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New Zealand with a Hobbit Botherer

John Gisby
Lulu
978-1-4116-5644-4
(January 23, 2006)

The next best thing to being able to travel to another country is to read a book that describes it so well that pictures come to mind. It isn't necessary to be a fan of the *Lord of the Rings* movies to enjoy this chronicle of the author's trip through New Zealand to see locations where filming took place, but fandom would add another level of appreciation to this humorous travelogue.

"At first the hillock was a blur, then a grassy hump took shape and finally the rocky flanks characteristic of Edoras in *The Two Towers* and *The Return of the King* emerged," writes Gisby. "The rocky perch of Rohan's capital, the surrounding plain criss-crossed by a braided river and the snowy mountain backdrop, were all exactly as shown in the movies."

The journey starts on a whim after the author has a dream in which he and his wife, Annette—an avowed *Lord of the Rings* devotee—attend a Hobbit Botherer Anonymous meeting. There, Jack Peterson, the group leader, tells the author that he must "trivel to New Zilland and visit where they (the movies) were shi… er shot. Convince your wife that Hubbits, Ilves and Wizards are not rill."

That extreme dialect grows a bit tiresome, but Peterson is not a frequent visitor, so the reader is able to enjoy most of the narrative without stumbling over fractured words. The rest of the writing is smooth and engaging, with the understated humour common to British comedy.

Gisby lives in west London, England, with his wife, who is the author of several novels and a short story collection. He has a BSc. in Physics and Chemistry from the University of London and a PhD in Thermodynamics. He has published numerous articles in scientific journals and is one of the main programmers for MTDATA, a process modeling (metal and oxides mostly) software used by various businesses and universities. This is his first book.

While the Hobbit Botherer group is fictitious, the people and places in New Zealand are real, and visitors can actually get a map with gold circles marking the spots where scenes from the movies were filmed. For those few folks who might not be familiar with the *Rings* story lines, the book has a glossary "For People Who Think *Lord of the Rings* is An Aristocratic Jeweler."

Maryann Miller