

EDGE OF THE WILD

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FROM THE EDITOR:

*“When winter first begins to bite,
and stones crack in the frosty night,
when pools are black and trees are
bare, ‘tis evil in the Wild to fare.”*

While it also provides plentiful opportunities for outdoor adventure, with daylight dwindling and temperatures dropping, Winter is the perfect season to retreat inside to the comfort of our halls and homes. Whether you prefer to spend the season curled up with a strong drink, crafting fine goods in your workshop, or simply making tracks in the Wild, there is no better time than Winter to explore the lives of Tolkien’s dwarves.

We hope you enjoy this issue and we thank you for reading!

-A. Hollis

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“SINCE THEY WERE TO COME IN THE DAYS OF MELKOR, AULË MADE THE DWARVES STRONG TO ENDURE. THEREFORE THEY ARE STONE-HARD, STUBBORN, FAST IN FRIENDSHIP AND IN ENMITY, AND THEY SUFFER TOIL AND HUNGER AND HURT OF BODY MORE HARDILY THAN ALL OTHER SPEAKING PEOPLES.”

THE QUENTA SILMARILLION:
OF AULË AND YAVANNA



PICK A PERSONA: DWARVES

a. hollis

Next, we move onto an examination of occupations associated with Dwarves. Even though the dwarves who feature most prominently in Tolkien's stories are the elites of their societies, due to their initial position as homeless exiles, we *can* get a 'common' perspective of their economy, and a very unique set of prospective persona ideas.

-For once, we have a culture for whom *Farmer* is NOT the dominant livelihood! Uniquely, it seems that dwarves have practically always fed themselves via trade with the Men, Elves, or Hobbits whom they live near (1).

-For stocky and hardy dwarves, a natural occupation is **Blacksmith** (2), through which iron items are created or repaired for trade. (In the published *Hobbit*, this is suggested to be less dignified, but in the 1960 update was replaced with *road-mending* (3).

-Similarly, **coal-mining** is mentioned as a profession to which dwarves 'have to stoop' at times (4). While I can easily imagine dwarves using coke (from stone-coal) in their "furnaces" (5), if it is being put to their own uses this does not account for the negative connotation. It may be that dwarves are trading it to Hobbit, Man, or Elf smiths in villages along the East Road. Without dwarf-coal, such smiths would be limited to *char*-coal made by colliers.

-As would be expected of a people excelled in metalwork (6), **Armorer** would be an excellent craft to demonstrate in a dwarvish persona.

-For the more technically-minded, **Luthiery** and other **musical instrument-making** seems to have a dwarvish history, considering not only the instruments carried by Thorin's company—fiddles, viols, flutes, clarinets, harp and drum — but also the "trumpets and horns, pipes and flutes" contained within the party-crackers at Bilbo's farewell feast; these come from the market of Dale, and are seemingly of dwarf-make (7).

-We are told that the town of Dale possessed bells that rang merrily, and given the metallurgical prowess of dwarves, it is likely that a dwarvish **Bell-maker** was responsible for casting these (8).

-Prior to the coming of Smaug in 2770, and by at least 3000 TA (following its reestablishment), it would seem that the market of Dale featured many "marvelous" toys as made by young dwarven **Toymakers** (9).

-Due to multiple references to dwarf-boots, it appears **Cordwainer** is a trade routinely associated with their race (10).

-Several other positions are specifically mentioned by Tolkien as practiced by dwarves 'of poorer sort': **Tinker**, **Mason**, 'pedlars [sic] of iron-ware', **Roadmakers** or **menders**, and **Bridge-Repairer** (11). In the same source, Thorin says he would require "tools or the tackle", for this last job—implying a familiarity with simple machines like the block-and-tackle (product of Shire ropers?) and perfect for someone with an engineering mind! While it is

unclear why these are jobs for ‘poorer’ dwarves, it may be because they are more utilitarian and have limited opportunities to show off their artistry. ✨

References:

- (1) The History of Middle-earth, Volume 12: Chapter X - *Of Dwarves and Men*
- (2) Unfinished Tales 3:III
- (3) History of The Hobbit, 786
- (4) HoTH 779
- (5) Lord of the Rings Book I: Chapter 2
- (6) The Hobbit Chapter 1, 17; LR II:4, III:6
- (7) TH 1, LR I:1
- (8) TH 1, 3
- (9) TH 1; HoTH 778, LR I:1
- (10) UT 3:III, LR Prologue, TH 8
- (11) HoTH 792, 816, 793

ON Neo-Khuzdul: USING A NON-CANONICAL SOURCE

J. HORNER

The Professor never fleshed out many of his non-Elvish languages, such as Westron and Khuzdul. As we can see from Ardalambion’s collected corpus of these tongues, Tolkien left us only a few hundred words and place names, some phrases, and some tantalizing musing on inspiration while he was constructing them. So when attempting to build a faithful impression of a culture that is only lightly touched on in the books, it becomes necessary to deal with secondary or even tertiary sources. Interestingly, some oft-reviled sources—like *The Lord of the Rings Online* (LOTRO) and the Peter Jackson movies—reveal unexpected riches. Without irony, I can say that some of the parts of these systems are greater than the whole. A good example of this comes to extrapolations of the Dwarvish language, or as it has been styled: *neo-Khuzdul*. There are three main attempts I have found at recreating neo-Khuzdul:

Linguist **David Salo** has worked professionally on the Dwarven lexicons for MERP and the Peter Jackson films. His reconstruction is inspired by Akkadian (a Semitic language related to Hebrew) rather than Hebrew itself. I consider this to be the safest neo-Khuzdul from a canon standpoint, but it’s not fully fleshed out.

The Dwarrow Scholar—the work of a Tolkien-Dwarvish aficionado, this is the most complete Neo-Khuzdul, as his work features a 5,300 page dictionary and a fully-useable lexicon. His work seems to be the go-to Khuzdul reference used by LOTRO.

Quasi-Khuzdul—I don’t know much about this one; while it doesn’t seem to be particularly well adopted, it *is* well fleshed out. ✨



These drawings (made during creation of The Hobbit) are some of Tolkien’s only illustrations of the dwarves of Middle-earth, and by far the most complete. Note the ‘breeches’, conical and tasseled hats, footwear, and backpacks.

MEULEURGY MINI-MATTOCK

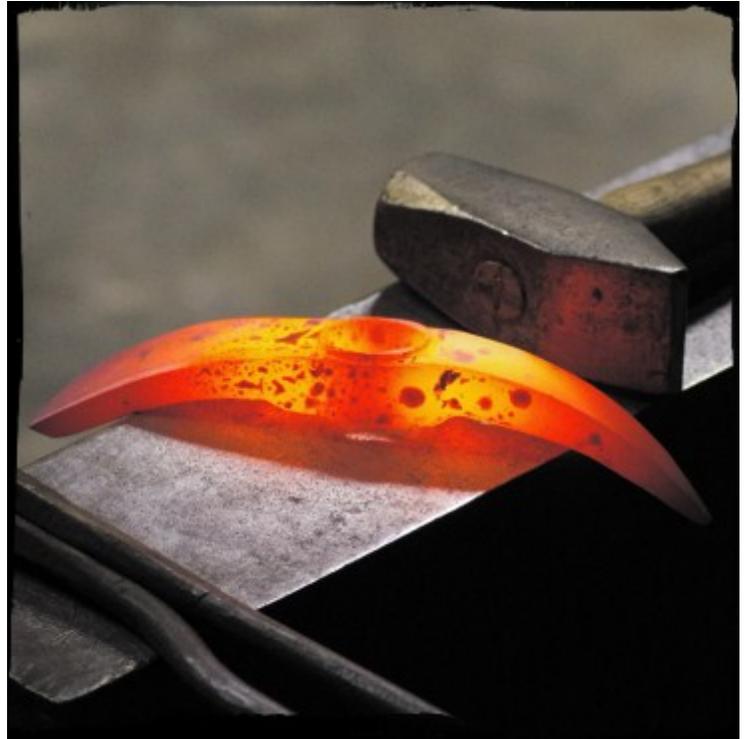
E. MEULEMANS

*"There hammer on the anvil smote,
There chisel clove, and graver wrote;
There forged was blade, and bound was hilt;
The delver mined, the mason built.
There beryl, pearl, and opal pale,
And metal wrought like fishes' mail,
Buckler and corslet, axe and sword,
And shining spears were laid in hoard."
-from Gimli's Song of Durin*

Those crafts most closely associated with the Dwarven race we hear told here, of their work in metal, stone, and jewels. Drawn from the earth, the iron for the smith was worked into the tools of the miner and mason, in turn providing more raw materials to support their trades. Despite their utilitarian nature, the hammers, chisels, and axes of everyday life were as much a material investment as the finest sword, and from these words held in equal esteem. Here we have a simple mason's hand pick—useful for lighter work or in tight spaces—it has been personalized by its owner with a rune of inlaid copper, its meaning now lost to time.



*Mr. Meulemans, this mattock, and many
other examples of his fine metalwork
may be found at his website,
meuleurgy.com.*



A DWARVEN CHILD'S INTRODUCTION TO METALWORKING

J. HORNER

(As overheard at a trade forge in the Iron Hills) above the ground, especially with *kûn* in ear-shot—but it is worked cold.

“So you want to you say you're a Dwarf, eh lass? Well, we will see about that. Probably the thing you have to know is that there's as many types of us Dwarrow as there's types of metal, gem, and rock. Today we will give the gems and rocks a pass, you're here to learn a little about metal.

There are four specialties of metalcraft after it is birthed from the bones of Arda: Smelting, Alloying, Smithing, and Casting, and there are hundreds of subspecialties. For this lesson, we'll talk about one of our favorites, the smithing of copper.

In smithing each metal is different. But there are two main categories of smithing. Forging, or hot-work, where a metal is heated and worked hot, and cold-work where... Yes, you guessed it, you work it cold. Each smith is known by the color of his metal.

Iron is the chief hot metal and worked by the blacksmith. It is a useful but dirty metal, prone to rust and scale. We respect it but prize the cold metals above it. However, the blacksmith's trade is the one that Men prize most. Our scattered kindred ply work among them making tools and things where use is valued more than beauty.

While those who do cold work are the whitesmiths (or tinkers, if destitute), the redsmiths (our subject today), the silversmiths, and the goldsmiths.

Sanzigal? Shh...we do not speak of its making

These metals are heated in our forges but then allowed to cool. This is called annealing. Each metal is annealed differently, but for copper, it matters little if you cool it quickly in a *megalu* or slowly in the air. Once it has cooled, it is soft and workable.

Then you may bend, chase, repousse, or hammer it to shape. Take that bit of copper strap there, and work it. Put it over that anvil beak and bend it over the round part. Yes, we are making a cuff for your mother.

After you work your copper for a while, it will harden. Why? Oh, curious child, that is not known, but it is so. And if you work it past that point, it will weaken and break. Now, let me show you. Take this piece of wire. Bend it in half. Easy, isn't it? Now straighten it again. Not hard, but harder, isn't it? Bend and straighten it again—yes, even harder. Three more times like this and it will be tough indeed to keep going. Then the wire will snap. This is called work hardening.

To make it soft again, place it back in the furnace. When it is red-hot remove it and anneal again. There you go, soft as before. Now we can work again.

Complete the curve over the anvil's bick, now take it and open the ends back up so mother's wrist will fit through. Good. Now anneal it again.

Alright, we are not done just yet. Take those punches, and tap them into the metal against

the bick. Yes, strong lines are good. Leave room for runes. Yes, *kûn* might see this, so use the Common Tongue. Well and good. Mother is spelled with two Ms. That's better.

Anneal it one last time, and shine it with that rag. All good. Now run along. Take it to your mother, and let her know old Flói says that you will make a good apprentice soon enough.” ✨

Notes:

1. *Sanzigal*: Neo-Khuzdul word for mithril. For this story, I am using the *Dwarrow Scholar's Neo-Khuzdul*. For a discussion of the various attempts at Neo-Khuzdul see my article on page four.

2. *kûn*: Khuzdul for ‘men’: from *Tharkûn*, name of Gandalf to the Dwarves, said to mean “Staff-man” (Lord of the Rings Book IV, Ch 5; Unfinished Tales: Part 4:II - The Istari.)

3. “Mithril! All folk desired it. *It could be beaten like copper*, and polished like glass; and the Dwarves could *make of it a metal, light and yet harder than tempered steel*. Its beauty was like to that of common silver, but the beauty of mithril did not tarnish or grow dim.” (LR II:4)

That it “could be beaten like copper” means that is a cold worked metal, and fairly soft in its unalloyed state, while "the Dwarves could make of it a metal" suggests that hardened mithril was an alloy.

4. *Megalu*: Neo-Khuzdul for ‘quenching bucket’

5. ‘Mother’ in Adunaic is *Ammê*, or **𐌆𐌇𐌇𐌆** in the Angerthas runes of Moria.



REVIEW: THE HISTORICAL FABRIC STORE

G. LAMMERS

'The Historical Fabric Store', located in Sweden, has a wide number of wool and linen assorted fabrics available. Due to the readily available supply of domestic linen here in the U.S., I didn't seek them out for linen, but was drawn by their selection of broadcloth, sporting colors that are hard to find stateside. They boast a rather large line of 100% wool offerings, which are becoming harder and harder to find at reasonable cost for the reenactor.

I selected this "Grey-green Recycled Broadcloth" for a Dunedain Ranger impression, and am absolutely thrilled. It is not loose-woven or airy, but very dense and tight throughout. The color is exactly what I expected, and the feel is still quite supple. I expect that to only improve with some self-inflicted shrinking before I

begin to sew, but already it has a garment quality in the hand. Definitely not scratchy like blends tend to be.

It is definitely not what I would call blanket- or cloak-weight, but rather perfect for winter outer-garments. Still, if one wished, I think it would be of adequate weight for a cloak provided you have other plans for bedding with thicker blanketing...it drapes very nicely, and no doubt would take well to an application of lanolin for water resistance, etc.

At \$23.02 per yard, it's not the cheapest fabric on the planet, but you could pay much more for similar wool and still wind up with a blend.

This and other offerings can be found at historical-fabrics.com, or through their Etsy store at thefabricstore.etsy.com. ✨



TRAVELER'S FARE ON THE GREAT EAST ROAD

G. LAMMERS

SALT PORK

Seen at Isengard, likely sourced from the Shire.
Today: available from [Turkey Foot Trading Co.](#)

NUTS

Seen at Beorn's home, and referred to in the Riddle-Game.
Today: common in all grocery stores

DRIED FRUIT

Fruit is prevalent throughout, dried fruit seen in Ithilien.
Today: Specialty stores (fruit leather), made-at-home

HARD, DRY CHEESE

Seen in Hobbiton and Bree.
Today: solid Parmigiano Reggiano or aged Cheddar are shelf-stable and common in grocery stores.

FRESH-MILLED OATS

Likely milled in Hobbiton at Sandyman's Mill.
Today: Find a mill near you at [factoryfreeoats.com](#)

HERBS AND SEASONINGS

Known by Hobbits, described in Wilderland and Ithilien.
Today: Sage, Thyme, Marjoram, Bay leaves, and coarsely-ground Salt found commonly in grocery stores

FLOUR

Likely milled in Hobbiton at Sandyman's Mill, and known in Wilderland.
Today: Found commonly in grocery stores; (seek out unbleached, whole-grain or specialty varieties.)

A NOTE ON THE INNS OF THE SHIRE

a. hOLLIS

Given what we know of their culture, it is very likely that the Shire contained *many* more inns than those few which are encountered or referred to in Tolkien's stories. It is entirely possible that *every* town or village denoted by 'buildings' on Tolkien's map contained an inn, tavern, or public house. That both Bywater and Hobbiton each has an inn and yet are only four or five miles apart supports this theory.

However, given the Society's preference for Primary Source materials, we believe that if an interpreter is to portray the most Tolkien-accurate version of Middle-earth, they should limit their references to the known examples which follow. While *The Lord of the Rings Online's* 'Bird and Baby' Inn of Michel Delving is a cute reference to the real-world "Eagle and Child" of Oxford, as a tertiary source its use is discouraged (see Standard 5:C:iii (published in *Edge of the Wild* Volume 2, Issue 4).

The seven known inns of the Shire are listed here and are marked on the following map.

1: the *Ivy Bush* ("on the Bywater road" near Hobbiton: Lord of the Rings Book I:Chapter 1)

2: the *Green Dragon* (Bywater: LR I:2)

3: the *All-Welcome Inn* ("at junction of the Northway and East Road (on Hobbiton side of Frogmorton)"; the inn is named as such because it was "much used by travelers through the Shire, especially by dwarves on the way to Thorin's home in exile": History of The Hobbit, pp 815-816.

4: the *Floating Log* (Frogmorton: LR VI:8))

5: the *Bridge Inn* (west side of the Brandywine: *ibid.*)

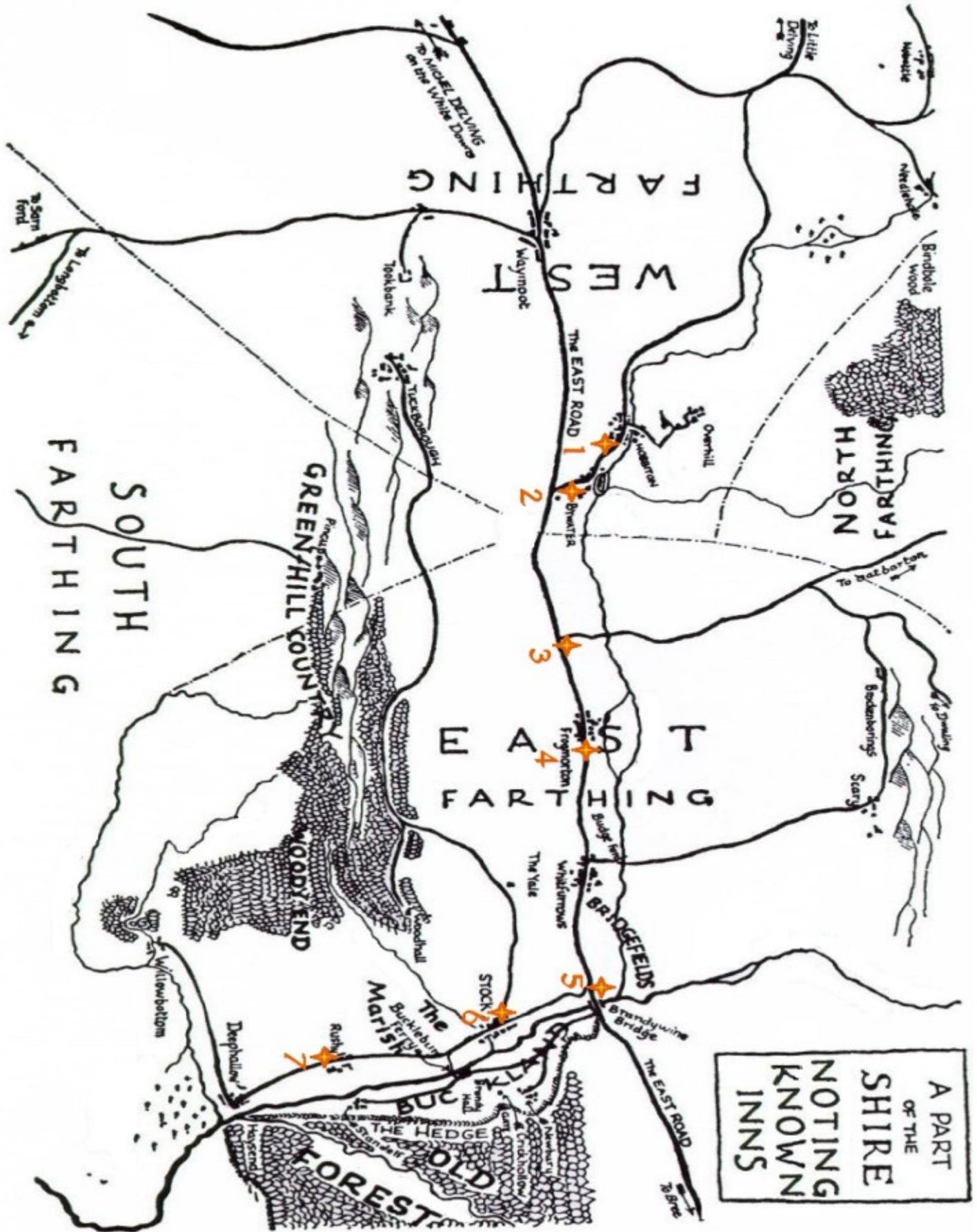
6: the *Golden Perch* (Stock: LR I:4)

7: Unknown inn of Rushy/Rushey (*Adventures of Tom Bombadil* #2).

In light of this issue's theme, I feel it worthwhile to reprint here in full a little-known passage (written as part of Tolkien's 1960 reworking of The Hobbit), describing the general state of the dwarf-hobbit relationship. It is hoped that the selection will be of use to the reader pursuing an impression from either culture:

"It has to be remembered that the East Road though it ran through the Shire was not the property of the hobbits: it was an ancient 'royal road', and they maintained the traditional duty of keeping it in repair and providing hospitality for travelers. This was of course profitable. It also provided their chief source of 'outside news'. Dwarves were therefore not a rare sight on the East Road or in its inns (It would also appear that they were sometimes employed as roadmenders and bridge-repairers), but they seldom turned off it, and their appearance in a company in Bywater and Hobbiton must have caused a lot of talk. They cared very little about hobbits, and had little to do with them, except as a source of food in exchange for metal, or sometimes forged articles (knives, ploughshares, arrowheads, axe-heads and the like). ... But they had the notion that hobbits were a slow stupid folk, with few artifacts, and simple-minded – because the hobbits were generous, never haggled, and gave what was asked." (The History of the Hobbit, pp 815-816).





ABOUT US

The Middle-earth Reenactment Society is dedicated to recreating the cultures of J.R.R. Tolkien's Middle-earth in both form and function, within the frameworks of 'historical' reenactment. A part of the middleearthrangers.org Tolkien re-creation community, the Society publishes the online quarterly periodical Edge of the Wild, showcasing new research, methods, materials, and instructional articles, and meets throughout the year at sites deemed 'wild' enough to still capture the reality and imagination of the lands envisioned within Tolkien's works.

To subscribe and receive future issues of Edge of the Wild sent directly to your inbox, contact us at Middleearthreenactmentsociety@gmail.com, or find us on Facebook at ['Middle-earth Reenactment Society'](#).

WE WANT YOU!

As you can see after reading this issue, *we like Dwarves!*, but unfortunately we're all a bit too tall to portray one. If you have a passion for historical trekking, can grow a solid beard, and are five feet tall (or less!), we want to hear from you! [E-mail us](#) and tell us about yourself to discuss collaborating on a Dwarven impression!

MEMBER PERSONA SPOTLIGHT

PERSONA: Dúnedain Ranger

“Aragorn...went forth clad only in rusty green and brown, as a Ranger of the wilderness.” - ([LR II:3](#)).

Note the separate hood and cloak, with the sword concealed beneath the cloak. (For more on this usage see *Edge of the Wild* Vol 1:Issue 4)

