

THE LORD OF THE RINGS

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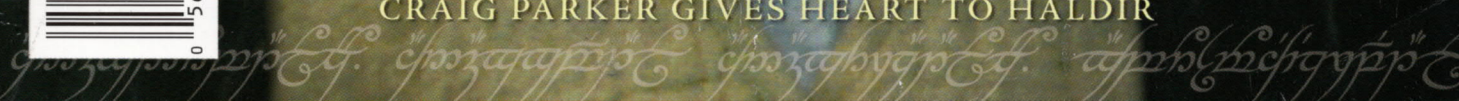
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MAKING MERRY

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CRAIG PARKER GIVES HEART TO HALDIR



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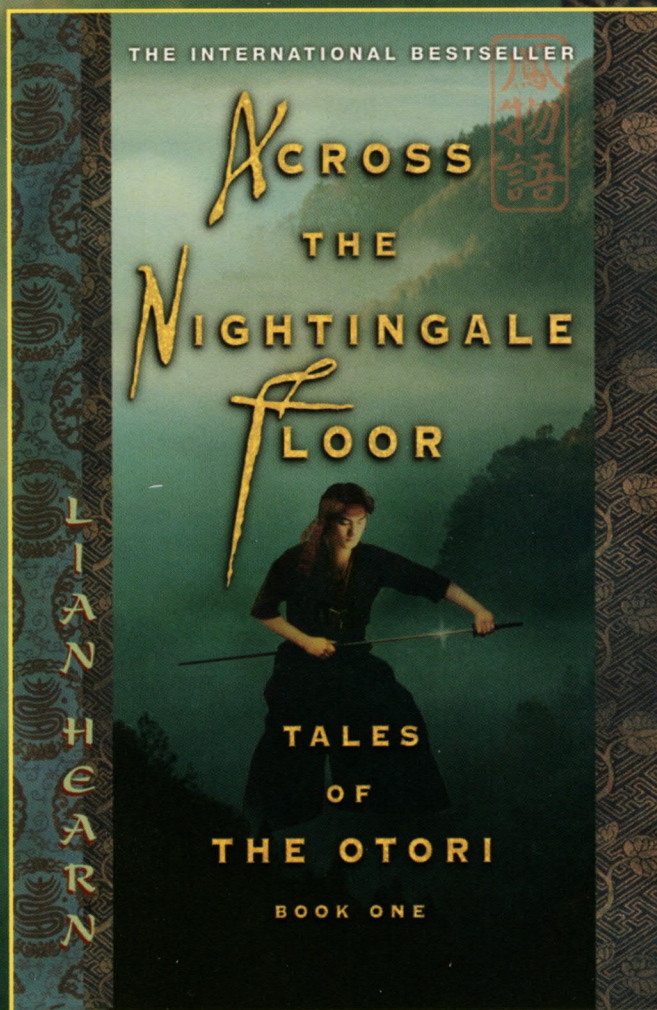
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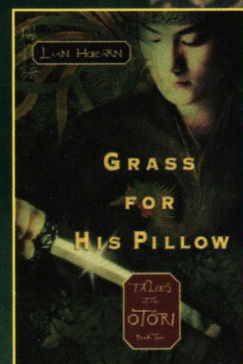
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COMMUNITY

If you will indulge me in a personal story, I would like to share a recent experience with the extraordinary Fan Club community. My 20-month-old daughter, Alexandra, recently had to spend a week in the hospital, and during this anxious week, my colleague, Dan Madsen, let the folks on the Message Boards know about Alexandra's situation and the tests she had to undergo. Later, after we brought her home with reassuring news from her doctors, I read many heartfelt posts on the Boards from Fan Club members who had sent their best wishes to my daughter. Several people had also emailed Dan, asking him to pass on their sentiments to me, including Sharon K., who wrote: "Carla, I just wanted to let you know that I belong to a prayer chain of 150+ members. I passed the prayer request about Alexandra along to them. Know that, right about now, you and Alexandra and your family are being flooded with blessings as we flood heaven's door on your behalf!"

I was touched to find that so many people I had never met would reach out to me during a stressful time, but I am certainly not the only one who has experienced this friendship from the Fan Club community. A member recently wrote to tell us about the warm welcome she received from members in North Carolina when she moved to the "Tarheel state" (as a native North Carolinian, I was not surprised to hear about this show of hospitality!). And I often see "regulars" on the Message Boards offering each other moral support. Recently, I've been impressed by the dedication of the international crowd on the Message Boards to one of their own, a U.S. Navy reservist who was deployed to Kuwait in January. Bill Powers has been the lucky recipient of many letters and care packages from Fan Club members since he arrived in Kuwait. Though there has been much intense but respectful debate on the Boards about the war in Iraq, Bill has had the support of fellow Ringers who line up on both sides of the issue.

Moving on to this issue's offerings, we are pleased to bring you the perfect complement to last issue's Billy Boyd/"Pippin" cover interview: Dominic Monaghan/"Merry" talked with us at length on a recent Saturday morning about the fun of working on *The Lord of the Rings*, the realities of fame and fortune, his passion for environmental causes, and much more. Further solidifying reports of the Hobbits' close offscreen friendships, Boyd was along for the ride that morning as the two headed up the coast of California for a surfing adventure! We're also very excited to bring you the behind-the-scenes story of Treebeard's creation; as one of the Weta Workshop artists told us, it was no small feat to figure out how to animate a walking, talking Treebeard without making him "goofy." And finally, I know that the many Haldir fans among you will enjoy our much-requested interview with New Zealand actor Craig Parker!

Carla Atkinson

CARLA ATKINSON
Managing Editor

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New Zealander Chris Streeter made a variety of props that helped lend authenticity to *The Lord of the Rings*, including the lanterns carried by the Elves, the chandeliers of Hobbiton, and Gandalf's staff.

Mailbaggins

GREETINGS FROM GERMANY!

A little "thank you" poem for all of you:
I had just put on a new pair of socks
Then went to work and stopped at the mailbox
Cool! My spanking new copy of the Fan
Club mag
But, no time to read ... got to get to work ...
what a drag!
Got to work ... did my show
(I'm a radio jock, you might want to know)
Then finally opened the magazine
and there it was ... Page 17!
My heart stood still! Oh my, what fun!
It's me ... as an Orc ... at RINGCON in Bonn.
My buddy quite pale—and me (quite fat)
We made it to the mag ... now how about that!
I showed it to my friend ... he let out a cheer
Great article, Ian! (We owe you a beer!)
So, Peter ... if you need two more Orcs
for Film Three,
We'd even dress up in drag—my buddy and me!
All the best, and thanks for making my day ...

—Brian Burgess
Nuremberg, Germany

THE ÉOWYN ISSUE

I especially enjoyed the latest issue with Miranda Otto on the cover [Issue 7]. That was a treat! I love Éowyn—she is a tough girl who can take care of herself, and I like that kind of character. I also loved the articles about training the horses. I think the horses are as important as the regular characters in *The Lord of the Rings*, and it was wonderful to see an article about them.

Donna Lindgren
Arvada, Colorado, USA

The interviews with the cast members are wonderful. I've enjoyed learning more about the actors I wasn't familiar with until I saw them in *The Lord of the Rings*. But what makes these magazines really awesome as a well-rounded whole are the articles from the crew members, and now the horses [Issue 7]! I've been involved in riding, owning, and showing horses for 19



years, and one of the inspirations [for my involvement] with horses was reading about Éowyn and the Riders of Rohan in *The Lord of the Rings*. I'm really enjoying all the great details and am looking forward to more information in future articles.

Kim Garvin
Monterey, California, USA

I have just received Issue 7, and my only regret is that I missed the first few issues. I have been inspired to write to you after reading the article on Peter Jackson. If I could tell him anything, I would tell him that there are no other movies for me. The article on Daniel Reeve is also awesome; once I started reading it, I couldn't put it down. How do you let all these people know how much all their hard work means to you? Somehow just loving their work doesn't seem enough.

Thanks again for the great magazine and wonderful articles.

Marilynn Tobin
Rockford, Illinois, USA

NEWCOMERS

Peter Jackson and *all* who worked on this film have created something so great, I don't believe there will be another film created in my lifetime that could even come close to the impact *The Lord of the Rings* has made in my life and the lives of so many others. Peter could not have cast the actors any more perfectly; each one of them brings some kind of magic to their character. When watching these films, you feel as if Middle-earth could really have once existed.

I love every article in the Fan Club magazine; I only wish I had known about this Fan Club sooner, so I wouldn't have missed so many issues!

Renee Sider
Wainfleet, Ontario, Canada

I am 10 years old, and I have just received my first copy of the magazine—Issue 5. It is exciting reading about the actors and actresses, and the photos are great. The article on Arwen is very interesting, especially as Liv Tyler

said she was sometimes nervous about learning new lines in Elvish just minutes before the scene was shot. I'm glad she learned things from Sir Ian McKellen, too. He was great as Gandalf. Mum and Dad say he's a fantastic actor.

As I joined *The Lord of the Rings* Fan Club at the beginning of this year, I have missed out on the earlier issues of the magazine. These back issues have some of my favorite characters, and I really want to read about them. I was so disappointed to find out from your Web site that they are not available. Please try to make them available to Fan Club members, as the magazine is so interesting and a lot of fun to read.

Azariah Heswall
Brunei

Editor's Note: Azariah, we're so pleased that you are enjoying the magazine. We have great news for you: Keep an eye on the Fan Club Store catalog in Issue 10 for details on how to purchase back issues of the magazine!

We're eager to hear your feedback, so please write to us via email at editor@lortrfanclub.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!

MILK DUDS AND MIDDLE-EARTH

I have been a fan of *The Lord of the Rings* since the age of 12 and am even more so now that Peter Jackson's movies have graced the big screen. Despite their glorious depictions of the world that I have grown up with over the past 28 years, I was totally disappointed when I purchased the extended version of *The Fellowship of the Ring*. Only an additional half hour? Couldn't it be a little longer ... like five or six hours?!

If there is any way to send a message to Mr. Jackson, please let him know that those of us who are totally enamored of his film want more. Please let him know that we loyal Ringers are patient people. We've waited for all three films and would be overjoyed to sit through six hours of sodas, popcorn, Milk Duds, and Middle-earth!

Kelly Ann Lavadie
Edinboro, Pennsylvania, USA



N^eWS

FROM MIDDLE-EARTH

New Zealand Plans for Premiere

Though the opening for *The Return of the King* is still months away, planning for the world premiere of the final installment in *The Lord of the Rings* film trilogy is already well under way in New Zealand. A leadership group charged with putting together the event includes New Zealand's "The Lord of the Rings" minister Pete Hodgson, Wellington Mayor Kerry Prendergast, and Roadshow Film Distributors general manager Lisa Hubbard.

The premiere of *The Return of the King* will take place at the Embassy Theatre in Wellington, and Prendergast has said that the premiere is likely to generate \$9.5 million in new spending for the local economy, boosting tourism spending by \$5 million. International media exposure gained from the event is estimated to be worth more than \$25 million to the New Zealand economy.

"*The Lord of the Rings* has cemented our status as one of the most beautiful places in the world to visit," Prendergast has said, "but we also need to sell our city as a talented, creative, and viable film-making destination. The world premiere is Wellington's day in the sun. It is our chance to shine like never before." ~ Dave Joy



OSCAR WINNERS
JIM RYGIEL, JOE
LETTERI, RANDALL
WILLIAM COOK,
AND ALEX FUNKE

Two Oscars for The Two Towers

BY DAVE JOY

A group of behind-the-scenes wizards who helped bring *The Two Towers* to the silver screen were honored with Academy Awards at the 75th annual Oscars ceremony held on March 23.

Jim Rygiel, Joe Letteri, Randall William Cook, and Alex Funke won Oscars for Achievement in Visual Effects, and Ethan Van der Ryn and Michael Hopkins took home the famous gold statuettes for Achievement in Sound Editing on the second installment in *The Lord of the Rings* film trilogy.

The Two Towers was also honored with nominations for Best Motion Picture of the Year; Achievement in Art Direction; Achievement in Film Editing; and Achievement in Sound.

Meanwhile, *The Two Towers* has surpassed *The Fellowship of the Ring* in worldwide box-office earnings, reaching \$910 million, making it the fifth top-grossing film ever. *Fellowship* is the seventh top-grossing film.

Not winning Best Picture (or even offering a nomination to Peter Jackson for Best Director) may have seemed to many die-hard Tolkien fans "stranger



than news from Bree." Yet the Hollywood festivities at the fan-organized "Two Towers-One Party" event went on just as they might have with regular patrons at the Prancing Pony—laughing, singing, dancing, and calling to Old Barliman for more ale! Certainly, winning two Academy Awards gave the jolly Middle-earth revelers plenty of reason to whoop it up at what was tentatively billed as "the world's largest-ever *The Lord of the Rings*-themed party" (see story on page 12).

Naturally, there's a "wait-'til-next-year" attitude concerning the Oscars, even while *The Two Towers* continues to rake in honors from around the world.

Other awards include:

The British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA): Orange Film of the Year (public vote); Costume Design (Ngila Dickson, Richard Taylor); Achievement in Special Visual Effects (Jim Rygiel, Joe Letteri, Randall William Cook, and Alex Funke).

The Academy Fellowship award went to Saul Zaentz, head of Tolkien Enterprises.

Hollywood Makeup Artists and Hair Stylists Guild Awards:

- 🌿 Best Character Makeup (Gino Acevedo, Jason Docerty, Richard Taylor)
- 🌿 Best Special Makeup Effects (Gino Acevedo, Jason Docerty, Richard Taylor)
- 🌿 Best Character Hairstyling (Donna Gilbert and Joanne Harris)

Saturn Awards: CINESCAPE and the Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Horror Films honored *The Two Towers* with 10 nominations in the feature film category:

- 🌿 Best Fantasy Film
- 🌿 Best Actor (Viggo Mortensen)
- 🌿 Best Supporting Actor (Andy Serkis)
- 🌿 Best Performance by a Younger Actor (Elijah Wood)
- 🌿 Best Direction (Peter Jackson)
- 🌿 Best Writing (Fran Walsh, Philippa Boyens, Stephen Sinclair, and Peter Jackson)
- 🌿 Best Music (Howard Shore)
- 🌿 Best Costume (Ngila Dickson)
- 🌿 Best Makeup (Peter Owen and Peter King)
- 🌿 Best Special Effects (Jim Rygiel, Joe Letteri, Randall William Cook, and Alex Funke)

Visual Effects Society:

- 🌿 Best Special Effects in a Motion Picture (Steve Ingram, Blair Foord, Rich Cordobes, Scott Harens)
- 🌿 Best Effects Art Direction in a Motion Picture (Alan Lee, Jeremy Bennett, Christian Rivers, Gino Acevedo)
- 🌿 Best Visual Effects Photography in a Motion Picture (Alex Funke, Bron Van't Hul, Richard Bluck)
- 🌿 Best Models and Miniatures in a Motion Picture (Richard Taylor, Paul Van Ommen, Matt Aitken)



PAUL VAN OMMEN (Left) accepts his VES award

- 🌿 Best Performance by an Actor in an Effects Film (Andy Serkis, Elijah Wood, Sean Astin)
- 🌿 Best Character Animation in a Live Action Motion Picture (Richard Boneham, Eric Saindon, Ken McGoough, Bay Raitt)
- 🌿 Best Compositing in a Motion Picture (Mark Lewis, GG Heitmann Demers, Alex Lemke, Alfred Munns)
- 🌿 Best Visual Effects in an Effects-Driven Motion Picture (Jim Rygiel, Joe Letteri, Randall William Cook, Alex Funke)

Golden Satellite (International Press Academy) Awards: Best Visual Effects (Jim Rygiel, Joe Letteri, Randall William Cook, Alex Funke) and Outstanding Motion Picture Ensemble Cast. 🌿



SOUND EDITING WINNER
ETHAN VAN DER RYN
ON OSCAR NIGHT

Ringers Enjoy Star- Studded Oscar Bash

BY IAN SMITH

"It's even better the second time!"

Two-time Oscar winner Randall William Cook was explaining how he felt about following up last year's Oscar for Best Visual Effects with another one this year, but he could just as easily have been talking about the party that he was attending—TheOneRing.net's (TORn) second annual Oscar fan gathering, which was heavily populated with Fan Club members.

This year's celebration ("Two Towers, One Party") was even bigger, brighter, and brasher than last year's. The celebrity count was up by a factor of several hundred percent, and even director Peter Jackson took the trouble to phone in and tell the throng of gathered fans how much he regretted not being able to attend. With 1,000 "men," three Hobbits, one half-Hobbit, a Dwarf, and an Elf from New Zealand in attendance, this was, without doubt, what Bilbo Baggins would have called "a night to remember."



DECKED-OUT FANS LINE UP
FOR THE LORD OF THE RINGS
OSCAR PARTY

Held at the Hollywood Athletic Club once again, this year's party filled all floors of the venue, with not one, but three Oscar TV broadcast viewing rooms. Two bars with fast and efficient service offered free drinks all night, a free hot buffet for those wanting "second breakfasts" was provided, and musicians Emerald Rose, Vis Sit Tecum Musicorum, and singer/guitarist Michael Bilach (dressed as Gandalf the Grey) ensured that partygoers were kept thoroughly entertained into the small hours of the morning.

"Quickbeam," TORn's master of ceremonies, kept the crowd amused and hyped up during the commercial breaks

in the Oscar TV broadcast, which was projected onto large screens in all the viewing rooms, with screams rending the air every time the camera showed a shot of Sean Astin (Sam Gamgee) in the audience. The decibel level increased even more when *The Two Towers* won two Oscars (for Visual Effects and Sound Editing). There may have been disappointment at the lack of a "Best Film" award, but fans consoled themselves with the thought of "Next year ..."

"I'm here out of respect for the fans," John Rhys-Davies, the first celebrity guest to arrive, told the gathered press before giving his Oscar tip for next year: "Sean Astin for Best Supporting Actor."

When pushed FOR INFORMATION ON *The Return of the King*, RHYSDAVIES WAS MORE RETICENT, SAYING ONLY, “You’ll need to take a very large handkerchief.”

When pushed for information on *The Return of the King*, Rhys-Davies was more reticent, saying only, “You’ll need to take a very large handkerchief.” A man of his word, Rhys-Davies showed his respect by walking out into the main floor, unconcerned about security issues and happy to pose with the fans for photo opportunities. More than one fan was overheard exclaiming, “John Rhys-Davies tickled me just as the camera flash went off!”

Next to show was Craig Parker (Haldir), whose arrival went unnoticed by the press corps gathered at the front reception, mainly because he looks radically different without the long blond wig he sported in the films. There were one or two “Orlando Bloom” moments when a small minority of fans got over-excited at seeing him and security seemed barely capable of coping, but the actor handled the situation well, and probably would have won “most hospitable cast member of the evening” for his patience and interest in hearing what fans and VIPs (sponsors) alike had to say. He stayed at the party right until the end. Fans got a chance to talk to the actor about the “Haldir lives! (I don’t care what Peter Jackson says)” T-shirts that have surfaced recently, and the actor revealed he had one himself, stored in a box for safekeeping. “It’s wonderfully flattering,” he said.

Following closely behind Parker was Bruce Hopkins (Gamling) who immediately got the attention of the crowd, wearing an extremely bright red suit and having an animated, enthusiastic manner that endeared him to everyone who met him, although few recognized him as the man who dressed Bernard Hill as Théoden in *The Two Towers*.

Dominic Monaghan and a somewhat subdued Billy Boyd were the next to arrive. The boys had attended a New Line Cinema party the night before, and Boyd was apparently suffering somewhat. Monaghan seemed in a better frame of mind, grabbing a bottle of “the hair of the dog” and walking straight toward the one person in the reception room who wasn’t queuing to speak to him—the aforementioned musician Michael Bilach, sitting in the corner in

shouted out his name. New Line producers Mark Ordesky and Barrie M. Osborne arrived around the same time and received an equally ecstatic reaction. “It’s very weird,” Osborne explained later. “I’m not used to that. I thought ‘Wow! Am I a rock star or what?!’ [I think] ‘I’m behind the camera—people don’t know me,’ and then this! It’s thrilling. It’s great to be a part of something that has fired people’s imaginations.”



CRAIG PARKER (HALDIR) jokes with party emcee “quickbeam”

his Gandalf costume. Later, Monaghan talked about his main project at the moment—scriptwriting with Boyd. “Billy and I don’t like to write on an empty canvas—we like to bounce ideas off each other,” he explained, before going on to say that the two would be spending more time doing just that with a month together in New Zealand, followed by two weeks in Hawaii.

Sean Astin was next up, and it wasn’t hard to see why he has such a large fan base. Smiling broadly, he spent a lot of time meeting and greeting the fans. Andy Serkis arrived around the same time, grinning from ear to ear, and flashing a peace sign at anybody who

The final guests—the Oscar winners themselves—arrived about half an hour later. Jim Rygiel, Joe Letteri, Randall William Cook, Alex Funke, Michael Hopkins, and Ethan Van der Rhyn were experiencing an adrenaline high and clearly enjoying themselves. They, along with Osborne, stayed right to the end of the party. It may seem surprising that so many of the film’s cast and crew should attend a fan-based party, when opportunities to do some major Hollywood schmoozing appeared to be available elsewhere. Dan and Chris Hennah, art directors on the film, explained that they had been bored at last year’s “big name” celebrity party and

“Last year, IAN CALLED US UP AND SAID WE SHOULD COME, BUT WE WERE AT SOME OTHER PARTY. HE GAVE US A TELLING-OFF! HE WAS LIKE, ‘It’s very naughty. They’re all girls. THEY’RE WAITING FOR YOU.’ So I’M HAPPY THAT I EMAILED HIM LAST WEEK AND SAID, ‘I’M GOING WITH BILLY.’”



DOMINIC MONAGHAN mugs with “Gandalf”



ASTIN AND OSBORNE take a call from peter jackson

were much happier at the fans’ party. Monaghan had a different explanation for his attendance with Billy Boyd: “The main reason we came is—to give him his credit—Sir Ian McKellen. Last year, Ian called us up and said we should come, but we were at some other party. He gave us a telling-off! He was like, ‘It’s very naughty. They’re all girls. They’re waiting for you.’ So I’m happy

that I emailed him last week and said, ‘I’m going with Billy.’”

Back on the main stage, it was time for the audience to meet the cast and crew. Craig Parker survived a rather worrying and hysterical crush to make it onto the main stage, where he got a reception that could have lifted the roof of the venue. After some joking around with TORn’s Quickbeam, he was

joined by Sean Astin—who acted as emcee for the rest of the evening—and the rest of the movie entourage. In addition to the aforementioned cast and crew members, an overwhelmed Alan Lee (who got one of the loudest cheers of the evening and produced his camera to take photos of the audience) was joined by Art Director Grant Major. Astin revealed that his short film, *The Long and the Short of It*, shot during *The Lord of the Rings* filming in New Zealand, would be appearing on the extended DVD version of *The Two Towers*. Bruce Hopkins got a loud cheer when he asked the audience, “Where were you when we needed you at Helm’s Deep?” Andy Serkis wowed the crowd with his “Gollum and Smeagol” impersonation. Boyd and Monaghan clowning around with the folk rock band Emerald Rose’s stage instruments and caused some hilarity by giving each other weird, suspicious looks as they circled each other. And the Oscar winners waved their gold statuettes in the air to wild applause.

The excitement onstage peaked when Barrie Osborne revealed to Astin that he had someone special on the line from New Zealand. Director Peter Jackson did not attend the Oscars this year, preferring to concentrate on completing *The Return of the King*. However, he had dialed in to Osborne’s phone (despite the fact that it was 4 AM in New Zealand) and was mic’d up over a very distorted sound system. Some confusion ensued as he found it hard to hear us, and we struggled to hear what he had to say over the distortion. Sean Astin saw a chance for revenge with his former director and mentor, and with

mock patronization advised Peter to "speak slowly, surely, and clearly." The stage presentation of celebrities ended nicely with a surprise special presentation from Quickbeam on behalf of all the fans: a special "Golden Gandalf" award given to Osborne, in lieu of the Best Picture Oscar he should have won.

It was when the guests left the stage that the party really kicked into gear, with dancing for all. Upstairs in the designated "VIP" (sponsors) area, the Oscar winners were happy to mix and mingle and talk about their work. Alan Lee confided that he "missed his pencil ... I've just been too busy all the time," while revealing that his appearance in front of the camera on *The Two Towers* will not be repeated in *The Return of the King*.

Although scheduled to end around 1 AM, the party ran on until 2 AM, and at the close, most fans were already talking about attending next year's party. Though the stars' presence at the party is exciting, most fans would come even if no celebrities appeared; for them, the party is all about sharing their enthusiasm for the films and solidifying worldwide friendships that have started "virtually" through the Fan Club Message Boards and the Internet.

With the enthusiastic reception this year's party garnered, together with the huge jump in attendance, perhaps TheOneRing.net should look into booking the Hollywood Bowl for next year's bash! ☺

Ian Smith is a charter member from London. Susan Brock, a charter member from San Diego, provided invaluable assistance with the reporting for this article.



Celebrity Tracks

BY DAVE JOY

Aside from the strange milestone of seeing the talking Gollum toys now on the market, **ANDY SERKIS** has to know he's "made it" after his character was spoofed on "Saturday Night Live" (by "SNL" regular Chris Kattan)! Look for Serkis to team up with Samuel Ball opposite Jennifer Garner ("Daredevil") in Revolution Studios' fantasy film *13 Going on 30*, with a likely release early next year.

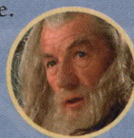


SEAN ASTIN'S short film, *The Long and the Short of It*, was screened in competition on February 22 at the Texas Film Festival on the Texas A&M University campus. The tribute to Astin included a moderated discussion with clips from his past films, followed by a question-and-answer session. *The Long and the Short of It* was made on an off-day during shooting of *The Lord of the Rings*. It stars Andrew Lesnie, the epic movie's Academy Award-winning director of photography; director Peter Jackson allowed himself to be directed by Astin in a classic cameo appearance. The story was conceived by Astin and Dominic Monaghan (Merry), while Elijah Wood (Frodo) served as Assistant Director, and Billy Boyd (Pippin) received credit as a "creative source." ... The folks at the gardening/literacy project at BitofEarth.net



(elanor.bitofearth.net) have confirmed that Astin plans to attend the dedication of a children's reading garden called "Project Elanor" this spring at the Rockwood branch of the Multnomah County Library in Portland, Oregon.

SIR IAN MCKELLEN is getting rave reviews for his performance in August Strindberg's "Dance of Death" at London's Lyric Theatre. The dark comedy about a spiteful and bitter married couple opened March 4 after earning critics' praise following its New York City opening on Broadway in 2001. McKellen and stage wife Frances de la Tour were described by *The Independent* of London as "unbelievable" and "breathtaking." ... The knighted actor is also expected to appear in an upcoming British-themed episode of "The Simpsons," along with *Harry Potter* author J.K. Rowling (watch for his character to be struck by lightning after the most feared words in theater—"Macbeth!"—are uttered).



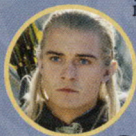
Rumor has it that **ELIJAH WOOD'S** voice is set to star in the upcoming animated film *Tom Thumb*.



BILLY BOYD recently toured Canada, ending up at the Edmonton Film Festival, where he was in attendance to promote his small art film *Sniper 470*, one of eight Scottish short films screened on March 15 at the Garneau Theatre. Also, watch for Boyd appearing with Russell Crowe in *Master and Commander*, coming out this November.



ORLANDO BLOOM, everyone's favorite Elf, has attracted quite a fanatical following, complete with numerous fan Web sites, including one that includes insightful behind-the-scenes impressions from several other key cast and crew members from *The Lord of the Rings* movies (orlandomultimedia.net/diary/fellowship_diary800.html).



Going from one epic to another, BLOOM and fellow Ringer SEAN BEAN will soon prepare to do onscreen battle again—but on opposite sides this time around. *The Perfect Storm* director Wolfgang Petersen has tapped Bean and Bloom, along



with other big-name actors, for *Troy*, a modern-day remake of Homer's epic story *The Iliad*. In what is expected to be another blockbuster hit for Petersen, Bloom is cast as Paris, the "fair Trojan prince" who steals away with Helen, whose face "launched a thousand ships" (Helen is rumored to be played by "Smallville" star Kristin Kreuk). Bean plays the redoubtable Greek hero Odysseus, conscripted into service by cuckolded King Menelaus and his feisty brother King Agamemnon. Having gained lasting fame from other film epics, Peter O'Toole plays Trojan King Priam. Julie Christie plays the mother of another notorious Greek warrior, Achilles (played by Brad Pitt), who tends to take things personally with the Trojan hero Hector ("Hulk" Eric Bana). No danger of giving the plot away on this well-known Greek tragedy, which is expected in theaters in May 2004.

The previously unknown Wellington, New Zealand, actor BRET MCKENZIE has achieved celebrity cult status and Internet stardom as a result of appearing for only three



seconds in *The Fellowship of the Ring*. Dubbed "Figwit" by adoring fans, McKenzie appeared as the brooding Elf who sat beside VIGGO MORTENSEN (Aragorn) during the Council of Elrond. The story has it that a fan gave him his name only moments after Frodo stood up and announced, "I will take the ring!"... as the camera panned temporarily to McKenzie, an adoring fan thought to herself, "Frodo is grea... Who is that!?" As with all of the star Ringers, hundreds of fan sites have reportedly sprouted for "the nameless Elf," who is currently a musician in a New Zealand band called The Black Seeds.

BRAD DOURIF (Grima/Worm-tongue) is expected to appear at the Atlanta DragonCon from August 29-September 1, 2003. Dourif attended last year's DragonCon as well.



Congratulations to LIV TYLER (Arwen) on her marriage to Spacehog lead singer Royston Langdon on March 25! Though wedding plans for other locales had been rumored, the two were married in a private ceremony at a villa in Barbados. The couple reportedly plans to hold a reception for family and friends in New York City at a later date.



Perceval Press, founded by VIGGO MORTENSEN (Aragorn) and Pilar Perez just last summer, has already announced a new lineup of books by a variety of artists, poets, and photographers to be published in 2003. Perceval published three books of Mortensen's work in 2002, as well as a volume of drawings and photographs by artist Lola Schnabel and a CD compilation featuring the work of selected musicians and artists.



"Gollum" Charms the GAMA Crowd

Andy Serkis (Gollum) appeared on behalf of Decipher, Inc., at this year's GAMA (adventure gaming industry) Trade Show held March 17-20 at the Orleans Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada. Serkis obligingly held two lengthy signing sessions at the Decipher booth, taking time to talk with each and every convention attendee who waited in long lines to get his autograph and speak in person with the popular British actor.

During his March 19 appearance, Serkis also gave a 45-minute Q&A talk about the unusual experience of preparing for and playing the role of Gollum during the filming of *The Lord of the Rings*. He ended the session with a rousing re-enactment of "Gollum's Debate," which sent the audience into delirious applause (this scene previously won a special award from Sony Entertainment for the "best digital performance of the year").

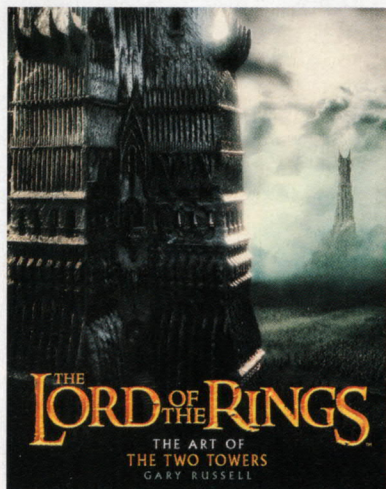
Later, five brave souls from the audience were invited to compete in a contest for the best imitation of Gollum (with Serkis as judge, of course). The winner—a mystery female—won on the strength of having brought her own fish to slap around and sing to in her own Gollum-esque way! With a crowd of more than 400 in attendance, Serkis's appearance was without a doubt the highlight of the convention.

~ Dave Joy



Product Update

BY DAVE JOY



HOUGHTON-MIFFLIN

Even if you've already seen *The Two Towers* more than once, the stunning images—most of which are previously unpublished or seen onscreen—featured in Gary Russell's new book, *The Art of The Two Towers*, may send you running back to the theater for more. Russell's book offers all-new views of breath-taking panoramas and awe-inspiring architecture, as well as detailed close-ups of many of *The Lord of the Rings'* fantasy characters, such as Ents, Wargs, and the Balrog. It would certainly be a welcome addition to any Ringer's library and serve as an authoritative and insightful companion to Russell's *The Art of The Fellowship of the Ring*.

Published by Houghton-Mifflin, this edition features more than 600 full-color images that detail the development of the movie's imagery—from concept renderings to the final product—in stunning large-format art. The book includes a more detailed look at

the monstrous Black Gate of Mordor, as well as the intricacies of the carefully crafted costumes of the noble Rohirrim horse-lords and the grim Easterlings.

The world-renowned artists and designers who brought J.R.R. Tolkien's vision to life onscreen provide thoughtful commentary, and the book also doubles as an in-depth reference to Peter Jackson's beloved recreation of the second installment of the epic trilogy.

In addition to behind-the-scenes details provided by Alan Lee and John Howe, the artists who inspired Peter Jackson's vision, other noteworthy contributions come from Jackson himself, as well as from Richard Taylor (Special Effects Supervisor), Grant Major (Production Designer), Ngila Dickson (Costume Designer), Jim Rygiel (Visual Effects Supervisor), and other movie crew members.

In a section dedicated to Gollum, you'll appreciate how the character developed from pencil sketches to a fully functioning CGI digital creation. In the afterword, Andy Serkis (Gollum) gives readers his personal insights on bringing Gollum to life and what it was like to work with Richard Taylor's talented crew at Weta Workshop.

DECIPHER, INC.

Several new resources for *The Lord of the Rings* Roleplaying Game are set for release in the spring and summer. In April, look for *Fell Beasts and Wondrous Magic*, a 96-page, hardcover, full-color book detailing the creatures—both fair and foul—and the magical

places and items found throughout the trilogy.

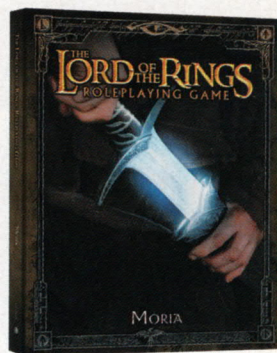
In May, the *Moria Boxed Set* will debut, detailing the ancient realms of the Dwarf-lords. With maps, a 32-

page book, and a 96-page book, it allows players to enter an adventure filled with twists and turns as the Fellowship journeys through the underground mazes of Moria.

Roleplayers can get their hands on *The Two Towers* Sourcebook in June, using this in-depth guide to enhance their Middle-earth dramas. The 128-page full-color, hardback book details the characters, places, and events found in *The Two Towers* (both the book and the film), and includes profiles of the main characters, plus detailed write-ups, adventure seeds, and expanded mass combat rules.

WREBBIT

Montreal-based Wrebbit offers puzzle aficionados several unique *The Lord of the Rings*-themed choices, including two amazing 3-D puzzles—the Orthanc Tower and the Hall of Edoras—that fans and collectors will want to leave on permanent display! Other Wrebbit offerings include *The Two Towers* poster puzzles featuring the Three Hunters, Frodo and Sam, Gandalf the White, and the Rohirrim Heroes. Wrebbit's "Perfalock" technology means your puzzle will stay together as long as you wish, making it perfect for wall-mounting! 🐰



INTERVIEW | DIRECTOR

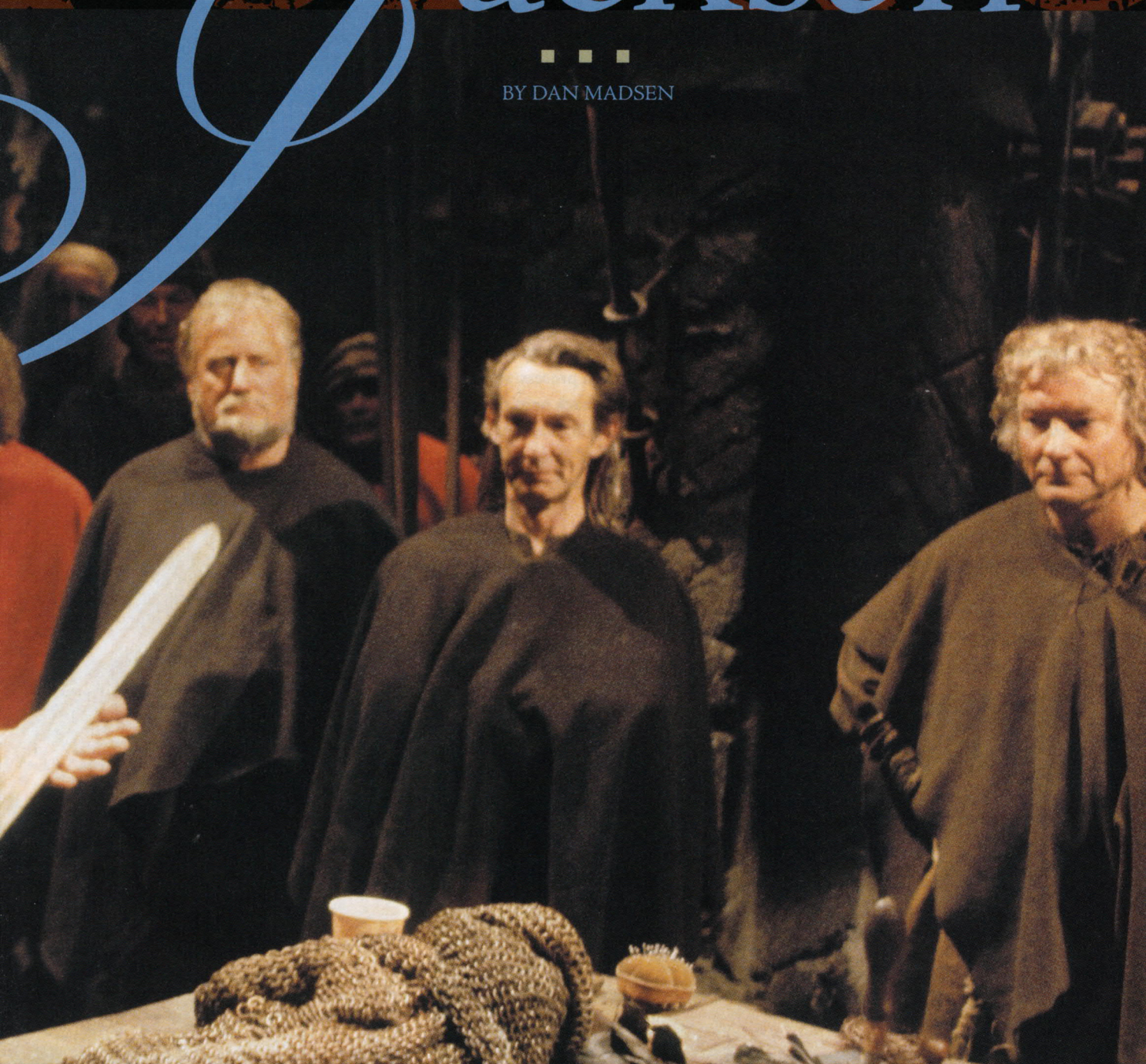
UPDATE *with* P E



The director talks about collaborating with his cast,

T E R Jackson

■ ■ ■
BY DAN MADSEN



filmmaking deadlines, and the design process behind Shelob

Early this year, *The Lord of the Rings* director took a break from his post-production work to talk with Dan Madsen about *The Return of the King*, his approach to filmmaking—and the creepy New Zealand “Tunnel Web” spider that is his inspiration for the cinematic Shelob!

PETER, ARE YOU GOING TO BE DOING SOME ADDITIONAL SHOOTING FOR *The Return of the King*?

Yes, we plan to. We haven't quite gotten to the point where we know exactly what it is we want yet. Philippa and Fran are looking at the footage as I cut. We work up ideas, and then get together and talk about the storyline and potential scenes we would shoot to improve it and enhance it. That process is beginning now, too. We're still anticipating that we'll shoot bits and pieces with most of the cast. But it's born from ideas that come from the cut, and I haven't done quite enough of the cut yet for Philippa and Fran to really get into the script-writing. But the first seeds of ideas are starting to happen.

FANS WERE VERY EXCITED TO SEE THE INCREDIBLE CG [COMPUTER-GENERATED] WORK WITH GOLLUM AND

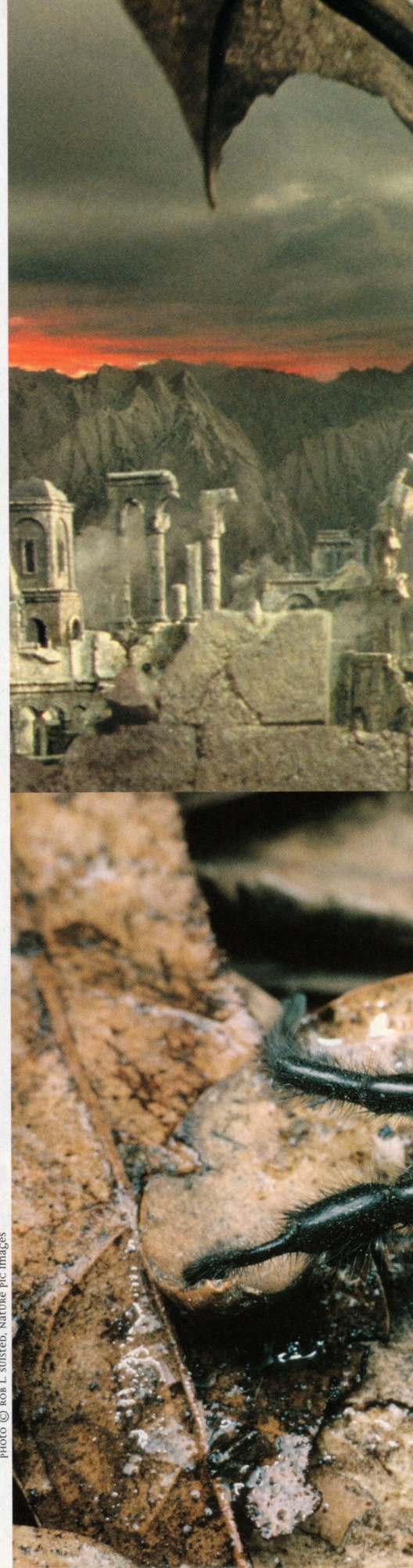
TREEBEARD. WON'T SHELOB BE THE NEXT BIG CG CHARACTER YOU INTRODUCE?

Yes, that's true. Gollum is now a member of the cast and continues through the story. The Mûmakil and Nazgûl have their real center-stage appearances after cameos in *The Two Towers*. They will be more spectacular from a cinematic point of view. But Shelob is definitely going to be the creepiest and scariest of the creatures. We did some work on Shelob a long, long time ago when we were in pre-production. Most of the creatures of the trilogy were designed before we even started shooting back in 1998-99. We've just dusted off the designs for each of the creatures as we've gotten to them in the post-production process, so Shelob has only just come back onto the drawing board for re-evaluation now.

I've got a real fear of spiders; I guess I have arachnophobia. Ever since I was a kid, spiders have freaked me out. There is a spider in New Zealand called a Tunnel Web spider, which is a common New Zealand spider but a very nasty, fat, pudgy one that lives in gardens. Ever since I was a kid, I have been terrified of coming across these



PHOTO © ROB L. SUSTED, NATURE PIC IMAGES





TUNNEL WEB SPIDER



“There is a spider in New Zealand called a Tunnel Web ... a very nasty, fat, pudgy one that lives in gardens. ... We had a Shelob design meeting, and I looked at the designs and said, ‘You know, we have to make this look more like the Tunnel Web. She has to be more like this horrible spider.’”



“We don’t have the scouring of the Shire ... I have always found that sort of anti-climactic. When I first read the book, I just suddenly wondered why, after the Ring is finally destroyed, we then have another 70 or 80 pages of a completely different event. It felt wrong when I read it, so we definitely don’t have that in the film.”

things. You find them under old bricks and old logs and leaves and such. It is a very evil-looking spider; it’s small—about an inch and a half long. About three weeks ago, we had a Shelob design meeting, and I looked at the designs and said, “You know, we have to make this look more like the Tunnel Web. She has to be more like this horrible spider.” Most of the CG guys that I was talking to were from the U.S., so they didn’t have a clue what a Tunnel Web was. So I turned to one of the Kiwi designers, Christian Rivers, and said, “Can we find pictures of one?” The next morning, Christian poked around in his garden and managed to catch one in a glass jar! So right now, we have a live Tunnel Web at Weta, being the model for Shelob. As far as I’m concerned, a photograph would’ve been just fine!

HOW CLOSELY WILL YOU BE STICKING TO THE BOOK IN *The Return of the King*?

The Return of the King is quite close to the book. There are notable exceptions. The first thing with *The Return of the King* is that we still have to wrap up *The Two Towers*. We have the Isengard sequence—in which they go to Isengard to deal with Saruman, who is imprisoned at the top of a tower—which is at the tail end of *The Two Towers* book. It is now at the beginning of *The Return of the King* movie. Likewise, we don’t have the scouring of the Shire, which is a major chapter at the end of the book. I have always found that sort of anti-climactic. When I first read the book, I just suddenly wondered why, after the Ring is finally destroyed, we then have another 70 or 80 pages of a completely different event. It felt wrong when I read it, so we definitely don’t have that in the film. The hint at what could be the scouring of the Shire in Galadriel’s mirror in *The Fellowship* is the closest thing we’re going to have. When the Ring is

destroyed at the end of *The Return of the King*, that is really the climax of the film. Those two things are the notable major exceptions as well as Shelob, which is another spill-over from *The Two Towers*—Minas Morgul, the stairs of Cirith Ungol and into Shelob’s tunnel are now in *The Return of the King*. When fans of the book see that sequence, I think they will understand immediately how impossible it would have been for it to be in *The Two Towers* film. It feels so right to be where we’ve got it from a story point of view—for reasons I can’t discuss now! At this point, we don’t have Ghân-Buri-Ghân, the Wild Man that the Rohirrim come across on their way to Minas Tirith in there. I don’t know if this will change with us doing pick-ups, but I doubt it.

Having said that, the rest of *The Return of the King* movie is going to follow the book reasonably well. What I like about *The Return of the King* is that the story is the centerpiece of the film,

more so than in the first two films. If you thought about what the major memorable thing was about *The Fellowship of the Ring*, it would probably be meeting these characters for the first time, and getting used to the actors playing them—that was the memorable thing. In *The Two Towers*, you've got Gollum and Helm's Deep—the spectacle and the size of it. The same characters are there in *The Return of the King*, the spectacle and size is there, Gollum is there—but there are not those new elements anymore. What it does have is the most compelling narrative of the three films. It has a story that unfolds in a very exciting way. I think that is going to make it a very strong film, because you now know the places, you know the characters, and you know the situation. We only meet one new character, which is Denethor—and he's only new to those who don't check out *The Two Towers* extended cut in November! We're now just simply paying it all off with a narrative that twists and turns and unfolds in quite a thrilling way.

MANY OF THE ACTORS WHO WORKED ON THESE FILMS HAVE SPOKEN OF THEIR UNIQUE COLLABORATIVE NATURE. BERNARD HILL TOLD US THAT THE ACTORS INVOLVED IN UPCOMING SCENES WOULD GATHER AT YOUR HOME OR PHILIPPA BOYENS' HOME TO GO OVER SCENES AND THAT EVERYONE INVOLVED WAS INVITED TO GIVE FEEDBACK. HE WAS STRUCK BY THE FACT THAT HE WAS OFFERED THIS OPPORTUNITY TO CONTRIBUTE. HOW DID YOU, FRAN WALSH, AND PHILIPPA BOYENS DECIDE TO TAKE THIS COLLABORATIVE APPROACH, AND HOW DID IT HELP YOU? CAN YOU THINK OF ANY EXAMPLES WHERE INPUT FROM AN ACTOR CHANGED THE DIRECTION OF A SCENE OR A CHARACTER IN A PARTICULARLY STRIKING OR POSITIVE WAY?

We just have a philosophy of collaboration. We ended up with some very good actors in the films, and as with any good actor, they are going to get under the skin of their character. They are going to get to know their character better than you do. As screenwriters or director, we have to give equal attention to many characters; in this particular trilogy of films, there are 20 major characters. We have to split our attention over 20 different people in terms of who they are and what they are, and we have to come up with ideas to make each of them fresh and different. Obviously, Tolkien had the same problem and provided a wonderful blueprint for us, but nonetheless there are a lot of characters for us to write dialogue for and to think about.

The wonderful thing about actors is that, obviously, the only character that they are interested in and that they really think about is their own. We find that the actors can be wonderfully useful to sit down and talk about scenes with because they are going to be approaching the scene from a unique point of view. They are going to be approaching it from their point of view, whether they are Théoden or Gandalf or Aragorn—their take on reading a particular scene is going to be from their character's own viewpoint. They provide insights into that character and we don't often think of these insights because we're looking at it from a more global perspective. We've always found it very useful to discuss the script with the actors and to figure it out. It serves two purposes for me: One, it obviously improves the script because they come up with ideas and bits of business we like to use. The other huge advantage is that when you get on set, everyone knows what he or she is doing, and there is less debate. You can easily use up the first hour or two each day talking to the actors about the nature of the scene and what they have to do. But if we have already had those discussions



“Ian McKellen would always have suggestions that were based on the book ... [He] would turn up for meetings—and sometimes on set—carrying the book under his arm ... [and] say, ‘There is this wonderful line. Why didn’t you put it into the script?’ ... Then he would read the line to us in the character of Gandalf, and it would be so wonderful that we would immediately want to put it in!”



“We ended up with some very good actors in the films, and as with any good actor, they are going to get under the skin of their character. They are going to get to know their character better than you do.”

in the context of a meeting, then we turn up on set and can start shooting because we all know what we're doing. Not only that, but the scene has been improved, and everybody is happy, so we can just shoot it. It actually makes the shoot run a little bit more efficiently to have these early meetings.

Actors contribute to various degrees. For instance, Ian McKellen would always have suggestions that were based on the book. Ian became a very great fan of the book; he hadn't actually read the book at all when he was first approached about the role. By the time we were filming on the set, he became a very great admirer of J.R.R. Tolkien. Ian would turn up for meetings—and sometimes on set—carrying the book under his arm. He would have basically looked at the scene that we had written and [then] gone to the

book to look at the equivalent moment there, too, and he would see lines we hadn't used, or he would see moments for Gandalf that Tolkien had described that we hadn't put in our script. A lot of Ian's ideas and suggestions were based on the book itself. He was very funny because he would say, “There is this wonderful line. Why didn't you put it into the script?” We would always have a reason and say, “Oh, well, the scene was too long,” or “We didn't think that was very important.” Because he is such a wonderful actor, he would say, “Well, that's fine, but if this line were in the script, this is what I would imagine it sounding like.” And then he would read the line to us in the character of Gandalf, and it would be so wonderful that we would immediately want to put it in the script! He knew that and would always get that past us! He

always had the ability to pull that off, because he is so great. He was a great salesman for getting us to put extra bits and pieces in the script!

HOW DO YOU REACH THE POINT ON THESE FILMS WHERE YOU CAN LET GO AND SAY, “IT'S DONE”? IS IT A MATTER OF TWEAKING A FILM AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE UNTIL YOU HAVE LITERALLY REACHED THE DEADLINE, OR IS THERE SOMETHING THAT JUST CLICKS INSTINCTIVELY AND LETS YOU KNOW IT IS FINISHED?

These films are too long and complicated to ever be able to sit back and say, “It's finished. I don't want to do anymore.” That moment never arrives. You literally run out of time.

You are really describing what happens in the last two months of post-production. The end of post-produc-

tion is at a point that is called "the delivery of the film." Here in New Zealand, we have to supply the studio with a finished cut negative and soundtrack of the movie. That usually happens at the end of every October or the first week of November. The reason that date is very, very important—and really can't be changed—is that New Line has a phenomenally complicated process that they have to go through in producing up to 10,000 prints of the film. The delivery date allows New Line the barest number of weeks to do what they have to do to release the film simultaneously around the world. All the international territories—French, Spanish, German, Italian, Japanese—have to have the music and the effects soundtracks of the film with translations so that they can hire their own actors and do their own dubbing.

Working back from the delivery, the process of finishing the film has become a lot more flexible in recent years with the advent of computers. The entire soundtrack of the film is on computer hard drives—every sound effect, every piece of dialogue, every piece of music, every nuance of sound is on computers. We edit the film on computers, so the picture is on a hard drive too. In the old days, you used to be dealing with strips of 35mm film, and the soundtrack was on magnetic tape. It was a very cumbersome process; before you could deliver the film, you had to do what was called "locking off the picture" and make no more changes. You had to have that done two or three months before delivery, so that all of the negative could be chopped up, and the soundtrack could then be mixed on these magnetic tapes. You couldn't really alter anything.

What happens now is that at almost any time before delivery, I can say, "You know, I want to extend this shot by 10 seconds," or "I want to cut this scene out," or "I want to reduce this by half." It happens automatically on the hard drive containing the picture. We can

then simply give that computer information for the adjustment we have made to the sound department, and they feed it into their computers, and their computers can automatically adjust the soundtrack to the same degree as I have done on the picture. All these computers talk to each other, and the process happens relatively easily. That enables the filmmaker to keep fiddling with the movie right up until just before delivery, which can be both good and bad. It gives you enormous flexibility and advantages, and we were certainly fiddling with *The Two Towers* right up to the delivery and the same with *Fellowship*. For example, on *The Two Towers*, I added the scene of Saruman talking with the wildmen the day before delivery. I just have a simple philosophy that nothing is ever perfect. There is no perfect cut of the film—it doesn't exist. It is an abstract notion to think that with a three-hour movie, you somehow arrive at the perfect version. It's never perfect. Films are never perfect, the cut is never perfect. We've shot over 5 million feet of 35mm film on this project, and there are infinite ways you could tell the story. You can generally keep improving films the longer you can spend on them.

The most useful thing that could happen during cutting would be to walk away from it for three months and have the ability to then come back and take a fresh look at the film, because it is after the passing of time that you suddenly

see things that you hadn't thought of before. When you have been cutting for a year, and you have a deadline approaching, you really just lose objectivity. You're operating on gut instinct, and you have to try to guess the best way a scene should play. After the space of two or three months, a lot of the things you were confused about or just couldn't get your head around become glaringly obvious if you see the film again.

That is why we are also shooting these pick-ups. *The Return of the King* was shot over three years ago. As we put that footage together, what we are finding—which is enormously helpful—is a fresh view of the film. We're able to look at a rough cut of the film, and it is something that we haven't really thought of or looked at for three years. Everything that we had written and shot ... suddenly it all has a wonderful sense of perspective about it. We look at it and say, "Oh, you know, we should have a scene that does this," or "Let's add that." Looking at it with fresh eyes after a distance of time is a really exciting thing to do because the script problems you couldn't get your head around at the time—because you were so tired or so busy—suddenly become obvious. It all becomes clear, and you are able to shoot the scenes that help the film. It's an interesting process. But I never really get to a point where I think something is perfect. I do work on it until there is no more time left. ❧



Making

With Pippin at his side, Peter Jackson's Merry waxes eloquent about The Lord of the Rings, New Zealand, camaraderie—and insects

■ ■ ■
BY CARLA ATKINSON



Merry



For British actor Dominic Monaghan, picking up and moving to a new country for more than a year to shoot *The Lord of the Rings* wasn't a daunting proposition.

Monaghan spent the first 11 years of his life as a bit of a nomad, traveling around Europe with his parents—his father is a teacher, and his mother is a nurse—and his older brother. “That kind of informed a little bit on my personality,” Monaghan says. “I’ve always been outgoing and was always trying to be the center of attention as a little boy ... loud and cheeky and naughty. I was moving around so much that I had to make friends quite quickly as a kid. Every three years, we would move to a different city, and I would have to constantly be impressing myself onto people immediately, because I knew I had only had three years to be friends with them before I took off.”

Monaghan's acting career began in earnest after his family settled in Manchester. He became involved with the Manchester Youth Theatre, where his performances and persistence enabled him to hire an agent. Monaghan went off to college and began studying English literature, drama, and geography, but then he won a role in the British TV series, “Hetty Wainthropp Investigates,” which lasted for four years. “In between [filming], I would do theater in Manchester or London,” Monaghan remembers. “That was how it all started. I did intend to go to drama college, but I just fell into work very early. I was very lucky.”

The many months spent filming *The Lord of the Rings* in New Zealand were, not surprisingly, full of amazing experiences for a young actor, Monaghan says, not least among them the off-set adventures—including surfing and bungee-jumping—he enjoyed with





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his cast-mates. He admits he was pleasantly surprised to find that the more experienced actors—such as the legendary Sir Ian McKellen—embraced the greener actors in the cast and jumped right into the after-hours fun, readily going out on the town with everyone. Monaghan was so struck by New Zealand itself that he plans to make the country his permanent home—quite an endorsement from a guy who has led such a nomadic life.

When we caught up with Monaghan the week after the Oscars, he was headed up the California coast for a weekend of surfing with—appropriately enough—fellow Hobbit Billy Boyd by his side.

WHAT DREW YOU TO ACTING?

Growing up, I was always the class clown, doing impressions of my teachers and entertaining my brother. Teachers saw that I was pretty comfortable with speaking in public and relished that kind of attention, so they started putting me in school plays. The first thing I remember doing was playing Joseph in “Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat” at school. I was about 8, and I had the majority of the lines; I really enjoyed getting into the character. Everyone else would be out playing football and things like that, and I would be looking at a script and getting into it and thinking, “What can I do to change myself and be different?” From the time I was about 11 or 12, it was my main passion apart from football (or soccer, as the Americans say). I would read plays, write plays, watch films, and try to concentrate on my favorite actors and work

out what was so good about their performances.

I was obsessed by film at a pretty young age. My dad would always go to the video shop on a Friday night and get a movie for my brother and me for Saturday morning, because my mum and dad, like any parents, liked to have a lie-in on Saturday. I would set my alarm for 6 or 7 in the morning and watch the film again on my own. Then, when my brother woke up, I’d watch the film again with him, and I’d talk to him about it —“Oh, this is great!” or “I really like this bit!” I’m sure I really annoyed the hell out of my brother doing stuff like that!

HOW DID YOU GET INVOLVED IN *The Lord of the Rings*?

I was doing a program called “I-TV” in France, and just before leaving to start that, I was finishing up a play in London; I was playing a skinhead. I went in for an audition—a generic Hobbit audition—but the day I went in, I had a really bad cold and [as a result] a really deep voice. And obviously, I looked nothing like a Hobbit since I had no hair! I didn’t think I had a chance to get the part, so I read [for it], left, and tried to forget about it. Then I came back from France for another audition ... I met Pete [Jackson] and spoke to him on the phone a couple of times for an hour or so.

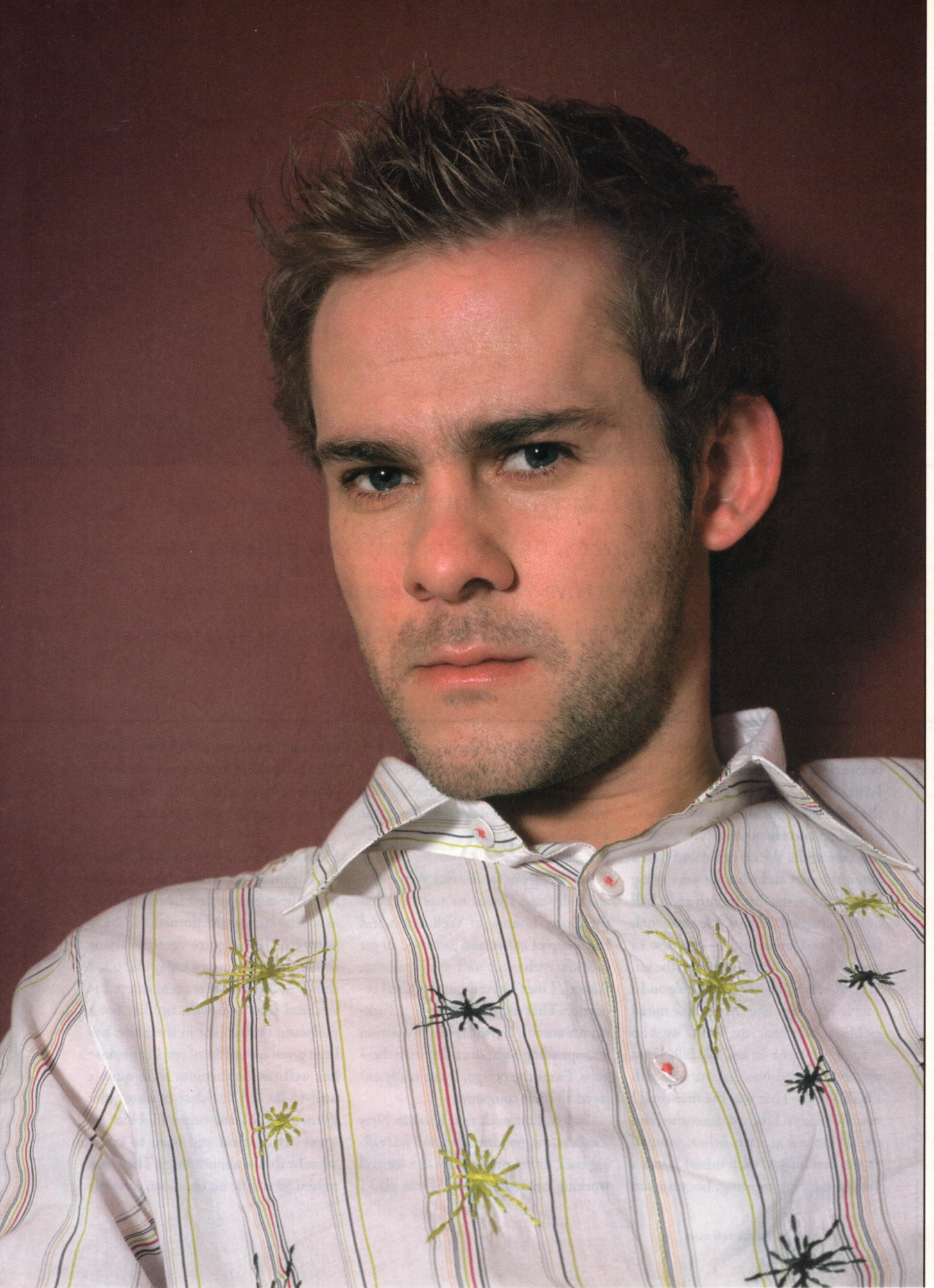
Later, when I had about a week left to go in France, my agent called and said, “I need to know where you’re going to be all day, because you may need to fly to L.A., or you may even need to fly to New

Zealand to have a final [meeting].” Then he called back a couple of hours later and said, “You don’t need to fly anywhere. They just offered you the part.” At that particular point, I was in a truckload of actors on our way back from the set after finishing for the day. So, it was me and about 15 actors in a “people-carrier” on the French motorway, and I got off the phone beaming and incredibly happy because I’d just been offered this part. One of my friends said, “What was all that about?” and I said, “I’ve just been offered a part in *The Lord of the Rings*.” And the whole coach-load of actors was just like, “Oh ****-ing hell ...” There were only a couple of people on the coach that I really felt were pleased. Most of the actors were like, “Jesus Christ! Jammy bastard!” That was good fun.

Then it was all exciting: I had a week left to film on this program, and [then] I had to go back to Manchester and move out of my house. My grandma was really ill, so I knew I probably wouldn’t see her again. I was spending time with her and my family and packing. I had just four days to do all that, and then I left for New Zealand for a year and a half. It was a trip. I was one of the last people to arrive, so I was kind of the new kid for a week or so, which was interesting.

TELL ME WHAT YOU REMEMBER ABOUT YOUR FIRST DAY IN NEW ZEALAND.

You fly into New Zealand pretty early in the morning, and by that point, you’re kind of spaced-out. It’s about a 32-





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hour journey, and I’d never flown that far before. I was under the impression that I’d have a day to recuperate. But I was in the hotel for about an hour, when I was picked up and taken to the set, where I saw Pete again. We sat down and talked about the part and what we were going to be doing in the first month and a half of the rehearsal process. He then took John Rhys-Davies and I—we flew in the same day—on a tour around the set. We got to see Bilbo’s Hobbit hole and a couple of things like that ... the initial building of Orthanc, etc. Then I went up to have a costume fitting, and Billy Boyd was in the wardrobe department with Elijah Wood. That was the first time I met those guys: I turned the corner, and we all looked at each other, jumped about, and hugged each other! It was a very interesting meeting, because you

realize that you’re going to have to work with these people on probably the closest basis for a year and a half through the whole trilogy ... and the first thing that we did was hug each other, so it was amazing.

We hung out for the rest of that day, and Billy and I went to a place called the Crazy Lounge in Wellington and had a cup of coffee and just tried to get to know each other and work it all out. [Later], I met Orlando in the hotel reception. That night, we went to a Turkish restaurant. It was an easy transition into spending 24 hours a day with these guys. From the get-go, I just really enjoyed all their company.

In that first week that I was in New Zealand, my grandma died, so I was calling back to my mum and dad a lot and working out what to do; [I was glad I

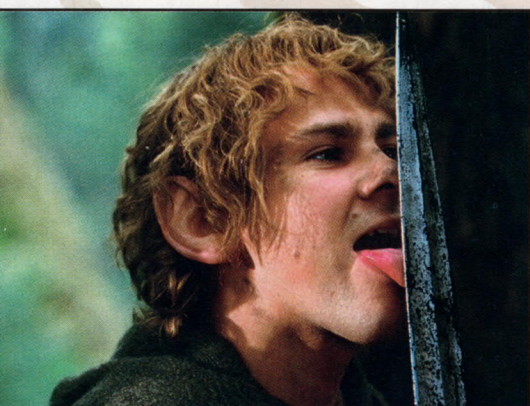
had] said “goodbye” to her when I was in Manchester. So, it was a bit of a weird couple of weeks at the start, but [getting to know everyone was] good fun.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE MERRY?

The thing about Merry that was different from the other Hobbits is that, as well as having the normal Hobbit-y nature of being quite carefree about things and wanting to enjoy the good things in life, Merry is quite sharp. He can read situations well, and he’s not a pushover. I think that in the Shire, he’s been given quite a lot of respect because he’s well-read and comes from quite a well-to-do family [that is also quite sharp]. I think the other Hobbits respect his opinion and want to know what he thinks about things. They look to him for a little bit of advice, certainly

in terms of orienteering ... where they're going and what to do next. So that was a way in for me for Merry.

I think Pippin's humor comes from a very genuine, innocent sense of himself—he's funny in a very cute kind of way. Merry tends to be a little bit more cynical about things—his humor has kind of an edge to it. He probably worries a little bit more than Pippin. That's probably just due to the fact that he's always felt more responsible. Then, in the Fellowship—certainly in the first movie—he didn't really know what his place was, because now you've got a whole group of very dynamic people leading the way. Merry, to a certain ex-



tent, loses his responsibility [for] looking out for people; he doesn't really know what to do, so he reverts back to being a playful Hobbit. As the trilogy moves on, he gets separated from certain people and starts to take hold a little bit; his intelligence comes through. He desperately wants to prove himself and contribute something to the Fellowship. I don't think he's too scared about dying as you move forward into the trilogy, because he realizes that once he's on this journey, the chances are that he probably won't be going back ... that he will be sacrificing himself for the greater good.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE MERRY AND PIPPIN'S RELATIONSHIP?

I think it's probably the most genuine show of friendship in the whole

trilogy. You've got Legolas and Gimli, who become friends over the course of the trilogy, but right from the start, Merry and Pippin are best mates. Frodo and Sam are very close, but that's more in a kind of servant-master element. But Merry and Pippin are equals, you know?

Back in the Shire, when everything was fine, they enjoyed sitting in the sun, smoking their pipes, drinking, chasing Hobbit girls ... the types of things that young Hobbits do. But once they're on this quest, I think they lean on each other for strength and guidance. What I love about Merry and Pippin in the movies—something that you see in the second movie quite a lot and certainly in the third movie—is that a lot of their friendship goes unspoken. All they need is to look in each other's direction, and it gives them both hope that they're going to get through this thing.

WHEN WE INTERVIEWED BILLY BOYD, HE TALKED ABOUT THE DIFFERENCES IN MERRY'S AND PIPPIN'S RELATIONSHIPS WITH TREEBEARD. HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE MERRY'S RELATIONSHIP WITH TREEBEARD AS COMPARED TO PIPPIN'S?

Instead of looking at the big picture and thinking, "Okay, how do I work through this situation to the best of my abilities? How do I need to talk to Treebeard to get what I want?" Merry is impatient and impulsive. Outside of the Shire, he's not someone that people necessarily think will have an opinion that is worth hearing, so he gets frustrated quite a lot—with Treebeard, that's certainly the case. Treebeard's very nature is to be slow and methodical about things, and Merry likes to push things forward. Even though people sometimes look at Pippin and think he's the more gullible character, what happened in that particular story [line] is that Pippin realized that the best way to do it is to come at Treebeard from a different angle and talk to him in such a way that he will listen.

THERE ARE SO MANY TALENTED BEHIND-THE-SCENES PEOPLE WORKING ON THESE FILMS. DURING FILMING, DID YOU NOTICE ANY BEHIND-THE-CAMERA JOBS THAT YOU WISHED YOU COULD DO OR FOUND PARTICULARLY FASCINATING?

They had an insect wrangler on *The Lord of the Rings*, and that is the main job that I would have wanted outside my job. I love insects; they're probably one of my biggest passions in life! The insect wrangler would come in with giant centipedes, spiders, wetas [a New Zealand insect], crickets, butterflies, moths, etc., and whenever he was on the set, I would always be on the outskirts, looking at all the tanks and asking him what was what. There was a scene in *Fellowship* where a spider crawled across my shoulder; I loved that because—not to get too geeky here—they're the most successful animals on the planet. This is the insects' world; it's not ours. We just live in it. They have managed to take over every single part of the world, so they demand our respect. I absolutely love them, so "insect wrangler" would be [a great job]!

WE INTERVIEWED PETER JACKSON RECENTLY, AND HE TOLD US ABOUT TRYING TO FIND A SPIDER TO SERVE AS A MODEL FOR SHELOB. HE REVEALED THAT HE CHOSE THE TUNNEL WEB, A NEW ZEALAND SPIDER, AND CONFESSED THAT HE HAS A BIT OF ARACHNOPHOBIA.

He sure does—poor guy! There was a situation where we were on set, and a weta was crawling halfway up Pete's bare leg—he always wears shorts, you know—and you could hear him shrieking from the other side of the set. (*Imitates Jackson shrieking*) "A weta! A weta! A weta!" Someone came over and grabbed it off his calf ... Pete Jackson is definitely not too fond of the creepy crawlies, which I think is interesting for someone who's so into blood, gore, guts, and intestines! He's a little bit scared of spiders, and he's a little bit scared of helicopters, and he's

a little bit scared of heights. He's got a lot of phobias for a guy who tends to scare the living daylights out of people with his movies!

I think Pete's keen for Shelob to have a New Zealand identity. I showed him a few pictures of spiders and said, "This is what I thought of Shelob." The picture I have in my head of Shelob is kind of like a female black widow, which has a really big, oversize abdomen but then very long black spiny legs with a couple of hairs coming off them—something that looks like it's holding on to a lot of juice. Less tarantula, more black widow.

THERE WERE ACTORS OF EVERY LEVEL OF EXPERIENCE WORKING ON THE FILM, BUT DUE TO THE TIME COMMITMENT AND THE NATURE OF THE PROJECT, I IMAGINE THAT IT WAS UNIQUE FOR EVERYONE, EVEN SOMEONE LIKE SIR IAN MCKELLEN. MANY PEOPLE HAVE TOLD US IT WAS A LIFE-CHANGING EXPERIENCE. WAS THAT THE CASE FOR YOU?

Without question. I'm going back to New Zealand in about a month or two. I'm looking at property there and hope to buy something by the end of this year, so I can be there for Christmas. So in terms of where my life is going and where I'll be living a huge majority of my life, my life turned at a right angle once I went to New Zealand, because it felt like home more than any other place I've ever been. Even after traveling around Europe throughout my childhood, I never felt more at home than I did in New Zealand.

When you're doing it [*The Lord of the Rings*] and moving so quickly, you don't realize how lucky you are and what an incredibly blessed life you're living. It's certainly the most happy I've ever been in my life. We had the most adventures and really embraced the country, and [it] embraced us. As you mentioned, people like Christopher Lee and Ian McKellen said, "We'll never do a job like this again."



And you meet friends you'll know the rest of your life; they've become family now. I'm sure my kids will call Elijah "Uncle Elijah," and Billy will probably be the godfather to my kids. At the time, you enjoy yourself, and you're having a great laugh, and you don't tend to think about it too much. Then when you finish the job, you realize how changed you are. I think I arrived in New Zealand a lot angrier, with a lot more to prove than I feel now. It made me a lot more secure in myself. A lot of that Mancunian [from Manchester] fight that I still kind of hang on to ... that attitude really mellowed out while I was in New Zealand. We got into surfing heavily for a year and a half—learning to surf is probably one of the greatest things I've done with my life up to now. When you're living a crazy life

telling me what to say now, but I'm not going to!

#2—Very small, dainty hands and feet, which makes him very dexterous; anything that he does with his hands is always very precise. #3—Quite big biceps for such a small man. Big strong arms. #4—Funny. #5—His hair. There's something very interesting with his hair. When he's in a good mood, he spikes it all up, so he looks like a complete lunatic. #6—His voice ... very good. #7—He's got quite enchanting eyes. You know how it is with the eclipse? If you keep looking at it for a certain amount of time, you can't stop—you have to keep looking at it. That's like Billy's eyes—if you look at them for more than 20 or 30 seconds, then you're hooked. There have been a couple of times in bars where I've had to

a great fear of heights that he just doesn't question. I'm very scared of heights, too, and when we went to do this bungee jump, I said to him, "We're going to conquer our fear of heights. Come on, that's what we'll do. We'll do a bungee jump, and then you can always say you did it." And Billy was like, "No. I'm afraid of heights, and that's the type of person I am, and that's what I'm sticking to." I like that! #13—Sleeps like a dormouse at any opportunity. If Billy's given 25 minutes to sleep, he'll do it. Whereas if I'm given 25 minutes to sleep, I'll run off and get a drink, go and call someone, play with my Playstation ... do 50 million things at the same time and get frustrated. #14—Good surfer. He's my main surfing buddy, which is always a good thing. He's also my scuba-diving buddy and my

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and things are moving so fast, a weekend where you can get into the water, take stock of what you've been up to, and just spend a few hours catching waves and enjoying the sunshine is a true gift.

LET ME GO AHEAD AND ASK YOU THE QUESTION THAT BILLY WANTED US TO ASK YOU. HE'D LIKE TO KNOW YOUR 18 FAVORITE THINGS ABOUT HIM.

My 18 favorite things? Okay. #1—The space between his nose and his lip. I think it's called the filtrum. That's f-i-l-t-r-u-m. Billy's got a fantastic filtrum. You know how babies have that very cute, sweet little filtrum? Billy's got the exact same thing! So that would be my #1 favorite thing about Billy. *(aside)* He's

actually pull girls away, so they'd stop looking at his eyes ... [otherwise] you'll be there the rest of your life! #8—I really liked the smell of his car when we were in New Zealand, because we used to keep our surfboards in there, and his car just absolutely reeked of rotting wetsuits and sand and protein shakes. Billy didn't care about that. #9—He got me into a couple of bands I really liked. #10—Choice of movies. He's got very good taste in films. #11—Oh, here's another good thing about Billy: If you're ever in a restaurant where you've never been before, Billy will always pick the restaurant's main meal—the one that they do the best. No matter what it is, he'll always go for it. #12—Fear of heights. Billy's got

kayaking and canoeing partner. So we have a great relationship both in and out of the water. #15—Always shares his food. When we're in a restaurant, Billy will always say, "Try this." #16—We enjoy drinking pretty much the same amount, which is nice. If you're going to spend a year and a half with someone, it's good if you drink on the same level! Billy and I can keep up with each other, which is essential. #17—I love the fact that he chose 17 favorite things because he knew I could only think of 16!

ACTUALLY, IT'S 18.

Oh, really. *(Boyd is heard giggling loudly)* My 18th one is ... let me think. Oh—the fact that he always leaves his sun-

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glasses everywhere. While I’ve been with him, he’s probably lost about seven or eight pairs. In New Zealand, he’d just leave them on café tables. What I used to do is just pick them up automatically, and a couple of hours later, he’d say, “Oh ****! I left my sunglasses!” I’d say, “No, Billy ... here you go.” That was my job: picking up sunglasses.

YOU TWO REALLY ARE LIKE AN OLD MARRIED COUPLE. YOU KNOW EACH OTHER SO WELL ...

We kind of are! There are a lot of gay rumors rife on the Internet.

I REALLY DIDN’T MEAN IT THAT WAY!

Well, [there are rumors]! We spend so much time together. We enjoy each other’s company. We’re constantly walking up and down the red carpet with an arm around each other and chatting and all that kind of stuff. So the rumors are rife! There was also a rumor about Elijah and me that Ian McKellen told us about—we were having an affair in L.A.! But you know, I’m not going to confirm or deny! (laughs) [Billy and I] do fit like a jigsaw. Still now, three or four years down the line of knowing each other, we’ll manage to make each other crack up in tears of laughter ... and fascinate each other,

which is [the perfect] relationship. Maybe we will get married in a couple of years! If he was a girl, I’d marry him today! I’ve been suggesting to Billy a sex change, but he really feels quite manly about things. (Boyd shouts, “I love women!”) Yes, he’s very passionate about women, as I am.

You know what else is interesting? Even though we spend so much time together, and we went to the same bars, we tended not to fight over women. Billy has a girlfriend right now and has for a while, but when we were single in New Zealand, we never really chased after the same women. Billy liked girls that looked a little bit different [than the ones that I liked], and we always gave each other quite a wide berth. Besides, I can’t compete with Billy for a woman because he has that incredible mind. ... (pauses) But I also have that incredible body! Thinking about both of us ... I mean there must be a few girls out there who would think that the combination of Billy and Dom must be like a dream! It’s like putting Brad Pitt and Tom Cruise together, you know.

I CAN’T WAIT TO GET THE LETTERS TO THE EDITOR IN RESPONSE TO THAT ONE.

You should definitely put in the article that I’m single, and I like women!

WE HAVE A FEW QUESTIONS THAT MEMBERS SENT IN FOR YOU. MARIA PHILLIPS OF LONDON ASKS: IF YOU HAD TO CHOOSE ONE ITEM OF MERRY’S WARDROBE TO WEAR AT A FILM AWARDS CEREMONY, WHAT WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

I’d probably go with Merry’s jacket. Merry wears a really nice green felt jacket that is kind of dressy. I think out of all the Hobbits, Merry is probably the most vain. He actually cares about his clothes. He’s probably the guy who would be the most ****-ed if he fell down and got his jacket dirty or got a hole in his trousers. So when I was doing the wardrobe fittings with Ngila [Dickson, the costume designer], the thing that we responded to well together was the fact that he’s a smart, kind of snappy dresser [for a Hobbit]. In the third movie, he wears a lot of armor and looks pretty cool in that, but you couldn’t really wear that to a film show and get away with it. I could definitely wear my green jacket and a pair of jeans and look pretty cool ... In fact, I probably will wear it! At some particular point, I’ll ask if I can wear my jacket to a film red carpet!

I THINK MARIA WILL BE THRILLED TO HEAR THAT. MICHELLE WALTON

ASKS: HOW HAS BEING THRUST INTO THE SPOTLIGHT AFFECTED YOU? HAVE YOU HAD ANY SPOOKY OR BIZARRE EXPERIENCES?

Billy and I were talking about this about 15 minutes ago. We're both very keen on impressing on people the fact that fame and fortune don't necessarily make your life perfect. My life is very, very good, but the problems that [everyone] experiences through life—frustrations with work, money, family, and friends ... time constraints—you still experience those even if you're "famous." Just because you're in a movie, that doesn't mean that everything about your life is great. I guess I still try and hang onto the things I find important ... my mates and my family.

You get recognized a little bit more on the street; you get people coming over to you, but it's never a negative kind of thing. It's always really positive—people come over and want to tell you how much they enjoy your work and how great they think the movies are. The passion for the movies has been incredible, but we feel the same way. We love the films, we watch them all the time, and we love going on the Internet and looking at the fan sites and realizing the audience's reaction to what we do.

The key word in my life over the past three or four years has been balance. UL-

timately, your life is all about learning lessons and balancing things out. I've been so lucky with opportunities that have been thrown at me ... sometimes in the life that I'm living, you get to fly to New York and go to a premiere and meet people you have admired for so long. The balance of that is being on your own quite a lot ... the artistic frustration of constantly wanting to work, wanting to get that kind of artistic impulse out of you and not being able to do it. In the past couple of years, I've tried to get as much into writing, painting, drawing, and poetry [as I can]. That was a lesson I learned from Viggo [Mortensen] in New Zealand. We spent a couple of nights together drinking whiskey and hanging out and reading poetry and short stories to each other. He impressed on me [the idea that], "You're an artist, and as an artist, you can't really censor yourself. Don't be ashamed of the fact that you might want to draw or paint or write. Those are all positive artistic things."

SEVERAL FAN CLUB MEMBERS—including MEREDITH MARTINI OF MARYLAND—WROTE IN TO SAY THEY HAD READ A NEWS REPORT ABOUT YOU BUYING A FOREST AND HOPED YOU WOULD TELL US THE STORY FIRSTHAND.

I've been living in L.A. for about a year and a half now, and I've been spending time with a couple of environmental groups—splinter groups of Greenpeace [called] Heart Magic and Future Forests. More than anything, I've just been socializing with these guys. I'm really interested in other people's opinions about the world.

I went to Borneo when I was 17 years old and went into the rainforest looking for orangutans and was completely fascinated. In any given square meter in the rainforest, there are hundreds of thousands of animals and organisms that are being sustained, and we are cutting down the equivalent of eleven football pitches [fields] of rainforest a day that is not being replaced. When I was told [about] this, I was completely horrified.

I spent a couple of days hanging out with this guy named Dan Morrell, who runs Future Forests. He was talking about this project called Carbon Neutral, which is something that the band Coldplay got into ... I'm a big fan of Coldplay, and I really enjoy their politics. [Dan] told me that Coldplay had become Carbon Neutral by figuring out how much carbon they use in a year and then offsetting that by planting trees. I was very interested in that, [so] he did some research and called me a couple of weeks later and said, "If you want, you can have a small forest right





next to the Coldplay forest." It's in a place called Bangalore in northern India, where I traveled last New Year's Eve with Orlando. It's a beautiful part of the world. I worked out how much carbon I use year-round in terms of flying on planes, the amount of music and films that I buy, and the waste that I make. I was able to buy a small mango tree forest ... it can be farmed by the [nearby] villages; through that, they can make a bit of money, and they can replant more forest. It's just a great thing. [All of this is] something very close to Billy's and my experience while we were doing the Treebeard thing. [J.R.R.] Tolkien [gave] nature a voice, and hopefully we have picked up that baton, and we give [nature] a voice through doing these kinds of interviews.

ONE OF OUR READERS WROTE IN AND SAID SHE JUST WANTED TO SCREAM WHEN PEOPLE LIKE ME ASK YOU GUYS THE SAME QUESTIONS ALL THE TIME. ON HER BEHALF, ARE THERE QUESTIONS THAT YOU WISH INTERVIEWERS WOULD ASK YOU?

Any kind of current affairs [questions]. I've always had strong opinions about things going on in the world. Obviously, we're in a job where people are going to ask us about our last job or our future projects or what we're doing at the moment. But I love the fact that we're

"IN ANY GIVEN SQUARE METER IN THE RAINFOREST, THERE ARE HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF ANIMALS AND ORGANISMS THAT ARE BEING SUSTAINED, AND WE ARE CUTTING DOWN THE EQUIVALENT OF ELEVEN FOOTBALL PITCHES [FIELDS] OF RAINFOREST A DAY THAT IS NOT BEING REPLACED. WHEN I WAS TOLD [ABOUT] THIS, I WAS COMPLETELY HORRIFIED."



now on a stage where people read interviews with us because of the jobs that we do and the fact that that might turn people on to different ideas ... [make them] think about things. Instead of just reading about Dom Monaghan who plays a Hobbit in *The Lord of the Rings*, you'll read three-quarters of that, and then I'll talk about issues that I believe are important or things that I'd like to get across to people. That's something that really turns me on about the position that I'm in—that hopefully you can inspire people to talk and spread ideas.

ARE THERE OTHER ISSUES YOU'D LIKE TO TALK ABOUT IN THIS INTERVIEW?

The times we're living in at the moment are a little bit crazy. [When I] talk to people that I admire and respect—Billy, Elijah, Viggo, my mum and dad, any people whose opinion I look to and listen to—those people are talking about getting happy and living a good life. For a long time, I had a fridge magnet that said, "Get happy." It was a huge thing about my life. You wake up, and you do everything that you can to just try and get happy that day. I think I'm generally a quite a positive, happy person, but everyone has those days where they feel kind of ****ty, and they don't want to do anything. I'm not that interested in [being with] people who dwell on their problems or get down on themselves. You just need to pick yourself up. It's not up to anyone else to help you out; you can do anything you want to change that. I think that when I feel happy, and my life is going well, I'm much more able to respond to people and give good advice.

ONE LAST QUESTION: CAN YOU RECALL ANY PARTICULARLY BIZARRE OR FUNNY THINGS THAT HAPPENED WHILE YOU WERE IN NEW ZEALAND, EITHER ON OR OFF THE SET?

One of the most unusual days that we had was on Mount Cook. We were flying up on a helicopter to the summit. We would get called in at about 5:00 in


the morning, and we'd get in our Hobbit feet, we'd get in our costumes, and then we'd be picked up in a helicopter. For a couple of days, I kind of felt like Phil Collins when he did Live Aid and flew to Detroit in a private jet and then got in a helicopter and landed in the stadium and all that. We'd jump in the back of a helicopter, the rotors would start going, and we'd take off and fly off for like 20 minutes. The journey was the most incredible thing you can imagine, flying really close to the cliffs and into places that maybe fewer than 20 people in the world have ever been. It was Elijah, Billy, and me in the helicopter with Sean Astin, and [the three of us] were trying to get the helicopter pilot to bank to the left and bank to the right ... We asked him if we could do a complete flip, and he was like, "No, all the [kit] will fall all over the place," and Sean Astin was saying, "Don't do anything—just keep going straight!" He was Mr. Safety. So we were [giving Sean a hard time about] that! The pilot would get us on top of the mountain, and we'd be up there all day. There would be some of the most incredible, clean, crisp air. Then, at lunchtime, the helicopter would come up with a big box of food. We would sit by this big mountain lake, and it was perfectly, perfectly silent, apart from us guys chatting to each other, eating beautiful food, and looking out on the view. I remember Billy saying to me, "This is incredible! What a day! [You're] with your best mates, hanging out with the cast from *The Lord of the Rings* ... you're on the top of an incredible mountain with no one around you, and this is your life. You're getting paid for it." It was a crystal clear thought: "This is it. This is a real peak in my life. This is a moment of complete happiness." I can define that as pure joy ... realizing for a split second that you're doing something that you absolutely love, and you are so lucky. Those kind of days are really bizarre, because you don't tend to live like that.

On the flip side of that, it is utterly bizarre to get out of a car in Leicester



Square—for the past eight or nine years I've been coming down to London for auditions and going to Leicester Square to catch a quick movie and get a train—on the night of a premiere, and there are 5,000 people all screaming! But you just have fun with it. My favorite band of all time is the Beatles, and whenever you see [footage of] the Beatles in a crowd situation where people are screaming their names, they never look like they're used to it. They always look excited; they're always laughing and waving. That's exactly how I—and the rest of the cast—feel. It's great fun, and you sort of pinch yourself. Certainly, talking with Billy and Elijah and Sean Astin and Orlando, you realize this is a passing thing. You go over and chat to people immediately, and you disarm them. So instead of them thinking about you as Dom the famous Hobbit, Dom the guy in the film, you're like, "Hey, mate, how are you doing? What's your name?" I just love the fact that you can break through that myth.

Billy and I actually took a little bit of time off on the night of the Oscars to go to the [fan-organized] party, because we missed it last year. We were in a crowd of 3,000 people, I think, and the love in that room ... everybody just really respects what you do, and they really love you. And we love them, because they're fans of the movies. It just feels great to have that relationship, and anytime we get the chance to spend time with the fans, we do, because we realize how personal the journey through the trilogy is for them and also for us. ☺



CONJURING *Treebeard*

*...how the wizards of Weta Workshop and
Weta Digital brought the beloved Treebeard to life*

■ ■ ■

BY CARLA ATKINSON







PRODUCTION SKETCH OF WELLINGHALL BY ALAN LEE

When designer Daniel Falconer took his first crack at sketching a cinematic version of Treebeard, his overriding concern was that the quirky, much-loved character should not be “hokey.”

Designing a tree that gets up and walks around on camera, Falconer says, “could look really, really goofy and silly.”

Director Peter Jackson told the designers at Weta Workshop/Weta Digital—the Oscar-winning outfit in charge of creating Treebeard—that everything about his vision of Middle-earth was grounded in reality. “There are magical creatures, but magic and Middle-earth are not overt, at least not in Peter’s version of Middle-earth,” Falconer says. “So how do you make a tree come to life without making it magical? How do you make it obey the same laws of physics and biology that all the other creatures of Middle-earth had to obey? That, I think, was the overriding brief for us, and that’s what I kept in mind at every stage.”

The design team faced very basic challenges from the get-go. For instance, asks Weta director Richard Taylor, “How does wood bend at the knees?” Falconer says this was the biggest challenge: figuring out how this entity, which has all the properties of

an unmoving tree, actually then gets up and walks around and articulates.

The Lord of the Rings Conceptual Artists John Howe and Alan Lee know all too well the challenge of depicting Treebeard. The acclaimed illustrators say they have both chosen over the years to side-step some of the more complicated aspects of Treebeard. Such as, Howe offers up, “how Treebeard walks and what his feet are like ... and what to do with the top of his head.

“Those are questions I avoided for ages,” he admits. “I’ve drawn Ents before but always only partially. I’ve never drawn their feet, because I’d rather not; I really don’t know what they’re like. I left their heads out of the edge of the picture for ages and ages. This is easy to do when you’re doing illustrations, because you can decide to leave something in the dark or leave it to the imagination, but in the cinema, you just can’t decide you’re not going to make feet! He’s got to walk.”

Design Direction

It came as no surprise to Richard Taylor that Falconer nailed the basic look of Treebeard.

“We discovered when we started designing that it was Daniel who already had an innate appreciation for

this world because he’d thought about it visually for so long,” Taylor says. “He had obviously played out these scenes and the characters visually in his mind. What sprung from his pencil was an encapsulation of Tolkien’s visual worlds, which made, at times, for an incredibly fluid and easy design process.”

Falconer, who calls himself a longtime “Middle-earth geek,” read *The Hobbit* when he was about 10 years old and *The Lord of the Rings* a year or two later. “It was really nice to be able to draw upon that interest and that knowledge,”



he says. "That was always my dream: to be involved one day in making *The Lord of the Rings* into a movie. ... By pure happenstance, I happened to be in the right place when that was going to happen."

Asked to share their take on Treebeard as a character, Taylor and Falconer say some of their ideas dovetail.

"Grandfatherly" is the primary thing," Taylor says. "He can be stern, rather set in his ways, but also has the wisdom of his years and [understands] ... the damage that misintention and wrongful deeds can do to the bigger picture. He has a worldly appreciation of the dynamics and issues that are being played out in Middle-earth. He's the elder statesman and the ecology of Middle-earth personified ... the spokesman for everything that's natural in the world."

Falconer says that "grandfatherly" was his impression of Treebeard as well, adding that he thinks the Ents feel a sadness akin to being forgotten about by one's children or grandchildren. "So they just quietly guard their own little patch of Middle-earth with a sad introspective weariness that can only come from having experienced so many things," he says.

Treebeard is one of Taylor's favorites among the characters in *The Lord of the Rings*. "For me, he embodies the wisdom we all hope to grow up and have one day," he reflects. "He is beautiful even in his age."

The Weta designers had a vast visual reference collection available for all of their projects, having gathered "every known piece of artwork that has ever been done by previous artists for every subject and character that had to do

with Middle-earth," Taylor notes. "At no time did Daniel need—or want—to draw from them because from the very first illustration, he knew in his mind's eye how Treebeard should look. Even though he was the most difficult to visualize, Treebeard came more quickly to the design table because Peter loved Daniel's first drawing and second drawing and third drawing. In the end, we put in a significant design phase to explore Treebeard just to make sure it couldn't just possibly be that easy."

But in the end, they came back to Falconer's very first drawing, sculpting design maquettes—three-dimensional models—from 6 to 18 inches tall for Jackson to review.

"Once we got into that design process, one artist that I did look at quite a bit was Arthur Rackham," Falconer says, "but the first drawing I did was just how I imagined Treebeard looking when I first read the book at 12 years old. The Treebeard that kept

coming up in some of the drawings we looked at had a tendency to look rather hokey. But I think that we got something that works."

Matt Aitken, Digital Modeling Supervisor at Weta, says that Falconer's design "found that very difficult point on the scale between a man and a tree."

"You've got to find something that incorporates the aspects of both," he says. "If you go too far toward the tree, you lose the character; if you go too much toward the man, you get a guy-in-a-tree-suit look. You want to stay away from that as much as possible! Daniel really nailed it."

Modeling Magic

Soon, the digital artists were able to begin their Treebeard tasks.

For all of its hero creature work, Weta Digital started with "hero maquettes" produced by the Weta Workshop design team and approved by Peter Jackson. "We got two maquettes," says Aitken. "One was about 2 feet tall and



alan lee sketch of willow ent.

"If you go too far toward the tree, you lose the character; if you go too much toward the man, you get a guy-in-a-tree-suit look." —Matt Aitken

was painted, so it could serve as a color reference; it also had foliage on it where we wanted Treebeard to have foliage. It was the final look, but it was too small to be really useful for us. And we also had a model that was quite big—about 5 feet tall—with much more detail. We used that one as a basis for our digital model; we have a 3-D laser scanner in-house that we can use to get a digital ‘grab’ of a physical maquette. We get a lot of the surface detail that’s in these maquettes—bark detail, for example. They also created an over-sized face and head, so we could scan those. That was one of the biggest scans we did on the show.”

Aitken and his colleagues took the digital Treebeard scan and converted it to an animatable model that the animators could pose, and the “shader artists” could shade and texture. One Weta Digital staffer—Kyla Bendall—worked on the Treebeard model full-time for a year. “I think a lot of the suc-

cess of the final digital creature has to rest on Kyla’s shoulders,” says Taylor. “Can you imagine modeling one creature for a whole year? She did an extraordinary job.”

With Treebeard, Weta Digital knew it was going where no one had really gone before with a digital creature. “He’s incredibly detailed and complex, with all this bark and moss and foliage,” Aitken explains. “The design calls for a huge amount of detail, and we’d never done it before ... nobody was sure we could pull this off! And in the process of making a film, you don’t leave things to chance—not at that scale!”

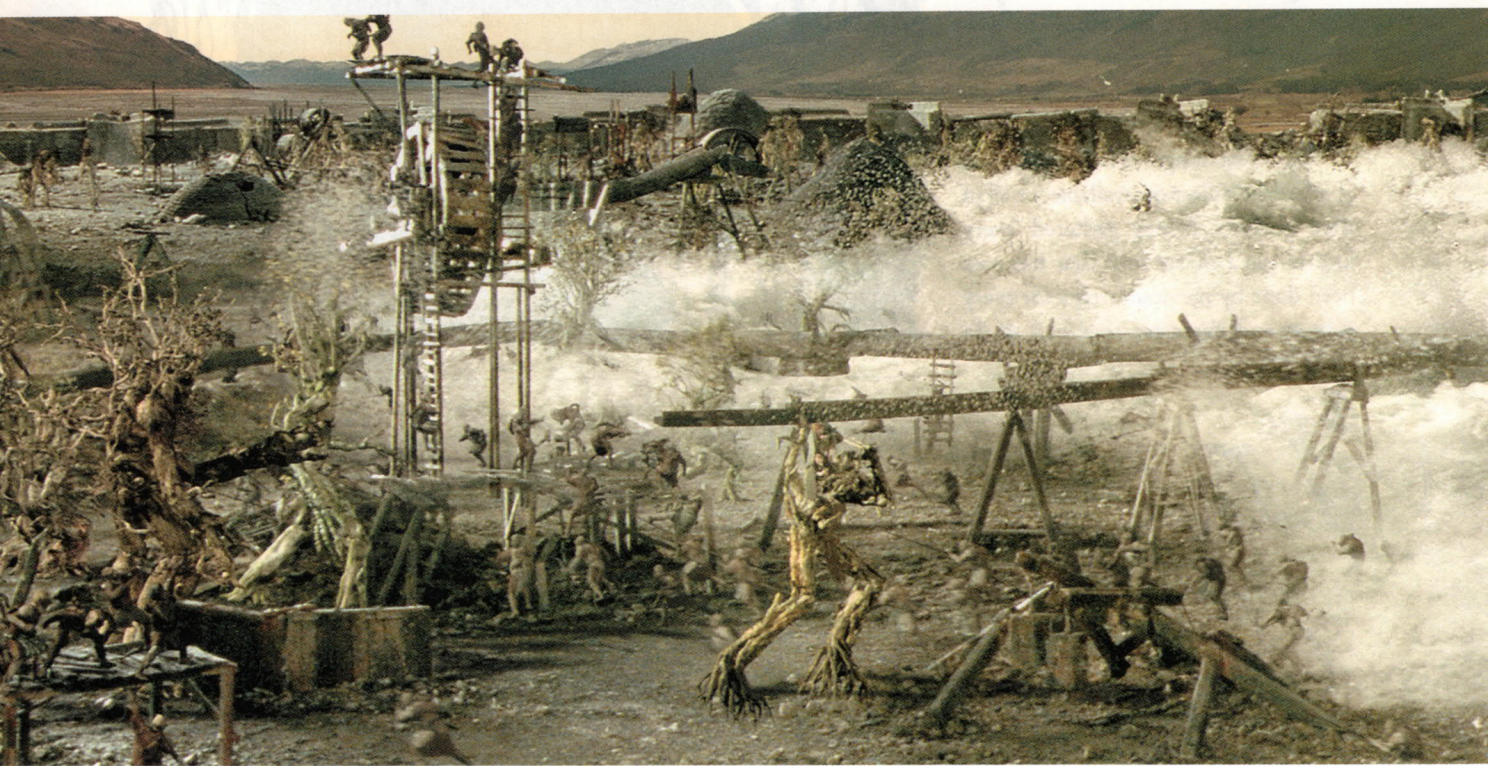
Treebeard is what digital artists call a “NURBS” model. NURBS was a pre-eminent creature modeling technology for film visual effects for about 10 years, Aitken says, but has already been overtaken by new technology. “If we were to start Treebeard now, we would definitely do him as a ‘sub-division surface

model,’ not a NURBS model,” he says. In terms of ‘model weight’—shorthand for the amount of data in a model—Treebeard is by far the heaviest model in all three films, Aitken notes: “He has something like 2,300 individual NURBS patches [components], each of which has to be textured and processed in animation.”

There is a lot of “great surface detail” that Weta Digital can’t get on its NURBS model, he adds. They are able to preserve that detail from their original maquette scan and use other methods to work it into the model.

One of Aitken’s key contributions was the special software he designed to help create foliage detail for Treebeard and the eight Ents that appear in *The Two Towers*. “The model that we had had none of the canopy of branches and leaves that give Treebeard his final shape,” he says. “I was able to develop a new piece of code for modeling trees. I

...the biggest challenge: figuring out how this entity, which has all the properties of an unmoving tree, actually then gets up and walks around and articulates.





from BLUE-SCREEN TO CELLULOID [CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT]: Actors and animatronic Treebeard puppet filmed on sound stage with blue-screen and tracking dots; actors are retained while a 3-D Treebeard model is matched-moved to the animatronic puppet; a grayscale test render of model; final digital composite, texture shaded and lighted.

call it GROVE, which isn't an acronym, but a 'tree word; I like the sound of it. [With the program], you can quite easily model branches, twigs, and leaves and dress the digital model. You can also add other dynamics, so when Treebeard is walking, the leaves are swishing around believably and chattering a little bit every time his feet hit the ground."

Weta Digital's Guy Williams was also working with a team of artists on putting the detail into the digital Treebeard through "shader" technology. Shaders define how light interacts with the surface. "In its rawest form, it's how the surface shades," Williams explains.

But shader technology "goes beyond what light does," he says. "You can move the surface around with the shader. You can change the color of the surface or put texture on it. We refract rays with shaders so that the eyeballs look like balls of glass. We bounce light in different ways so that Treebeard's bark looks like it's covered with a powdery dust, which helps take the CG [computer-generated] curse off. The leaves backlight and glow when they're lit from behind. The moss looks soft."

The beard and the eyes were the biggest challenges, Williams says. "The

beard took about two and half months," he says, "but we had very, very good art direction to work toward, and it was just a repetitive process of nailing down all the technologies. It's a complex thing—six or seven different kinds of procedural geometry layered in with nonprocedural geometry.

"We mock up itty-bitty scenes of camera moves around the beard," Williams says, "and then we put lights in there and just start working on a piece of the beard to try and make it look more and more realistic."

When the beard was complete, Williams' team spent six weeks on Treebeard's eyes alone. They were working with the analogy that his eyes are like "balls of hardened sap with clouds floating in them that look like irises," he recalls. "We spent a lot of effort trying to make that look good! It was a very vague spec; we matched a few things, but they ended up looking cool but not practical ... [we had] a lot of beautiful images that didn't really convey which direction he's looking in and wouldn't 'act' very well. We had to go back in and make them act."

Williams gave high praise to three colleagues who put their hearts and

souls into the details that make Treebeard real. "Jane O'Callaghan modeled the beard, which took about two months of her time, just tweaking the way hair flowed and things like that," he says. "Hillary Yeo Tse Ann and Sergei Nevshupov painted all the texture on Treebeard. Sergei did most of the textures around the face, and Hillary did the textures for the eyes and the textures for the body. This is a CG character that we see full-body, but then we fly up and put the camera a foot away from his face. The detail is all there; it all holds up. It just looks better and better the closer you get. That's a testament to those guys."

Tree Doctoring

Despite the amazing range of digital technology, Peter Jackson and the artists at Weta knew that Treebeard could not be a completely digital character.

"We chose to build it as an animatronic puppet so that the actors could interact with him, climb up him, and ride in his branches," Taylor explains.

Animatronic puppets are in essence mechanical creations outfitted with hydraulics and electrical servo motors that are radio-controlled by on-set

Treebeard's eyes are like "balls of hardened sap with clouds floating in them that look like irises. We spent a lot of effort trying to make that look good!" —Guy Williams

puppeteers. "They use the same kind of transmitter that model aircraft enthusiasts use to fly their remote-control planes," Aitken explains, "so they're actually remote-controlling all of these mechanisms in Treebeard's head that can turn his head, blink his eyes, open his mouth, and all that sort of thing. He's kind of like a robot that is being controlled live by puppeteers."

By the time Weta Workshop was to begin building the Treebeard puppet, the original design had evolved quite a bit based on feedback from Peter Jackson, Aitken says. "At that point, the definitive version of the design was the digital model," he says, "so we gave the Workshop print-offs and scale measurements, and they used those as detail reference for creating this on-set puppet."

The puppet is approximately the top "one-third of Treebeard," Aitken notes. "He's got really long legs, so from his hips up is about a third of his height. Treebeard had to be 35 percent larger than he would be in real life because Dominic Monaghan [Merry] and Billy Boyd [Pippin], as humans playing Hobbits, are actually over-scale. Any environmental thing that you want to film with them has to be slightly larger, to make them look Hobbit-sized."

First, the Weta crew built a 14-foot-high aluminum frame outfitted with rod-puppeteered arms that were finished off with pneumatic hands capable of gripping Boyd and Monaghan. Next, urethane foam was sprayed onto the frame and sculpted to mimic Falconer's maquettes. Meanwhile, Falconer himself was sculpting Treebeard's face separately, using clay

instead of urethane. At one point, the Weta crew took a silicone molding of a native New Zealand tree just outside the workshop. This molding of a pohutukawa assisted them in the design of Treebeard's "skin." Once the puppet's "shell" was completed and painted, the Weta team applied Treebeard's embellishments, including foam fungi, silk leaves, flocking, dried moss, and faux spider webs.

And there is something else, too, Taylor says. When Weta Props Master John Harding was hunting for different little mosses and lichens and bits of dressing for Treebeard, he found "the empty shell of a very, very rare giant snail called a Kauri, a creature that is native to New Zealand and is extremely rare today because rodents have just about wiped them out," Taylor says. Finding an empty shell is rare, the Weta director says, and Harding decided that Treebeard should carry this New Zealand Kauri shell within his beard. "It's a nice thing to try and spot!" he suggests.

The puppet-making process came to a comical end, Taylor recalls. When the time came to begin filming, "we got to the front door and discovered that Treebeard was too big to pass through!" he says with a laugh. "We had to 'tree doctor' him—we lopped his top branch off to get him through the front door and then rebuilt him immediately that same morning!"

The completed animatronic Treebeard was so striking and lifelike that it surprised even *The Lord of the Rings* crew members when they got their first glimpse.

"To just be in the presence of this majestic creature was quite overwhelming!" he says. "You're standing in the shadow of a piece of Tolkien lore, and even though you know it's made of steel and pneumatics and urethane, you just can't help but be overwhelmed by the emotion that Treebeard imbues."

Falconer agrees.

"The guys who put together the puppet [John Harding, Shaun Bolton, and Dominic Taylor]—and also the guys who put together the digital version—did such a beautiful job of mixing that antiquity and that wisdom ... that old-lived-in feeling ... that you really did believe it was an old tree," he says. "Even after having been involved in the design process, to walk on the set and suddenly see this 14-foot-tall puppet sitting amongst the trees ... at first glance it's just a tree, and then you get closer to it, and the eyes blink open, and you get little shivers down your spine!"

Treebeard Comes Alive

How did the actors who would share most of Treebeard's scenes—Dominic Monaghan (Merry) and Billy Boyd (Pippin)—react when they first laid eyes on Weta's creation?

"With trepidation!" says Richard Taylor. "Treebeard was so large, and they knew that they had to sit for many, many days amongst the branches and ride this massive, animatronic creature as if it was stalking through the forest, with them perched on the most precarious branches. We built ridged steps and seats into the sub-structure that would allow the actors to sit and ride



the unique style of each and every ent...

The Root of the Matter



oak

linden

ash

willow

beech

fir

birch

rowan

Weta Digital, with the help of *The Lord of the Rings* Conceptual Artist Alan Lee, created eight distinctive, entirely digital Ents to join Treebeard at the Ent Moot in *The Two Towers*.

Each of the Ents is based on a different species: Ash, Beech, Birch, Fir, Linden, Oak, Rowan, and Willow.

"Those are species that Tolkien actually lists in the book when he has Treebeard take Merry and Pippin to the Ent moot," says Digital Modeling Supervisor Matt Aitken. GROVE, the special software that Aitken created for modeling Treebeard and the other Ents, "has the whole concept of a species bound up inside it," he says, "so you can define an Oak species or a Willow species and then quite easily model branches, twigs, leaves, and dress the digital model."

Weta Workshop designer Daniel Falconer says the Ents are variations

on a theme. "They have the same general rules that apply to Treebeard, in terms of physiology," he says. "Obviously we want them to appear as if they are all the same species. But they are also as different from each other as [actual trees are], so some are very tall and slim and others are pudgy ... [they have] all different types of bark, all different kinds of coloring, but they all have to have that same sort of slightly melancholic, old-forest feel to them."

Conceptual Artist Alan Lee designed the Ent ensemble. "All the Ents have a different characteristic that ties them in to a particular tree," says Lee, adding that he couldn't help but think about what their personalities might be like as he was working on the designs. Robin Hood and his Merry Men came to mind, for instance, he says.

And one of the Ents—"Fir"—"just seemed to adopt this [personality] of a slightly more reclusive and antisocial character who has been living out in the deep forest for years and years," Lee recalls. "When he [is with the other Ents], he is shy and awkward and doesn't really play a big part in any discussions."

"And he's got this enormous growth of beard and hair—he looks like something that you might find in ... I don't know—what was that book? *Deliverance*?" Lee says with a laugh.

Aitken says he was pleased with the finished Ent moot scene, where moviegoers are introduced to the other Ents. "When they all come together, they all look fantastic," he enthuses. "The whole species thing reads really strongly [in that footage], and it's some of the best Treebeard animation that they've done."



and climb the puppet with ease. The puppet also carried the actors in its hands; therefore these huge hands would envelope these little tiny Hobbits and carry them along. Poor old Billy and Dominic spent days perched on these little bicycle seats hidden inside the hands. But in true Hobbit form, they made an adventure out of it and at no time complained!"

Falconer says the pair eventually began treating the animatronic Treebeard almost as if it truly was another actor.

"It was not the most comfortable place in the world," Boyd told the magazine in an interview earlier this year, "but Dom and I had to laugh. It got to the point that we did actually speak to Treebeard just to see if he was doing okay. We would ask him if we were getting too heavy for him!"

John Rhys-Davies, who was cast as the voice of Treebeard late in the design process, was off-camera, reading Treebeard's lines to play off Boyd and Monaghan's performance, Taylor says.

For their part, Monaghan and Boyd say it wasn't too difficult to act alongside their puppet-controlled co-star. "There was relative performance coming out of Treebeard," says Monaghan. "At any given time, there were seven or eight people working the puppet, so he was moving left and right, his arms

were moving, his eyes were blinking, and his mouth was moving."

With Boyd and Monaghan on set, things were "constantly funny," Falconer remembers. "We just thoroughly enjoyed it. Timing the puppet to walk so that it would rock violently enough to look as though they were at the top of a massive tree, trudging through the undergrowth required almost a ballet of mechanisms, and that was hilarious. Because the stunt guys who were there to look after the actors got caught up in the whole thing, we had a great time combining the skills of everyone to get the best performance out of this massive mechanical creature."

Creating Character

Weta Digital was charged with taking the animatronic puppet and "creating Treebeard's character, if you like, through his face animation," says Aitken.

In tackling that challenge, the Weta team referenced the research of American sociologist Paul Eckman, who has spent "the last 30 or 40 years analyzing human facial expressions and how/what you can determine about people's mood and character from the way that they talk and the way that they move their face," Aitken says. "As a part of this process, he's developed this really useful breakdown of the different

muscles in the face and the different expressions we can pull with our faces."

Eckman's research is a great starting point for creating a facial animation system on a digital creature, he explains, and Weta used the system on Gollum and Treebeard. "Our analytical systems really model the play of muscles underneath the skin to create the different poses that the face is capable of," says Aitken. "The animators can dial in all these different expressions and create very complex—and, I think, natural—facial expressions as a result. Treebeard has this wonderful subtlety that the animators have brought to bear in his face, which is tricky, given that the bottom half of his face is covered by a beard, and we only get a shadowy glimpse of where his mouth is. It all has to be done with the eyes and the brow, and the cheeks to a degree."

Randy Cook, who won Academy Awards for his work on both *The Fellowship of the Ring* and *The Two Towers*, led a team of 14 animators assigned to Treebeard.

"When I came down to Weta in 1998, all of the characters had already been designed," Cook remembers. "I have been a creature designer and animator for many, many years, and I was delighted to see how good they were. Treebeard was a very boldly designed character. He is right on the money as



far as being a humanoid tree—or a tree with a face, arms, and legs. But that can also be very dangerous, because you are getting into extremely fanciful storybook territory. The design of Treebeard is very, very storybook in its concept, but it is so perfect in its execution. It's extremely easy to accept as a character."

Cook worked closely with Steven Hornby, the lead animator on Treebeard, to capture Peter Jackson's vision of Treebeard and try to blend that with some other thoughts as well.

"Peter and I weren't at odds about the character," Cook says, "but he saw him as a crotchety old blowhard, and I saw him as a combination of your favorite uncle and a giant walking tree house! We met somewhere in the middle. Treebeard is not multi-faceted in the very frightening, chilling way that Gollum and Smeagol are, but he has depths that are not immediately apparent when first we encounter him."

Treebeard's performance is "rather theatrical and grand in some ways," Cook says, "but we also wanted to make him move in a fashion that seemed to be credible for somebody who was made out of this bark-like substance."

The animators tried to create "movement patterns that were indicative of someone who was very strong but also hadn't moved in a while," he says. "He's a little stiff when we first meet him. His limbs don't ache so

much as they are just under a great deal of muscular tension as he moves and creaks around." Animators also had to take into account the movement of the animatronic puppet, working with the Weta Workshop team to match its side-to-side walking patterns.

Jackson was very particular about Treebeard and the other Ents. "He was on our backs like an overcoat to make it right with changes and suggestions," Cook says. "We worked closely with Peter on not only Treebeard's performance but on things like the way his feet [interact with] the ground—his feet are sort of roots and sort of toes."

For filming purposes, there was a seemingly magical mix of animatronic puppet and digital "actor." But Matt Aitken says there is actually no magic to it. "It's actually quite complicated and time-consuming," he says. "There's no trick to it."

To begin its assignment, the Weta Digital team had at its fingertips the real and the imaginary: first, the photographic image of the on-set puppet filmed on a blue-screen stage with Merry and Pippin, and second, the digital image of Treebeard it had already created, complete with animation. "It's really just a case of layering that digital head over the top of the image, just sliding it in," Aitken explains. "Because the digital head was turning, you started getting glimpses of the puppet head behind it, so we had this

small army of people working, largely unsung, on this crucial role called 'roto-painting.' Where the puppet Treebeard poked through, they just painted him out, frame by frame; they had to do it in such a way that it didn't flicker from frame to frame and was not distracting at all. If you're lucky, he's on the blue screen at that point, so it's just a simple case of painting him out; if you're unlucky, maybe Merry's foot happens to be behind the piece of the head you want to paint out. In that case, you have to paint Merry's foot back in, which can be time-consuming. What we'd probably do in that case is adjust the animation to favor that so that there's not so much work for [the roto-painters] to do."

Cook was impressed by the work of this unsung group.

"The team who did the textures on Treebeard did such a good job that when you cut back and forth between the puppet and the animation character, you literally can't tell the difference," he says. "Sometimes you've got an animatronic body with a head and arms—sometimes you've got an animatronic body with just a head, sometimes you've got the whole CG character with just the Hobbits on it, and, sometimes, even the Hobbits are CG. It is an amazing piece of work from the model and the texturing departments. They have made him flow seamlessly into one character."

The Actors

Because animators didn't use any reference footage of John Rhys-Davies performing Treebeard—as they did with Andy Serkis' Gollum performances—they had to rely on their own acting skills.

"We have some great animators that I would put up against any actor," Cook says. "We chose not to have any [actor] reference so the animators could do their stuff with Treebeard. Their craft and talent is acting. Peter ... holds all of his actors to a very high standard—whether those actors happen to be real or not doesn't matter."

The animation team started by sitting around brainstorming about the character and the kind of acting he would need to do—the light comedy, for instance. Much of what Treebeard is doing is reaction, Cook says. Although there are a lot of dialogue shots, there are also plenty of reaction shots, and that's where the subtle light comedy timing can be used to very good effect, he explains.

"Movie cameras are wonderful lie detectors," he adds, "and if you are not feeling or believing the emotion you are going through on screen at the moment, then the audience isn't going to believe you either."

So how do you apply this standard to a bunch of frames on a computer?

"What we do—and I think it

works quite well—is make sure we know exactly what the character is thinking or feeling," Cook says. When animators do lip-syncing for a character, they have an exposure sheet with the words written on it, he says. Even when an animated character isn't talking, the Weta digital animators write out a frame-by-frame thought track and have the character communicate those thoughts with his eyes and his expressions. "I don't know if it is an old trick or not, but it is one I have used as an animator for many years. ... If someone is really acting out the expression of a very simple emotion, you will get a totally appropriate reaction in the face, and you will also get the timing perfect."

The animators had to make Treebeard's expressions read through all of his foliage, which wasn't easy. "We had to work with him 'shaved,' and the clean-shaven Treebeard is really something that would give the kids nightmares!" Cook says with a laugh.

A key part of his job was to ensure that the animated characters fit in with the live-action characters, Cook notes. A CGI character, by virtue of the fact that he is so unusual, tends to pull focus; he is [innately] fascinating," he says.

"[This] is what Peter and I would collaborate on the most—making sure these guys behaved themselves around the other actors and played fair. It's the easiest thing in the world to get an ani-

ated character to ham it up and draw attention to himself all the time—to the detriment of the other actors in the scene and the movie—but that wasn't the plan here. All of the CGI characters had to be members of an ensemble and, as such, had to behave themselves scrupulously."

Warmth and Heart

Peter Jackson says he is looking forward to bringing fans more of Treebeard in the extended-edition DVD version of *The Two Towers*.

"One of the problems with Treebeard is that he talks so slowly that people kind of get irritated by it," he says of the innate challenge of the Treebeard scenes. "Slow talking can be mistaken for boring quite quickly! In a way, the background material for Treebeard is so full of humor and whimsy [that] learning about his character—even though he still talks slow—is rather funny. I think people will actually understand Treebeard a lot more with the extended footage."

Taylor says he is most proud of the fact that this "massive mechanical creature can have so much character."

"Even when he's totally static, sitting in the studio two years later with a layer of dust across him, people who come to visit the Workshop still walk up and are taken aback when they see that there's a face in the twisting tree," he says. "When they see his eyes, when they suddenly pick out his eyes amongst the twisting barks and the knots and stuff, they go, 'Oh my!' They see a character as opposed to a big prop. It's really exciting to see their eyes light up!"

Cook admits to having great affection for Treebeard. "One of the things I am proudest of is the warmth and heart that comes through in him," he says. "I so believe in the character that I watch him on screen, and I think of him as a character, not as a computer artifact." 🐉





Dispatches from

CRAIG PARKER talks about the tremendous fan response to his portrayal of the ELF HALDIR in *The Lord of the Rings*

New Zealand actor Craig Parker never expected that his minor role as the Elf Haldir in *The Lord of the Rings* movie trilogy would spur such a strong response from fans. A well-known face to New Zealand TV viewers, Parker is a relative unknown beyond his home country—but no more! In response to many requests from Fan Club members, Dan Madsen spoke with Parker recently about his role in *The Lord of the Rings*.

Parker was born in the island paradise of Fiji, where he says he had an “idyllic childhood.” He moved to New Zealand with his family when he was 10 years old but says Fiji is still a “very special place to me—it was a very relaxed place to grow up.” Likewise,

working on *The Lord of the Rings* was a bit of paradise for the actor, who says he “would have made cups of tea on the set just to be a part of it!”

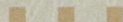
CRAIG, WHEN DID YOU FIRST REALIZE THAT YOU WANTED TO BE AN ACTOR?

I think I was interested in acting very early on. I have a very clear memory of watching a production of *Peter Pan* when I was a kid and seeing him fly on stage, which just blew me away! I must have been able to see the wires and such, but as a child, that didn't

matter—the magic of the theater removes those details. That was a great thrill for me. It was really only in my teenage years that I considered it as a job. I intended to be an actor and was very fortunate that things happened the way they did. You know, we walk ourselves to the cliff and then fall over it accidentally!

HOW DID YOU GET THE ROLE OF HALDIR IN *The Lord of the Rings*?

Many years ago, when Peter [Jackson], Fran [Walsh], and Philippa [Boyens] were putting together the script, they got a group of us in to make a radio play [from the scripts]. At



BY DAN MADSEN



the Front Lines

that point, there were only two scripts, and Miramax was going to make the films. We recorded the scripts over a period of weeks in the studio and then came back a year later and recorded [what had become] three scripts. We came back yet again a few months later and rerecorded them. I had a small amount of involvement there. Then, when it came time for the films to happen, I did a reading for them—as everyone in the country and the world did!—and got a phone call saying I got the role, which was very exciting!

HAVE THOSE ORIGINAL RECORDINGS EVER BEEN HEARD?

I don't know if they have ever been released. They were largely for Peter, Fran, and Philippa to see how it flowed as a film and to see how the dialogue sounded. I'm sure it was used as a selling tool as well. Perhaps they may turn

up on a DVD at some stage. A lot of work was put into them. They were also made into animatics, which is where it is all animated, and the dialogue is placed over it.

DID YOU DO THOSE RECORDINGS WITH ANY OF THE OTHER ACTORS WHO ACTUALLY APPEARED IN THE FILMS?

I think Cameron Rhodes (Farmer Maggot) might have been involved with it. Liz Mullane, the casting agent in New Zealand, did one session with us. I don't recall the other people involved with it.

DID YOU PLAY HALDIR IN THE RECORDINGS?

No, I played Frodo mainly and Boromir. There were only eight of us, so there were fantastic moments where one person was playing three different

characters in one scene—it was slightly schizophrenic! I'm not sure who played Haldir; I don't know if I even remember Haldir being in it!

WHEN YOU AUDITIONED FOR THE FILM, WERE YOU READING FOR THE PART OF HALDIR?

Yes, I was. I think there were probably six different pieces of the script, which covered different racial types like Elves and Hobbits. Haldir was the Elf I read for.

ONCE YOU WERE TOLD YOU HAD THE ROLE, DID YOU STUDY THE BOOKS TO UNDERSTAND WHO THE ELVES WERE?

I had read the books previously, and I did reread them. I had actually started reading them before I heard I got the role, just because the interest was so huge around here. It also becomes a collaborative process when you arrive



on the set. You meet the producers and the director and the makeup and costume people, and from all of them, an idea emerges. So you take all of that and decide how the character should act.

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST REACTION WHEN YOU SAW YOURSELF IN THE MAKEUP AND COSTUME WITH THE LONG BLOND HAIR AND POINTED EARS?

We laughed a lot! The joke around the set was that the Elves were the drag queens! I'm sure it is easy to have the beauty of the Elves when you live in a place like Lothlorien, but sitting around on a dirty film set, tired, with your hair messed up, smoking cigarettes, was not a pretty sight! There were some very funny sights on the sets with the Elves.

DID YOU CREATE ANY PARTICULARLY TIGHT BONDS WITH OTHER ACTORS ON THE SET?

I think I found a great sort of humor match in Billy [Boyd] and Dom

"The joke around the set was that the Elves were the drag queens! I'm sure it is easy to have the beauty of the Elves when you live in a place like Lothlorien, but sitting around on a dirty film set, tired, with your hair messed up, smoking cigarettes, was not a pretty sight!"



[Monaghan], whom I spent a fair amount of time with. They have a great sense of humor. I mainly worked with Viggo [Mortensen] and Sean [Bean] and the Fellowship. I have a huge amount of respect for someone like Sir Ian McKellen, whom I have watched for years. I was very nervous about meeting him initially. I think others have said this about him and the rest of the cast, but they were all utterly charming, with no arrogance or playing the "star." It was a very relaxed set, and everyone felt at ease with each other. No one was throwing tantrums. We all had a great time.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE PETER JACKSON?

He is remarkably calm. Often, he would be looking at three or four different sets through satellite link-ups, directing all of these areas and making sure they all fit together. I never saw him lose his temper. He always had time for questions. When it came time to shoot,

he was there, ready to go, calmly describing what was required and how it would all work together. He was an ideal director. I cannot imagine the stress his brain must have been under shooting three films at one time and having such a huge post-production aspect to it. He was constantly thinking about where the [computer-generated] characters fit in and how this jigsaw fit together, and he constantly remained sane and was polite. I have a great deal of admiration and respect for him as a human being; he is genuine. You meet people who are busy being humble, but I think Peter doesn't have time for all the nonsense around filmmaking—he is busy making the film. It's not about the other aspects of it.

WHEN YOU WERE FILMING—ESPECIALLY ON THE HELM'S DEEP SET—DID YOU EVER STOP AND MARVEL AT THE SIZE AND SCOPE OF THE PROJECT?

Constantly! The project was shot over three years, and my involvement was very minor. I would come down for a week, disappear for a month, and then go to another set for a week. Every time I arrived, there would be something wonderful and new to look at. We filmed part of Helm's Deep outdoors, and other parts were done in a studio with computers. We shot for three months in a quarry in Wellington in the middle of winter; it was cold and bleak, and no one saw daylight. The crew was working under very difficult conditions, yet there was a wonderful camaraderie and enjoyment to it. We enjoyed the horror of the whole thing! It is breathtaking to arrive on the set and see that they built a castle, a fortress, and it is not made of polystyrene—it is concrete and rock with exquisite artistry. It is movie-making on a grand scale. New Zealand has a wonderful little film industry, but we have 3.8 million people, so we don't have the budget to make blockbusters.

Compared to America, our films are low-budget. To suddenly work on a piece with the money to do these wonderful things and realize a vision was so exciting! I think all of New Zealand was just elated.

THE COUNTRY MUST BE VERY PROUD TO HAVE HAD THESE FILMS MADE THERE BY NATIVE NEW ZEALANDERS.

There is a wonderful sense of ownership and pride here. It is almost as if everyone in this country either worked on, knows someone, or is related to someone who worked on these films. We are all very proud of them. It is quite nice. I think New Zealand sees them as "our little films we whipped up in Wellington."

THE FILMS ARE ALSO DRIVING A LOT OF TOURISTS TO NEW ZEALAND AS WELL.

Yes, we have quite a big place, and there are not many of us, so tourists are welcome. The tourism department here is very aware that a lot of the places where we filmed are protected land, so any tourism that happens around those areas has to be very carefully monitored. We don't want a million people trampling through and throwing Coke bottles on the ground, but I don't think that is going to happen. If someone makes the effort to travel into the mountains, they usually tend to have a slightly higher degree of responsibility about the environment.

AS WITH OTHER INTERVIEWS, WE'VE ASKED OUR FAN CLUB MEMBERS TO SUBMIT QUESTIONS. OUR FIRST QUESTION COMES FROM DENNIS BASDEN OF HOFFMAN ESTATES, ILLINOIS: HOW DID YOU GET IN THE MINDSET OF PLAYING AN ELVEN WARRIOR?

The most difficult thing about being an Elf was trying to walk while looking ahead without tripping over your feet! However, I also spent a lot of time thinking about who they are and

trying to get my head around the idea that these people live for thousands of years, which is not an easy leap! [But] a lot of the [preparation] happens without you being fully aware of it.

HOW LONG DID IT TAKE YOU TO GET INTO THE FULL MAKEUP AND COSTUME FOR HALDIR?

The whole thing took about two hours at some terrible hour in the morning each day! It wasn't a huge prosthetics session—many people had much longer makeup sessions than I did. But putting the ears on and getting them absolutely [seamless] and perfect took a good hour.

WHAT WAS THE MOST DIFFICULT MOMENT FOR YOU ON THIS PRODUCTION?

On the first day of fighting at Helm's Deep, I had been working with the sword master, Bob Anderson, and his crew. I had done a little sword-fighting before on [the TV productions] *Hercules* and *Xena*, but, suddenly, we are doing a full run of this scene and literally hundreds of giant Uruk-hai, who are twice my size, come



charging at me with axes and swords and knives! I had to trust that they had instilled in me the sword-fighting skills to defend myself. Moments like that were a bit terrifying! But I came through it entirely unscathed, as the stunt crews were fantastic. It was very exciting. I am 5'11", and I was fighting boys who were 6'5". Because it was written in the script, I could beat them! That was fun!



JULIA BALLARD OF COLORADO ASKS: GIVEN THAT ELVES ARE ADVANCED IN BOTH MATTERS OF MIND AND BODY, IS IT POSSIBLE THAT WE WILL BE SEEING HALDIR IN *The Return of the King*? IN OTHER WORDS, DID HALDIR, IN FACT, DIE AT HELM'S DEEP?

Anything is possible!

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED FROM YOUR WORK ON THIS FILM? DO YOU HAVE ANY LASTING MEMORIES?

I think the thing that has truly amazed me on this project is that one person, like Peter Jackson, can say, "OK, I'm going to do this," and such a mammoth creature can be birthed from that one person having the courage and the idea to follow it through. Many, many people were involved in that birthing but, ultimately, one person can change the world.

ARE THERE PARTICULAR SCENES THAT YOU WISH HAD MADE IT INTO THE FINISHED FILMS?

I really don't regret where things were cut and changed, because [that was] done for a story purpose. There was one scene we shot with Cate Blanchett, Hugo Weaving, Martin Csokas, and I, and I am sorry we never saw that because I adore Cate and Hugo so much. The two films I have watched so far are so wonderful that I don't really watch them worrying about me—I am just taken with the whole magic of it. I also have to say that Gollum was just magnificent!

THESSA AND MARIKE VAN AERDE OF TILBURG, THE NETHERLANDS, HAVE ASKED ABOUT THE SCENE IN WHICH GALADRIEL, CELEBORN, AND ELROND DISCUSS THE STATE OF THE WORLD IN *The Two Towers*.

Yes, we did film that scene. The purpose of the scene was to show the argument of the Elves who were saying, "Our time is done, we're moving on, and the world is left to men." The

"I think the thing that has truly amazed me on this project is that ... such a mammoth creature can be birthed from that one person having the courage and the idea to follow it through. Many, many people were involved in that birthing, but ultimately, one person can change the world."

other argument is, "We have a responsibility here—we have lived together and fought together, and now it is time to honor the agreement we have with Men." That is pretty much what that deleted scene was saying, [but] that comes across in the film, anyway, I think; it all makes sense in the final cut.

DO YOU THINK THAT SCENE WILL BE ADDED INTO THE EXTENDED DVD OF *The Two Towers*?

I really don't know; it is possible. That's the great thing about DVDs—you can get all of this extra material. I'm in love with DVDs at the moment!

SUE HERRERA OF WINNEMUCCA, NEVADA, ASKS: YOUR PORTRAYAL OF HALDIR'S DEATH WAS TRULY HEART-RENDING—WHAT WERE YOU THINKING AS YOU ACTED THAT SCENE TO BE ABLE TO CAPTURE SUCH EMOTION?

Well, the reason Haldir turns up at Helm's Deep is something that Peter was very keen on right from the start: Elves are immortal. They live until they choose not to, or they die in battle. Peter wanted to see that. He wanted to show that the world was changing so much that we would see Elves die. I think he achieved that quite well. When we were shooting the scene, in front of me were literally hundreds of bodies lying around—Elves and Orcs and Uruk-hai. The make-believe aspect was not that difficult because there was a battle carnage scene in front of me. Who knows what death is like? But at that point, Haldir loses faith. He believes all is lost, and there is nothing that can be done anymore. They have rallied and done what they can, but I

think he believes that it is over. It's not the greatest way to die.

WERE YOU ABLE TO DO THAT IN JUST ONE TAKE?

Yes—I don't think it was particularly difficult. There was a lot of fighting from the first blow until the mortal blow, and that was difficult—trying to remember that there is a big guy behind you with an axe, and you've got to fend that off or otherwise your head gets split open! Those were the things that were difficult; the actual acting side of it was reasonably easy.

WAS THERE SOME SIGNIFICANCE TO ARAGORN PUTTING HIS HAND ON HALDIR'S HEART IN THE DEATH SCENE?

I'm not sure. Aragorn has a relationship with the Elves. He has lived with them and is aware of their ways and customs. There is a fellowship between him and the Elves. I guess it is an Elven aspect of Aragorn.

WHEN YOU TOOK ON THE ROLE OF HALDIR, DID YOU KNOW HE WAS GOING TO DIE IN THE SECOND FILM?

No, not initially. I found out later, when I was talking with [screenwriter] Philippa Boyens, and she said, "We're thinking of doing this." I thought, "Oh, great! More shooting, and I get to go into battle!" I was thrilled that I was able to be a part of the film in a small way.

FAN CLUB MEMBER "BEAR" ASKS: I'VE HEARD THE MEMBERS OF THE FELLOWSHIP DISCUSS THE WEAPONS TRAINING THEY WENT THROUGH FOR THEIR ROLES. DID YOU ALSO HAVE THIS KIND OF TRAINING, AND CAN YOU TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT IT?

I had spent quite a bit of time with the stunt team and with [swordmaster] Bob Anderson, who was very cool. He had fought with Errol Flynn in older films and had played Darth Vader in *The Empire Strikes Back* lightsaber duel. He is a masterful swordsman and a wonderful English gentle-





"I haven't really waded onto the Internet yet. It's a Pandora's box as far as I'm concerned. You don't want to look too closely, because just as you [begin to] feel very flattered, you [will also] read something that isn't so flattering. ... It's often best that you don't know what people are saying about you behind your back."

man. He took me through a lot of the basics of fencing and fighting. I would then work with the sword crews, stunt crews, and fight coordinators. We spent a lot of time going over the sequences of the battles. We all left slightly bruised at the end of the day but feeling really good and really tough! It was great fun!

YOU WERE ALSO USING A BOW, WEREN'T YOU?

Yes, a little bit. They were probably the most difficult things, because they are so big and awkward. We did do a series of shots with the bows. In some shots, we were using arrows, and some were done without. Some shots we did out in the quarry, and the volleys went into the black abyss in front of us.

Others were done in the studio, where there were mattresses and various people hiding behind armor and stuff to deflect them. It was a mixture of all sorts of things, and I am not even sure what is real and what is CGI when I watch the film.

SHEILA CONNERS OF PENNSYLVANIA ASKS: WERE YOU PLEASED THAT WE GOT TO SEE MORE OF YOUR ROLE IN THE EXTENDED DVD OF *The Fellowship of the Ring*?

You know, I haven't seen the DVD yet. I got a copy for Christmas, but it is still in the box! I haven't been home for the last two months, as I have been in Wellington doing a play. I'll be back home in a week and a half, so I'll watch it then.

FRANCES SANGIL OF THE PHILIPPINES ASKS: IF YOU DIDN'T PLAY THE ROLE OF HALDIR AND HAD A CHOICE, WHICH CHARACTER WOULD YOU HAVE LOVED TO PLAY?

That's a hard question. My attitude, right from the beginning when I knew these films were going to happen, was that I would have made cups of tea on the set just to be a part of it! I would have loved to play any character!

ARE PEOPLE STARTING TO RECOGNIZE YOU FROM THE FILMS?

In New Zealand, I do a television show, so I am recognized locally. I think people here are proud that another "Kiwi" is in the film. But I am in no danger of being mugged as I walk down a Tokyo street ... at least not yet!

ALICE OF READING, ENGLAND, WANTS TO KNOW: YOU RECENTLY ATTENDED A *The Lord of the Rings* CONVENTION IN GERMANY. WHAT DID YOU THINK OF THE REACTION YOU RECEIVED THERE?

I was blown away by it! I have a number of friends who have been involved in the *Hercules* and *Xena* shows and have been to those conventions and would tell wonderful stories of them. I wasn't quite sure what to expect. I assumed it would be full of mad people, which was definitely not the case, thankfully! I was there with some friends of mine, and we just had the best time. The people were wonderful! I didn't meet any mad people. It was wonderful seeing the power that this story has ... People knew it so intimately and cared so much for J.R.R. Tolkien that it seemed like the films had done well by them; the films hadn't twisted it too much. It was a very surreal time but quite wonderful. It was very strange to get up in the morning and wander downstairs for breakfast and see Hobbits and Ents wandering around!



MELANIE CANDRA OF YARDLEY, PENNSYLVANIA, ASKS: WHAT IS YOUR REACTION TO THE INCREDIBLY LARGE INTERNET FAN BASE THAT HAS DEVELOPED AROUND YOU AND THE CHARACTER HALDIR AND THE OUTCRY AGAINST HIS DEATH AT HELM'S DEEP?

Well, Haldir doesn't die in the book—he's there at the end hopping onto the boat. I find it very flattering that people care so much about all of this. I haven't really waded onto the Internet yet. It's a Pandora's box as far as I'm concerned. You don't want to look too closely, because just as you [begin to] feel very flattered, you [will also] read something that isn't so flattering. So I try to avoid doing that! It's often best that you don't know what people are saying about you behind your back. But I do find it very flattering and a little odd!

WHAT ARE YOU CURRENTLY DOING? ANYTHING COMING UP?

At the moment, I am finishing a season of doing the musical *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. I then go back to working the next six months on a series called *Mercy Peak*, which is a television series here in New Zealand. I think it's playing in Canada now, too; at the end of the series, it will probably play in Europe, but we tend to not sell a lot to the United States. It is an hour-long series that takes place in a small town—individual stories each week but with recurring characters. It is kind of like [the U.S. television show] *Northern Exposure*. That takes me to the end of the year, and then, after that, I have no idea what I'll be doing—maybe I'll take a long holiday!

CRAIG, THANKS SO MUCH FOR TALKING WITH US.

Well, thank you very much! Good talking with you! ☺

THE LORD OF THE RINGS

THE TWO TOWERS

LIFESIZE STANDUPS

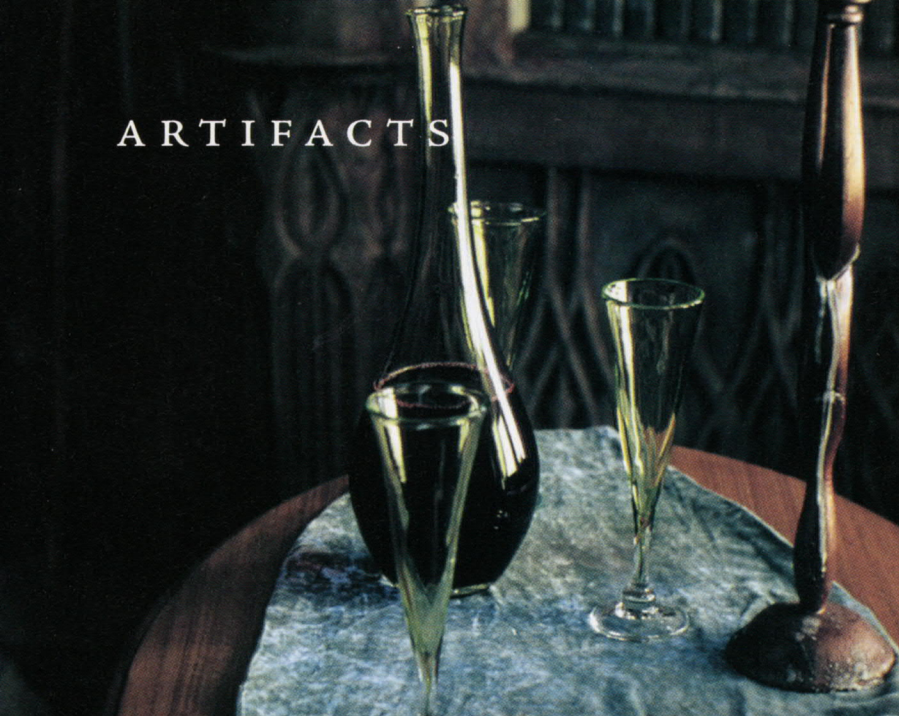
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384 Aragorn™ Actual Height: 5'9"	437 Legolas™ Actual Height: 5'10"
436 Gollum™ Actual Height: 2'10"	

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Middle-earth

The Lord of the Rings Art Department props maker Chris Streeter talks about the variety of film artifacts he and his colleagues had a chance to create for the historic trilogy.

Imagine for a moment being on the creative team responsible for making Gandalf's famous magical staff in *The Lord of the Rings* films ... or Balin's Book in the Chamber of Mazarbul ... or even the leaded glass windows at Bilbo's home at Bag End.

All of those amazing props, artifacts, and background decoration that brought Middle-earth so believably to life started with Peter Jackson and his brilliant design team, but the execution was left to the skilled craftsmen in the Art Department at 3Foot6 (the production company behind the films).

Sketches by *The Lord of the Rings* Conceptual Artists Alan Lee and John Howe often inspired Jackson to request lavish, exacting prop designs

that were in keeping with the attention to detail and authenticity the director sought for the trilogy as a whole. Many props had to be created from scratch, regardless of tight shooting schedules and other challenges. When one-of-a-kind prototypes of esoteric artifacts were needed right away, Production Artist Chris Streeter and his colleagues in the Art Department rose to the challenge.

AUTHENTICITY

During the lengthy filming of *The Lord of the Rings*, it fell to the Art Department craftsmen to make any hand prop that they couldn't buy off the shelf. And it wasn't just intricately detailed armor and weapons that make the films seem

so ... well, down to Middle-earth. The crew also put fine touches and details on "invisible" background movie set decorations such as furniture, fireplace andirons, and chandeliers, says Streeter.

For props makers, wood played quite an important part in the design and production process, especially for pattern-making, but other materials were also essential to making set decorations seem authentic, Streeter notes.

"A lot of research and experience went into finding new things we could bastardize for use on a set," he says. "We used a lot of finishers and wood-working [equipment] like polishers. It all depended on the job, really. When you got the designs, you had to decide what it would be made out of—



do quality control every step of the way. After the first few lamps were made, it went quickly, Streeter recalls. "It was tough making all of them in such a short time frame, but fortunately we were working

with really creative people who know how to get things done," he says.

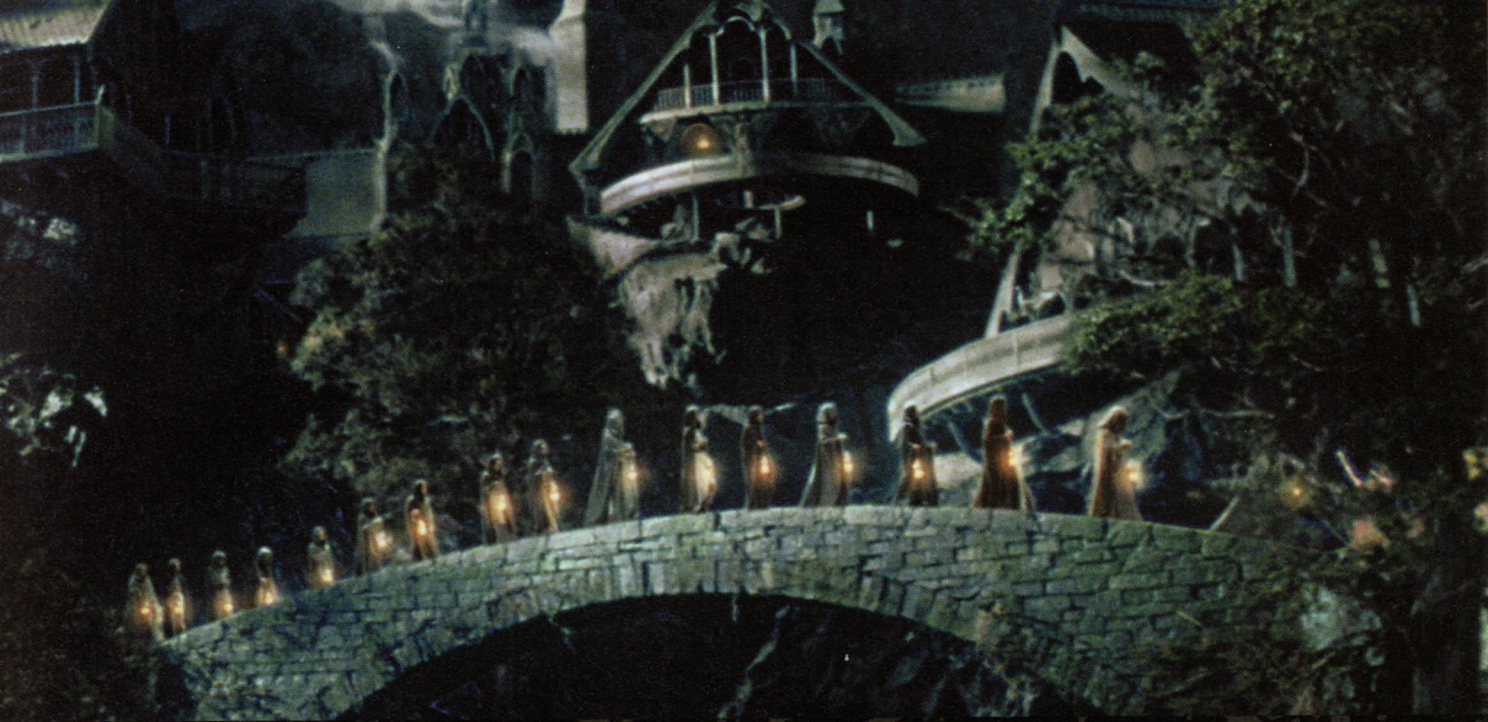
"You might be surprised to learn that the Elven lamps were made out of cardboard ... with a candle inside each of them, which was nerve-wracking to say the least!" Streeter confesses. "Fortunately, none of them caught on fire.

We had a bit of a problem with the paint softening with the cardboard and the glue, which was something that was completely overlooked at first. Normally, with something like

that, you build a prototype and then send it back to the designer. Then the designer would say, 'Change this,' or 'Paint it a different color.' But we were so rushed for time that we had to cut out the steps that would take too long. We're really happy they turned out as well as they did."

Of course, movie magicians such as Streeter and his cohorts know they won't often have the luxury of time in doing their jobs, especially after shooting begins on a film. "There are a lot of unforeseen things in the film industry, and I guess that's why we have our jobs—we can cover all bases effectively," Streeter says. "There is nothing more satisfying than being given a design and all the time you need in order to complete it to your satisfaction. Occasionally, which is to be expected, there are some reasonably tight deadlines to keep up with, and you just can't have an ego about it;





Props

BY DAVE JOY, WITH
REPORTING BY
DAN MADSEN

whether it would be a 'one-off' or whether you had to make multiple examples of it." If multiple copies were called for, he says, a mold was a good option for reproduction. The crew relied heavily on plastic urethane, paints of all kinds, esoteric glazes, and expensive gold leaf in order to obtain the most realistic finishes on all of their props.

During the long production and filming process, Streeter and his co-workers often found themselves making props and artifacts on short notice. "You want it when?!" was a common reaction when assignments came down, Streeter remembers. "But you tried to draw up [a plan outlining] exactly what was required within the time frame they gave you," he says. "[The time frame] definitely directed how you would go about building a prop."

LAMPS FIT FOR AN ELF

Streeter and his colleagues were often so time-pressed to make multiple copies of "one-of-a-kind" items—the lamps the Elves carried when they left Rivendell, for example—that they had to push the creative envelope to find new ways to pull off such challenges.

"I was told that the 50 Eleven lamps were needed in two days," Streeter recalls with a laugh. "It took half a day just to find the material, then it took the rest of the day to get enough hired labor to come in and work on the patterns we'd made." Everything had to be broken down into production steps, he says; each part of the lamp required about 10 detailed steps. In all, hundreds of steps went into making each lamp, but because they had a good pattern, all it took was enough manpower to put them all together in time and





CHRIS STREETER

STREETER AND HIS CO-WORKERS OFTEN FOUND THEMSELVES MAKING PROPS AND ARTIFACTS ON SHORT NOTICE. “You want it when?!” WAS A COMMON REACTION WHEN ASSIGNMENTS CAME DOWN.

you just have to do it. Those cardboard lanterns, for example, could have been terribly embarrassing if they didn’t work out, but they *had* to be done to the best of our ability in the time frame we were given. So you deliver them and wonder, ‘Oh, no, what are people going to think?’ But when filming was complete, they looked great, and we couldn’t have been happier!”

GANDALF’S STAFF

When the props makers had to carve one-of-a-kind originals, the designers knew that creating each one out of wood would be too time-consuming, Streeter says. “We would first sculpt a design in plasticene, make a mold of it, cast as many items as we needed, and then apply them to actual pieces of furniture or armor,” he explains. “We did a lot of sculpting ourselves, including some of the ‘hero’

sculpts, like statues and stuff. Those would usually be sculpted by people with exceptional skills that [were suited to the particular item]. One of the hero sculpts I enjoyed working on most was Gandalf’s staff.”

And just how does one go about making such a prized artifact?

It began with a drawing from Alan Lee, Streeter says. The Lee drawing was “broken down” into bits and pieces so the Art Department staffers could determine whether they had raw materials on hand that would work. Gandalf’s staff was sure to take a beating during filming, so the material they chose was key. Streeter and his colleagues began with a wooden dowel that was shaved down at one end, and then they followed Lee’s drawings in order to sculpt details into it. “We just cut it, shaped it, and smoothed it out,” explains Streeter.

FANCIFUL “FIRE DOGS”

Moviegoers might not even notice some of the painstakingly created props in the films because they fit so well into scenes already overwhelming to the senses.

A case in point: the “fire dogs” in the Golden Hall of King Théoden of Rohan. With a fire roaring, only solid cast iron would be realistic and withstand the heat of the fire. But “getting them cast was quite an expensive process,” Streeter says, and those costs had to be taken into consideration. The pattern or prototype for the fire dogs was custom wood-layered, cut with various abrasives, and then polished to look authentic.

Streeter then took the originals to New Plymouth, New Zealand, and oversaw the casting process. Once cast, the fire dogs had to be put together, which included attaching additional



"I have worked on hundreds and hundreds of things," STREETER SAYS. "I KEEP COMING ACROSS PHOTOS OF STUFF I HAVE WORKED ON AND SAYING, 'Oh, I did that!'"

cast iron pieces—no easy task, Streeter says. "Welding can sometimes be a little tricky," he explains.

A JOB WELL DONE

Streeter says it is immeasurably satisfying to see his work in *The Lord of the Rings* films but emphasizes that he is proud of the work of everyone in the Art Department.

"A couple of props that get a little bit of screen time are the big book in the Mines of Moria and Boromir's horn," Streeter says. "I didn't make them, but I love those two! They are beautiful examples of prop work."

Of the props he did make, what are his favorites?

"I have worked on hundreds and hundreds of things," Streeter says. "I keep coming across photos of stuff I have worked on and saying, 'Oh, I did that!' Remember the chandelier that Gandalf bumps his head on in Bilbo's

Hobbit hole? I made that ... it's one of my favorites. I think I made most of the chandeliers in Hobbiton."

He is also proud of his work on the firedogs in the Golden Hall and the Elven telescope in Rivendell.

"And the leaded glass windows [in Bilbo's Hobbit hole] are favorites, too—they added such a touch of realism to the scene, and I happen to know they were really well-made," he says with pride. In fact, he says, the windows have such high production values that they could easily be put in a real home, and no one would realize that they had been created for a film set. That isn't always the case with movie props, many of which look far different when you see them up close, Streeter says.

"You may look at [*The Lord of the Rings* props] and wonder what all the fuss is

about, especially considering the cost that went into making them," he says. "But people would be surprised to know that these antique-looking leaded glass windows were made from an old recipe that has been used for years and years. In fact, all the glass we used was made the old-fashioned way. There was nothing to it really—just cutting the lead and cutting the glass ... but just the fact that they were something real that you could actually put into the windows of a house really impressed me."

"Even though I made all of this stuff," Streeter reflects, "I always get sucked into the storyline when I watch the films, and I forget about what I made!"



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■ ■ ■ BY DAVE JOY

The artisans of The Noble Collection bring the silver-screen treasures of The Lord of the Rings film trilogy to fans everywhere

In an unforgettable film moment in *The Fellowship of the Ring*, Arwen and Aragorn stand together, quietly looking into each other's eyes. Arwen then takes Aragorn's hand and lovingly gives him her cherished pendant as a token of her undying love and to protect him from harm in facing a terrible enemy. Not surprisingly, replicas of "Arwen Evenstar's Pendant"—as well as many other jewelry items from *The Lord of the Rings* movies—have recently become very popular among "Ringers," thanks in large part to the master artisans at The Noble Collection in Ashburn, Virginia.

President and Chief Designer Robert Khoury has been a fan of *The Lord of the Rings* for years. When he heard Peter Jackson was going into production, he immediately contacted New Line





“We got the idea of using a
COMPUTER-GUIDED FINE LASER to
etch each individual ring,” Khoury
recalls. “WE TALKED ABOUT IT AND
THEN TESTED IT. IT WORKED!”

Cinema about the possibility of producing replicas of the Middle-earth jewelry and weapons created for the films. In fact, The Noble Collection's line of *The Lord of the Rings* collectibles has grown so large that the company can now divide it into three categories: Jewelry of Middle-earth, Treasures of Middle-earth, and Weapons of Middle-earth.

“It was both an honor and a challenge” to reproduce jewelry and weapons replicas from the historic film project, Khoury says. “We wanted to do our best to produce first-rate designs and quality reproductions,” he explains. “We knew we were working on something truly monumental and did not want to disappoint anybody—the fans, the production designers, or the studio.”

The master craftsman was also quick to acknowledge Weta Workshop's “incredible” jewelry designer, Jasmine Watson, for her inspiring designs. Collaborating with the talented folks at Weta Workshop and New Line Cinema was also enjoyable, Khoury says. It's worked out nicely for Weta and New Line, as well: The Noble Collection has some of the world's finest designers, artists, sculptors, and craftspersons, and they take their art very seriously... especially when it comes to *The Lord of the Rings*.

“I read the books for the first time about 20 years ago,” says Khoury. “I found them fascinating and imaginative. Such a rich world was created in the mind of the author... a timeless story of heroism, good and evil, temptation, and an incredible journey. I loved it.” When The

Noble Collection got the nod to produce official replicas, Khoury surrounded himself in short order with talented, inspired artists who share his passion for producing authentic Middle-earth replicas. Their creations are considered works of art in their own right and demand the attention of not only fans but serious collectors all over the world.

“We really do our best to be true to the trilogy,” adds Akram Saigh, marketing director at The Noble Collection. “All of the lead designers involved have read the books and, of course, have seen the two great movies. We talk with many fans and enjoy getting their feedback and input. At the same time, I must give a lot of credit to the folks at New Line Cinema and Weta Workshop for all their support. They are involved in all stages of the design, and working with them closely has added much to the quality of our reproductions.”

MIDDLE-EARTH JEWELS

New Line Cinema provided Khoury with the actual mold and casting of Arwen's pendant. “You can't get more exacting than that... it is such a beautiful piece!” says Saigh. Other jewelry items, such as the Elven brooch, were also cast from movie originals.

The Noble Collection also reproduces exact replicas of the One Ring, along with some of the most famous weaponry of Middle-earth, including Sting, Glamdring, Gimli's Axe, and a collector's edition of Narsil. In all, there are 23 collectibles in *The Lord of the Rings*

product line at The Noble Collection, and the list is growing rapidly.

Quite a number of designers worked on Arwen's pendant and the One Ring. “Our challenge was to construct Arwen's pendant in a way that ensured each piece would be just like that first one we received,” Khoury says. “So it was not so much a styling challenge as it was [a matter of] setting up a production procedure and creating master molds that would ensure this.”

The One Ring was a bit more challenging, Khoury admits. He describes the Elven script on the inside and outside as “very fine.” It was a bonafide puzzler for a while, since the inscription on the One Ring in the film was created using computer technology.

“We had our best model-makers working in teams,” notes Khoury, “and we challenged them to produce the best prototypes. They all came through, and the prototypes looked great. The problem was that those prototypes could not be reproduced; when we test-produced each one, the detail was lost. We then changed the shape to hold the detail in the mold. Although the detail was better, the shape was flat, so we canned that.”

And then inspiration hit. “We got the idea of using a computer-guided fine laser to etch each individual ring,” Khoury recalls. “We talked about it and then tested it. It worked! We were able to produce



the ring in the ideal shape and have incredibly clear etching. It is a beautiful piece!"

SWORDMASTERS

Beauty and power can certainly be expressed in finely crafted pendants, rings, and brooches, but wait until you've held a full-size Wizard's sword! Or even a Hobbit's! New Line Cinema provided The Noble Collection with actual props from the movie before they began production. "We did our utmost to produce exact replicas of what was used in the movie," Saigh says. "The prototypes were made in Toledo, Spain, where the world's greatest swords are still made." Of The Noble Collection's replica of Sting, he says excitedly, "It is stunning! Of course, I have one in my house!"

The art and craft of sword-making is radically different from jewelry-making, Khoury notes. Many design considerations are specific to making a world-class sword, and it takes a long time and involves a variety of talented people with different skill sets.

"Sting was the most challenging," Khoury says. "We wanted to make sure we created both a beautiful and enduring

final product. When we received the movie prop from New Zealand, it had a metal pommel, a finely etched metal guard, and a wooden handle with an Elven design wrapped [over] the length of it like a helix. After much discussion, we chose to go with a production model that would mimic the look of the wood with enameling and highlight the beautiful etching. It would have been much simpler to make the handle out of wood for production, but [we would have had to use] a sticker-like decal as the etching. That would not look nearly as nice and could wear off over time."

"The Noble Collection has produced many famous movie swords in the past," Saigh adds with obvious pride. "Great ones ... such as the 'Green Destiny' sword from *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*; swords used in *Highlander*; and Mel Gibson's sword in *Braveheart*. All are extremely well-made replicas."

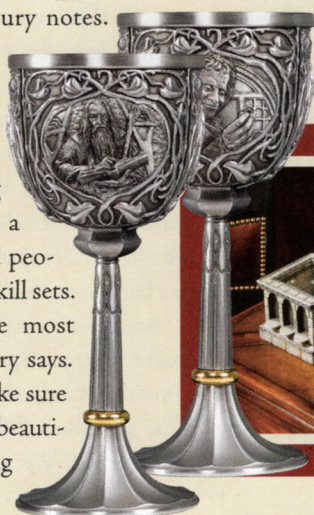
Other jewelry and treasures in *The Lord of the Rings* product collection include finely crafted Middle-earth keepsakes such as rings especially designed for Aragorn, Elrond, Galadriel, and Gimli (and one for the "King of Men" as well as the grim Witch-King of

Angmar). Of course, there's the One Ring available on a chain (just like Frodo's), as well as a solid-gold edition in its very own heirloom box. In addition to the familiar Elven Brooch from the film, there is a matching Fellowship Necklace, as well as another gorgeous Elven Necklace, Saruman's Brooch, and a Rohan Brooch. Other stunning collectors' pieces include sculptures such as the "Quest for the Ring" and "The One Ring Mirage," a holographic image chamber. Or how about sitting down at a classic Middle-earth chess set with a Shire-inspired pewter goblet at your elbow (and a pint of your favorite Shire ale)?

Of all *The Lord of the Rings* jewelry, treasures, and weaponry, what are the designers' favorites? Not surprisingly, the One Ring is Khoury's favorite (along with the Middle-earth chess set). A new product on the way has captured Saigh's fancy. "The Gandalf Staff has to be my favorite," he reveals. "We have a casting of the original one from *The Fellowship of the Ring*, and The Noble Collection is soon set to offer a life-size replica!" (No doubt such a prop will add a lot of believability to all the would-be Gandalfs in line parties for *Return of the King*!)

The Noble Collection designers are not resting on their laurels. Be on the lookout in the near future for a collector's edition of the *Legolas Bow and Arrow*. And you can soon own beautiful replicas of the famous pipes of Aragorn, Bilbo, and Gandalf. Several more swords are also planned for release in 2003, with many more collectible pieces magically issuing forth from the designers' tables of The Noble Collection. "The best is still ahead of us," Khoury insists! ♪

Check out *The Noble Collection* at www.noblecollection.com.



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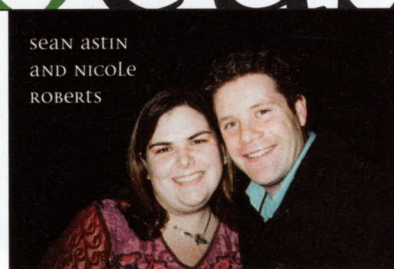
FAN focus

RINGER REPORT

A contingent of United Kingdom Fan Club members, some traveling from as far as Scotland, gathered in London on February 9 to see Howard Shore

bers gathered on March 15 in Nashville, Tennessee, for a Shire-inspired Middle-earth feast. Everyone attending brought a favorite Shire dish, including cheese and crackers, marinated vegetable salad, beef stew, vegetarian shepherd's pie, ale and steak pie, pumpkin muffins, homemade cobblers, warm honeyed mead, wine, and ale, of course! They sang songs, recited poetry, and planned other events, but, like most Hobbits, spent most of the evening gossiping, telling stories, talking about

their families, and refilling their mugs! This group gathers monthly and plans to



sean astin
and nicole
roberts

have a Middle-earth party, complete with costumes, live music, and a re-creation of the Prancing Pony in the fall. Members hail from across Tennessee and beyond, including Kentucky. Anyone who is interested in joining the fun should go to groups.yahoo.com/group/nashvillesmial for more information! ~ Nanette 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 or to The Lord of the Rings Fan Club, c/o Decipher, P.O. 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.)



fan club gathering
in nashville


conduct the London Philharmonic Orchestra at the Royal Festival Hall. ... Sean Astin attended the Texas Film Festival at Texas A&M University in College Station on February 22. Astin was awarded the Jury Prize for Best Short Film for *The Long and the Short of It*. Nicole Roberts, manager of Rings On The Range, a Texas Fan Club group, presented Astin with a "Rings On The Range" badge and made him an honorary Texas Ringer. Nicole was invited to pin the Ringer badge on Astin's jacket. The actor said he couldn't wait to tell his wife he got "pinned" in Texas! As has been widely reported, Astin was wonderfully gracious, humorous, and personable. For more info on the Texas group of Fan Club members, please visit groups.msn.com/RingsOnTheRange. ... A festive group of Fan Club mem-



tennessee ringers
amy sturgis and
margaret sturgis

Cartoon Contest, Issue 4

Desks disappeared beneath drawings of Hobbits, Wizards, and Elves. Picking the winners was hard, as we were flooded with great strips. We assembled a great council to determine which would stay and which would go. I was asked to lend my axe.

Below, in no particular order, are the winners! 

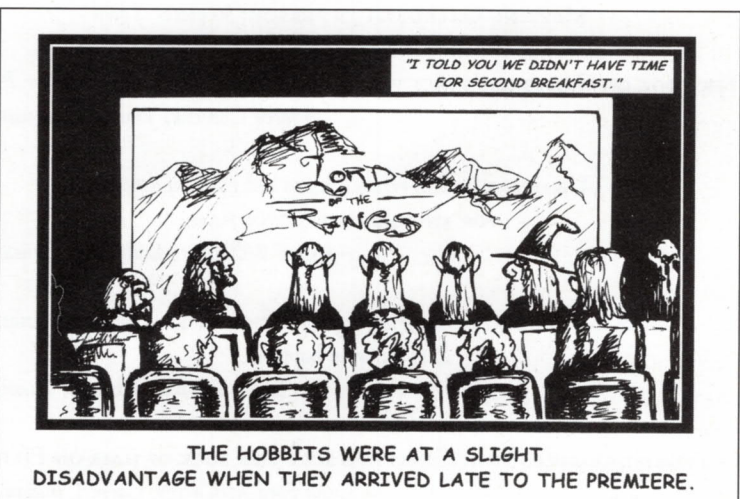
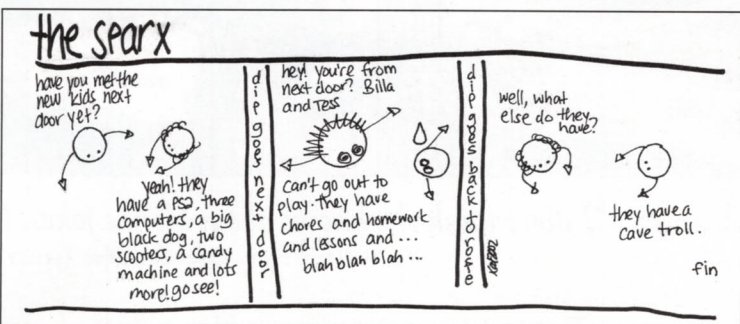
"Of Mushrooms and Wizards" **BEST ART**
~ Debbie Horton, Santa Ana, California, USA

“Ring’ers” MOST INSPIRED
~ Joe Ondreicka, Jackson, New Jersey, USA

"The Trading Game" WE FEEL THE LOVE
~ Yvan Strong, Portland, Oregon, USA

~ Katherine Chin, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

“Second Breakfast” LOL FUNNY
~ Jessica Williams, Manhattan, Kansas, USA



FAN focus

The Winners' Circle (2)

Caption Contest, Issue 6

We received many clever captions for this photo, which the magazine staff has been known to call "the Freaky Galadriel shot." Decipher's Chuck Kallenbach, a designer of *The Lord of the Rings* Trading Card Game and one of our contest judges, tells me that during game development, he and his fellow designers named this image "Celeborn! Take out

the garbage!" Chuck says they "reasoned that Galadriel put on her 'scary face' whenever she needed her husband to perform his chores."

The first-prize caption entry comes from Nancy Flynn of Columbus, Ohio, who is the recipient of a beautiful full-size replica of Sting provided by United Cutlery.

Our celebrated panel of judges—fans one and all—also honored four other imaginative caption scribes, each of whom won a miniature *The Lord of the Rings* sword replica from United Cutlery for their witty entries.

Thanks to everyone who sent in entries! ~ Carla Atkinson, Managing Editor

WINNERS



MERRY: "I don't think she knows about blonde jokes, Pip."

~ Nancy Flynn, Columbus, Ohio (FIRST PRIZE)

TAKING A TRIP TO LOTHLORIEN: 30 pieces of gold

MEETING GALADRIEL IN PERSON: 50 pieces of gold

GETTING AN ELVISH SOUVENIR GIFT: 150 pieces of gold

THE LOOK ON GALADRIEL'S FACE WHEN SHE READS YOUR THOUGHTS: Priceless!

~ Jared Chmelik, Thorp, Wisconsin, USA

UNAWARE OF HIS FOLLY, GIMLI ASKED GALADRIEL

FOR ANOTHER STRAND OF HAIR.

~ Jessica Williams, Manhattan, Kansas, USA

"We've secretly replaced Galadriel's regular coffee with The Light of Earendil.

Let's see what happens..."

~ Stephen Finney, Chicago, Illinois, USA

GALADRIEL REALIZES THAT GIMLI HAS SOLD HER LOCK OF HAIR ON E(LF)-BAY.

~ Susan Ford-McCarthy, Carmel, Indiana, USA

HONORABLE MENTIONS

"Ooooh ... Jalapeno Lembas."

~ James Flynn, Columbus, Ohio, USA

GALADRIEL: "ONLY 6
NOMINATIONS?!?!?"

~ Linda Neugent, San Luis Obispo,
California, USA

"High interest rates catch
YOU off guard?"

~ Kira Jones, McDonough, Georgia, USA

"Stay away from my
granddaughter, Aragorn!"

~ Tim Keaton, Ft. Wayne, Indiana, USA

"Yet hope remains, while the company
is true; but if I take the ring,
it'll ruin my 'do!"

~ Anne D. Hagins, Austin, Texas

TONIGHT AT 11:00: WHEN
ELVES DRINK COFFEE.

~ Shannon Elswick, via email

(À LA GLORIA SWANSON):

"I'm ready for my clooose-up
now Mr. Jackson."

~ Jennifer Roebuck, Baltimore,
Maryland, USA

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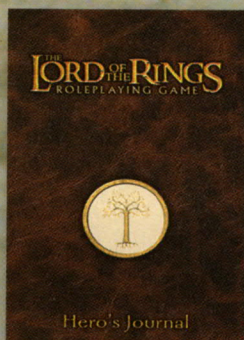
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- Includes a character generation summary

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[B] 103791 Aragorn Teaser

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[C] 103786 The Two Towers

[D] 103787 The Two Towers Legolas

[E] 103788 The One Ring

[F] 103789 Rohirrim and
The Three Hunters

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Fan Club members receive a 10% discount on all merchandise purchases. For information on joining The Lord of the Rings Fan Club, visit www.lotrfanclub.com.



A



B



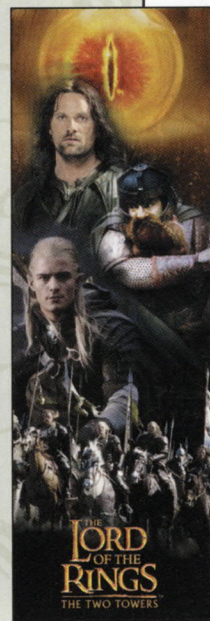
C



D



E



F

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[D] 103694 Bilbo's Pipe **\$179.00**
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Member price **\$161.10**

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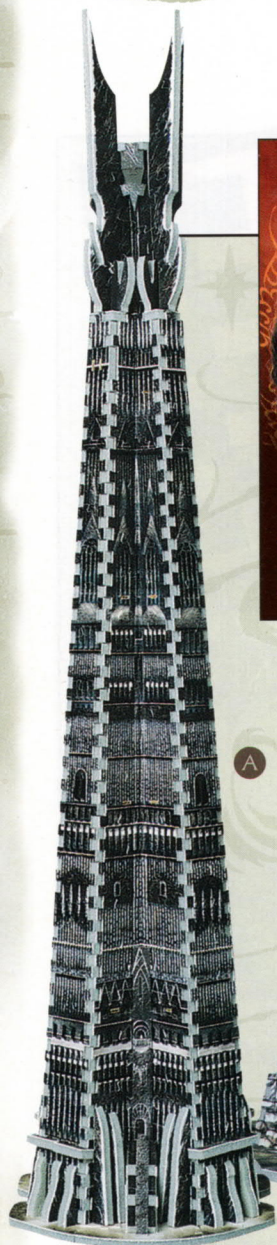


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A



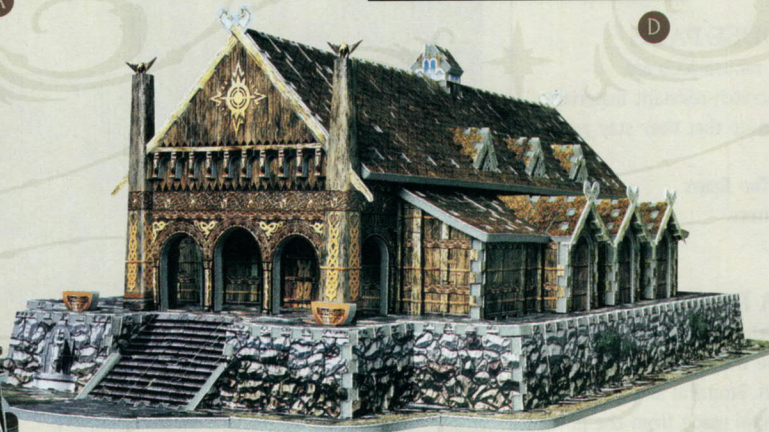
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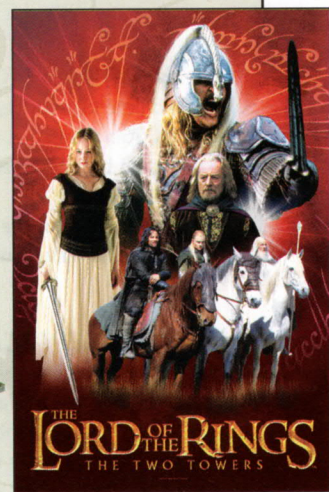
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[C] 103644 Three Hunters	\$14.95
[D] 103645 Frodo & Sam	\$14.95
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The Two Towers NEW ZEALAND STAMPS

The Two Towers New Zealand stamp set (showing all 6 stamps) is framed in black, double-matted, and includes a brass plaque with the series name and release date. The stamps include Aragorn and Éowyn, Gandalf the White, Easterlings, Frodo Captured, and Éowyn at Edoras. Sheetlets feature 2" x 4.5" full-color images surrounding each stamp and are double-matted. All sheetlets are provided with a complete frame, colored to match the stamp.

[A] SET 103138	\$89.95
Member Price	\$80.95
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[C] 103177 Orc Raider on Warg	\$39.95 each

[D] 103178 Gandalf the White	\$39.95 each
[E] 103179 Easterlings	\$39.95 each
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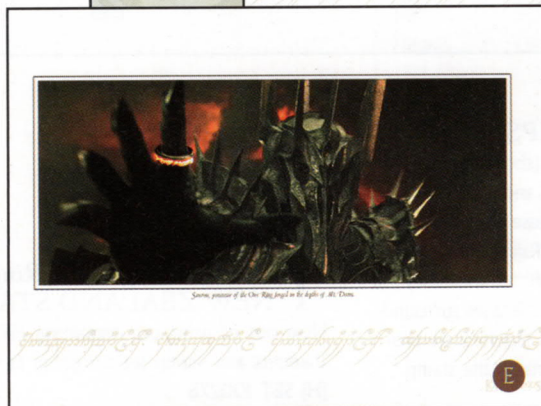
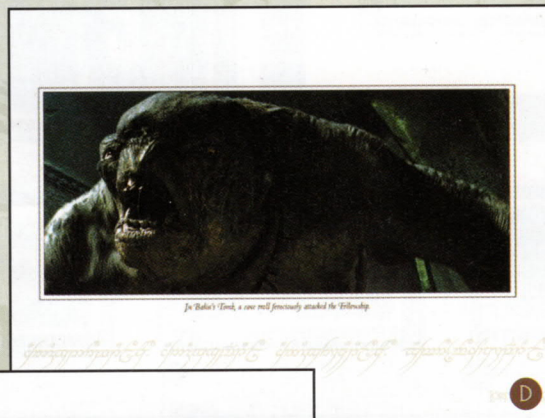
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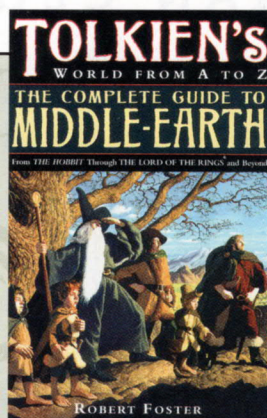
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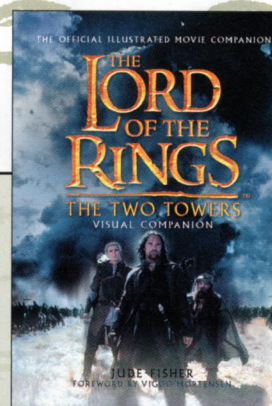
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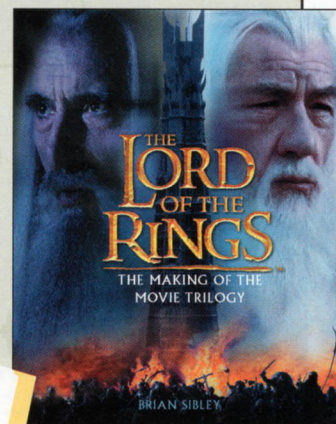
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An extraordinary look into the mind of Viggo Mortensen, whose boundless creativity touches a myriad of media, from photography to painting to poetry to acting. A CD with music and spoken-word poetry is included. Softcover, 7 3/4" x 7 3/4", 110 pages, 83 reproductions.

[A] 103141 \$25.00 Member Price \$22.50

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[A] GANDALF	100029
[B] SARUMAN	100030
[C] FRODO	100031
[D] URUK-HAI	100282

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Member Price

\$45.00 each

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Resin Kits are the same scale and design as the vinyl kits, but are molded in more durable and sharper resin material. Models are supplied unpainted, and some assembly is required.

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URUK-HAI	100283

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Member Price

\$89.00 each



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[A] 103521 **\$24.95** Member Price **\$22.50**

The Lord of the Rings RPG HERO'S JOURNAL

Take notes on your personal *The Lord of the Rings* adventures in this handy journal, which includes step-by-step instructions on creating an RPG character; plus 14 pages of charts for character skills and important details. Softcover, 32 pages.

[B] 103523 **\$9.95**
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Now you and your friends can enter Middle-earth and take on the roles of any character or hero you can imagine. Experienced gamers can leap right into this beautiful full-color book, and newcomers will appreciate the in-depth playing guide. Hardcover, 304 pages.

[C] 100266 **\$39.95**
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The Two Towers ADVENTURE GAME BOXED SET

This introductory role-playing game contains a 32-page Helm's Deep adventure narrative; a 24-page guide to the peoples and plains of Rohan; an explanation of the basic principles of role-playing games; full-color character sheets; two encounter maps; cutouts of the characters and monsters; and dice.

[D] 1000264 **\$30.00** each
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[E] 103374 **\$29.95**
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| 100196 | The Two Towers – Aragorn | \$10.99 each |
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|------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| 100158 | Realms of the Elf-lords | SOLD OUT |
| [E] 102000 | The Two Towers | \$3.29 each |
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\$2.96 each

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| 100159 | Realms of the Elf-Lords | SOLD OUT |
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| [F] 103444 | Battle of Helm's Deep | \$118.44 each |

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Deluxe starter sets contain 60 fixed cards, three randomly inserted rare cards from the new The Two Towers expansion, one 11-card booster pack, a rule book, glass bead tokens, a collector's card list, and a deck storage box.

[A] 103100 Elven	\$20.00 each
103101 Isengard	\$20.00 each
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Member Price	\$18.00 each

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103057 Fellowship Draft Pack	\$4.50
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Four-disc, special extended widescreen edition of *The Fellowship of the Ring* is re-edited and rescored, adding nearly 30 minutes of never-before-seen footage. Extras include the screen credits for *The Lord of the Rings* Fan Club charter members, four audio commentaries, and 18 behind-the-scenes featurettes. The film runs approximately 208 minutes. DVD is available only with Region-I encoding (suitable for North American DVD players).

[C] 100269	\$39.99	Member Price \$35.99
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The Fellowship of the Ring COLLECTOR'S DVD GIFT SET

The five-disc Gift Set contains the four discs of the Special Extended DVD Edition, as well as *The Lord of the Rings* Fan Club charter member screen credits; two bookend sculptures by Sideshow-Weta; the *National Geographic Beyond the Movie* DVD; an exclusive Hobbit-sized edition of *The Lord of the Rings* Fan Club Official Movie Magazine; and several collectible Decipher trading cards—all enclosed in a collector's box specially designed by Alan Lee.

[D] 100270	\$79.99	Member Price \$71.99
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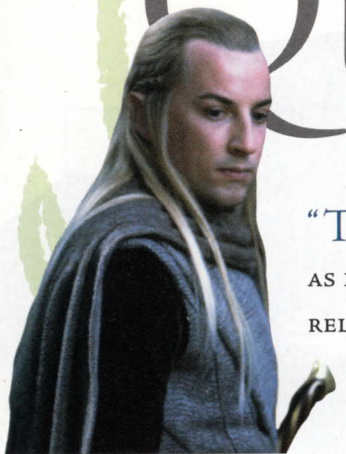
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Quoteworthy

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



“There is a wonderful sense OF OWNERSHIP AND PRIDE HERE. IT IS ALMOST AS IF everyone in this country EITHER WORKED ON, KNOWS SOMEONE, OR IS RELATED TO SOMEONE WHO WORKED ON THESE FILMS. WE ARE ALL VERY PROUD OF THEM. IT IS QUITE NICE. I THINK NEW ZEALAND SEES THEM AS ‘our little films we whipped up in Wellington.’” [Craig Parker, Haldir]



“EVEN WHEN [TREEBEARD IS] TOTALLY STATIC, SITTING IN THE STUDIO TWO YEARS LATER WITH A LAYER OF DUST ACROSS HIM, PEOPLE WHO COME TO VISIT THE WORKSHOP STILL WALK UP AND ARE TAKEN ABACK WHEN THEY SEE THAT there’s a face in the twisting tree. WHEN THEY SUDDENLY PICK OUT HIS EYES AMONGST THE TWISTING BARK AND THE KNOTS AND STUFF, THEY GO, ‘Oh my God!’ THEY SEE A CHARACTER AS OPPOSED TO A BIG PROP.” [Richard Taylor, Director, Weta Workshop]



“One of the most unusual DAYS THAT WE HAD WAS ON MOUNT COOK. ... WE WOULD SIT BY THIS BIG MOUNTAIN LAKE, AND IT WAS PERFECTLY, PERFECTLY SILENT APART FROM US GUYS CHATTING TO EACH OTHER, EATING BEAUTIFUL FOOD, AND LOOKING OUT ON THE VIEW. I REMEMBER BILLY SAYING TO ME, ‘What a day! [You’re] WITH YOUR BEST MATES ... ON THE TOP OF AN INCREDIBLE MOUNTAIN WITH NO ONE AROUND YOU, AND this is your life. YOU’RE GETTING PAID FOR IT.’” [Dominic Monaghan, Merry]



“LOOKING AT [A FILM EDIT] WITH FRESH EYES after a distance of time IS A REALLY EXCITING THING TO DO, BECAUSE THE SCRIPT PROBLEMS YOU COULDN’T GET YOUR HEAD AROUND AT THE TIME—BECAUSE YOU WERE SO TIRED OR SO BUSY—suddenly become obvious. ... IT’S AN INTERESTING PROCESS. BUT I NEVER REALLY GET TO A POINT WHERE I THINK SOMETHING IS PERFECT. I DO WORK ON IT UNTIL THERE IS NO MORE TIME LEFT.” [Peter Jackson, Director]



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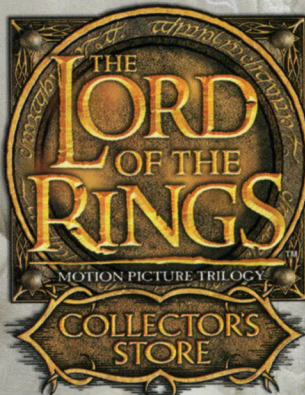


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