill insists.

"Peter Jackson didn't see me walking down the street one day and say, 'That's the guy!'" Hill says with a laugh. "And I wasn't particularly interested in *The Lord of the Rings*; I was looking forward to bubbling up more directing jobs and going on in that route."

But that's not the way things played out. "Peter knew my work from before, and he wanted me for the project in some role," Hill says, "and I did put myself on the take for another role—I won't tell you what!" When Jackson and screenwriters Fran Walsh and Philippa Boyens instead invited him to audition for Théoden, he wasn't enthusiastic.

"It seemed a long way away, and it seemed to be a long, long job," Hill recalls. "I was directing a play locally, and I thought I could probably do without this, really." But in the end, he decided to send in an audition tape. "I said, 'Oh, okay,' with not very much enthusiasm. I got a friend and some [film] equipment, and we set it all up in his barn. I directed myself and then sent a tape off to New Zealand."

Peter Jackson liked what he saw and sent the actor a script, inviting him to join the cast. But that wasn't the end of the story. When the actor looked over

the script, he balked. "There's no way I'm going to do this—there's nothing in the script, only dialogue," Hill remembers thinking. "The part didn't seem to exist at all in the same kind of way it did in the book. I thought, 'This is just silly.' But [fellow British actor] Sean Bean had been out there, and he had a great time, so I phoned Sean Bean, and he said, 'No, no, they're just working on the script in a very strange way.' My agent persuaded me to at least talk to the writers." Boyens and Walsh called Hill, and the three had a "very long, very expensive conference call," he says.

The conversation blew him away. "They were saying, 'Well, this is what we want for Théoden, because when he goes to Isengard, and we do this, and then we go over there and to the Pelennor fields ... all these places!'" he says. "They lost me completely; it was like rocket science. It was coming out of them with such ease because they were so immersed in it." It slowly dawned on Hill that they had already been filming for five months, which is about the average shooting time for a normal feature film.

"Philippa and Fran had obviously been involved in condensing the book into script form over a period of more than two years, so they were massively informed," he says. "Meanwhile, I've got my own book—my reference one—



THE GHOST AND THE DARKNESS

and am flipping through it as the conversation is going on, trying to pretend I know what they're talking about and looking for some kind of a clue as to where everything's supposed to be! In the end, they said, 'Well, basically, you're just going to have to trust us.' I said, 'Well, it looks like it, doesn't it?'" My agent said, 'It's up to you. It's not going to make you in any way a millionaire—just the opposite, it could quite impoverish you, being out there for that long.'"

Hill decided to do it. The decision was made a bit easier by intuition, he says. He had, Hill remembers, a "sneaking suspicion about Peter—I had a feeling about him."

## LATECOMERS

When Hill arrived in New Zealand, he was taken aback to learn that a script conference was scheduled for his first day.

"I thought, 'They're pushing it, really,'" Hill says. "When I met [Boyens and Walsh], they said, 'We're not being pushy—our schedules are just so busy that if we don't see you today, we can't see you for another week. We just wanted to say to you that you came out here on an act of faith, and we won't let you down.' And they didn't."

Hill says he soon found that "they're not the kind of people to let you down.

"They're New Zealanders, and New Zealanders have this astonishing ability [for] consistent honesty, which is probably not true of very many countries at all," he notes. "But New Zealanders have it in abundance. New Zealanders have all the traits that I would hope people would see in me."



TITANIC





When Hill arrived, many of the major cast members had been working together for months, but everyone was “so welcoming,” he says. “They had worked themselves to death to get through Christmas, they’d been on holiday, and now they were looking at the great big long slog to God knows when! Round about the second month into that long slog, at the end of February, some fresh faces arrived—Miranda Otto and myself—and it was a new strand of the story, and everybody went ‘Oh great!’ Miranda is wonderful—a brilliant lady and just great to look at! Sexy and charming and everything! And I’m kind of loud and funny and intent on making myself a place in the whole group, which went down well with everybody! They said, ‘We won’t have to look after these two, they won’t need much baby-sitting!’”

The newcomers jumped into the fray right away, Hill says. “We were doing Helm’s Deep with all the stuntmen, we went to stunt rehearsals and riding les-

sons—all that kind of stuff!” he says. “It was just a peach of a job, really! There were lots of side benefits, and, of course, you got to work with Peter Jackson!”

Hill soon discovered the unique approach that characterized *The Lord of the Rings* production. When a new section of the films came up, and scenes were due on the shooting schedule, the actors involved would go to Boyens’ home or to Jackson and Walsh’s home—“to their attic, which is a huge office”—and everyone would sit on the floor or couch, “eating biscuits, fruit, and cakes, and drinking tea, or whatever you wanted,” he recalls. “You worked out what was going to happen in this section of the film as far as your character was concerned, and also the general feel, down to the stage that you were actually talking about the lines, the dialogue that was going to go on.”

Later, the actors got a hard copy of what had been discussed and could respond with their feedback and suggestions, sometimes “going back and forth

“My agent said, ‘It’s up to you. It’s not going to make you in any way a millionaire—just the opposite, it could quite impoverish you, being out there for that long.’”



four or five times," Hill says. It would then go to Peter Jackson for comments and come back again. Eventually, they would end up with a shooting script and usually get started the very next day. "It was just brilliant to have that much immediate input into the construction of this mega-movie," Hill says. "I think that's unique—I can't think of any other film that worked like this. I mean, sure, you can sort of improvise in other films,

and Boyens). When he took the role of Théoden, he read it again. "A lot of it came back very easily, and some of it didn't," Hill says. "Because I do find the book very dense and rather whimsical in places, it's a credit to Philippa, Fran, and Peter—and all the other people who broke it all down—that the films steer clear of the whimsy without sacrificing too much of the fantasy and the kind of interesting, quirky layers. I

goes through this wonderful sequence of physically and emotionally forming into the character everybody knows as being the real Théoden," the actor explains. "He eventually becomes an all-action, middle-aged hero—and there aren't very many roles for 50-year-olds that you can say that about. On the way, he's full of self-doubt, guilt, remorse, and grief because he's lost his son ... and anger—anger with himself, anger with

"He's full of self-doubt, guilt, remorse, and grief because he's lost his son ... and then Aragorn pulls him back up by his boot straps—'Do this for you, do this for Rohan ... this place is not about ramparts, bricks, and mortar. This is about the souls and spirits of the people; this is about the world of man.'"

or you improvise in order to get the scenes, but to take a great literary work like that and make a contribution ... it was a privilege to be involved at such an early stage."

#### AN "ALL-ACTION" HERO

Bernard Hill first read *The Lord of the Rings* in 1977 after receiving a copy as a gift (it was this same copy that Hill was flipping through furiously during his conference call with Walsh

think one of the great achievements that Peter has to be credited with is making us all believe in Middle-earth in Film One. I think that was a really difficult thing to do, because you have to introduce all the characters, you have to take us into Hobbiton and make us believe that those people were normal size and wizards were tall—too tall."

What is Hill's read on his character? "He starts off at 150 years of age, and he

the enemy, bitterness and virtual acquiescence to the onset of evil, to the victory of evil over good. He gives in basically, and then Aragorn pulls him back up by his boot straps—'Do this for Rohan ... this place is not about ramparts, bricks, and mortar. This is about the souls and spirits of the people; this is about the world of man.' This, too, sets Film Two apart from Film One—it's full of those emotions, not just from Théoden, but from other people, too. It deals with real human emotions. It was that—even though I didn't see it fully as I do now—that I sensed [in the beginning] ... I sniffed it."

Hill has "really done a lot to ground *The Two Towers* in a sort of real world, which is really what makes the film different from *The Fellowship of the Ring*," says Peter Jackson.

"Because *Fellowship* spends a lot of time in Hobbiton and Rivendell and Lothlórien, the film has a strong fantasy component to it," Jackson explains. "*The Two Towers* is different in the sense that we now spend a lot of our screen time in Rohan, and Bernard, of course,









plays the King of Rohan. I think it is refreshing that in this film, you are now dealing with a human being and human characters as opposed to elves or hobbits. Bernard has created a Théoden that is a little more complex than the Théoden in the books. He is still the same character, but he has managed to bring him to life with a lot of different levels and depth. He is a powerful actor!"

that, you're on your own, really. No one knows how John Lennon picked his nose in private; no one knows how Lech Walesa scratched his head! You can add those things in yourself—there's a certain amount of liberty—but you have to obey certain rules in order to do it."

Some of J.R.R. Tolkien's material on Théoden that "might have led you to establish a certain amount of character-

skin look. I loved it! The raggedness of it all! And the fact that Théoden, I imagine, is kind of like the Irish kings of old. Certainly, he's like a *Henry V* character, rallying the troops and giving them all the speeches and stuff. Also, like *Henry V*, Théoden's on the front; he's not the kind of general that sits on the hill and sends people to their deaths. When the Uruks are trying to get in through the gate at Helm's



Is portraying a literary or historical figure easier or more difficult than portraying an "unknown" character?

"That's interesting actually," Hill says, "because I played John Lennon a couple of times and Lech Walesa and a couple of other historical characters from Shakespeare, and the thing about representing somebody well-known is that you have to allow the audience to believe that you're the character. The audience wants you to be John Lennon, so you give them enough clues, and then the rest is easy."

"With historical characters, like Shakespeare, you have to obey certain kinds of rules, because there are rules laid down within the play, within the script," he adds. "If it's a film script, you have to follow certain rules, but after

ization" had to be ignored for the films because it wouldn't have worked on screen, Hill believes. For instance, the Rohan "are known for singing as they kill!" he says. "We couldn't do that on film—it would have looked like a Monty Python movie! If you did that, then you'd have to continue that trait in the rest of the character, and I think you'd be down the wrong track then. We disobeyed a lot of it, so maybe Théoden isn't the character that is essentially in the book."

The look of the Rohan—which was based, he says, on long-ago Irish kings—was especially pleasing to Hill. "I have a lot of Irish in me—both my grannies were Irish," he explains. "I felt really at home and at ease with that kind of reddish-blond, blue-eyed, pale-

Deep—I won't tell you how because it's a surprise—he's there; that's where he gets wounded. You often see him at the sharp end—that's what I like about him."

Hill enjoyed the challenge of playing both the vulnerable king and the triumphant warrior. "You go through this amazing arc with Théoden," he explains. "In Helm's Deep, when they're at the door, they retreat into the Great Hall, and he says, 'It's over, it's done, we've lost! The women and the children are in the caves!' Aragorn comes up to Théoden and says, 'This is not over yet. This is about man, this is about Rohan, it's about spirit and courage.'"

Théoden concedes, of course, Hill says. "The next time you see him, a few minutes later, there is a big close-up,



and he says, 'Now for wrath, now for ruin and a red dawn,' and he puts his helmet on, and [the camera] pulls back, and they're all on horses in the Great Hall, and they all go 'Yeah!'" Hill says. "... A whole troop of them charging down on horseback, through the door, through the Uruks, through them all! They blast their way out! Brilliant stuff! From that moment on, he's the Théoden we all know he can be—the hero, the king, and the leader! That carries us right through the end of Film Two and smashes us into Film Three!"

## TOUGH DECISIONS

The limitations inherent in film adaptations brought Hill a disappointment or two along the way.

For instance, the relationship between Théoden and Merry could not be developed to the degree that it was in the book. "There's a little bit where Merry comes up and says, 'I offer you my sword,' and Théoden says, 'Well, I'll take you as far as the half-way stage. Then you can be one of my knights,' and stuff like that, and Merry says, 'That's great, that's fine!' It's just not there to the extent it is in the book."

Hill and fellow Brit Dominic Monaghan, who plays Merry, pushed for more screen time for the relationship. "We knew it would work, because Dom and I got along like a dream!" Hill says. "We were like brothers! Just like Viggo [Mortensen] and I—we're more than brothers, really! We're very, very close. They knew that Dom and I could do it, because we think in the same way. They knew it would be a great combination, but they still couldn't get it to happen, which is a shame. But we're making films, not documentaries of the book. I'm sad about it, Dom's sad about it, and Peter and the writers are very sad about it."

The actor has plenty of empathy for the plight of Jackson, Walsh, and Boyens. They had "awful" decisions to make, Hill says, and they made them

"with a massive respect for the book—and that was something we respected them for.

"We felt pleased that we'd helped keep it that way," he says. "We did it all with one foot in the book at all times; we never lost sight of it. We referred to it when we got in trouble and when we lost the thread of the overall picture. It's all there in the book, so if the script didn't quite get the leaps or didn't bridge the gap between one emotional thought and another, the book would clarify it for everybody."

## A SENSATIONAL SITE

Though Hill was less than enthusiastic at the outset about taking a job in such a faraway place, it doesn't take much prompting before he waxes eloquent about the beauty of New Zealand—particularly the "homeland" that Peter Jackson chose for Théoden.

"It is the most sensational location anywhere in the world," Hill enthuses. "Edoras—Mount Potts is what it's called—is breath-taking! And it was home! It was my kingdom. I remember the first day they took me there. The driver said, 'Do you just want to look at this for the first time?' I got out and had a look, and he said, 'This is this, and that is that...' It was dark, but you still got the sense of it. He was sensitive enough to know that I would want to do that.

"When you see Edoras, it might look like it's a digital enhancement, but it's not," he continues. "It's completely untouched! As a matter of fact, the photography does not do it justice; we all took videos and photographs of the place—the scenery, the valley, the background, everything—and when we saw the photos and footage, we all said, 'This is just not representative at all!'"

The Edoras location was so remote that the few residents in the area use their airplanes like cars. "We got to know the people at one sheep station there," he says. "They're way out, and they haven't left that valley by car in 10



A certain amount of characterization had to be ignored

for the films because it wouldn't have worked on screen. For instance, the Rohan "are known for singing as they kill!" Hill says. "We couldn't do that on film—it would have looked like a Monty Python movie!"





The film people asked if they could leave Edoras “as a museum,” but they were told to destroy it because the locals and the government didn’t want tourists paying visits.

years.” The film people asked if they could leave Edoras “as a museum,” he recalls, but they were told to destroy it because the locals and the government didn’t want tourists paying visits. “This is conservation land,” Hill explains. “We weren’t allowed to step off the roads because of some of the rare plants that grow there. They grow only because of the atmosphere and the fact that they’re left alone. There are some places in the world that human beings should just not go, and that’s one of them.”

## A GLIMPSE OF MAGIC

For *The Lord of the Rings* cast, getting a true sense of what they were creating was difficult, particularly because they were filming all three movies at once and jumping around from film to film.

Hill’s first inkling of Jackson’s wizardry came toward the end of filming, when the director prepared a preview of sorts for the cast and crew.

“Peter—this is very typical of him—put together essentially 40 minutes of clips that showed some-

thing of everybody who was still working there,” Hill says. “I’m watching Ian McKellen, who’s a good friend of mine, knock at this door with his costume on. Ian Holm, who I know quite well from years back, is also in costume and answers the door. The two Ian’s chat in the hallway, and then Gandalf bangs his head, and Bilbo makes him tea, and they sit down at a table. As I watch them, I just shake my head. ‘Hang on a second! This is a



trick! He’s not that much bigger than him!’ When first I watched two people I knew in costume, I was forced to believe this was Gandalf and Bilbo! The next thing I know, I’m completely immersed in the trickery and the technical achievement of the whole thing—and I’m in the business! It was seamless. That showing was Peter’s way of saying, ‘This is what we’re going to do with everything.’”

“We all just sat there at the end, going ‘My Christ!’” Hill recalls. “We were all hard and battle-scarred actors by then! We all just stood up, turned around, and applauded Peter. He gave us all this wonderful book of photographs, and we all went to a big party and got completely smashed! It was a pure adrenaline rush!”

## A “FAMILY FILM”

During filming, Hill saw two familiar faces: He had worked with both John Mahaffie, one of the unit directors (“one of the nicest men you could ever wish to meet”), and the art department’s Dan Hennah on *Bounty*, a film



with Mel Gibson that was shot in Australia. He'd also gotten to know Henna's wife, Chris, who ran *The Lord of the Rings* art department with her husband, and was pleasantly surprised to find that the Hennahs' daughter, Nancy, was his makeup artist in New Zealand.

Incidentally, Hill says the hours on the makeup bus were among the most memorable during his stay in New Zealand. "There was Noreen, who's known as Nor, an incredibly sexy makeup lady who was looking after Orlando Bloom," he says. "They were in the first chair. The second chair was Viggo and Jose—and Viggo and Jose were like brothers ... there was something going on, and I couldn't work out what it was! (*Laughs*) And then there was me, and Nancy Henna was my makeup lady—the most bad-tempered makeup lady there ever was! She was young, about 26 or 27; her parents had been married for 400 years and were a bad example for what you'd expect married life to be. She'd keep saying, 'What kind of example are they!?' This is not real! She was really grouchy and would sort of shout at me and just did not let me have any kind of tantrums whatsoever, because that was her place! And it was absolutely wonderful! We made a collage out of the mirror—it was just a party place! We had a 'wine cellar' and brought in cheese and everything—it was a place where people came to just relax and enjoy themselves."

Hill says the overriding feeling on the films was that of a family. To illustrate his point, he describes a scene he encountered when he was getting ready to leave New Zealand:

He had gone to the studio to see Walsh, and while they were talking, Jackson came in. "Peter comes around the corner and it's all 'Hi, hi, when are you

off?' 'Oh, I'm going tomorrow,' 'Well, great then, I'll see you in a bit!'" Hill recalls. "And he sits down and asks Fran, 'How are you?' Just then, Katie, their daughter, and Billy, their son, come into the studio—

jumping all over their mom and dad. Then Katie says to me, 'You didn't die in *Titanic* then, did you!? Because you're here in Daddy's film!' And I told her, 'No, that's right, I didn't die in *Titanic*!'"

Hill soon said his farewells and headed for the door. "I was just about out the door and turned around, and I see this sight," he recalls. "It was Peter and Fran directing the biggest movie project ever, and their two kids are leaning on their shoulders and jumping all over them! And I think, 'This is a family film—it's

Peter and Fran's family film, and we're all in it! It was wonderful and I thought, 'You've got to have your feet on the ground to reach that level,' and that's exactly what Peter and Fran are like. There is no hierarchy on the movie.

There was no sense in any department that you would, in any way, be a minor contributor."







# URUK-HAI Weapon

■ ■ ■  
BY CARLA ATKINSON





ry

*Richard Taylor seems like such a mild-mannered guy. But talk to him a bit about designing weaponry, and you quickly realize that if Taylor ever played "war" as a kid, he must have been the scariest guy on the block. This issue, Taylor brings us the story behind the brutal Uruk-hai weapons moviegoers will see in The Two Towers' Battle at Helm's Deep.*





“[THE URUK-HAI’S] SOLE ROLE IS the pursuit of material wealth and the pursuit of the Ring. THEY ARE BRED OUT OF THE GROUND [THROUGH] ALCHEMY AND MAGIC ... WE THEORIZED THAT BECAUSE they are mass creations, IT WAS IMPERATIVE THAT THE WEAPONS THAT THEY CARRY ARE almost intuitive for the act of killing.”

Creating the weapons that would help to translate the terror of the Uruk-hai to the big screen did not begin, as one might think, with a design discussion.

It began with the creation of a mythology—a terrible and fascinating mythology.

Richard Taylor and his colleagues didn’t believe they could design the look of the Uruk-hai, much less their weapons, until they felt they knew the story of the Uruk-hai in much greater detail than was revealed by J.R.R. Tolkien.

“We went with the very strong philosophy that J.R.R. Tolkien—

although it was never stated—was creating an analogous journey from pastoral England to the coming of the industrial revolution,” says Taylor, the head of Weta Workshop, which, among many other things, directed the painstaking creation of all of the weapons for *The Lord of the Rings* films. “Hobbiton is cottage-industry England in the 18<sup>th</sup> century—but, of course, at the turn of the century came the great landowners, and the coming of the industrial revolution turned the pastoral beauty of England and the individualistic, craft-based industry of England into a replicating,

mass-production, industrial world ... and, as a byproduct, created an industrial wasteland.”

Saruman, they reasoned, is indeed that landowner, and his minions—his mass-produced minions—are the Uruk-hai. “Their sole role is the pursuit of material wealth and the pursuit of the Ring,” Taylor says. “They are bred out of the ground [through] alchemy and magic—a Middle-earth version of a hybrid race. From that point, we theorized that because they are mass creations, it was imperative that the weapons that they carry are almost intuitive for the act of killing.”



# BERSERKERS

**T**he berserkers are the first wave of Uruk-hai to be sent into battle. They wear bowl-like helmets that hide their faces, although their muzzles are still able to snap through the opening in the helmet. The concept behind the helmets is that, as the Uruk-hai raged across the land on the way to Helm's Deep, they massacred any villagers in outlying farms along the way. In the process, they gathered the blood of some of these victims and stored it in hip



flasks or goatskin bags. At the point of battle, they fill the berserkers' helmets with the blood, and in the process of smashing the helmet down onto the head of the berserker, they soak the berserker in human blood, thereby giving the berserker intense bloodlust—basically giving the scent to a rabid dog—and building the berserkers' aggression to the most maniacal level. The idea is that the berserkers are so lacking in intelligence that, once given the tasks, they continue on, regardless of the level of attack upon them.

"They have a single bloodlust requirement—to mount the first sieging ladders, ride them to the top of the wall, and cleave the Rohan and elves off at hip height. They must clear the walls as quickly as possible so that the Uruk-hai who pour up the ladders next will have a clear area upon which to mount the wall and begin their attack. The berserkers' weapon of choice is a 5-foot-long, two-handed blade

with a sharpened edge on each side. It features a small hexagonal hand guard, a leather-wrapped handgrip, and, at the end of the blade, two sharpened spikes. If an Uruk-hai has plowed through

its victims with this weapon, the spike at the very end of the weapon will continue to do damage to any enemies beyond the first primary victim and gather up any other characters that they need to kill. All nasty stuff, of course!"

~ Richard Taylor

"These enormous two-handed swords are really a sort of lumberjack or butcher's weapon. I'm sure they are really designed to cut people in half—really, it's just for that purpose, which is very scary!"

"Rather than protecting their chins, the Uruk helmets have the mouths



exposed so they can bite people. I think it will be quite a powerful feature in the battle of Helm's Deep—very disturbing. The berserker's helmets are featureless, with two holes for their eyes. They look like skulls. Very creepy."

~ John Howe





# SWORDSMEN

“We theorized that the land of Isengard had been defoliated, and the foliage had been thrown down into the depths of the pits below Orthanc to fire up the furnaces that would smelter the iron ore out of the rock and create molten liquid steel to cast the swords. These swords would be sharpened crudely on a grindstone and thrust into the hands of the Uruk-hai. Once that weapon is in the hands of the Uruk-hai, it is totally intuitive. There is only one thing that you can do with it, and that is slash and chop. It requires very little training to do maximum damage with that weapon, and that’s the rationale: create the most intuitive, brutal piece of blade that these characters could ever be given.

“Their primary weapon is a sword about 3 feet long, with a sharpened blade on one side. On its back side, there is an unusual hook or barb—a sharpened spike—at the top edge. Saruman knows that at some point his Uruk-hai are going to go into battle with the

their knees and attempt to take the horses’ legs out with a forward cut, using the edge of the blade. That failing, they can flip the blade around and use that hook to pull the legs of the horse out from underneath the Rohan soldier.

“The swordsmen’s armor is a weapon in its own right. If you look carefully, you’ll see two blades protruding from their helmets: The tops of



those blades are perfectly placed at the width of a human’s eye, so if the Uruk-hai lose their swords, they can still head-butt the faces of the Rohan and the elves with the helmet and incapacitate them in a really delightful way! And their shields have two spikes protruding from the front that constitute yet another weapon.”

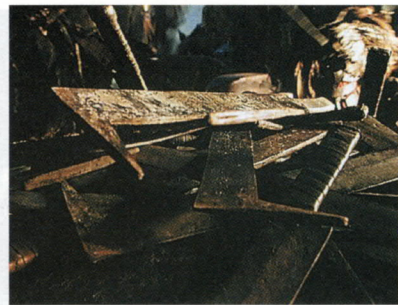
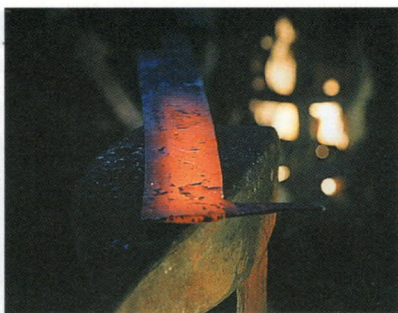
~ Richard Taylor



Rohan at the Battle of Helm’s Deep, and that the Rohan are going to be horsebound—therefore, the most important thing is to dismount them. So the concept with the hook is for the Uruk-hai to first drop to







## BRAINSTORMING

As the designers, along with director Peter Jackson, discussed and debated and reasoned, a back story began to take shape.

"The Uruk-hai are not fantasy monsters," Taylor says. "An Uruk-hai is a hybrid humanoid creature. They have developed a culture of fighting that is complementary to their anatomy, their physiology, and their mental state. And with the singular task that they have ahead of them, it would be wasteful for Saruman to make more sophisticated weapons and to train the Uruk-hai at a higher level; at the end of the day, they are just fodder for the arrows of the enemy. However, in sheer numbers, they're able to overwhelm and eventually take the enemy's strongholds."

The designers had friendly debates "on how and why the philosophic makeup of a creature is as it is in J.R.R. Tolkien's world," Taylor says, "analyzing at some length the physiological and physical realities of these creatures if they existed in our own world. At no time did we want the design motifs of these creatures to contradict the physical realities of our own world—and the same applied to the cultures of fighting."

"But we also didn't want to just mirror our own world," he emphasizes. "We wanted to make sure—as you'll see with the Haradrim and the Easterlings, and to a certain degree, the Gondorians—that the weaponry is complementary of the rich culture of these specific nations." For instance, Taylor says, it would be a waste of time to create armor to protect the Uruk-hai's backs because they would never retreat.



Even the crudeness of the weapons of the Uruk-hai has been thought out at a very "significant and rational level," he says. "We wanted to make sure that the Uruk-hai had as substantial an array of weaponry as any culture in our own world. We've really tried to think, 'What is the purpose of these soldiers, and what are their specific job tasks?'"

## UNDERPINNING OF REALITY

Creating the back story of the Uruk-hai helped Taylor and his team of designers on the project—Weta's Warren Mahy, Ben Wotten, Christian Rivers, and Daniel Falconer, and *The Lord of the Rings* Conceptual Artist John Howe—in the next phase of the creative process: going from the theoretical to the tangible.

"One of my personal mantras to the team at Weta is that at no time did I want anything we made looking as though it had come from a 1990s art department," Taylor says. "To create the underpinning of reality in the world of J.R.R. Tolkien's Middle-earth, it was imperative that everything had to look as though it was manufactured in that era, with the technologies of that era that replicate our own past."

To ensure that they met this goal, the Weta team relied on the knowledge

and expertise of John Howe, a renowned fantasy illustrator known for his depictions of Middle-earth. "John is one of the world's leading experts in medieval re-enactment," Taylor explains. "He has an immense knowledge of this period of warfare."

Howe says he delved into the topic of medieval weaponry both as background for his work as an illustrator and out of personal interest. "It started as a visual interest," he recalls. "I was hooked on armor as a concept because transforming human beings into metal crustaceans seems like such a curious thing to do."

Howe has handled dozens of medieval helmets, breastplates, swords, crossbow bolts, arrows, etc.—"weapons of all sorts"—and put a lot of work into their repair and reconstruction. "The range of things with which I'm familiar is totally empirical," he says. "My experience is more hands-on than theoretical, so I'm certainly not an expert. I can't give you a breakdown of the metallurgy and dating techniques, but I have an instinctive sense for what feels right and wrong."

The Weta designers had no such experience when they began working on the films. "None of us have ever been involved in military hardware," Taylor says. "Because of the isolation and the relative young age of the European culture in New Zealand, only a few of us have ever seen a real suit of armor or handled an historical weapon." In some ways, Taylor believes, that allowed "a very fresh look at historical solutions."

## FRONT-ROW SEAT

At the heart of the conceptualizing and design process for nearly every





Weta assignment was the person who was most invested in the design direction of *The Lord of the Rings*.

"We had the great luxury of working with Peter Jackson as a director," Taylor says. "He wants to be—and is—involved at every level of discussion during the pre-production stage. So right up to a few months out from filming, he made himself available to be fully immersed in this design process, so that, as closely as possible, we were capturing his vision as well as our own. He reserved about an hour every afternoon of every day for the first two and a half years that we worked on the films. With this level of interaction with Pete, it would take about two and a half weeks, on average, to design a 'hero weapon.'"

For those fans who would have given anything to be in New Zealand, working alongside Peter Jackson and the Weta designers, Taylor describes a typical brainstorming and design session for *The Lord of the Rings*.

When Jackson arrived at Weta Workshop's design room, Taylor says, one of the designers immediately handed the director a pointer. ("It's a

piece of fishing rod that tapers, sort of like an old school cane—it still sits in the corner of my room, waiting for the next film that we make with Peter!" he adds.) Jackson would go through all of the drawings presented to him, picking the ones that he liked. "We then put a red dot on the ones he liked and a yellow dot on the ones he didn't like," Taylor explains. "On Peter's next visit—which could be as soon as 24 hours later, or, if he's had to be away on location, it could be up to a couple of weeks—all of the yellow-dotted drawings have been taken off the wall. Only the red-dotted drawings are left, as well as all of the extrapolations of those drawings that we have come up with since his last visit. When Peter arrives,

he can see where he was last time, and where we have gone since then."

The full complement of seven Weta designers, John Howe and fellow conceptual artist Alan Lee, plus Production Designer Grant Major would then stand in a semicircle around Jackson and the "wall of design."

The design room was divided into sections that reflected all of the prominent projects that Weta was working on. "At any one time, having meters and meters of pinboard on the walls, we could have up to 10 or 15 subjects going at once," Taylor says. "We would have drawings six or seven levels deep at times because there were so many drawings being done on any one subject; Peter could pick through them with the pointer and indicate what he liked and didn't like."

As the director perused the drawings, the designers told Jackson their ideas and philosophies, and he told them his story and script points. "This would sometimes spur very enjoyable debate," Taylor says, "and other times, Pete would go, 'Wow, that's exactly what I had in mind—what do you guys think?'"







# PIKESMEN

“Regardless of the theoretical reasons for this particular weapon, Peter Jackson very much has the philosophy that there should be a rational explanation for things in filmmaking. But also—and almost over and above that sometimes—you want to create certain props for a visual look. Peter visualized very strongly, from the very first day that we started talking about Helm’s Deep, the look of an army marching to war with, as he called them, ‘forests of pikes’ above their heads—this sea of wavering, corn-like stems that would create this formidable and freakish wall of impenetrable pikes. And that’s indeed what ended up happening on set and eventually in the film. The feeling that the Uruk-hai are an unstoppable wall of military creatures is fundamentally created by these thousands of pikes that they’re holding up above their heads.

“The 25-foot-long pikes are designed to hook soldiers off of battlements and—when dropped into a position almost parallel with the ground—can create a wall to stop a charge of horses. As we’ll see in Film Two, that strategy is used to try to stop the charge of the Rohan down the shale slope

to the Helm’s Deep battle.

“The pikemen also carry in their leading hand a small forearm shield, designed to protect the arm that carries the pike from any enemy blows. On the end of this short shield is what we called a ball-end shield—almost a cup of steel with sharpened spikes on it—that the pikeman put his hand into. If the pikemen were to lose their pikes and come into close hand-to-hand combat, they can draw their short sword with their left hand and use their ball-end shield arm as a weapon and as protection. In the process of punching the enemy, they would drive these 20-pound steel balls into the enemies’ bodies and faces. Hoo-hoo! (*cackles*)

~ Richard Taylor

“The inspiration for the steel balls came from the *morgenstern* (German for morning star), another incredibly popular Hollywood extrapolation of a very curious piece of medieval weaponry—basically a spiked ball on a chain on a stick. I’m not sure these peculiar weapons actually ever existed in any great quantities. They must have been incredibly difficult to use with-



out whacking yourself in the head!

“The ball-end shield is extremely aggressive, but it is also very single-minded. Once you have your hand in it, you can’t do much else with that arm except either punch people with the fist or block with it. You can’t switch hands to pick up your other weapon, so it’s very constricting. I won’t go so far as to say there’s a sort of bondage issue in all this, but it’s almost that. They’re strapped into this armor, and they’re set in the right direction, and off they go until they meet the enemy and flatten him. It’s a good parable, you know? This monomania, this single-mindedness of purpose that is symptomatic of Saruman’s urge for power. He believes everyone thinks like him, so he’s incapable of guessing that they may do something else, something unexpected.”

~ John Howe





# CROSSBOWMEN

**W**e wanted the crossbow to be a very special weapon. In real warfare, although the crossbow was incredibly successful—because it had the ability to punch a very powerful hole through armor as well as people—it was very unwieldy and slow to load. Invariably, you had to drop it to the ground, put your foot in the foothold at the front of the weapon, windlass the string back into its cocking device, and lock a bolt into the breech.

"All of this takes many seconds—if not minutes—to do, unlike a longbow, which allows you to instantly load a new arrow, draw it, and fire it off into the enemy. We wanted our Uruk-hai to be able to fire on the march. There's something incredibly creepy about a character not even breaking its gait. It's sort of like the shots of Arnold Schwarzenegger on the back of the motorbike in *T2* [*Terminator 2*—his ability to re-cock the shotgun single-handedly while on the charge—or the way that a cowboy was able to reload his Winchester while galloping across the plains.

"We developed a pump-action crossbow, whereby an Uruk-hai, by swinging a lever down underneath the body of the crossbow, was able to hook up the string, draw it back into the cocking position, load the arrow, and then, by pulling on the trigger, was able to fire the bolt. This creates a feeling of industrial automation and further automates the Uruk-hai, as will be seen in the charge on Helm's Deep. This is very, very creepy for the elves and the Rohan,

who only know the technology of the longbow, where timber and twine are used to propel an arrow. Suddenly, walking toward them in massive numbers, is a mechanized killing machine. The pump-action element gives the Uruk-hai that much more menace and creates that much more fear in the Rohan and the elves.

"Powered by a steel leaf spring, the crossbow features two nasty, sharpened blades; if the crossbowmen run out of bolts, they can actually use the weapon as a short pike, a killing weapon in its own right."

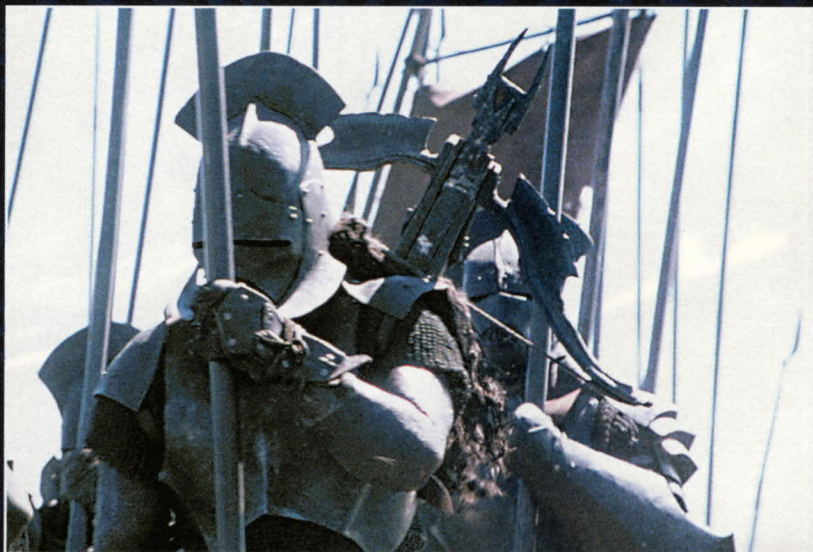
~ Richard Taylor

"The inspiration for the crossbows came directly from a 15th-century German manuscript, one of these artillery books that was very popular in the late Middle Ages in Europe. They're full of the designs

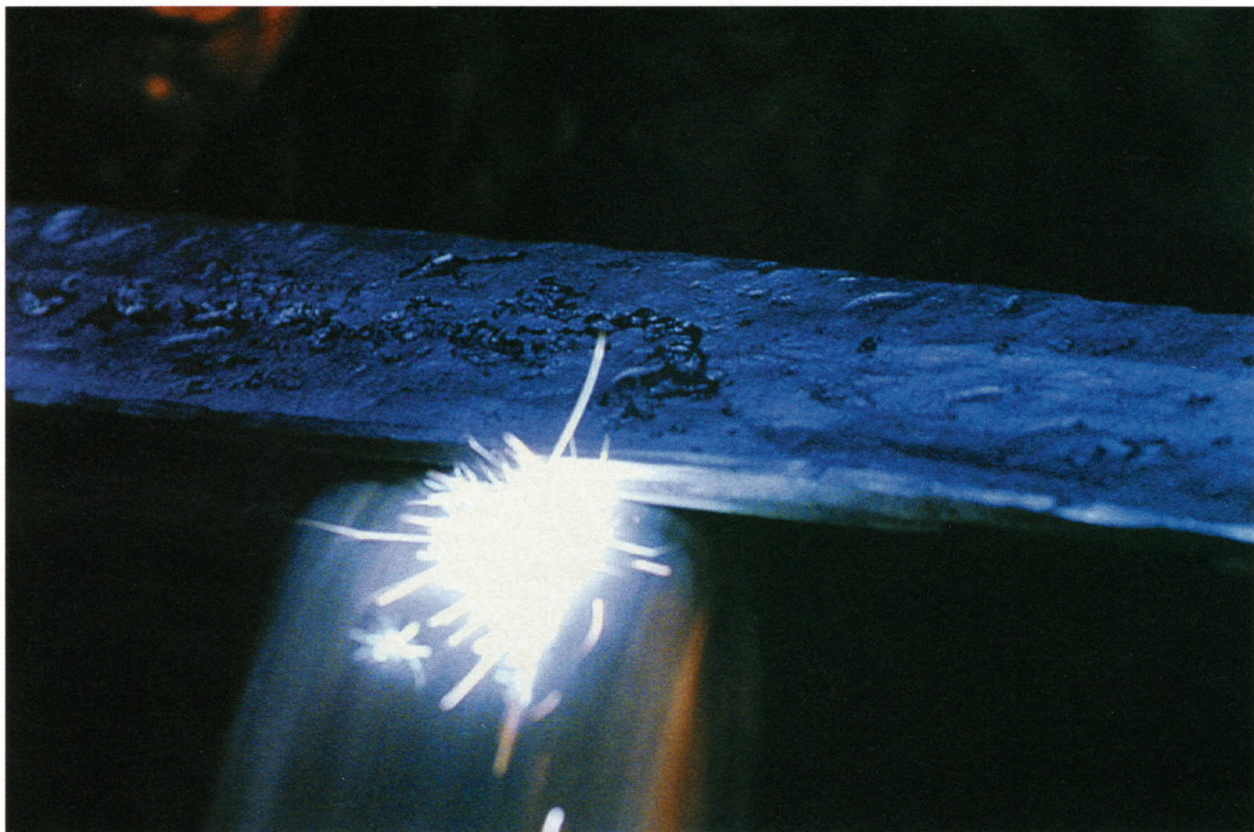


of some astonishing and intriguing siege weapons and machines. In there was this wonderful pump-action crossbow, and the Uruk-hai version is an extrapolation of that. So it really is based on something that may actually have existed, as fantastical as it appears on the screen!"

~ John Howe







“This is a primitive ... an Iron Age technology. **THERE’S NO GREAT ABILITY TO DO LOST-WAX OR FILIGREE OR OTHER BEAUTIFUL DETAIL WORK. THERE’S NO GREAT ABILITY TO FOLD BLADE EDGES TO CREATE STRENGTHENING IN THE STEEL.** What you cast is what you get.”

#### DESIGNS COME ALIVE

After the brainstorming, the design process began in earnest. Sometimes, it went very quickly, with a finalized design in a matter of days, Taylor says, or it could take months to develop weaponry for a particular culture.

Howe recalls that the Uruk-hai weaponry went through a lengthy design process. “Peter was looking for something special, and nobody pinned it down for ages and ages,” he says. “It was one of these design processes where everyone had a hand in everything. I don’t think any of us can remember who actually came up with specific ideas, because every time an idea got a

nod of approval from Peter, we would all jump on it and extrapolate. It slowly developed along a line that was very curious and brutal—cruel-looking weapons and armor that were very single-minded, very much driven for one purpose, and not very versatile.

“The one-handed swords, for example, are more like cleavers than anything else, with this awful spike on the back of the blade,” Howe explains. “You can’t stab with them, so they’re actually quite limited; all you can do is hack at things or snag them backhanded. That, to me, symbolizes Saruman’s greatest error, in that he thinks that he’s creating a very, very specialized, extremely efficient

army. But because he’s so single-minded, it’s not versatile at all.”

After a weapon design was finished, the Weta team created cardboard cutouts out of foam-core board for Jackson to review.

“We would get whoever is closest to the average size of the particular army we’re trying to exemplify to hold the cutout so that Peter could see its silhouetted shape in relationship to our size,” Taylor says. “In the case of the Uruk-hai, I, being 6-foot-5, would hold the cutout. This enabled Peter to appreciate it in context—to see its iconographic statement. We could also appreciate whether it looked too light,





too heavy, too flimsy, too permanent, too solid, or too weak."

Once the design was finalized, Weta created 3-D prototypes of each weapon by power-filing or grinding the shape of the weapons out of custom board, "an easily worked compressed timber board," Taylor explains. They then applied "a very simple coloring" to the 3-D prototype and gave it to Jackson for more feedback. When it was finalized, the prototype went to the manufacturing floor—first to swordmaster Peter Lyons, who made all of the hero weapons, and then to Weta Props Master John Harvey and his team, who made the background weapons. "From these mockups, they were able to master up the originals that become the hero and stunt weapons," Taylor says. "We went through that process for 2,000 weapons over 10 cultures—about 200 weapons per culture."

The meticulous approach that marked the concept and design phase carried over into the manufacturing stage. The weapons and military hardware of any race, Taylor emphasizes, are relative to its available manufacturing

techniques, particularly for the Uruk-hai, who had only fire, quenching, grinding, sand-casting, hammer blows, and forging at their disposal.

"This is a primitive ... an Iron Age technology," he notes. "There's no great ability to do lost-wax or filigree or other beautiful detail work. There's no great ability to fold blade edges to create strengthening in the steel. What you cast is what you get, and therefore, the Uruk-hai weapons-making is determined by the primitive technology available to them. That is what had to drive the physical reality of the weapons."

### A DREAM JOB

Of the 148 Weta employees who worked on *The Lord of the Rings* films, only 28 had ever worked on a film or television show before—the 120 others were trained from the ground up, the Weta director says.

Even the most experienced staffers—Taylor included—had learning curves along the way, but Weta's team approach made those learning curves easier to get through. The

designers reveled in the challenge of creating the Uruk-hai weapons and the many other "props" that gave *The Lord of the Rings* films such an authentic feel.

"We're not experts on military hardware, but we want to give the feeling that the characters in the films are experts at what they do," Taylor says. "That only comes through having a great time collaborating. We have great fun designing these things!"





# “ROMANESQUE” SHIELDS



“Saruman’s fighters know that they are going to have to siege Helm’s Deep, and they realize that they must go up the causeway and try a battering ram to bring down the gate. Consequently, they are vulnerable to arrow blows from above. Hails of arrows are falling on them like rain from the upper parapets of Helm’s Deep. Therefore, a very ingenious Romanesque shield was developed by the Uruk-hai—or at least by the designers at Weta!—that creates an armadillo-like shell.

“The Uruk-hai will release one of the handgrips of their shields and grab hold of the rear handgrip on the shield of the Uruk-hai in front of them and, in the process, lock all of the shields together into this impenetrable skin of steel. The shields have a kicked-up lip on top, so if any arrows actually connect with the shield, they ricochet off. Of course, the Uruk-hai unwisely don’t appreciate the fact that the Rohan have the ability to shoot into their side flanks, and therefore their side flanks are left unprotected.”

~ Richard Taylor

“Leaving the side flanks unprotected is almost nonsense. But that’s part of the whole psyche of the thing. It’s all forward-



facing and aggressive—running toward the other person, basically running over the top of them.”

—John Howe



## BALLISTA

“The final weapon of the Uruk-hai is a massive ballista—a huge crossbow the size of a bus. The Uruk-hai crank it up by twisting a huge rope and pulling back into place this massive leaf spring; a bolt is then laid onto the breach. The bolts, which are about 15 feet long, are then fired by these massive ballistas across the parapets of Helm’s Deep.

“The head of the bolt has been specifically designed—obviously from espionage scouting missions to Helm’s Deep by

Saruman’s orcs—to perfectly key into the parapets’ fortifications on the top of Helm’s Deep. These lock in, and immediately the slack is taken up on a rope that’s been attached to the end of that bolt and has been primarily used to pull a rope up to the top of the parapet.

“This rope, in turn, is connected to the very top of the sieging ladders, which are lying on the ground; the rope goes through a pulley in the bolt that’s now locked into the top of the parapet and down to an

army of runners. These Uruk-hai soldiers’ sole task is to run in the opposite direction of the wall, pulling on this rope, and, in turn, pulling the sieging ladders up to the wall. The sieging ladders are already primed with full contingents of Uruk-hai, and the runners’ power is able to pull up the ladders—plus about 30 or 40 Uruk-hai who are all clinging to it—and in the process deliver the soldiers immediately into the fray of battle.”

~ Richard Taylor



# The Business of BLADES

BY JUSTIN PAKES

Kit Rae should have a manic gleam in his eye. Perhaps a nervous twitch and disheveled clothing. One imagines that Kit sports a nasty facial scar and is missing a finger. To the darker side of the intellect, these all seem like perfectly reasonable traits for a man who spends a majority of his time playing with knives and swords.

Instead, Kit is a remarkably sane-looking fellow, with a pleasant demeanor, calm, almost gentle speech, and all of his fingers intact. As well as having his own brand of fantasy knives, Kit is also one of the team responsible for bringing Sting,

Glamdring, Narsil, and other legendary *The Lord of the Rings* weapons into our homes.

Since 1987, Kit has been the art director for United Cutlery, the company tasked with reproducing the famous blades and great weapons of *The Lord of the Rings* movies for collectors and fans alike. Their first releases were phenomenally successful: the Sword of the Witch-king; Sting, Frodo's hand-me-down Elvish sword; and Glamdring, blade of Gandalf. All were lovingly reproduced as full-size designs and mounted on lavishly decorated wooden plaques bearing the appropriate cultural designs. These are as close as any of us will get to the real thing.

What is the key to a successful adult sword or blade replica? "If the sword or the knife is not in really good memorable scenes," Kit says, "people don't remember it, and it just doesn't sell well as an adult collectible."

Given that United Cutlery had to start production on their initial *Lord of the Rings* items well before the films' scenes were final, was this considered somewhat of a risk? "We knew from our first visit to New Line's office in New York," Kit says. "We got to see a rough cut of the trailer and thousands of photos from the film. We knew the film was going to be great just from what we saw. We took the gamble that the swords were going to get a lot of play in the movie. We got really lucky with *The Lord of the Rings*—they did such a good job."

UC CREW: (L TO R) KIT RAE, ART DIRECTOR (HOLDING STING AND SHARD OF NARSIL); ADAM HALL, LOTR SWORD DRAFTSMAN (STRIDER'S RANGER SWORD); DAVID HALL, DIRECTOR OF PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT (GLAMDING); JESSICA HALL, MARKETING DIRECTOR (HADHAFING, SWORD OF ARWEN)





## FROM RAMBO TO ZORRO

Be not fooled by the United Cutlery designers' youthful enthusiasm. The company is not new to the game of movie replicas. Not only does United Cutlery make officially licensed replicas, but it also designs and manufactures blades intended for screen-time in major movies. "We've actually built props for movies, and our stuff routinely appears in films and television shows," explains Kit, referring to United Cutlery's own unique brands of knives and swords. "Props guys just like to buy them off the shelf because they don't have to build them."

United Cutlery has clearly been in the movie game for a while. "I think our first one was *Rambo III*, and then we went back and made the official [replica blade] versions of *First Blood* and *Rambo II*," Kit recalls. "That led to *Indiana Jones and the Temple Of Doom*, *Terminator II*, *Total Recall*, *The Shadow*, *Mortal Kombat*, *Stargate*, and *Dragonheart*. We manufactured the blades for *Blade I* and *Blade II*, the sword for *Zorro*, and probably a few more I'm forgetting." (At least he didn't forget *Total Recall*!)

## THE PERILS OF STING

How did Kit's experience working with Weta Workshop—the group in charge of creating all of the props for *The Lord of the Rings*—compare to his work producing other movie replicas? "Movie props in general are not as nice as they appear in film," Kit reveals. "To be honest, most of them are awful. Some are so bad, it's really surprising how good they look in the final film."

"But Weta's props were amazing," he says. "The ones we got were steel blades, with wooden handles, or some had a

polyurethane handle. The decoration and paint job were so good that you couldn't really tell they weren't a fully weighted sword until you picked them up. A few of them were 'used' props—actually used on set—and some of them were just duplicate props that Weta had made. For the most part, they all looked almost identical to the photos of the props that we had been provided. I was so impressed by what Richard Taylor's guys did—what Peter Lyons, the swordmaker did—that it inspired me to make damn sure that we got these things as accurate and nice-looking as possible."

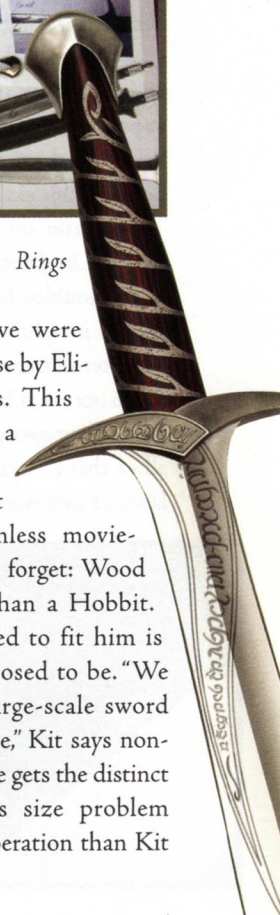
Which sword replica gave Kit the most problems? His response is emphatic: "They all did." Pushed for examples, he gives a few, but the one word that seems to come up more than any other is *Sting*. The blade was tricky, the hilt was problematic—"That skinny wood handle ... there was no room for the blade-tang [the part of the blade that is inside the handle] to end"—and even the wooden wall-hanging display plaque took weeks. "It went through a lot of changes," says Kit. "Originally, it was a round plaque with the One Ring inscription on it. We ended up using one of the embossed leaf-shapes from Frodo's belt." But there is one other aspect of reproducing *Sting* that seems to best illustrate the unique challenges

of *The Lord of the Rings* movies: size.

"The prop that we were sent was the one for use by Elijah Wood," Kit says. This doesn't seem like a problem until you consider a fact that Peter Jackson's seamless movie-magic often makes us forget: Wood is somewhat taller than a Hobbit. Thus any *Sting* scaled to fit him is larger than it is supposed to be. "We had to reduce our large-scale sword down to the small size," Kit says nonchalantly—though one gets the distinct impression that this size problem caused far more exasperation than Kit will admit.

## ETCHING ELVISH

One of the stunning features of the Elvish swords is the engraved Elvish script that flows across the blade. [See our "Languages of Middle-earth" features on translations in Issue 1—featuring *Sting*—and in Issue 3, describing *Hadhafang*.] How did the United Cut-





lery staff recreate this beautiful facet of the swords?

"Most of those are chemically etched or electro-etched," Kit says. "[With Sting], we couldn't get the actual artwork for all the lettering by the time that we needed it, so we had to recreate all of that. Luckily, I have several books [Kit is a big fan of *The Lord of the Rings*] that have the actual lettering and explain the languages that Tolkien used, so I could go and look up what the actual letter was supposed to look like." Who would have thought that written Elvish would be a valuable skill for a sword-designer? "Then later on in the game," he says, "[New Line] got us the translation so I could double-check and make sure we spelled it right!"

After all these challenges, it is rewarding to note that Sting is United Cutlery's best-selling sword. "It's my favorite out of all of them," says Kit, proving that this labor of love was worth the effort.



## YOUR NEW SWORD IS NOT OLD ENOUGH!

Another challenge that Kit and the United team had to overcome was one many of us face every day... the weather. Or more accurately, weathering.

"In the film, it's hard to tell because there are not a lot of close-ups," Kit

explains, "but if you look at the actual props, they are pitted, dented, worn. They look like they have been around for a really long time. [It's] really beautiful the way [Weta] did all that [weathering] work on the props. I wanted to reproduce that exactly, but it gets you into trouble. If you release a product, and people don't remember the weathering from the film, then they think they have a defective product. In the end, we settled for a semi-worn antique-looking metal finish. In the case of the Witch-king and Ringwraith swords, we decided on an acid-etched corroded blade finish because they were obviously not polished or clean."


But even the perfectionists of United Cutlery have a limit as to how much realism they can instill in these replicas. "Strider's Ranger's Sword is weathered and worn, and all of *The Two Towers* photos I have show it covered in orc blood. I get other people's opinions, and some say they would rather have it nice and new, while others want it real dirty-looking. We are going to do it somewhere in between." (Kit is quick to point out, however, that there will be no orc blood!) "Maybe we will do a limited edition orc-

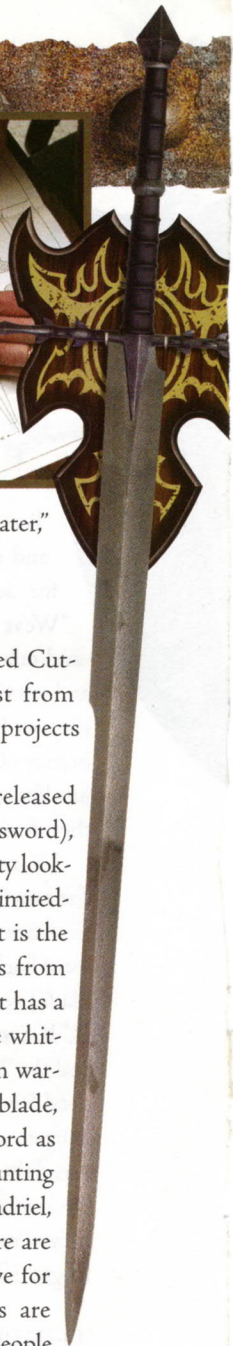
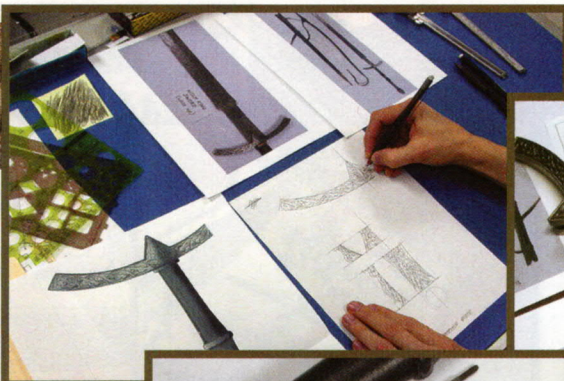
blood-splattered version later," Kit suggests with a laugh.

## A LONG ROAD

Kit Rae and the United Cutlery staff won't get a rest from their *The Lord of the Rings* projects anytime soon.

United Cutlery recently released Hadhafang (Elrond/Arwen's sword), Strider's Ranger Sword, the nasty looking Uruk-hai Scimitar, and a limited-edition Shards of Narsil. Next is the conundrum of what weapons from *The Two Towers* to produce! Kit has a list that he admits needs to be whittled down a little further: Elven warrior swords, King Théoden's blade, Eómer's, Eówyn's, Legolas' sword as well as his long-knives, the hunting knife given to Aragorn by Galadriel, and Faramir's blade. Then there are the many requests they receive for scabbards. "All the scabbards are really nice-looking, and many people want to display [their weapons] in the scabbard," Kit says. He muses on this for a second. "I don't understand that," he admits. "I want the blade to show. But we are looking at doing scabbards."

For those of us who have more desk space than wall space, United Cutlery is also selling miniature versions of all of their swords. Is Kit's house full of displayed weapons? "Yeah, unfortunately," he says. "I have no wall space left—*The Lord of the Rings* has pretty much tapped me out." 





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# FAN focus

## RINGER REPORT

John Rhys-Davies, who stars as Gimli in *The Lord of the Rings* movie trilogy, made an exclusive appearance on July 6 at the Origins Convention in Columbus, Ohio, as the special guest of honor at the Decipher booth. He signed autographs, and *The Lord of the Rings* Fan Club members were given priority over other attendees. Several Fan Club members from surrounding states made the drive to attend Origins and said that Rhys-Davies was charming and kind and even allowed them to take photos. One Fan Club Member commented that it was difficult to get a good photo because Rhys-Davies tickles you when you're standing next to him! ... Also on July 6, five United Kingdom Fan Club members traveled to London, England, to attend a luncheon with Brian Sibley, author of *The Lord of the Rings* Official Movie Guide. Charter Member Ian Smith is an old friend of Sibley's and asked the author if he could take time to get together with the UK "gang of five." Sibley also created the acclaimed dramatic adaptation of *The Lord of the Rings*



JOHN RHYSDAVIES AND FAN

for BBC Radio. The group enjoyed talking about movie rumors—and coveted Brian's *The Lord of the Rings* Weta Workshop jacket! Fan Club members were treated to autographed books and *The Lord of the Rings* trading cards from Decipher ... For cyber-fans, the Fan Club Message Boards are a great place to meet Ringers from throughout the world. Join the fun at [lotrfanclub.com/messageboards.html](http://lotrfanclub.com/messageboards.html)! ~ Nan Morris

We want to include a broad representation of Fan Club members in the magazine. Send your Fan Club event news and photos to [editor@lotrfanclub.com](mailto:editor@lotrfanclub.com) or to The Lord of the Rings Fan Club, c/o Decipher, PO Box 56, Norfolk, VA 23501. (If you would like to find out about groups that may already be active in your area, visit the Bag End Message Board in the Community section of [lotrfanclub.com](http://lotrfanclub.com).)

## Fans Gather for Hollywood Bowl Concert

After an amazing, star-packed weekend at Comic-Con (see *News from Middle-earth* for a full report), fans from as far away as Boston and the United Kingdom gathered in Los Angeles for a weekend of parties, laughter, fun, and, of course, *The Lord of the Rings*. The performance of Howard Shore's *The Fellowship of the Ring* score at a special concert at the Hollywood Bowl spurred the weekend events. Fan Club and [theonering.net](http://theonering.net) (TORn) members collaborated on a full slate of events for the weekend of August 9-11.

On Friday, a "Beach Moot" was held at Venice Beach, a traditional spot for tourists, and included lunch, strolling on the shore, and dipping toes in the cold Pacific Ocean.

That evening, many Ringers gathered for a "Pub Moot." The evening gave everyone a chance to mingle with old friends and make new acquaintances, and included prizes for everyone! The "Pub Moot Awards" were the

## FAN CLUB SPOTLIGHT: The Australian Fellowship

Across the world, members of *The Lord of the Rings* Fan Club are creating their own regional Fan Club "chapters" and planning local events and get-togethers. This issue, we bring you the Australian Fellowship.

Australia is the latest corner of the world to launch a "chapter" of *The Lord of the Rings* Fan Club. One group of enthusiastic Melbourne Fan Club members—and even one from

farflung Queensland—met for a weekend of fun and togetherness in August, starting with a showing of *The Fellowship of the Ring* at a local theater. The following day, the group watched the recently released *The Fellowship of the Ring* DVD together on a big screen projector, which was a huge hit! Nearly everyone had brought along memorabilia and spent time comparing photos, jewelry, stamps,

autographs, books, etc. They ended the evening late, departing reluctantly. The fledgling chapter plans to meet again in November when the extended DVD is released. Any other Melbourne Fan Club members should get in contact with Pete ([lotr@castlesoftware.com.au](mailto:lotr@castlesoftware.com.au) or [castlesoftware.com.au/peter/default.asp?topic=3182](http://castlesoftware.com.au/peter/default.asp?topic=3182)) to join this friendly group of Ringers! ~ Nan Morris





PHOTOS BY IAN SMITH

highlight of the evening for many. Fan Club President Dan Madsen was presented with a replica of Sting, along with a poem written by Amy Buckles (aka Primula), recognizing his efforts in providing a wonderful Fan Club. Other special awards brought laughs to the Fan Club members who frequent the Message Boards.

A DVD Viewing Party was held on Saturday at the storied American Film Institute in Hollywood. A fine screen, great sound system, and a room full of *The Lord of the Rings* fanatics (many frequently in tears) made the viewing perfect.

Later that day, a fan-organized, pre-concert picnic was held at a beautiful park near the Hollywood Bowl. This quiet, Rivendell-like setting and the ethereal melodies of Vis Sit Tecum Musicorum, a small wind and harp quintet from Salt Lake City, Utah, set the perfect tone for the picnic.

*The Lord of the Rings* fans occupied an entire section at the Bowl; the eloquent conductor even mentioned the fans at one point, as Ringers were quite vocal (at appropriate times!) in our appreciation of the music. The first half of the concert featured various selections of "musical mythologies," and the second half was devoted entirely to *The Fellowship of the Ring* score, performed for the first time that weekend. It was a beautiful evening, as fans listened to the melodies in the company of the finest friends. ~ Nan Morris



## Official Movie Magazine Challenge



Two unofficial contests were run by Fan Club members on the Message Boards this past summer. Bill Powers, better known as Sauron's Truss on the boards, initiated a "bad writing contest," in which members could submit their humorous and horrible parodies. The second competition was a caption contest, using images from *The Two Towers*. Fan Club members submitted very amusing hypothetical lines to accompany several scenes.

Chris Burrows (aka Baron Wilderness) submitted the winning caption for an image of Eowyn (below).

We are shamelessly appropriating this idea for the Official Movie Magazine Challenge. Take a look at the image above and come up with your best caption!

The top five winners will receive a prize donated by United Cutlery, including a full-size replica of Sting.

One entry per person, please. Submit your entries to [editor@lotrfanclub.com](mailto:editor@lotrfanclub.com) or to *The Lord of the Rings Fan Club Official Movie Magazine*, c/o PO Box 56, Norfolk, VA 23501. Deadline for entries is February 15, 2003. Contest results will be announced in a future issue of the magazine!

Due to some magazine mailing delays, we are also extending the deadline for the Issue 4 Official Magazine Challenge to January 30, 2003; see Issue 4's Fan Focus section for contest details. 🍷



COMMENTATOR: "And this is Eowyn from Rohan, and she'll be attempting a VERY difficult triple back lurtz with pike."

Certain restrictions will apply. For the complete terms and conditions of this exciting contest, please refer to our Web site ([lotrfanclub.com](http://lotrfanclub.com)), and click through to "Fan Club Magazine."



# THE LORD OF THE RINGS

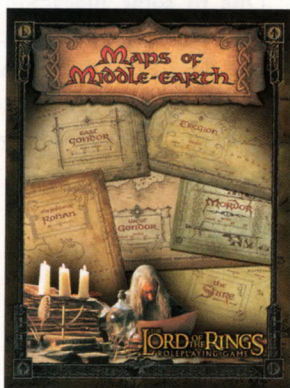
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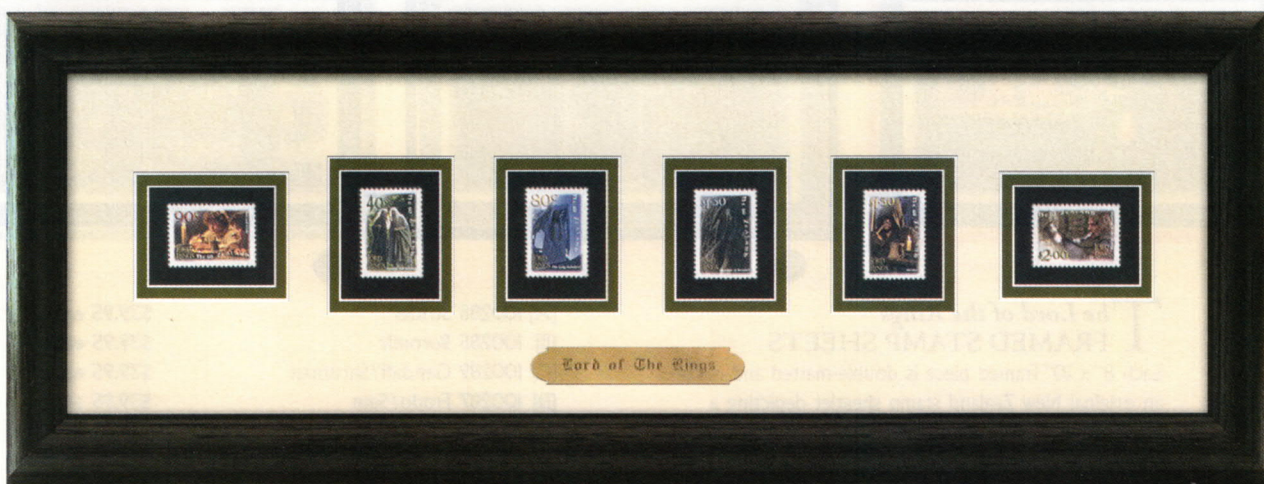


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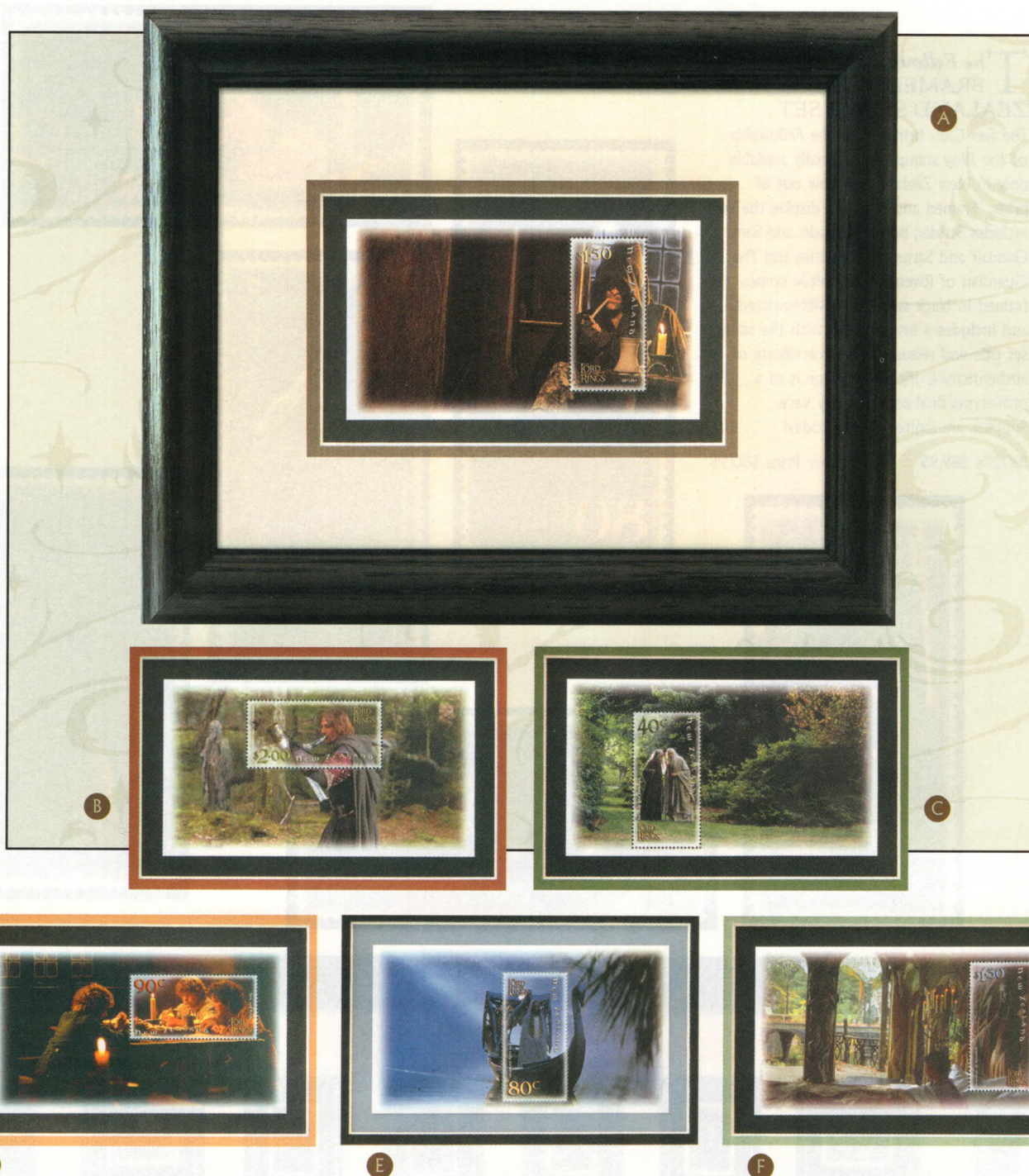


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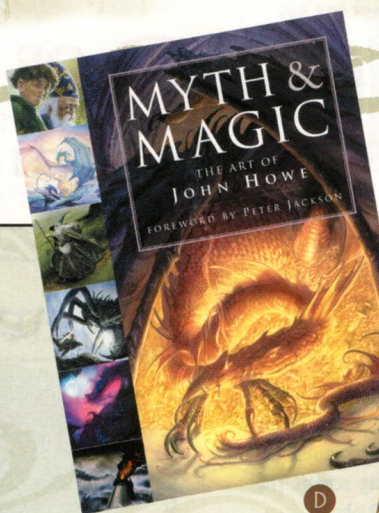


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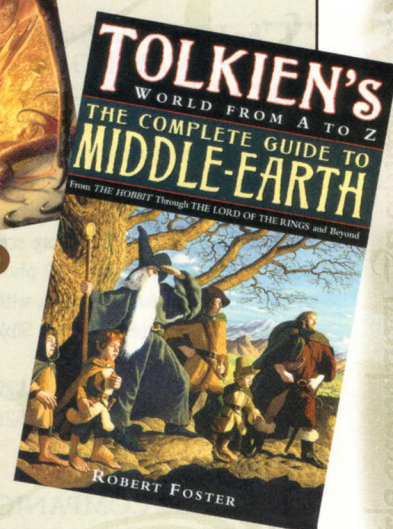
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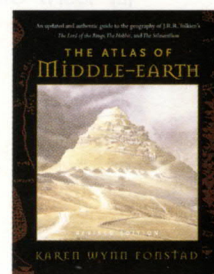
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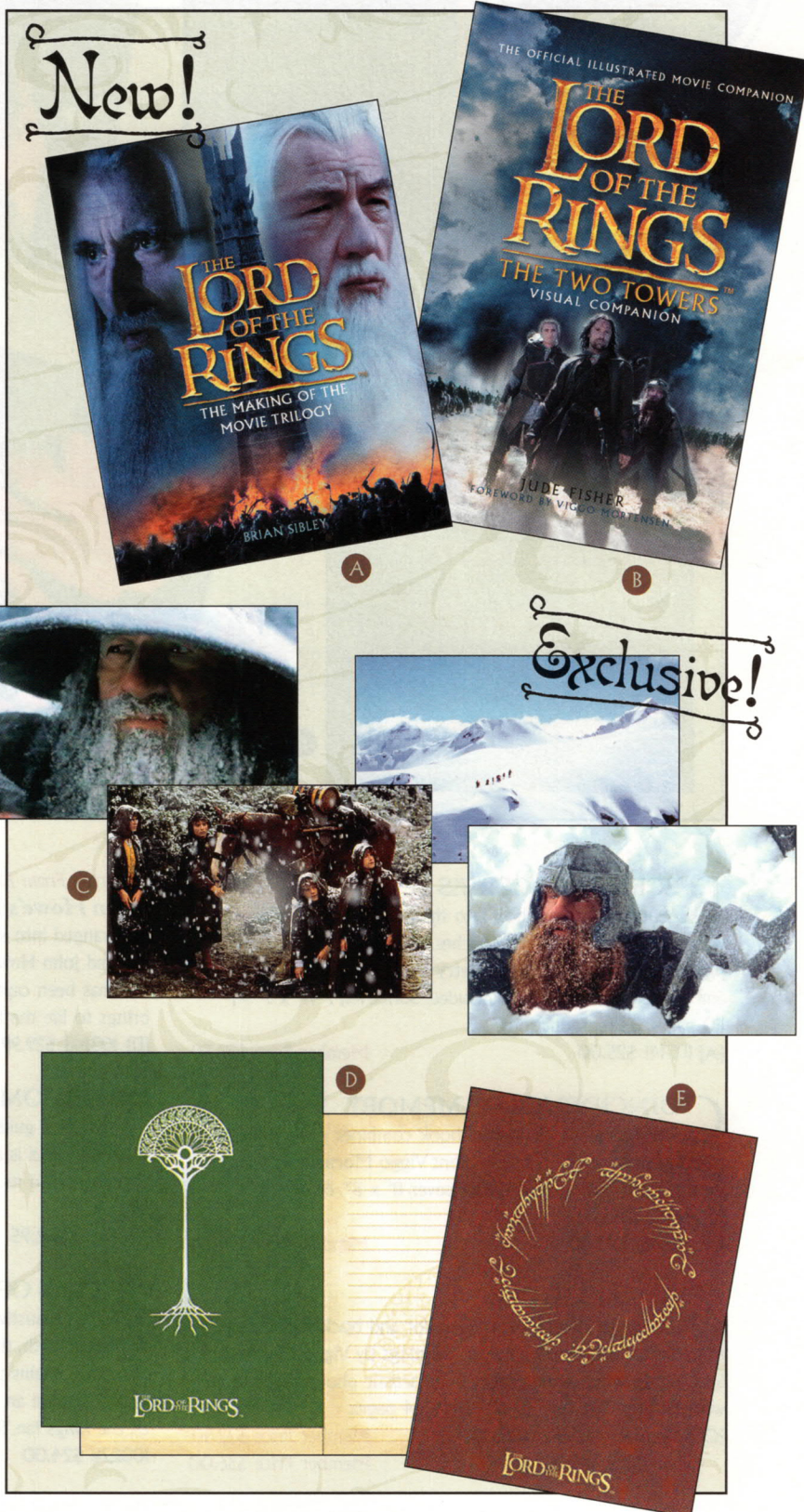
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# The Tolkien Society

President *in perpetuo*  
J.R.R. Tolkien CBE

Registered Charity number 273809

Founded with the author's approval, the society was formed to further interest in the life and works of J.R.R. Tolkien. Now registered as an educational charity in the UK, the society has local groups or 'smials' all around the world and has been instrumental in the founding of other national Tolkien Societies.

2003 sees our 'Coming-of-age' and Tolkien's 'Eleventy-First' birthday; celebrate these events with us, toasting Tolkien or watching *The Two Towers* on 3<sup>rd</sup> January (look out for our 'Toasts' web-page), at Sarehole Mill in May, at our seminar on *The History of Middle-earth* series, or in September at *Eleventy-One*, our longer than usual Oxonmoot.

The society has a web site that provides general information about the society and the world of Tolkien. To find out more about us and how you can come to our party, visit:

[www.tolkienociety.org/decipher](http://www.tolkienociety.org/decipher)

For membership or further details write to:

**The Secretary (Dec),  
210 Prestbury Road,  
CHELTENHAM,  
United Kingdom  
GL52 3ER**

Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation. 1. Publication Title The Lord of the Rings Fan Club Official Movie Magazine. 2. Publication Number 1541-8421. 3. Filing Date 9/26/2002. 4. Issue Frequency bi-monthly. 5. Number of Issues Published Annually 6. 6. Annual Subscription Price \$29.95. 7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Not printer) (Street, city, county, state, and ZIP+4) Decipher, Inc. 253 Granby St., Norfolk, VA 23510-1813. Contact Person Peter Lobred. Telephone (757) 623-3600. 8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher (Not printer) Decipher, Inc. 253 Granby St., Norfolk, VA 23510-1813. 9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor. Publisher Warren Holland, Decipher, Inc. 253 Granby St., Norfolk, VA 23510-1813. Managing Editor Carla Atkinson, 253 Granby St., Norfolk, VA 23510-1813. 10. Owner Full Name Warren Holland. Complete Mailing Address Decipher Inc., 253 Granby St., Norfolk, VA 23510-1813. 11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities Cindy L. Thornburg, Decipher, Inc. 253 Granby St., Norfolk, VA 23510-1813. Cara Richell Eddleman Trust, Decipher, Inc. 253 Granby St., Norfolk, VA 23510-1813. Brielle Eddleman Trust, Decipher, Inc. 253 Granby St., Norfolk, VA 23510-1813. 12. Tax status—Has not changed during preceding 12 months. 13. Publication Title The Lord of the Rings Fan Club Official Movie Magazine. 14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below Aug/Sept 2002. 15. Extent and Nature of Circulation. Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 months. a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run) 25,000. b. Paid and/or Requested Circulation. (1) Paid/Requested Outside-County Mail Subscriptions Stated on Form 3541 (Include advertiser's proof and exchange copies) 12,155. (2) Paid In-County Subscriptions Stated on Form 3541 (Include advertiser's proof and exchange copies) 0. (3) Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Non-USPS Paid Distribution 0. (4) Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS 0. c. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation [Sum of 15b. (1), (2), (3), and (4)] 12,155. d. Free Distribution by Mail (Samples, complimentary, and other free). (1) Outside-County as Stated on Form 3541 70. (2) In-County as Stated on Form 3541 0. (3) Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS 0. e. Free Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means) 109. f. Total Free Distribution (Sum of 15d. and 15e.) 179. g. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c. and 15f) 12,334. h. Copies not Distributed 12,666. i. Total (Sum of 15g. and h.) 25,000. j. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation (15c. divided by 15g. times 100) 98.5. No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date. a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run) 25,000. b. Paid and/or Requested Circulation. (1) Paid/Requested Outside-County Mail Subscriptions Stated on Form 3541 (Include advertiser's proof and exchange copies) 14,545. (2) Paid In-County Subscriptions Stated on Form 3541 (Include advertiser's proof and exchange copies) 0. (3) Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Non-USPS Paid Distribution 0. (4) Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS 0. c. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation [Sum of 15b. (1), (2), (3), and (4)] 14,545. d. Free Distribution by Mail (Samples, complimentary, and other free). (1) Outside-County as Stated on Form 3541 99. (2) In-County as Stated on Form 3541 0. (3) Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS 0. e. Free Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means) 135. f. Total Free Distribution (Sum of 15d. and 15e.) 234. g. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c. and 15f) 14,779. h. Copies not Distributed 10,221. i. Total (Sum of 15g. and h.) 25,000. j. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation (15c. divided by 15g. times 100) 98.4. 16. Publication of Statement of Ownership (this box is checked) Publication required. Will be printed in the Dec 2002/Jan 2003 issue of this publication. 17. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner signed by Peter Lobred - Publications Director. Date 9-26-02.

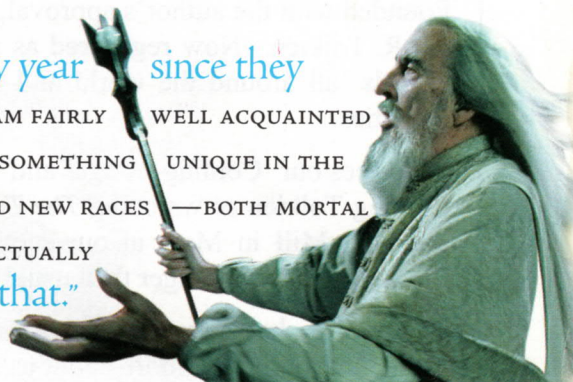


# Quoteworthy

A sampling of our favorite quotes from this issue...

"I [HAVE] READ THE THREE BOOKS OF *The Lord of the Rings* ... every year since they came out, and that is nearly 50 years ... YOU COULD SAY I AM FAIRLY WELL ACQUAINTED WITH THEM. ... YOU HAVE TO REALIZE THAT [J.R.R. TOLKIEN] DID SOMETHING UNIQUE IN THE HISTORY OF LITERATURE. HE DIDN'T JUST INVENT NEW WORLDS AND NEW RACES —BOTH MORTAL AND IMMORTAL. HE INVENTED NEW LANGUAGES THAT YOU CAN ACTUALLY READ, WRITE, AND LEARN TO SPEAK! No one has ever done that."

[Christopher Lee, Saruman]



"... IN A WAY, you are sort of dreading the first premiere ... THEY ARE STRESSFUL OCCASIONS—THEY ARE NOT THE BIG KIND OF BUZZ YOU MIGHT EXPECT THEY ARE. WHEN YOU ARE THE FILMMAKER, it's not that much fun really."

[Peter Jackson, Director]

"PETER [JACKSON] VISUALIZED VERY STRONGLY, FROM THE VERY FIRST DAY THAT WE STARTED TALKING ABOUT HELM'S DEEP, THE look OF AN ARMY MARCHING TO WAR WITH 'FORESTS OF PIKES' ABOVE THEIR



HEADS—THIS SEA OF WAVERING, CORN-LIKE STEMS THAT WOULD CREATE THIS formidable and freakish wall of impenetrable pikes.

AND THAT'S INDEED WHAT ENDED UP HAPPENING ON SET AND EVENTUALLY IN THE FILM."

[Richard Taylor, Weta Workshop Director]

"I WAS JUST ABOUT OUT THE DOOR AND TURNED AROUND, AND I SEE THIS SIGHT. IT WAS PETER AND FRAN DIRECTING THE BIGGEST MOVIE PROJECT EVER, AND their two kids are leaning on their shoulders and jumping all over them! AND I THINK, 'THIS IS A FAMILY FILM—IT'S PETER AND FRAN'S FAMILY FILM, and we're all in it!'"

[Bernard Hill, Théoden]



## COMING UP

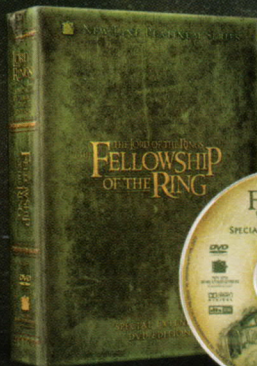
- Miranda Otto Debuts!
- The Horses of Middle-earth
- Daniel Reeve's Magical Maps



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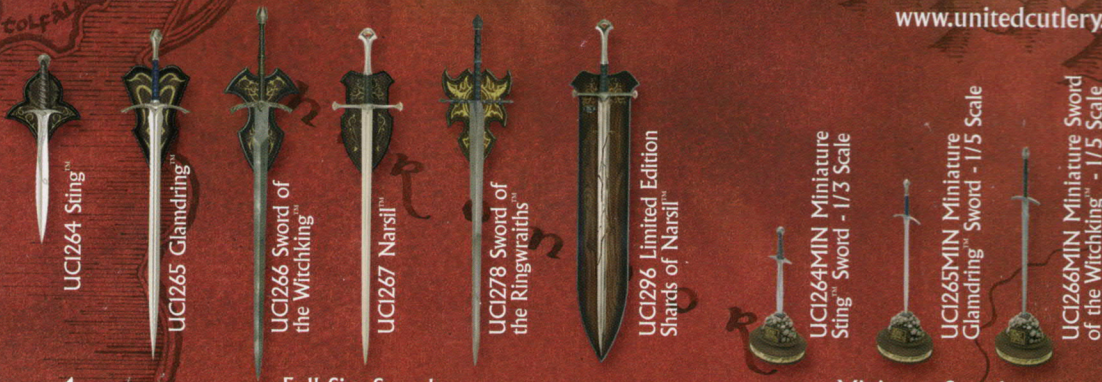
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