

Hi Carlos,

My sincere apologies for not responding earlier. I'm hoping the answers are still usable:

New Zealand's only official Tolkien Smial (Welly-moot) has been running since Jan 2012. Technically we started a year before that the NZ Noldor - a bunch of movie fans/spies looking for news about the Hobbit movie. We got in Peter Jackson's way too often so we decided to focus on Tolkien rather than Jackson.

We currently have between 150-200 members, but we're not a very active group anymore.

We used to have a meeting every two months, but once the Hobbit movies were finished, we found interest waning, and enthusiasm with it. We still have an annual picnic at Rivendell though - that seems to be a regular event now. And when movie events happen, we go as a group, for instance last year when the Tolkien bio-movie was released.

There are a number of other locations in New Zealand that have expressed interest in joining, or starting their own groups, but so far nothing official has eventuated. I guess they would be the "rangers" as you described them, but we don't have that distinction here.

Our activities are always open to newcomers, except when they're held at a member's private residence.

Occasionally we'll have potluck dinners at a member's homes for instance - that's obviously members only.

We've held some pretty interesting talks, and had some great guests, but our topics range enormously. Our location has meant that from the very beginning we acknowledge the LOTR/Hobbit movies as legitimate works to be discussed.

We have met more than a few "hardcore" Tolkien people who like to pretend the movies never happened, which we find a bit silly.

We don't have a specific focus for the group that keeps coming up - once it's discussed, we find another area and go with that.

My email address is [jack@welly-moot.com](mailto:jack@welly-moot.com), and I'm always happy to meet with Tolkien fans who travel through this area. That happens quite frequently -

I was a LOTR movie locations tour guide for 14 years, and have met with literally thousands of Tolkien fans. Stand-out anecdotes? Where to start! Buy me a beer one day, and I'm sure there's a few forthcoming!

<http://www.welly-moot.com/>