



News From Bree



The Official *Middle-earth™* PBM Newsletter
Issue 31, August '06

"Strange as News from Bree..."

The Lord of the Rings Chapter 9

The Talk at the Prancing Pony...

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What is Middle-earth PBM?

Middle-earth PBM is a turn-based strategic game set in the world of Tolkien's Middle-earth. For more details, please take a look at our website: www.middleearthgames.com

Featured Artist

Stuart Anderson.

Visit his site at:

www.geocities.com/Yosemite/Meadows/2667/

Picture This: Middle-earth Circa T.A. 1650

By Michael Martinez

Preamble

Only J.R.R. Tolkien knew what he thought Middle-earth should look like. Most people associate Middle-earth with medieval Europe, but there is little agreement on which part of Europe at what period of time. This series of articles suggests some ways Tolkien might have depicted his Middle-earth Circa T.A. 1650.

Tolkien often described himself as a Classicist, but in his view a Classicist was anyone concerned with history and literature from before the modern era (which began around the time Columbus reached America). By his own admission, Tolkien drew inspiration for Middle-earth from The Bible, ancient Egypt, Greek mythology, Anglo-Saxon poetry, Finnish poetry, Norse mythology, and events from his own lifetime. As numerous researchers have shown, Tolkien was probably also influenced by Babylonian traditions, Greek history, French history, Celtic history and folklore, and American ethnology.

"By wisdom the LORD laid the earth's foundations, by understanding he set the heavens in place."
--*Proverbs 3:19, NIV*

If you have learned anything about algebra, you should recall what a Cartesian coordinate system is. Two number lines, running from Infinity to Negative (or Opposite) Infinity, are laid cross each other to form four quadrants. The vertical number line is called the Y-axis and the horizontal number line is the X-axis. They cross at their zero points and that coordinate is denoted as (0,0). Many types of data are measured on these coordinate systems. Tolkien's development of Middle-earth can also be measured such a coordinate graph.

Think of the vertical (Y-axis) number line as representing all the years that Tolkien spent writing stories about imaginary peoples and times. He didn't set out to write about Middle-earth. His first mythology,

The Book of Lost Tales, was set in an imaginary prehistoric England, where the fairies had built a great civilization that was to be destroyed. The fairies would flee as Men arrived and colonized the British Isles, or they would diminish and become smallish creatures of legend and folklore.

Think of the horizontal (X-axis) number line as representing all the years of history and culture of which Tolkien was aware. He studied the ancient past and read Greek and Roman books in their original languages. He studied (and later taught) medieval English language and literature, as well as other languages including Gothic. He grew up in post Victorian England, served during the First World War, and began writing The Lord of the Rings just before World War II broke out. Tolkien had laid the foundations of Middle-earth prior to December 1937, but he never wholly stopped writing about it until just a few months before he died in 1973.

In a very liberal sense, we can say that the upper left-hand quadrant of our Cartesian plane of Tolkien influences represents his earliest years of development and the very ancient traditions that most heavily influenced his work. The lower right-hand quadrant of our Cartesian plane represents both Tolkien's later writings and the late influences upon them. Many of those influences consist of Tolkien's own earlier literature.

Middle-earth, as depicted in the first edition of *The Lord of the Rings*, begins at the Cartesian point (0,0). To picture the Middle-earth of Third Age 1650, we must therefore confine our speculations largely to the lower right-hand quadrant. That is, Tolkien really did not write much about this time period, but all that he wrote concerning it was composed after 1940. Most likely, it was composed after 1950, when Tolkien began working on the historical materials summarized in *The Lord of the Rings* appendices.

By 1950, Tolkien had moved on from the beloved Greek myths of his youth and had already spent 25 years of his life teaching Old English, Gothic, and related topics to his students. By 1950, Tom Bombadil had evolved from a silly poem about one of his children's toys into a serious pair of chapters in *The Lord of the Rings*. Tolkien in 1950 no longer wrote about tiny goblin feet pitter-pattering down a dusky road; instead, his Orcs clamoured to slaughter whomever stood in their way. And by 1950 Tolkien had lived through two wars more dreadful and deadly than any other wars in human history.

He was the wise Noldo of his own stories, old and wise beyond mortal years, burdened with the griefs of ancient losses of kith and kin, saddened by unending years of conflict between mortal enemies, pained by the encroaching paths of civilizations he did not fully appreciate.

Tolkien chose the year Third Age 1636 to inflict a devastating plague upon Middle-earth. Many readers assume that Tolkien modelled his Great Plague on the Black Death, which by some estimates killed 1 in every 3 or 4 Europeans. However, he could just as easily have had in mind the Great Influenza Epidemic of 1918, which is believed to have killed between 20 and 80 million people across the world. The 1918 epidemic killed more people than died of the Black Death.

Tales of the 1918 epidemic include accounts of people contracting the illness and dying from it within a day; of bodies piled high in morgues for lack of undertakers to bury them; of towns isolating themselves from the outside world; of hospitals being overwhelmed while they lacked doctors (who had either died or been drawn into the war in Europe). Spain is thought to have lost 8 million people to the flu. Britain lost about 250,000 people. The United States lost around 500,000 people. India lost about 16 million people. The 1951 Influenza Epidemic is said to have been even more deadly in some parts of England than the 1918 epidemic. Tolkien was still working on the LoTR appendices in 1951.

Unlike the historical epidemics, Tolkien's plague wiped out at least one nation or tribal group: the Stoors of Dunland. The only other significant impact of the Great Plague that Tolkien noted was the withdrawal of Gondorian forces from its frontier outposts, "for fewness of men". The forts in Mordor were abandoned, according to Appendix B. A few years later, Tolkien wrote in a subsequent text that Gondor withdrew its troops from the fort at Tharbad, where it had jointly used and guarded the great bridge with Arnor.

Arnor had, by 1636, become divided into three kingdoms (Arthedain, Rhodaur, and Cardolan), of which two had vanished. Arthedain now claimed rule over all of former Arnor and effectively controlled portions of Cardolan. Tyn Gorthad (the Barrow-downs) was so dangerous that when Arnor attempted to recolonize the region 200 years later, the attempt failed.

One consequence of the Black Death was the hastened breakdown of Europe's feudal manor system. There is no such manorial system in Middle-earth. Tolkien never mentions serfs or feudal estates in either Arnor or Gondor. Arnor had already suffered great loss in the War of the Last Alliance of Elves and Men. As in 14th century Europe, Arnor's labour force probably flourished for lack of manpower. Gondor, on the other hand, went into an

expansionistic imperial phase. While growth was slow and gradual, it would have discouraged the formation of feudal estates. By the time Gondor began its long decline, its economic system would have been rooted in other arrangements.

Hence, the Great Plague (like the 1918 Influenza Epidemic in England) did not alter the way Middle-earth did business, or Tolkien at least neglected to say as much. We can infer that whatever systems were in place survived, undoubtedly weakened but not to the point of collapse. Hence, even though some portions of countryside -- once well populated -- were emptied of occupants, the basic infrastructures remained intact. In Arnor, the kings maintained their armies, roads, and most importantly their laws. Their practical borders most likely shrank. They controlled less territory if only because so few people were left to govern.

One fact Tolkien doesn't mention, but which we can infer, is that the Orcs (and not simply the Easterlings and Southrons) must also have suffered from the Great Plague. Otherwise, even though the Easterlings were too weak to overrun their enemies, the Orcs should have risen up to take advantage of the Dunedain's weakness. No such arising occurred. The Orcs therefore lacked the numbers to reassert themselves as a threat, and that is probably why Sauron only had them creep stealthily back into Mordor.

One consequence of the Great Plague -- and of the Kin-Strife in Gondor -- would have been the loss (to the Dunedain) of much ancient lore. Plagues and wars have a way of killing off generations indiscriminately. Arnor and Gondor's cultures would therefore have been diminished. By Third Age 1650, there were probably many scrolls stored in Minas Tirith's libraries that could no longer be read except by the most learned of loremasters. And in Arnor, many old documents and libraries may simply have been left to rot in now-empty estates and villages.

The care and upkeep of roads and bridges should have declined. Remote outposts would have been abandoned or left to become self-sufficient communities like the Bree-land had become by the end of the Third Age. But Arnor would have retained one advantage over Gondor: there were still many High Elves living in northern Middle-earth. The last great exodus of the Noldor would not occur until the final years of the Third Age, when they would slip through the Shire without so much as bidding the Hobbits fare well and good luck in the coming war.

Three great centres of Mannish culture survived the Great Plague: Arnor (led by the kings at Fornost Erain), Gondor (led by the kings at Minas Anor), and Rhovanion (led by the descendants of Vidugavia). All three regions suffered terrible losses in the Great Plague, but they did not vanish or lose their monarchies. Their governments intact, they would last another 200 to 400 years before substantial changes altered their fates irrevocably.

In the next article, we'll examine southern Arnor and Dunland more closely.

Michael Martinez is a recognised authority on Tolkien and Middle-earth, and a published author on the subject.

Games Starting Soon

The following new games are filling up, so if you wish to play, get in touch! [Bracketed dates give the date the game started filling up.]

1650 2wk Gunboat [Game 34]:
8 duos available. [5/7/2006]

1650 2wk [Game 35]:
20 nations available. [13/7/2006]

2950 2wk [Game 23]:
3 nations available. [1/3/2006]

1000 2wk [Game 49]:
Third Test game - character and PC set-up updated. Ask for rules.
10 nations available. [9/4/2006]

Grudge Games

Scott Moyes: playing all 12 Free People nations in a 1650 game and looking for opposition.

Face to Face Games

UK Face to Face Game

We are trying to get a feel for how many people might be interested in playing in a UK FTF in a few months' time. Preferably around the beginning of September before UK term-time starts again, provisionally the weekend of the 1st-3rd September. We could run one in late August, but that's quite near in terms of planning. So how does that fit with those who would like to come? If you are interested, as ever, please get in touch.

Other Face to Face Games

We are able to organise Face to Face Games between teams in separate locations. So if you live outside the UK, and have a group of friends interested in playing in a Face to Face Game, please get in touch and we will see if we can organise a game, perhaps against a team in the UK.

A Face to Face What?!

Face to Face Events are weekend-long games of Middle-earth which take place, as the name suggests, at a single location. Turns are run at regular intervals through the weekend, and teams are assigned their own private areas to plan and write orders.

A fixed cost is paid for the entire weekend instead of per turn, the pace is hectic, and it is great fun - virtually everyone who has played one of these games is dying to play another one as soon as they can. It's a great way to learn a lot about the game, to chat to fellow players, and to meet us. Sleeping space is always available, but don't expect much sleep.

From Out West: Editorial

Apologies for the long hiatus with Bree, but we're now back on schedule and hope to bring it out at least once every two months, if not more regularly.

New features include the latest Player Ratings, news on forthcoming games and events, and Gaming Tips. These latter are short pieces of advice on playing Middle-earth PBM. They are divided into three categories - simple, medium and complex. We hope you find them useful, and if you have any similar advice you think others may benefit from, please send them in.

We will also be re-publishing articles from the Mouth of Sauron (an earlier Middle-earth PBM newsletter), which have been languishing unread for too long.

The A-Z of Middle-earth will be continued, with information taken from the Tolkien Gateway, the net's fastest growing Middle-earth wiki site. As will other semi-regular features such as Shelob's Web.

In addition, we hope to bring you articles not just about Middle-earth PBM, but all aspects of Tolkien's world. And we are proud to have secured an original series of articles by Michael Martinez, whose writing is never less than controversial!

But as this is a newsletter for you, we would like to know what you want to see in it. So please feel free to send us your comments and suggestions. And of course, if you have anything you wish to submit for publication, from gaming advice to pieces of fiction, from artwork to essays on the nature of Tolkien's reality, from game reports to, well, whatever takes your fancy, please send them in.

I think that is it for now, so until next time,

Good Gaming,

Clint

Maiden Voyage

by Heidi Wolters

The first part of a two-part article, originally printed in *Shadis* Magazine.

Maiden Voyage describes the first PBM gaming experience of someone who has never participated in a Play-By-Mail game before. Readers should remember that the impressions of a seasoned gamer may differ.

Part I

I was delighted when I was offered the chance to participate in Game Systems, Inc.'s Middle-Earth Play-By-Mail, and even more so when I received the start-up kit.

The first thing that impressed me was the art. On its cover, the rulebook sports an impressive rendition by Angus McBride of the scene at Minas Tirith when the gates have fallen and Gandalf stands face to face with the Witch-king. I also received a poster-quality terrain map of Middle-earth, with all of the pertinent regions. The only one missing was Eriador, the region which contains the Shire and Bree. The events covered in the game take place in the Third

Age, circa 1650, well before Hobbits made the larger political scene.

The rulebook itself is fairly straightforward, which is important those of us who, like myself, panic at the sight of anything more complex than a manual can opener. Sequence of events and character orders are neatly laid out, and there is a separate list of orders listed by skill type, number, and code. I have found this to be extremely helpful as it saves me the time and aggravation of rooting through the rulebook for every little thing.

There was only one problem: according to my nation's victory conditions, I am supposed to hold, at game's end, a population center belonging to an ally of mine. This bothered me somewhat, simply because the player in control of the nation to

Simple Tip

Having an army commander with lots of characters with command skill in their army issue order 435 is a quick way to enable all the characters to gain command rank. Useful for all-important tax changes, relationship downgrades and posting camps.

which that population center belongs is quite a pleasant fellow. There are twenty-five nations active in the game, which fall into three categories: Free Peoples, Neutrals, and Dark Servants. The Free Peoples are self-governing, as are the Neutrals. Sauron, Tolkien's Dark Lord of Mordor, holds sway over all of the nations of Dark Servants. Each side seeks to crush the other either by military, espionage, or the finding of the One Ring, an artifact that Sauron created and infused with his own power. Typically, the Free peoples try to find and destroy it, while the Dark Servants strive to return it to their Master and see the Free Peoples defeated. To the Neutrals (who cannot win on their own, and must choose a side before game's end) it can be a powerful bargaining tool if the player handles his or her position correctly and very carefully.

As in *The Lord of the Rings*, the Ring can only be destroyed in the fire of Mount Doom, in the very heart of Mordor. To accomplish this, a single character must find his or her way to Mount Doom. The order for the Ring's destruction/transferral must be given twice in the same turn, so the character cannot perform any other action that turn. They certainly don't make it easy.

My favorite nation is that of the Sinda Elves, and I was fortunate to be placed into a game where that position was open. GSI does their best to give each player his or her first choice in positions, but it's always best to have a second in mind, since there are no guarantees.

My first turn found me with several characters who are quite famous in Tolkien's realm, chief among them being Amroth, Nimrodel, and Thranduil. I have eight characters; three army commanders, two navy commanders, and two characters who are primarily mages but can also act as agents or emissaries. My forces were quite scattered at first, with my armies at the four corners of Mirkwood and my unattached characters frolicking in the fields by themselves. The armies I was given seemed a bit on the small side.



Among my first actions, of course, was the recruiting of a few hundred light and heavy infantry and some archers. I had my mage characters 'prentice magery,' an order which increases mage rank (a measure of how potent the mage is). Due to a lack of available revenue, I had the fellow defending my capital attempt to raise taxes to 50%. The population, of course, did not support this, so the attempt failed on several turns. Luckily, the rule is that if your nation's revenue fall below a viable level, taxes are automatically raised. It is, however, still possible to go bankrupt, once the tax rate reaches 100%, which will put you out of the game.

As I mentioned before, my forces were quite scattered. I had three armies in Mirkwood, one navy many miles east in Rhovanion, and one many miles southwest in Southern Gondor. At first, I decided to try to gather my forces together in Mirkwood, but the rivers aren't navigable that far north and

it would have taken too long to anchor the ships and march those troops overland. My first thought was, "great, these navies are just going to end up as Sauron's chew toys." It took some time of worrying over my navies and literally chasing shadows in Mirkwood for me to realize that, "hey, those little index cards with the funny writing on them that appear with every turn are not just strange props, but actual communications from possible allies!"

It's important, especially for players, who, like myself, are new to Play-By-Mail, to contact fellow players. I spent a long time being lazy and shy and suffered for it. Strong alliances and trade agreements can be formed and it is possible to pick up some useful information and strategies from more experienced players. My contact with two of the other players (the Woodmen and the Noldo Elves) has benefited me greatly. The player controlling the nation of the Woodmen is relatively new, but he was able to clue me in on where the good battles were going on, and we are supporting each other both with advice, and military aid. With his greater experience, the player controlling the Noldo Elves has been giving me advice on tactics and game diplomacy. Without his help, I would not have realized how important is to officially downgrade relations with enemy nations.

Armies tend to fight harder against opponents that they hate than against opponents they merely dislike. It's also nice to know that just because my armies are scattered, doesn't mean

they'll end up as cannon fodder due to inferior numbers. I have friends to watch my back.

Finally, my turn sheets, straightforward though they are, made much more sense to me after I was made aware of the 'sequence of events' sheets.

As the game stands now, I have an army under Commander Thranduil joining the Woodmen and Noldo Elves in the Siege of Goblin Gate, and one army in the south under Regent Amroth

about to engage the forces of the Dragon Lord near Dol Guldur, where I hope to meet up with my ally, Captain Waulfa of the Woodmen. Two mages are with Amroth's army. One of them is casting Barriers, a protection spell, and the other is summoning a wind storm. Nimrodel has just succeeded in slaying a Werewolf who'd been harassing one of my cities, and is moving to join one of the armies. One navy is guarding my nation's southernmost port city, and the other, under Commander Ohtar, is anchored at Ilanin, a city belonging to the Easterlings. The Easterlings are a Neutral nation, and as such must choose a side by the end of the game. It seems now that the Northmen are trying to aid in that attempt. These are my first experiences with combat and diplomacy, and I feel like I'm in a roller coaster car, poised at the top of the very first hill! My next result sheet should be very interesting indeed....

Hall of Fame: Game Winners

Game 239

2950 module, 11vs11 format, Grudge game. Ended on turn 30, 16/06/06

Victory went to the Dark Servants

Witch-King	John Briggs
Dragon Lord	Chris Meyer
Dog Lord	Drew Carson
Cloud Lord	Laurence Tilley
Blind Sorcerer	Jim Carson
Ice King	Drew Carson
Quiet Avenger	Laurence Tilley
Fire King	Jim Carson
Long Rider	Martin Cinke
Dark Lieutenants	James Howl
Corsairs	John Briggs

Game 221

2950 module, Grudge game
Ended on turn 15, 20/03/06

Victory went to the Free Peoples

Woodmen	Steven Mcabee
Northmen	Jason Mele
Riders of Rohan	Jason Mele
Dunadan Rangers	Steven Mcabee
Silvan Elves	Steven Mcabee
Northern Gondor	Jason Mele
Southern Gondor	Steven Mcabee
Dwarves	Steven Mcabee
Sinda Elves	Jason Mele
Noldo Elves	Jason Mele
Corsairs	Jason Mele
Dunlendings	Steven Mcabee

Game 220

2950 module, Gunboat game
Ended on 19/04/06

Victory went to the Dark Servants

Dragon Lord	Bradford Fisher
Dog Lord	Ken Shannon
Cloud Lord	Michael Joyce
Blind Sorcerer	Steven Mcabee
Ice King	Alan Jeffrey
Quiet Avenger	Frederick Young
Fire King	Frederick Young
Long Rider	Darren Frechette
Dark Lieutenants	Darren Frechette
Corsairs	Kevan Mull

Game 104

BOFA module, Beginners' Game
Ended on turn 10, 04/07/06

Victory went to the Free Peoples

Elves	Jeff Glover
Dwarves	Alicia Jenkins
Men	David Jenkins

Game 102

BOFA module, Beginners' Game
Ended on the 18/04/06

Victory was divided among the following

Elves	Glen Mayfield
Dwarves	Chris Shurtz
Men	Winston Shurtz
Warg Riders	John Knight

Game 86

1650 module, Gunboat variant
Ended on turn 30, 29/06/06

Victory went to the Dark Servants

Witch-King	Ulrik Bisgaard
Dragon Lord	John Folz
Dog Lord	Michael Seneca
Cloud Lord	Michael Seneca
Blind Sorcerer	Michael Seneca
Ice King	Darrell Swoap
Quiet Avenger	Phillip Vogel
Fire King	Phillip Vogel
Long Rider	Darrell Swoap
Dark Lieutenants	John Folz
Corsairs	John Folz
Rhudaur	Phillip Vogel

Game 70

1650 module, Gunboat variant
Ended on turn 34, 26/04/06

Victory went to the Dark Servants

Witch-King	Mike Barber
Dragon Lord	Kevin Ingram
Dog Lord	Bernie Gaider
Cloud Lord	Kevin Ingram
Blind Sorcerer	Javier Maqua
Ice King	Javier Maqua
Quiet Avenger	Bernie Gaider
Fire King	Bernie Gaider
Long Rider	Javier Maqua
Dark Lieutenants	Mike Barber
Corsairs	Kevin Ingram
Rhudaur	Mike Barber

Game 52

1650 module, Gunboat Variant
Ended on turn 46, 12/04/06

Victory went to the Free Peoples

Eothraim	Paul Leard
Cardolan	William Frankenhoff
Northern Gondor	George Martinez
Sinda Elves	Paul Leard
Noldo Elves	Paul Leard
Haradwaith	George Martinez
Dunlendings	George Martinez

Game 41

Fourth-age module, 3-way Grudge game
Ended on 09/05/06

Victory went to the following

South Kingdom	Ernest Hakey
Raggers	Matt Ashley
Nameless	Kyle Ford
Black Mask	Ernest Hakey
Rhun Easterlings	Desiree Ford
Akallabeth Cabal	Paul Sacco
Sons of Owain	Dave Griffiths
Ash Pit Goblins	Gregory Bair

Game 24

2950 module, Gunboat game
Ended on turn 44, 07/04/06

Victory went to the Dark Servants

Dragon Lord	Matt Ashley
Dog Lord	Matt Lincoln
Cloud Lord	Jeremy Ford
Blind Sorcerer	Jeremy Ford
Ice King	David Bronaugh
Quiet Avenger	Russell Floyd
Fire King	Jeremy Ford
Long Rider	Matt Lincoln
Dark Lieutenants	Matt Ashley
Corsairs	Matt Ashley
White Wizard	Russell Floyd

Medium Tip

Army commanders at your capital (or elsewhere where they can issue a 320 order) are ideal for doing those very important orders such as Natsells. I always make sure it's my army commander at my capital doing the 325 order (or 315 order if we're doing a buy-out), so that they can't be affected by any enemy characters and are relatively immune to agents as well.

Game 22

2950 module, Individual variant
Ended on turn 9, 05/05/06

Victory went to the Dark Servants

Witch-King	Glen Mayfield
Dragon Lord	John Briggs
Dog Lord	Eugene Dunkley
Cloud Lord	Darren Beyer
Blind Sorcerer	Paul Ledakowich
Ice King	Chris Shurtz
Quiet Avenger	Winston Shurtz
Fire King	Robert Shurtz
Long Rider	John Knight
Dark Lieutenants	Scott Hart
Corsairs	Jason Mele
Khand Easterlings	Miles Fagrie

Game 11

1650 module, 12 vs 12, Grudge game
Ended on turn 11, 22/06/06

Victory went to the Free Peoples

Woodmen	Bernd Luehrsen
Northmen	R Kevin Given
Eothraim	Drew Carson
Arthedain	Timothy Huiatt
Cardolan	Tony Huiatt
Northern Gondor	David Holt
Southern Gondor	Martin Cinke
Dwarves	Tony Huiatt
Sinda Elves	Bernd Luehrsen
Noldo Elves	James Howl
Corsairs	David Holt
Dunlendings	Timothy Huiatt

Game 63

1650 module, Individual variant
Ended on turn 45, 22/05/06

Victory went to the Dark Servants

Witch-King	Derek Livingston
Dragon Lord	Stephen Allen
Dog Lord	Richard Wilson
Cloud Lord	Michael Welsch
Blind Sorcerer	Piergiorgio Della Porta
Rodiani	
Ice King	Nick Blanchard
Quiet Avenger	Michael Absolom
Fire King	Brian Medus
Long Rider	Michael Welsch
Dark Lieutenants	Jeffrey Horne
Dunlendings	David Lovett
Rhudaur	Michae, Welsch
Easterlings	Ian Etchells

Game 16

1650 module, Individual Power variant
Ended on 20/04/06

Victory went to the Dark Servants

Witch-King	John Lamulle
Dragon Lord	John Lamulle
Dog Lord	Mike Barber
Cloud Lord	David Holt
Blind Sorcerer	Timofey Dvoskin
Ice King	Jeff Glover
Quiet Avenger	Kevin O'keefe
Fire King	Keith Bowen
Long Rider	Anders Stockmarr
Dark Lieutenants	Steven Mcabee
Haradwaith	Wade Buhr
Rhudaur	Otis David Pearson

Game 1

1650 module, 12 vs 12, Grudge game
Ended on turn 18, 20/06/06

Victory went to the Dark Servants

Witch-King	Mark Jeffries
Dragon Lord	Sam Roads
Dog Lord	Ed Lane
Cloud Lord	Mark Jeffries
Blind Sorcerer	Clint Oldridge
Ice King	Tim Jones
Quiet Avenger	Clint Oldridge
Fire King	Tim Jones
Long Rider	Sam Roads
Dark Lieutenants	Ed Lane
Haradwaith	Clint Oldridge
Rhudaur	Sam Roads



Gunboat Strategies: Some thoughts

By Clint Oldridge

I've played a fair bit of Gunboat now (and so far have been lucky enough to be on the winning team each time, though I don't hold out much hope for one of my games at present!). So I thought I'd pass on some of my experience with the format. Note this isn't anything official, just some random meanderings of my twisted mind.

Have a goal

It's all too easy to get into a process of running turns without a plan. If you have two nations that are close together on the map then clearly it is worth organising them so that any military, economic (inf-othering) or agent/curse hit all combine together for maximum impact. Ideally you can plan it so that you get all the various bits and pieces to impact all at the same time. Although this advice is appropriate for all games, I think in GB it's particularly important as you can't rely on allies to help out (other than through pure luck).

Talking about allies...

Help them wherever you can. If they ask for assistance give it! If you've got a curses item then pass it on if you've finished with it, or if you've picked up a particularly juicy item then pass it on if it's going to be better used elsewhere. Monetary aid is clearly the biggest form of help. I've heard so many Rhudaur players complain that they've had no assistance, and that seems pure foolishness on the other players' part – Rhudaur is the best buffer zone in the game!

Regional play

The variant is very different to normal games, where you can ask for help from others – “I just need another 1000 HI to come and help take 2715....”. It's very unlikely that you're going to be able to pull together enough of a hit to take out an opposing player, but you can generally control an area. I've found that you can control the economy of opposing players much more efficiently than you can in other games. Economies are very restricted – most games see the market drop and stay low, so be prepared.

Long term vs short term gain

My general style in normal games is to go for a quicker style of play. But I've found that although that can work in GB as well (1000, 1650, 2950), it's generally better to play for a slightly longer game and therefore develop your nation accordingly. Multi-class characters are therefore much more interesting to me in this format. Same goes for economic development. I'd probably still say that it's not important for some nations – they've got more economy than they can ever handle, but even so, each camp you create is one the enemy doesn't.

Camps

Create them. It seems stupid, but I've been in so many games where come turn 20 there are still camp locations out there.

Big artifacts

In a similar vein to my camp comment, it's surprising how long some of the bigger items take to be picked up. Well

worth the odd 428 later on in the game, even if you're the Dwarf/Northmen combo.

Aggression

Remember that the best form of defence is attack.

Joining together

Two heads are better than one. The latest format of GB allows you to join with an ally to share the load of the turns – seems like a good idea to me. I sometimes get lost in the turns, and an insight from another player is very useful...

Information gathering

Sometimes you can double characters if they turn up on a PC you control (and enemy characters all of the time). Palantirs and information gathering spells are much more useful, and I often throw out a 925 just to check what's going on. Then there's the diplos...

Diplomacy

If there is a limited form of diplomacy allowed (50 words per 5 turns), then I advise you to take advantage of it. Even if you don't find the information that you gain from other players' diplos to be very useful, it can give others an insight into what's going on, and help to plan appropriately. If nothing else, just listing your PCs will give others a good insight into your economy, and saves on guesswork. Plans for military/agent/emissary attacks seem particularly appropriate as well – you can then join in...

My favourite duo

1650 FP: it has to be the Cardolan/Sinda, although playing North Gondor/Dunlendings is an interesting challenge – just how many troops can you put out? 1650 DS: WitchKing/Dark Lieu – just incredibly strong with massive amounts of options for play, but Corsair/Dragon Lord is a big challenge and lots of fun.

2950: Riders/Rhun – well, I am a military man after all, and for DS: Ice King/Dark Lieu, although I think I like the challenge of the WW/QA combo as well – how to keep the WW alive seems the hardest question to answer there.

1000: one agent and one conjure mount nation – they work very well together in my opinion.

Have your own opinion

These are just my thoughts on the subject. Part of the beauty of GB is that you can do your own thing... I've had dwarves conjuring mounts naming Mages as fast as I could for example – great fun. Seen some beautiful and weird play and especially so in this format.

The ultimate GB experience

12v12 format – I'm presently on turn 17 of my Grudge game and my, is it fun. Much, much harder than a normal game, and I'm playing against Brad and Wade (sharing their 12 nations between them). I think I'm my own worse enemy and have learnt my limits in this format...next time FP though...

A-Z of Tolkien...

Taken from tolkiengateway.net

Balrogs

Balrogs (Sindarin for "Demon of Might"; the Quenya form is Valarauko or Valarauco) were menacing creatures about twice the height of a man, made equally of fire and shadow and with a fiery whip of many thongs. They induced great terror in allies and foes alike and could shroud themselves in darkness and shadow. Gandalf defeated a Balrog while the Fellowship of the Ring escaped Moria in *The Fellowship of the Ring*.

History

The Balrogs were originally Maiar, of the same order as Sauron and Gandalf, but they became seduced by Morgoth, who corrupted them to his service in the days of his splendour before the coming of the Elves. During the First Age, they were among the most feared of Morgoth's forces. When his fortress of Utumno was destroyed by the Valar, many were destroyed, but some fled and lurked in the pits of Angband or escaped across the Blue Mountains to eastern Middle-earth. In the Third Age the Dwarves of Khazad-dûm awakened a Balrog while mining for mithril, and were cast out.

The Balrogs were first encountered by the Elves during the Dagor-nuin-Giliath ("Battle under the Stars") in the First Age. After the great victory of the Noldor over Morgoth's Orcs, Fëanor pressed on towards Angband, but the Balrogs came against him. He was mortally wounded by Gothmog, Lord of Balrogs (the only Balrog known by his name). Though his sons fought off the demons of fire, Fëanor died of his wounds soon after, and his spirit departed for the Halls of Mandos.

Balrogs have been very elusive since the First Age; if Sauron had any in his service during the Second Age or the War of the Ring, they were never revealed. Tolkien described only one Balrog after the War of Wrath: Durin's Bane. It is believed to have been the last Balrog in Middle-earth, and is certainly the best known.

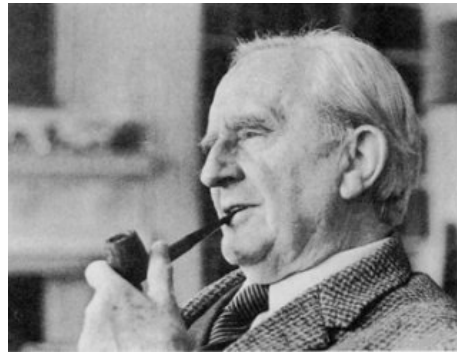
Do Balrogs Have Wings?

Discussion has arisen as to whether the Balrogs had wings. The debate mainly arises from the "The Bridge of Khazad-dûm", the fifth chapter in *The Fellowship of the Ring*. There are two references in this chapter. The first: "His enemy halted again, facing him, and the shadow about it reached out like two vast wings."

J.R.R. Tolkien: Part I - Biography

Taken from tolkiengateway.net

Part II – His Writing, to follow next issue



J.R.R. Tolkien in 1972, in his study at Merton Street

John Ronald Reuel Tolkien (January 3, 1892 – September 2, 1973) is an author best known for *The Hobbit* and its sequel trilogy *The Lord of the Rings*. He worked as reader and professor in English language at the University of Leeds from 1920 to 1925; as professor of Anglo-Saxon language at Oxford from 1925 to 1945; and of English language and literature from 1945 to 1959. A strongly committed Catholic, Tolkien was a close friend of C.S. Lewis, and a member of the Inklings, a literary discussion group to which both Lewis and Owen Barfield belonged.

In addition to *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien's published fiction includes *The Silmarillion* and other posthumous books about what he called a legendarium, a fictional mythology of the remote past of Earth, called Arda, and Middle-earth (from middangeard, the lands inhabitable by Men) in particular. Most of these posthumously published works were compiled from Tolkien's notes by his son Christopher Reuel Tolkien. The enduring popularity and influence of Tolkien's works have established him as the "father of the modern high fantasy genre". Tolkien's other published fiction includes adaptations of stories originally told to his children and not directly related to the legendarium.

The Tolkien Family

Although records are unclear, many of Tolkien's paternal ancestors were craftsmen. The Tolkien family had its roots in Saxony (present-day Germany), but had been living in England since the 18th century, becoming "quickly and intensely English (not British)" (Letters, 165). The surname Tolkien is anglicised from Tollkühn, German: tollkühn, "foolhardy". The etymological

English translation would be "dull-keen", a literal translation of "oxymoron". The character of Professor Rashbold in *The Notion Club Papers* is a pun on the name.

Childhood

Tolkien was born on January 3, 1892, in Bloemfontein in the Orange Free State (now Free State), South Africa, to Arthur Reuel Tolkien (1857 – 1896), an English bank manager, and his wife Mabel née Suffield (1870 – 1904). Tolkien had one sibling, his younger brother, Hilary Arthur Reuel, who was born on February 17, 1894.

While living in Africa he developed a severe fear of spiders after being bitten by a large tarantula out in their garden. When he was three, Tolkien went to England with his mother and brother on what was intended to be a lengthy family visit. His father, however, died in South Africa of a severe brain haemorrhage before he could join them. This left the family without an income, so Tolkien's mother took him to live with her parents in Birmingham, England. Soon after in 1896, they moved to Sarehole (now in Hall Green), then a Worcestershire village, later annexed to Birmingham. He enjoyed exploring Sarehole Mill, Moseley Bog, and the Clent and Lickey Hills, which would later inspire scenes in his books, along with other Worcestershire towns and villages such as Bromsgrove, Alcester and Alvechurch, and places such as his aunt's farm of Bag End, the name of which would be used in his fiction.



Ronald and Hilary Tolkien in 1905

Mabel tutored her two sons, and Ronald, as he was known in the family, was a keen pupil. She taught him a great deal of botany, and she awoke in her son the enjoyment of the look and feel of plants. Young Tolkien liked to draw landscapes and trees. But his favourite lessons were those concerning languages, and his mother taught him the rudiments of Latin very early. He could read by the age of four, and could write fluently soon afterwards. He attended King Edward's

There is nothing special in this on its own. The Balrog carried with itself a shadow that assumed a wing like form. The next reference is what forms the debate.

"...suddenly it drew itself up to a great height, and its wings were spread from wall to wall..."

Readers usually make their own interpretation of this, and feel it to be quite obvious. However, it can be seen in two possible ways. For some, the Balrog has a shadow that assumes a wing-like form. Later, this shadow is spread from wall to wall. Others, however, think that the Balrog has actual wings that are spread from wall to wall. There is no real conclusion to the debate, and it will probably continue as long as Tolkien has readers.

Arguments For Balrog Wings

The most common argument for those supporting Balrog wings is the second reference in "The Bridge of Khazad-dûm". The people supporting Balrog wings believe the sentence to mean that the Balrog had literal wings spreading from wall to wall. There are also other references that may be taken as evidence of Balrog wings. These usually involve discussions about references to speed of travel: "Swiftly they arose, and they passed with winged speed over Hithlum, and they came to Lammoth as a tempest of fire."

– *Morgoth's Ring, The Later Quenta Silmarillion*: "Of the Rape of the Silmarils"

Here, the Balrogs are said to move "with winged speed". This is usually taken as a metaphor for moving very quickly, but there are people who believe this is a strong argument for Balrog wings.

Arguments Against Balrog Wings

The first reference to the Balrog is one of the main arguments against wings, as it explicitly refers to "wings of shadow" instead of physical wings. Another common argument is that Balrogs are never exactly described as flying, unless one assumes "winged speed" means flying. There are also numerous situations where a Balrog could have either saved or helped itself by flying but didn't do so:

"Many are the songs that have been sung of the duel of Glorfindel with the Balrog upon a pinnacle of rock in that high place; and both fell to ruin in the abyss."

– *Quenta Silmarillion*, Chapter 23, "Of Tuor and the Fall of Gondolin"
And:

"I threw down my enemy, and he fell from the high place, and broke the mountain-side where he smote it in his ruin."

– *The Two Towers*, Chapter 5, "The White Rider"

School, Birmingham and, while a student there helped "line the route" for the coronation parade of King George V, being posted just outside the gates of Buckingham Palace. He later attended St Philip's School and Exeter College, Oxford.

His mother converted to Roman Catholicism in 1900, despite vehement protests by her Baptist family. She died of diabetes in 1904, when Tolkien was twelve, at Fern Cottage, Rednal, which they were then renting. For the rest of his life, Tolkien felt that she had become a martyr for her faith; this had a profound effect on his own Catholic beliefs. Tolkien's devout faith was significant in the conversion of C.S. Lewis to Anglicanism.

During his subsequent orphan hood he was brought up by Father Francis Xavier Morgan of the Birmingham Oratory, in the Edgbaston area of Birmingham. He lived there in the shadow of Perrott's Folly and the Victorian tower of Edgbaston waterworks, which may have influenced the images of the dark towers within his works. Other strong influences were the Romantic medievalist paintings of Edward Burne-Jones and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood; the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery has a large and world-renowned collection of works and had put it on free public display from around 1908.



J.R.R. Tolkien in 1911

Youth

Tolkien met and fell in love with Edith Mary Bratt, three years his senior, at the age of sixteen. Father Francis forbade him from meeting, talking, or even corresponding with her until he was twenty-one. He obeyed this prohibition to the letter.

In 1911, while they were at King Edward's School, Birmingham, Tolkien and three friends, Rob Gilson, Geoffrey Smith and Christopher Wiseman, formed a semi-secret society which they called "the T.C.B.S.", the initials standing for "Tea Club and Barrovian Society", alluding to their fondness of drinking tea in Barrow's Stores near the school and, illegally, in the school library. After leaving school, the members

stayed in touch, and in December 1914, they held a "Council" in London, at Wiseman's home. For Tolkien, the result of this meeting was a strong dedication to writing poetry.

In the summer of 1911, Tolkien went on holiday in Switzerland, a trip that he recollects vividly in a 1968 letter (Letters, no. 306), noting that Bilbo's journey across the Misty Mountains ("including the glissade down the slithering stones into the pine woods") is directly based on his adventures as their party of twelve hiked from Interlaken to Lauterbrunnen, and on to camp in the moraines beyond Mürren. Fifty-seven years later, Tolkien remembers his regret at leaving the view of the eternal snows of Jungfrau and Silberhorn ("the Silvertine (Celebdil) of my dreams"). They went across the Kleine Scheidegg on to Grindelwald and across the Grosse Scheidegg to Meiringen. They continued across the Grimsel Pass and through the upper Valais to Brig, and on to the Aletsch glacier and Zermatt.



Tolkien in 1916, wearing his British Army uniform in a photograph from the middle years of WWI

On the evening of his twenty-first birthday, Tolkien wrote to Edith a declaration of his love and asked her to marry him. She replied saying that she was already engaged, but had done so because she had believed Tolkien had forgotten her. The two met up, and beneath a railway viaduct renewed their love, with Edith returning her ring and choosing to marry Tolkien instead. A condition of their engagement was that she was to convert to Catholicism for him. They were engaged in Birmingham, in January 1913, and married in Warwick, England, on March 22, 1916.

With his childhood love of landscape, he visited Cornwall in 1914 and he was said to have been deeply impressed by the singular Cornish coastline and sea. After graduating from the University of Oxford (Exeter College, Oxford) with a first-class degree in English language in 1915, Tolkien joined the British Army effort in World War I, and

In both the duel with Glorfindel and with Gandalf, the Balrog fell from a great height and did not use its wings. Obviously, it is possible that the wings could not be used for flying. This could be due to its size or its current physical condition (injury or exhaustion as a result of combat). However, even the size of Balrogs are a matter of dispute. Tolkien gives a few statements of the Balrog's size. "[The Balrog] strode to the fissure, no more than man-high yet terror seemed to go before it." – "The Treason of Isengard", Chapter 10, "The Mines of Moria II: The Bridge"

This does not appear in the published version of *The Lord of the Rings*, so it may or may not be taken as a proof. But when the Balrog does engage the Fellowship, it passes through an entrance.

The entrance is sized so that "...orcs one after another leaped into the chamber." and "...clustered in the doorway." (*The Fellowship of the Ring*, Chapter 5, "The Bridge of Khazad-dûm"). Though these statements are open to interpretation, it is conjectured that Balrogs cannot be very large (clearly not as large as portrayed in Peter Jackson's movie) to fit through such an entrance. The Balrog's size matters both because a large size would make it unlikely that its wings were functional, and also because during the confrontation with Gandalf, its wings were said to span the width of the chasm. Physical wings on such a small creature could not possibly do this, thus the belief that they are metaphorical wings of shadow.

Some think the strongest objection is the simplest: that taking references like the second statement seriously mean that all lines must be taken literally. For example, shortly before the Balrog's appearance, "Gandalf came flying down the steps and fell to the ground in the midst of the Company". But few would believe that Gandalf literally flew.

Are There Any Balrogs Left in Middle-earth?

Yes, there is still a possibility that Balrogs are still lurking out there. After the last battle of the First Age some Balrogs escaped the Valar's wrath and hid deep underground. The Silmarillion tells us that: "The Balrogs were destroyed, save some few that fled and hid themselves in caverns inaccessible at the roots of the earth..."

served as a second lieutenant in the eleventh battalion of the Lancashire Fusiliers. His battalion was moved to France in 1916, where Tolkien served as a communications officer during the Battle of the Somme, until he came down with trench fever on October 27, and was moved back to England on November 8. Many of his fellow servicemen, as well as many of his closest friends, were killed in the war. During his recovery in a cottage in Great Haywood, Staffordshire, England, he began to work on what he called *The Book of Lost Tales*, beginning with *The Fall of Gondolin*. Throughout 1917 and 1918 his illness kept recurring, but he had recovered enough to do home service at various camps, and was promoted to lieutenant. When he was stationed at Kingston upon Hull, one day he and Edith went walking in the woods at nearby Roos, and Edith began to dance for him in a thick grove of hemlock. This incident inspired the account of the meeting of Beren and Lúthien, and Tolkien often referred to Edith as his Lúthien.

Oxford

Tolkien's first civilian job after World War I was at the Oxford English Dictionary (among others, he initiated the entries "wasp" and "walrus"). In 1920 he took up a post as Reader in English language at the University of Leeds, and in 1924 was made a professor there, but in 1925 he returned to Oxford as a professor of Anglo-Saxon at Pembroke College.

Tolkien and Edith had four children: John Francis Reuel (November 17, 1917 - January 22, 2003), Michael Hilary Reuel (October 1920–1984), Christopher John Reuel (1924) and Priscilla Anne Reuel (1929). Tolkien assisted Sir Mortimer Wheeler in the unearthing of a Roman Asclepieion at Lydney Park, Gloucestershire, in 1928. During his time at Pembroke, Tolkien wrote *The Hobbit* and the first two volumes of *The Lord of the Rings*. Of Tolkien's academic publications, the 1936 lecture "Beowulf: the Monsters and the Critics" had a lasting influence on Beowulf research.

In 1945, he moved to Merton College, Oxford, becoming the Merton Professor of English Language and Literature, in which post he remained until his retirement in 1959. Tolkien completed *The Lord of the Rings* in 1948, close to a decade after the first sketches. During the 1950s, Tolkien spent many of his long academic holidays at the home of his son John Francis in Stoke-on-Trent. Tolkien had an intense dislike for the side effects of industrialisation, which he considered a devouring of the English countryside. For most of his adult life he eschewed automobiles, preferring to ride a

bicycle. This attitude is perceptible from some parts of his work, such as the forced industrialisation of The Shire in *The Lord of the Rings*.



The last known photograph of Tolkien, taken 9 October 1972, next to one of his favourite trees (a *Pinus nigra*) in the Botanic Garden, Oxford

W.H. Auden was a frequent correspondent and long-time friend of Tolkien's, initiated by Auden's fascination with *The Lord of the Rings*: Auden was among the most prominent early critics to praise the work. Tolkien wrote in a 1971 letter,

"I am [...] very deeply in Auden's debt in recent years. His support of me and interest in my work has been one of my chief encouragements. He gave me very good reviews, notices and letters from the beginning when it was by no means a popular thing to do. He was, in fact, sneered at for it."

– The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien, #327

Retirement and Old Age

During his life in retirement, from 1959 up to his death in 1973, Tolkien increasingly turned into a figure of public attention and literary fame. The sale of his books was so profitable that Tolkien regretted he had not taken early retirement. While at first he wrote enthusiastic answers to reader inquiries, he became more and more suspicious of emerging Tolkien fandom, especially among the hippy movement in the USA. Already in 1944, he made a somewhat sarcastic comment about a fan letter by a twelve-year-old American reader ("It's nice to find that little American boys do really still say 'Gee Whiz'." Letters no. 87). In a 1972 letter he deplores having become a cult-figure, but admits that

"Even the nose of a very modest idol (younger than Chu-Bu and not much older than Sheemish) cannot remain entirely untickled by the sweet smell of incense!"

– The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien, #336.

How Many Balrogs Were There?

In one of Tolkien's early Middle-earth writings, *Lay of the Children of Húrin*, "Lungothrin, Lord of Balrogs" is mentioned. It is not, however, certain if it was another name for Gothmog, or it simply meant "a Balrog lord". According to Christopher Tolkien, the latter is more probable, as the name Gothmog was mentioned in the earliest Middle-earth writings, as well as the final version of Tolkien's mythology.

The Balrogs were originally envisioned as being immense in number:

"The early conception of Balrogs makes them less terrible, and certainly more destructible, than they afterwards became: they existed in 'hundreds' (p. 170), and were slain by Tuor and the Gondothlim in large numbers: "thus five fell before Tuor's great axe Dramborleg, three before Ecthelion's sword, and two score were slain by the warrior's of the king's house."

– *The Book of Lost Tales 2*, commentary by Christopher Tolkien on "The Fall of Gondolin"

"There came wolves and serpents and there came Balrogs one thousand, and there came Glomund the Father of Dragons."

– "The Lost Road and Other Writings", *Quenta Silmarillion*, Chapter 16, §15

As the legendarium became more formidable and internally consistent, and the Balrogs more terrible, this number was much reduced. In the end Tolkien stated that there were probably "at most" seven Balrogs:

"In the margin my father wrote: "There should not be supposed more than say 3 or at most 7 ever existed."
– "Morgoth's Ring", Section 2 (AAm): note 10

It should however be noted that these texts postdate the published *The Lord of the Rings*, but predate the materials from which the published *The Silmarillion* was drawn. The exact number of Balrogs is therefore very uncertain, but Tolkien's note above seems to have been his final word. However, the number of 3 would require the rewriting of much of *The Silmarillion*, and even the number of 7 causes conflicts. At least two Balrogs were killed at Gondolin, part of a group of more. All others save one were destroyed during the War of Wrath, and yet there were still enough there to allow Durin's Bane to flee from the battle unnoticed. While "thousands" clearly is not according to the author's intent, a more probable number, taking into account the writings, is that there were at least a dozen.

Fan attention became so intense that Tolkien had to take his phone number out of the public directory, and eventually he and Edith moved to Bournemouth, on the south coast. Tolkien was awarded a CBE ("Commander of the British Empire") by Queen Elizabeth II at Buckingham Palace on March 28, 1972.

Edith Tolkien died on November 29, 1971, at the age of eighty-two, and Tolkien had the name Lúthien engraved on the stone at Wolvercote Cemetery, Oxford. When Tolkien died 21 months later on September 2, 1973, at the age of 81, he was buried in the same grave, with Beren added to his name, so that the engraving now reads:

*Edith Mary Tolkien,
Lúthien,
1889 – 1971*

*John Ronald Reuel Tolkien,
Beren,
1892 – 1973*

Posthumously named after Tolkien are the Tolkien Road in Eastbourne, East Sussex, and the asteroid 2675 Tolkien. Tolkien Way in Stoke-On-Trent is named after J.R.R.'s son Father John Francis Tolkien, who used to be the priest in charge at the nearby Roman Catholic Church of Our Lady of the Angels and St. Peter in Chains.



The grave of J.R.R. and Edith Tolkien

Your Tip

Have some advice to offer?

If so, your tip could be here!

Email it to bree@middleearthgames.com

Player Ratings

For more information on how these ratings are calculated, and what each means, please take a look at our website:

www.middleearthgames.com

Valar Rating

Ranking	Rating	Player
1	2080	John Seals
2	1826	Mike Sankey
3	1760	Robert Turkot
=4	1730	David Ruzic
=4	1730	James Adams
6	1714	Mike Barber
7	1709	Rick Halvorsen
8	1707	David Holt
9	1685	Joel Mason
10	1684	Anders Stockmarr

Ainur Rating

Ranking	Rating	Team Name Or Captain
1	1853	David Ruzic
2	1799	Us 2
3	1786	Aussie
4	1777	Gm
5	1743	Andraste
6	1740	The Sarumen
7	1735	Us 1
8	1732	John Simpson
9	1716	Jerry Mellerick
10	1703	Marc Pinsonneault

Council of the Wise – Individual Player

Ranking	Votes	Player
1	26	Ernest Hakey
2	21	Ricard Pitarque
3	14	David Holt
4	12	Harry Nikokavouras
5	11	Steven Mcabee
=5	11	John Lamulle
=5	11	John Gates
=5	11	Chris Guise
=9	10	Gareth Gillingham
=9	10	Ian Etchells
=9	10	Tonia Hartofylaka
=9	10	Brad Stephens

Maia Rating

Ranking	Rating	Player
1	2019	Ernest Hakey
2	1878	Michael Mulka
3	1868	Alan Jeffrey
4	1860	Jeff Glover
5	1853	Mike Barber
6	1851	Randall Brady
7	1847	Chris Guise
8	1841	David Holt
=9	1839	David Crane
=9	1839	John Briggs

Council of the Wise – Enemy Player

Ranking	Votes	Player
1	11	Michael Reisfeld
2	8	Ricard Pitarque
3	6	John Briggs
=4	5	David Holt
=4	5	Harry Nikokavouras
=4	5	Ernest Hakey
7	4	Alan Jeffrey
=7	4	Guy Roppa
=9	3	Skage Hem
=9	3	Gary Hood
=9	3	Michael Kamine
=9	3	M Joyce
=9	3	David Crane
=9	3	David Ruzic
=9	3	Caleb Hudelson
=9	3	Joseph Williams
=9	3	Steven Mcabee
=9	3	Bettina Wagner
=9	3	John Lamulle

Council Of the Wise – Team Player

Ranking	Votes	Player
1	22	Ricard Pitarque
=1	22	Ernest Hakey
=3	16	David Holt
=3	16	Manolis Perakis
=3	14	Mike Barber
=3	14	John Briggs
=3	14	Ian Etchells
8	13	Chris Guise
9	11	Steven Mcabee
=9	11	Bradford Fisher
=9	11	John Lamulle
=9	11	Kevin O'keefe

Istari Rating

Ranking	Rating	Player
1	2346	Steven Mcabee
2	2136	Ernest Hakey
3	2024	Phillip Vogel
4	1996	Chesley Coughlin
5	1846	Mike Sankey
6	1788	Thomas Maccabe Iii
7	1759	Ricard Pitarque
8	1746	David Ruzic
9	1716	Bradford Fisher
10	1708	Joel Mason

Nazgul Rating

Ranking	Nazgul	Player	Games Played	Games Won	Games Dropped
=1	100%	Robert Turkot	7	7	
=1	100%	James Adams	7	7	
=1	100%	David Ruzic	7	7	
=4	100%	Joel Mason	6	6	
=4	100%	Rick Halvorsen	6	6	
=4	100%	David Pearson	6	6	
7	91%	Mike Sankey	11	10	
8	90%	Chris Guise	10	9	
9	90%	David Holt	10	9	1
10	88%	Marian Ewell	8	7	1



Glorfindel of Rivendell

A noble Elf of Rivendell, he fought at the Battle of Fornost, where he confronted the Witch-king of Angmar. Following the battle, Glorfindel persuaded King Earnur of Gondor not to pursue the Witch-king, saying of him, "not by the hand of man will he fall". This prophecy came true centuries later when the Witch-king was killed by Eowyn.

In *The Lord of the Rings*, Glorfindel helped Frodo Baggins and his companions to reach the House of Elrond and evade the pursuit of the Black Riders. He was one of a few Elves sent out by Elrond, being one who could "ride openly against the Nine". Referring to this ability, Gandalf later tells Frodo that "those who have dwelt in the Blessed Realm live at once in both worlds, and against both the Seen and Unseen they have great power". This clearly suggests that Glorfindel has spent time in Aman. Moreover, Gandalf identifies Glorfindel as "an Elf-lord of a house of princes". Glorfindel was a participant in the Council of Elrond, where he suggested the possibility of throwing the One Ring into the sea.

It is possible, and indeed frequently argued, that Glorfindel of Rivendell was the reincarnation of Glorfindel of Gondolin. If that is the case, then he is the only known reincarnated Elf to have returned from Aman to Middle-earth. This is consistent with Glorfindel's powers against the Ringwraiths, as well as with the statement that he is an Elf-lord (Glorfindel of Gondolin was known as the Chief of the House of the Golden Flower). Tolkien himself stated this possibility to be true in an essay written late in life (found in *The Peoples of Middle-earth*):

"An Elf who had. . . fought in the long wars against Melkor would be an eminently suitable companion for Gandalf. We could then reasonably suppose that Glorfindel. . . landed with Gandalf-Olórin about Third Age 1000. This supposition would indeed explain the air of special power and sanctity that surrounds Glorfindel - note how the Witch-king flies from him, although all others. . . however brave could not induce their horses to face him. . . [A long discussion of reincarnation follows here] . . . At any rate what at first sight may seem the simplest solution must be abandoned; sc. that we have merely a reduplication of names, and that Glorfindel of Gondolin and Glorfindel of Rivendell were different persons. This repetition of so striking a name, though possible, would not be

Rules of War

This game summary has sadly become unattached from its game, and indeed its author. We apologise for this, and if you recognise either the game or you are its author, please get in touch so that this can be remedied in the next issue.

The realm of Middle-earth was once free. The Lords and Ladies of the lands were a proud people; before the fall, before their great defeat. It all started when Gareon III hosted the Evil Hobbit Bradley. Bradley and Gareon spoke of Glory. They spoke of battle; a long glorious war. If only assassins, poisons and such ill-noble artifices were not part of the war. Bradley's poison tongue flickered as he spoke, "We could war without assassins. No +20!" The seeds of demise had been planted.

Gareon III wrote to his cousin, Good King David II of North Kingdom, that the Dark Servants desired a fair and open contest. Gareon continued that this was the war they had been seeking. That this war was their legacy. The battle was to be largely a military contest.

Good King David thought long and hard.... He wrote to the leaders of the Free Peoples. "Rally your levies! Glorious war is upon us." The spy masters and assassins were also ready, but the leaders of the Free peoples were not interested in their council.

The war started in earnest. Exchanges were made on both sides. While King David's son Prince Edward IV was raising troops at Moria, he was struck down by an assassin's blade. First there was shock, then dismay that a 50 commander with 30 points of mage skill could be struck down so early in the war. Had evil Bradley lied?! It must be a fluke. But next month two more commanders were slain. Then two more, and more...

After several months the North Kingdom was under siege. All of their starting pop. centres had been captured except the capital, Annuminas. The Free Peoples felt safe behind their walls. Furthermore, while the loss of the capital would be a moral blow, strategically the Free Peoples were fine. They could continue the glorious war till the Dark Servants had been vanquished from Middle-earth.

But then the unthinkable happened, and the walls of Annuminas gave way. Evil Bradley's host of malformed hobbits broke the walls. The capital fell...

The Free Peoples were angry that their capital had been taken. They ranted and raved. While a few cowards spoke of surrender, the Free Peoples' Alliance was not broken. Their resolve intact, they were ready for more.

However, Evil Bradley pulled out the rules of war and pointed out that a strategic victory had occurred. The leaders of the Free People were outraged. Gareon had promised a war of glory. A long military battle to the end. Generation upon generation had always negotiated away the strategic victory. But Gareon's foul guest had left this detail out, and the Free Peoples had never bothered to ask.

Gareon descended upon Bradley with an army of rules lawyers. They argued, moaned, and spoke of intent. However, the Rules of War were clear on this matter. The fate of the Free Peoples was sealed. Bradley's twisted hobbits won. Gareon, disgusted, decided to leave Middle-earth altogether.



Echoes of the Past: Tolkien and D&D

credible. . . [A telling of Glorfindel's tale follows here] . . . We may then suppose that Glorfindel returned during the Second Age, before the 'shadow' fell on Númenor. . ."

– *The Peoples of Middle-earth, Last Writings*, "Glorfindel"

However, it is unlikely that Tolkien believed this at the time he wrote *The Lord of the Rings*, since at that point he frequently used names from his unpublished *Silmarillion* for characters in the newer work, without implying that the two characters were the same.

Glorfindel of Gondolin

Glorfindel was a noble Noldorin Elf of Gondolin, chief of the House of the Golden Flower. He was described as wearing a mantle so brodered in threads of gold that it was diapered with celandine as a field in spring, and his arms were damascened with cunning gold. He was said to be much loved by all, and during the Fall of Gondolin fought Orcs and Balrogs in the Great Market.

During the retreat of the last survivors across the city, he guarded their rear from fierce Fire-drakes. Later, in the flight across the Encircling Mountains, he still guarded the rear, and when Morgoth sprung his trap slew many Orcs. The falling of rocks from above near destroyed them, and all would have perished, but Thorondor descended, and for a while they were saved. But then a Balrog leaped among the women and children, swinging its whip of flame. Glorfindel leaped forward, and in long combat high on the rock he fought. After a fierce fight Glorfindel cut off the creature's whip-arm at the elbow, and the Balrog sprang forward. Then Glorfindel drew a knife, and stabbed the Balrog in the belly. But as the Balrog fell it grasped Glorfindel's golden locks, and both descended into the abyss. Thorondor went down and bore back up his body, and he was mourned.

Some have speculated that Glorfindel of Rivendell was him resurrected, as writings in *Morgoth's Ring* indicate this was possible, and writings in *The Peoples of Middle-earth* seem to confirm the theory.

This article was taken from the Mouth of Sauron, Issue 14. Author unknown.

To see the whole of this issue of Mouth of Sauron, and indeed other issues, please visit our forum: <http://mepbm.com>, or view them directly here: <http://mepbm.com/info/mouth/>

Many people have noticed that Tolkien's novel *The Lord of the Rings* bears an uncanny resemblance to the game of Dungeons and Dragons, in that it contains elves, dwarves, orcs and so forth. Clearly Tolkien was much influenced by D&D, and a recently unearthed recording, probably made by MI5, shows him playing Dungeons and Dragons on the floor of his rooms in Merton College, Oxford, one evening, with C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and various other luminaries.

Here is part of the transcript of the recording, which all will agree is of great historical interest.

C.S. Lewis: Well, Tom, it's really good of you to come along and act as Dungeon Master for the evening. I Haven't enjoyed myself so much since I played in G.K. Chesterton's dungeon and slew Father Brown.

T.S. Eliot (for it is he): Thanks. Anyway, is Father Aslan going to go and explore the Waste Land further yet, or will he have another drink?

Lewis: That depends on the rest of the party. Radagast?

Tolkien: Yes, I want to go and see Madame Sosostriis the clairvoyant and see what she has to say.

(Murmurs of assent from Dorothy L. Sayers, Charles Williams, Bertrand Russell (visiting), etc. etc.)

Eliot: O.K. Radagast I want you to roll a D20 at this stage to see what happens as you walk across the Waste Land.

[LOUD BANGING ON THE DOOR.]

Tolkien: Who is it?

Voice outside: Iss only me, Professor Tolkien. Juss poor

Smeagol. He's brought his essay for the nice Mr Professor.

[Tolkien goes over to open the door, doing his best to block the view of the dice, counters and miniature monsters on the floor. Meanwhile the rest of the party hurriedly leap into chairs and pretend to be having a deep discussion.]

Lewis: Yes but we all remember what St Paul says about the Numinous in his Epistle to the Confusions...

Tolkien: Well, Smeagol, where this essay? Can't you see I'm busy discussing the Numinous?

Smeagol: Don't be hard on poor Smeagol, he couldn't find his precious elvish dictionary. That nasty Baggins had borrowed it. Oooh, what's that on the floor?

Tolkien: Er, nothing. My son must have left his toys there.

Smeagol: Can Smeagol be an orc?

Bertrand Russell: Certainly not. We don't want any orcs. I've come over specially to play White Head the dwarf.

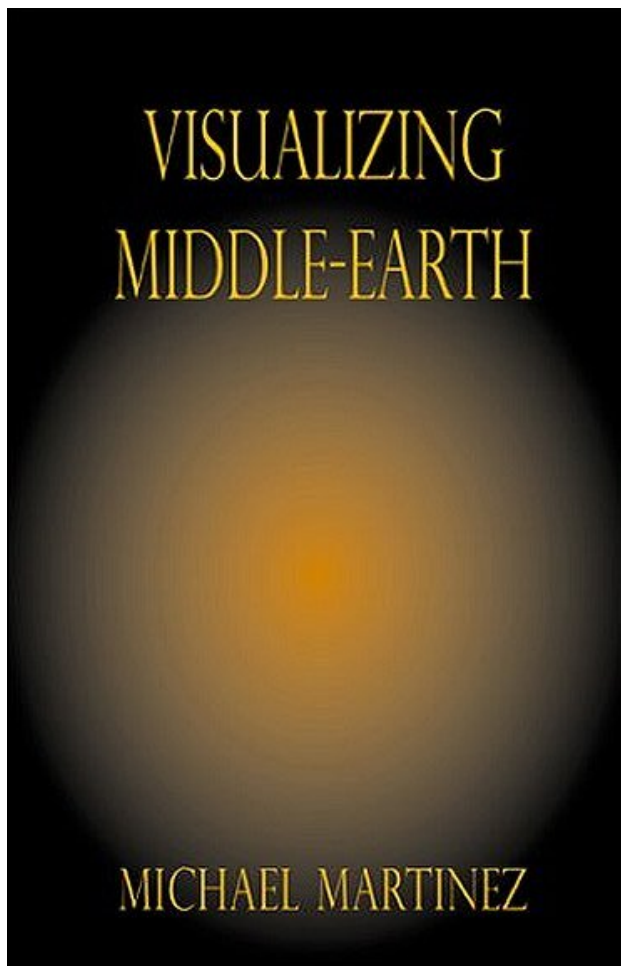
Lewis: You mean, 'to argue the non-existence of God', don't you?

Russell: Er, yes. Sorry.

Tolkien: Off you go boy and hand your essay in on time in future. [Door slams]. Now, my character Radagast threw a 12. What happens to him?

Complex Tip

Moving armies fed can be tricky. Having a small army at that same location so that you can 780 (transfer command), can mean that army moves off fed. If the small army has lots of food you can very likely move off fed next turn.



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