

J. R. R. Tolkien's Birmingham & Oxford

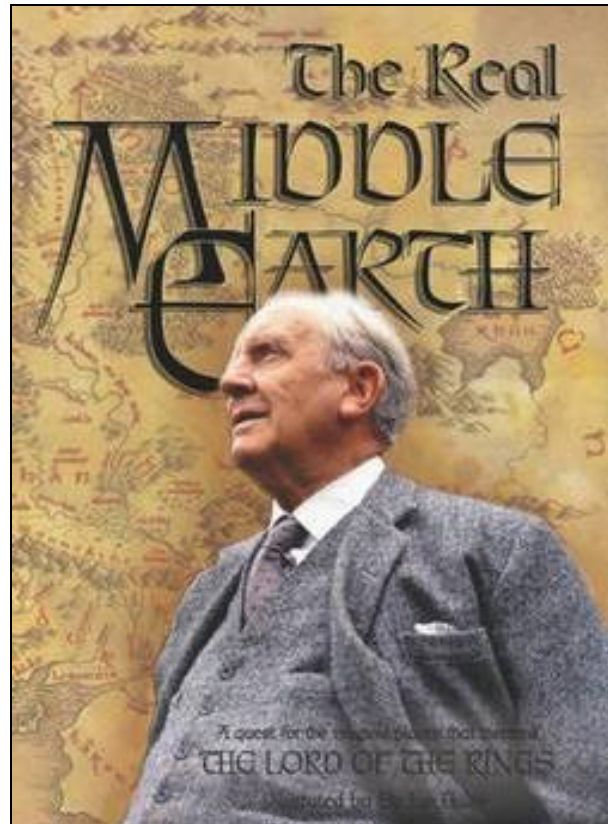
Oxford University's list of distinguished alumni & former faculty begins in the 13th Century with John Wyclif and Roger Bacon, followed in succeeding centuries by Sir Thomas Moore, Sir Walter Raleigh, Edward Gibbon, Edmund Halley, Thomas Hobbes, Samuel Johnson, John Locke, Adam Smith, John Wesley, Sir Christopher Wren, Lewis Carroll, and among Tolkien's friends and contemporaries C. S. Lewis, Jeremy Dyson, and Charles Williams. JRR Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy has sold more than 100 million copies and is the third best selling book of all time after *The Bible* which has sold more than 6 billion copies, and *Quotations from Mao Tse-Tung* with 900 million copies sold.

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And for information about J. R. R. Tolkien go to www.tolkiensociety.org



Oxford Professor John Ronald Reuel Tolkien (1892-1973), Ronald to family, "JRR" to readers, was born while his father was working in South Africa. His father died when he was 4 years old. He, his mother, and his younger brother Hilary returned to West Midlands, England. Tolkien's childhood homes, 5 Grace Street, Sarehole (then a separate hamlet, now part of Birmingham) and *Fern Cottage* at the foot of Lickey Hills on the outskirts of Birmingham. Today *Fern Cottage* is viewed from the street; it is now rented (www.stayatferncottage.co.uk) to tourists interested in visiting nearby sites rich with Tolkien history. Tolkien taught at the University of Leeds before joining Oxford faculty as a philologist, one who studies the history of languages. Tolkien's mother had introduced him to Latin, German and French. He taught himself Greek, Middle English, Old English (also called Anglo Saxon), Old Norse (also called Old Icelandic), Gothic, Modern and Medieval Welsh, Finnish, Spanish and Italian. He had a working knowledge of Serbian, Russian, Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, and Dutch. Tolkien invented 14 languages for his Middle-earth.