

THE ZINE

ISSUE 10



Back from 4 years of hiatus, our world-famous production **THE ZINE** is finally back in print. The greatest Otaku magazine in Nottingham put together by a crack team from the university's Science-Fiction, Fantasy and Anime Society.

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SC-FI, FANTASY & ANIME SOCIETY

ISSUE:10

The Zine is revived once again:
let the fate of destruction be the joy of rebirth.

The creation of The Zine has never been easy, going by what previous editors have had to say, and the three year gap since the previous issue only serves to promote this fact. But nothing is easy to create that is worthwhile and fortunately we've had plenty of submissions this year to make this the longest (and greatest) one yet!^[citation needed]

My thanks go out to everyone who submitted content; the society runs on involvement and interaction, and it's great seeing the talent members can display.

This year we have over 40 pages of anime and game reviews, art, a look into the society's past, an argument on the question of anime dubs and more! I hope it will be as enjoyable to read as it was to write.

-James Thackway (Comms Officer and Zine Editor)

The title screen for Valkyria Chronicles 4 features a central illustration of a young woman with dark hair and a determined expression, wearing a military helmet and uniform. She is flanked by two other characters: a young man on the left and a soldier on the right, both in similar military attire. The background is a soft, painterly landscape with rolling hills and a blue sky. The title 'VALKYRIA 4' is prominently displayed in a large, stylized font, with 'CHRONICLES' written in a smaller font below it. The number '4' is particularly large and blue.

VALKYRIA 4

CHRONICLES

Dave Timermanis

Valkyria Chronicles 4: Masterpiece by Accident

Valkyria Chronicles is a rather strange franchise that has managed to gain widespread popularity despite, on paper, sounding like an incoherent mess. An anime style game where the story is presented like a visual novel without any choices and with primary gameplay that is a bastard mix of turn-based strategy and third-person shooting, all set during WW2 as imagined by a Disney princess. Yet it works because it manages to be at the very least competent in most aspects of design, writing and presentation. Most notably it manages to create something far greater than the sum of its parts by having what I consider the best narrative aspect of the game come about by accident, like that time they were trying to make a new type of wallpaper and invented bubble-wrap. Fair warning, there will be massive spoilers up ahead, so if you want to play the game yourself (and you really should) I advise you stop here and go do that instead, I don't care. Baka.

Throughout the game you play as Claude Wallace, squad commander and useless dishrag, as you lead your platoon of elite rangers and 14-year olds in fantasy WW2 against the evil eastern empire. Both the main cast and supporting characters, allied and enemy alike, are likeable and everyone gets at least enough characterisation to make them memorable among the hordes of faceless cannon fodder you mow down beneath your tank treads. The main cast are particularly strong and I found myself shouting at them in joy and frustration in equal measure. Obviously, making each enemy goon a distinct character would be both unnecessary and impossible, but even the basic design of making most enemy soldiers generic and interchangeable lends poignancy to the point the game eventually makes.

As you progress and go through victories and defeats, the tone remains largely upbeat and positive with cheerful music and friendly banter. There are occasional grim moments that force the characters to remember that they are technically in a life and death struggle where thousands of people are dying daily, but their overwhelmingly positive personalities tend to brush these concerns aside fairly quickly. But as the game goes on you can't help but get a creeping feeling that something isn't quite right, that there's a growing dissonance between the characters' actions and their attitude of being the good guys. This culminates when your grand plan for victory is finally revealed - drive your armored land-ship into the enemy capital and detonate your magical girl powered nuclear reactor, killing you, your magical reactor princess, the enemy's high command and millions of civilians. And everyone just goes along with it.

Motivating speeches are given, heroic music plays, friends nobly sacrifice themselves and you, as a player, are left to watch this grand delusion play out. This is the games brilliance. That slow creep of good, honest intentions gone awry; each small step along the way justified by the situation the characters find themselves in, each concession demanding an incrementally greater alienation from reality. Yet because we're watching this story from the perspective of those involved the presentation remains firmly on their side because, in their eyes, they're the good guys. This setup is apparent from the very start of the game where you are presented as a valiant soldier fighting for liberty against the oppressive empire. Why are the other guys evil? Well, they're an empire, so they must be bad.

There's a scene near the end of the game that really hammers home just how delusional and disconnected our protagonists have become. We've crashed into the city and Claude has his hand on the nuclear detonator when he receives word that a ceasefire has been declared. He agonises over everything they've been through and is about to pull the lever anyway, but his girlfriend Riley manages to talk him out of it. Then Minerva, someone who has more reason than most to hate the empire, barges into the room and threatens to shoot Claude if he doesn't pull the trigger. And Claude immediately starts moralising. These are clearly people whose moral compass might as well be tuned to the magnetic field of Jupiter, yet their sense of righteousness remains strong as ever. This is what war does to someone, the game is saying, and it shows this from a direct and immediate perspective with subtlety one would never expect from it.

Which is why I think it may have been by accident. The colourful presentation, simplistic writing and trite messages of "war is bad" are so blatantly simple and family friendly that any kind of subtle and layered storytelling seems highly improbable. Are the opposing soldiers faceless because they show the depersonalisation of the enemy occurring in the minds of our protagonists or simply because of design expediency? Do the characters gloss over traumatic events because of PTSD or because this fit the tone and writing better? Do they go along with various atrocities because they get swept up in a fervor of war and camaraderie or because the game needed a climactic story piece? It could be both, the design deliberately serving the narrative and if that is the case then this games creators deserve far more praise than they're getting. There is one

character who almost embodies the players external position and makes me think that this was all planned, but his position in the plot makes the difference between self-awareness and characterisation too ambiguous to tell.

Even at the very end, when everyone gets their happily ever after, the war is viewed with a kind of nostalgia, making the overwhelmingly bleak interpretation of their mental states unlikely to have been intentional. Or it could be a continuation of the subtext of delusion carefully crafted throughout the experience. War isn't necessarily entirely bad for its participants, but the this degree of idealisation seems extreme even for the game at hand. I'm still not entirely sure what to make of this issue and perhaps that's another point in its favour. Much like real war there is no absolute right or wrong, just your own interpretation.



-Dave Timermanis

The Meiji Restoration & French Cuisine in Japan



Furansu Ryori. French cuisine. You've most likely seen an anime where French cuisine has been mentioned or heard an anime girl get excited about the romanticism of French cuisine. If not, you've undoubtedly seen a plethora of crepe stalls (kureipu), potato croquettes (kurokke) and crème caramel (purin). But how exactly did French cuisine take Japan by storm?

To begin our story, we have to travel back to Japan in 1603, when Tokugawa Ieyasu established the Tokugawa shogunate in Japan, putting to an end a civil war which had lasted since 1467, known as the Sengoku Jidai. An isolationist chapter in Japan's history had begun where very little information, technology or goods were traded with the outside world. Nevertheless, some Dutch knowledge, known as Rangaku, filtered through from 1720 onward, through the port of Dejima near modern day Nagasaki. Alongside economic and social issues plaguing the Tokugawa shogunate, fascination with the West slowly grew, creating further destabilization. Then, in 1853, the Americans under Admiral Perry brought 4 steam-powered warships to the port of Edo (now Tokyo) and threatened them to open their ports. The understandably frightened shogun signed several unequal treaties with not only the US, but many other European countries, granting access to Japanese ports and resources. Disgruntled daimyos (feudal lords) in the south of Japan, namely the Satsuma and Choushuu, successfully overthrew the shogun and handed over power to the teenage emperor Meiji and his cabinet, with the help of British tactics and weaponry. A new outward looking Japan had risen out of the ashes of the stagnant and backwards-looking shogunate. A Japan which looked outwards to the West for technological and political advances. A Japan which had an appetite for new cultural imports.



*Matthew Perry depicted in
Sayōnara Zetsubō Sensei*

The newly formed Meiji government's plan was as follows: make allies with European countries, get them to send over military equipment and learn as much about science, culture and whatever else they could. A transfer program was set up whereby students were paid to go over to European countries to bring back whatever information they could find. Most researched the sciences, industry and law however some looked into the cultures of the countries they visited. The first Japanese French chefs had been born. Some were invited to the Meiji's own royal kitchen. Others set up the first French restaurant in Japan, becoming extremely rich. After all, French food was the province of nobility and the Meiji himself. Hence, to the masses, French food was both exotic and luxurious.

At the beginning of the Showa era, around the 1920s, and onward up until the 2nd World War, French food fell out of favour due to the rise of nationalism in Japan. Despite the conservative government and Emperor Hirohito encouraging the consumption of *washoku* (Japanese cuisine) they themselves continued to indulge in French food. However, the perception of French food's extravagance was still there, demonstrated by the Japanese Navy's recruitment posters, which advertised the possibility of trying French cuisine, since a few of the most prestigious Japanese battleships, like the *Yamato*, had French chefs on board.

Upon the disbandment of the Japanese Military by the Americans after World War 2, Japan was left with a surplus of male labour who previously had no ambition but to become soldiers. When the Americans, who were de facto in charge of the Japanese economy post-war, asked these young men what they aimed to do, many responded that they aspired to become French chefs since it was still seen as such a prestigious job. The Americans orchestrated a solution and sent ambitious Japanese youths to France to apprentice under French chefs, many of whose apprentices had died in the war. Similarly, many French chefs came to Japan to teach locally. However, for many of the Japanese French chef wannabes, their arrival to Paris quickly turned from a dream to a nightmare. Getting a job as a chef in France was exceptionally difficult due to how competitive the environment was. Any small mistake could lead to you being fired. Somewhat like Shokugeki no Souma. The hellish battlefield was only made worse by discrimination against Japanese applicants over their accents which, when people are shouting across kitchens trying to ensure dishes are served on time, obstructed their work. Some prostrated themselves in front of French restaurants for days, begging to get a job. Despite the abject failure many faced, a tiny proportion found success and made their way to the top of society. Upon their arrival home, the whole village threw a celebration for their returning 1st generation French chef. Not everyone was impressed, however. Washoku chefs saw the French chefs ideologically as culture traitors and more pragmatically as a threat to their business. The returning heroes also brought with them farm animals. Traditional Japanese cuisine cooks almost exclusively with seafood, hence land meat seen as new and exotic to some. and as corruption of the cuisine to washoku chefs. French cuisine was still expensive, albeit hardly as expensive as it was before the war, and still perceived as an exotic alternative to washoku. It particularly became popular for wedding catering. French restaurants offered special discounts, undercutting their washoku competitors on price. Along with the French cuisine, European-style marriages with bridal dresses and wedding cakes took root in Japan and many began to favour them to the Shinto alternative.



*A magnificent prostration, Aqua.
Watch out Kazuma~*



*A Franceaboo chef as portrayed
in Abenobashi Mahō Shōtengai*

A feud between washoku and French cuisine continues in Japan to this day. Upon the arrival of French chefs, a hyper competitive war broke out on the streets of Tokyo where shops opened and shut at a rapid rate due to competition and corporate espionage. Today, Japan has the second most 3 Michelin star restaurants at 25 compared to France's 27. And Tokyo has the most 3 Michelin star restaurants at 13. Although most serve Japanese cuisine, many of these prestigious restaurants serve French cuisine and some French-Japanese fusion cuisine. French culture, as with many other cultures, have left their mark on Japanese culture, and when you look out for these small quirks, like when they talk about Furansu Ryouri in Shokugeki no Souma, hopefully your viewing experience will be enriched with knowledge of its origins and Japanese culture.

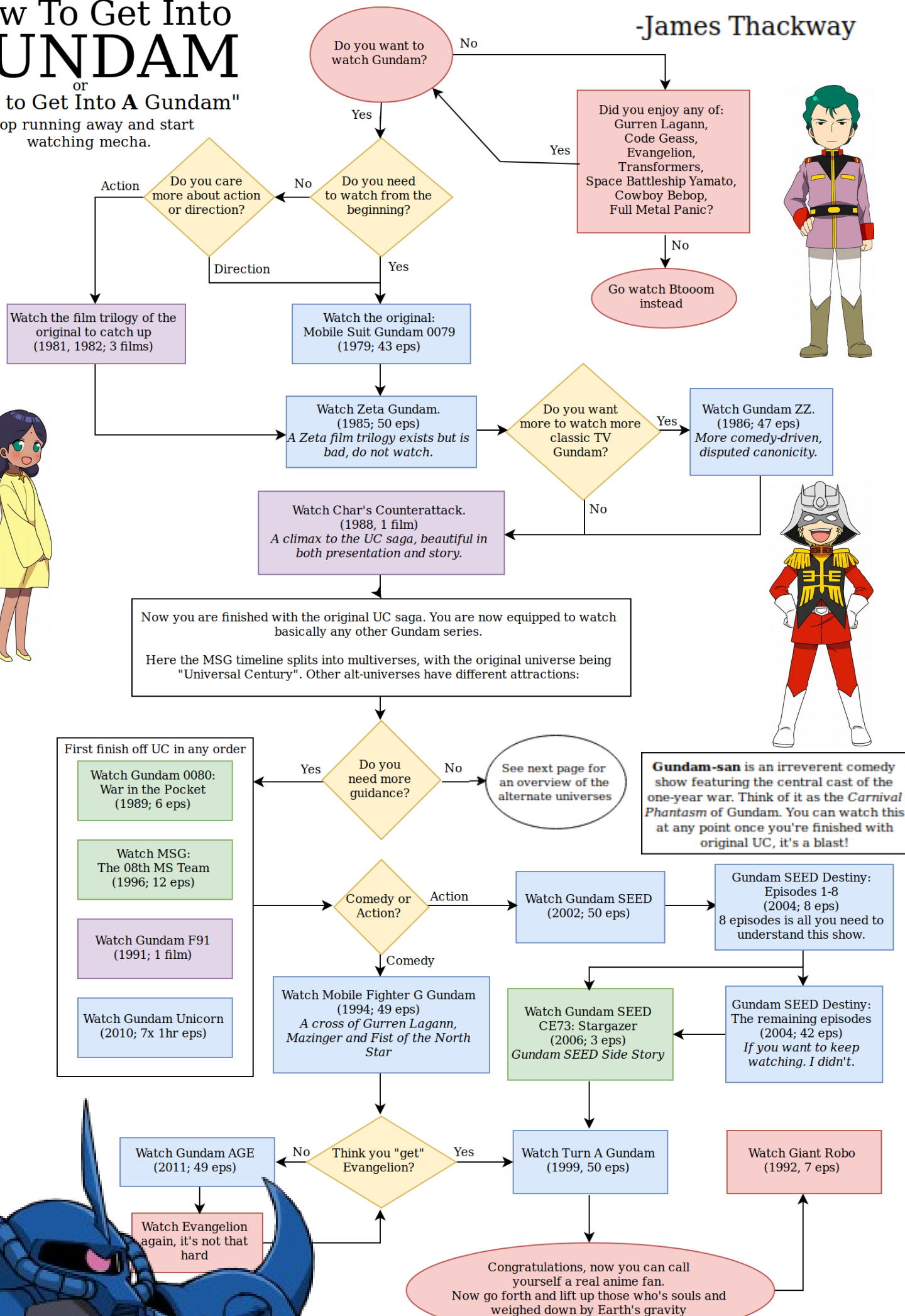
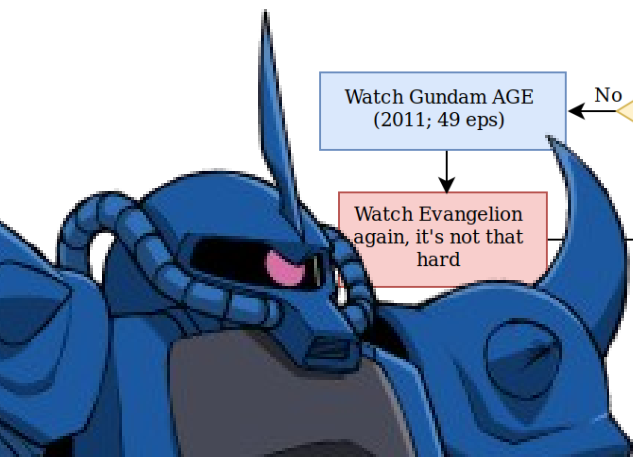
-Nick Stathakis

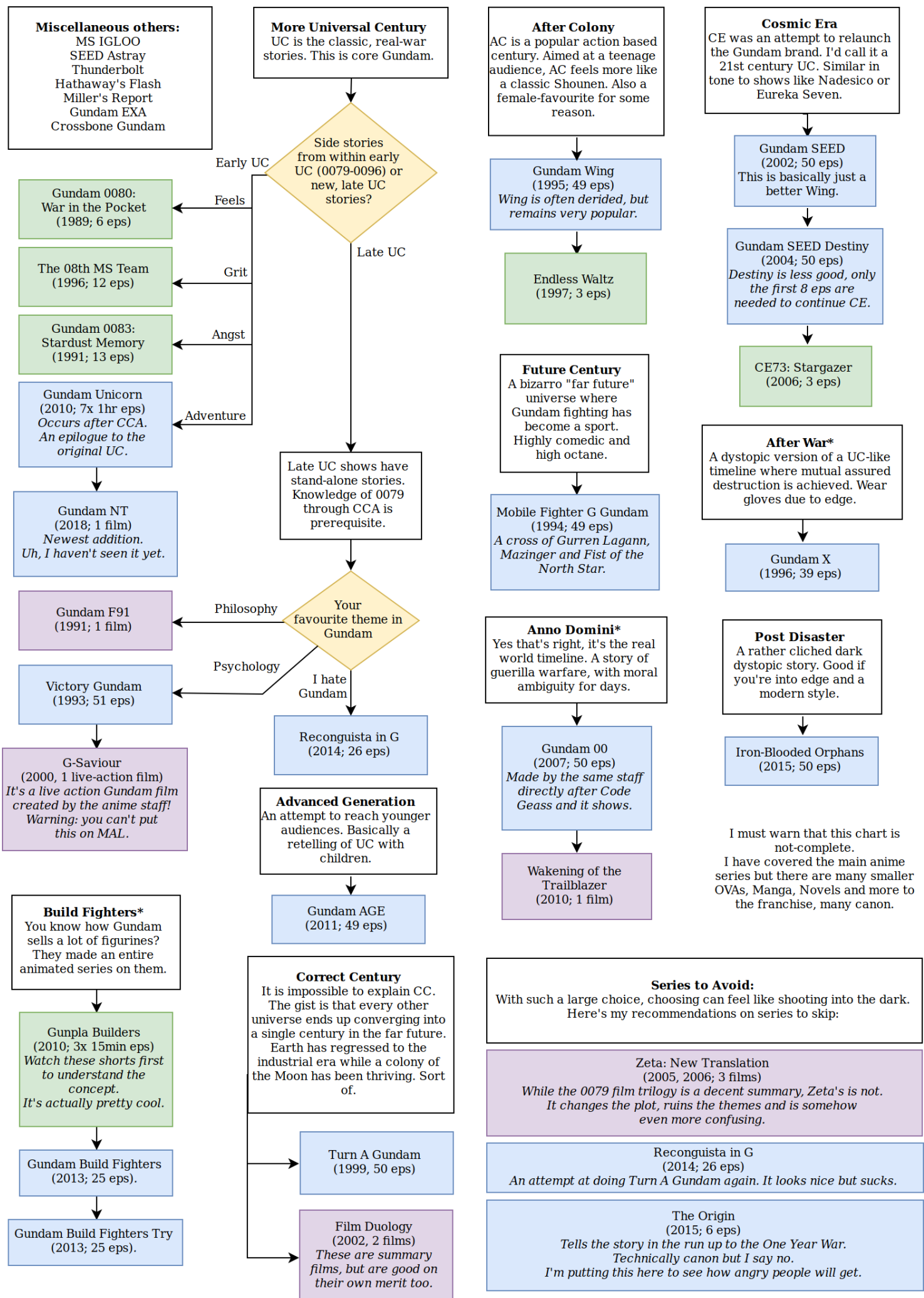
How To Get Into GUNDAM

or
"How to Get Into A Gundam"

Stop running away and start watching mecha.

-James Thackway







Initial D and the Hashiriya of Japan

I don't know if what I'm about to write is going to be a review. Reviews have the nominal purpose of looking at something in a critical, unbiased manner and conveying these impressions to a potential audience and I'm about as impartial as Khrushchhev during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Nonetheless I believe it is fair to say that Initial D is one of the greatest sports anime of all time. Here's why:

The story takes place in the late 90's and follows Takumi Fujiwara, son of tofu shop owner and anime's best dad Bunta Fujiwara, as he gets involved in the world of street racing. Japan has a rich culture around street racing starting in the 80's and reaching its peak in the 90's with groups like the Midnight Club attaining legendary status and influencing popular culture for decades down the line. The particular type of racing portrayed in Initial D is touge drifting, which has its roots on the mountain roads of Gunma where the show takes place. Racers, called Hashiriya in Japan, will go head-to-head with each other down a mountain pass (touge), often sliding parallel inches from each other along ravines and through corners that would beach most American cars. Other times they will form long chains of cars all sticking as close to each other as possible while going as sideways as possible, where a mistake on the part of someone up front can cause the whole train to pile up. These activities are both illegal and quite dangerous, but the drivers are fully aware of this and take appropriate precautions. Races are held late at night with people at either end to watch for civilian traffic, inexperienced drivers are taught the ropes before going out on their own and everyone helps out in case of an accident. All quite respectable, really.

I cannot, in good conscience, talk about Initial D without mentioning the man who first brought drifting into the spotlight. Keiichi Tsuchiya is a professional Japanese racing driver who started out street racing in the mountains in his 1986 Toyota Sprinter Trueno GT-V AE86, commonly referred to as a hachi-roku (8-6). Coincidentally, this also happens to be the same car Takumi so skillfully maneuvers on his nightly tofu deliveries (technically Takumi's is a GT Apex, not the GT-V, but the difference is minor). Tsuchiya worked as an advisor on Initial D and it is said that Takumi is largely modeled after his early experiences with street racing. His work on the "Drift Option" videos that showed him drifting his AE86 are credited with bringing drifting to the west and sparking the boom in tuner culture during the late 90's that led to so many interesting accidents, including the Fast and Furious franchise.



Arguably even more important than racing are the vehicles and community around them. Part of the reason why Initial D is set in the 90's is that Japanese cars of that period were uniquely suited to street racing. Relatively cheap, reliable, but lightweight and packing enough punch that those tight corners come at you quicker than you may be comfortable with. Modifying your car was an absolute must as well and people would often unite around a single model to share their mechanical expertise and love of petrol and burnt rubber. There are garages and designers dedicated to working on a single kind of vehicle and passionate communities that will help keep old cars going. In the show the Takahashi brothers, for example, are devout followers of the Church of the Rotary Engine, while Team Emperor all drive Lancer Evo's. There is friendly rivalry between different groups, but even when pride, honour and status are on the line losses and accidents are taken with humility and respect towards the other driver. The show portrays this very well and, in contrast to some other sports anime, none of the rivals are ever really vilified. Occasionally they will act like cocky knobgobblers, but some people are just like that and even they will humbly admit defeat upon recognising their adversaries true skill. Most of the time.

Speaking of adversaries, there's something I'd like to mention in regards to the characters of Initial D. None of them are particularly eccentric or visually extravagant, they're passionate, but not obsessive about their hobby, they have very mundane occupations outside of racing and are generally quite reasonable. In other words, they're real people. Takumi is probably the most outlandish character around, having inherited incredible talent from his father and developed it by being forced to deliver tofu since he was fifteen. The other racers acknowledge that he is a genius driver, but beyond that there's no fanfare about it, no news agencies or sponsors lining up to interview him. Takumi's growth as a character and his slowly burgeoning interest in racing are also a masterpiece of realistic and subtle development. Initially he doesn't give half a twig about driving, yet without any major revelations or traumatic incidents, he learns to enjoy it. The way his growth as a driver and person are presented feel organic and believable, though this kind of slow build takes time and one needs to see multiple seasons to really appreciate his progress.

After finishing school at the end of the first season he gets a job with a moving company while his friend Itsuki continues working full time at the local gas station. I find this kind of blue-collar attitude makes the characters far more relatable and realistic than watching yet another group of high-schoolers struggle with the meat grinder of entrance exams or bend time and space at national championships. Many real Hashiriya



come from working class backgrounds and spend the majority of their spare time and money on their cars. No particular distinction is made about age or social standing so long as you're respectful and like to drive. Most of the opponents throughout the series are older than Takumi, some well into their middle age, and have access to more resources and experience. This makes each new battle a unique challenge while keeping it believable that all of these different people could still be competing within the same field. Seeing the difficulties of balancing adult responsibilities and ones passion is rather refreshing in a genre that more often focuses on spectacle and hype.

That's not to say that there isn't any hype. All the things mentioned above - realistic portrayal of Hashiriya culture, relatable characters, cool cars doing cool things - all of that would only make a moderately decent show without that little knob that goes to eleven. Eurobeat. Here's an analogy : Cowboy Bebop has fantastic music that elevates the show and sets the that famous bluesy tone for the world, somehow melancholy, yet simultaneously action-packed. Initial D without Eurobeat would be the equivalent of Bebop scored by DJ Khaled. Sure, it might somehow work, but it would be a very different show. Eurobeat as a genre mostly exists because of Initial D, in large part because of the way it uses its music. Each track is only ever used once (until the later seasons, where a handful of fan favourites make a return), often only using 30 seconds of a full song. This is why the OST is several hundred tracks long and essentially funded an entire genre. Eurobeat and drifting have become so entangled that it's frequently played at Japanese racetracks during drift events. It may not be to everyone's taste, but those that understand will attest that it really is an unstoppable hype machine.

All this glowing praise does come with some mountain-sized caveats, though. The first thing that usually puts people off are the visuals. I find the PS2 graphics and bean-headed characters rather charming in a retro way, but I also like old cars with no modern comforts, safety or driver assists. The animation starts off very rough indeed, but improves astoundingly as the seasons progress to the point that, by the fourth season, I would put it forward as an exemplar of how to do good CG in anime. This is made all the more impressive when one considers that five different studios have handled production over the fifteen year run of the series, not counting spin-offs and remakes.

Another point to potentially be made against it is that it sometimes focuses heavily on the technical aspects of racing to the detriment of pacing and character development. While it is less accessible than most sports series to those not familiar with or interested in cars it's this aspect that elevates it for those of us who are. All the talk about suspension travel and cam profiles serves to properly immerse you and give depth to what's going on, similarly to the detailed recipe breakdowns in Food Wars.

The biggest drawback, though, and one even I can't ignore entirely, is that there's a lot of stuff in Initial D that doesn't need to be there. Lengthy and awkward romance segments that go nowhere may serve as character building and give weight and background to later decisions (looking at you, Mogi, you trollop), but that doesn't make them any less dull. There's a lot more of this early on and it does hamper the show. Many rivals also don't get a proper build-up, which contextually makes sense, since you're only going to see them for as long as it takes to leave them in your dust, but it's still disappointing. Some characters get several seasons worth of set-up, but doing this for all of them doesn't seem practical, though.

So, at the end of the day, can I recommend Initial D to anime fans? Not really. It is one of the more realistic sports anime out there and it faithfully depicts the culture around touge drifting and the Hashiriya, a culture unique to Japan. It stands well enough on its own merits as an anime and the soundtrack is literally unique, but to those not already interested in cars and racing, the technical and pacing issues I so briefly glossed over are going to make watching the show rather tedious. The culture of underground racing in Japan is really worth a look for those interested in Japanese culture beyond what can be found in Akihabara. As for me, I'm just happy to know that the mountains of Gunma still occasionally resound to the whine of engines and burning rubber as a newer generation of Hashiriya carry on the tradition of going fast because it's fun.



By Dave Timermanis

Through the Eyes of The Zine: A “Brief” History of the Society

By Matthew Thomas (MASCOT 2018/19, Anime Rep 2014/15,
Member 2012-present)

If you are reading this, then you probably already have some idea of what a Zine is. From media reviews, fan art, records of the year’s events, and much more; the Zine is our Science Fiction, Fantasy & Anime Society’s annual/biannual magazine, comprised of creative contributions from members and committee members alike. While its “annual/biannual” status is now rather tenuous, with the previous Zine (issue #9) being published in May of 2015, today you read the latest release of this long-running publication, made for both current members and for posterity! Please see our Zines on our dropbox at:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/myjqhs3oz98hmf/AAAIMZ3tUJXlnY08IPXOgkera>

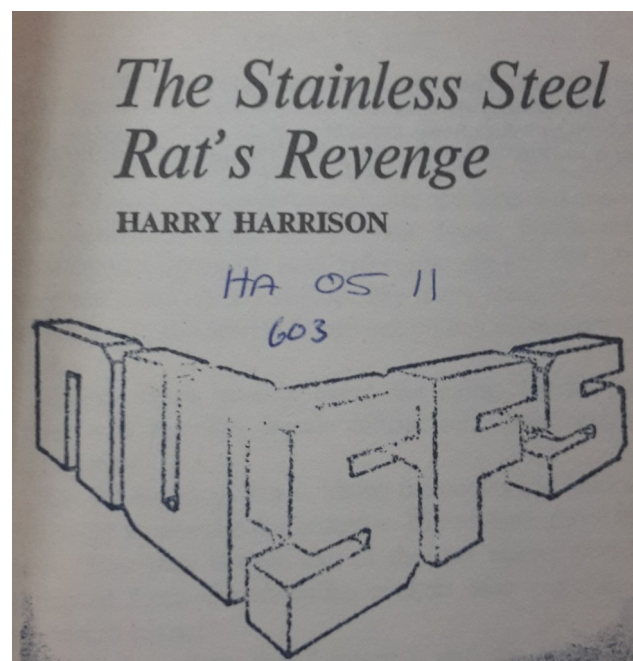
This issue of the Zine exists thanks to the efforts of this year’s editor-in-chief, James Thackway (Comms Officer), and all of those who contributed content. However, it also exists due to the precedent set by past members, who created and produced several Zines over the past 10 years. By giving a brief overview of these Zines and their contents since the first issue’s release, supplemented by my memories and research, I hope to give you a glimpse into the past events and interests of our society, an idea about how things have changed, and an appreciation of the legacy that the society inherits. I feel this is especially relevant given our recent change to just an Anime society, as it is my hope that the all that has made the society good can be continued despite the change in focus.

Please do note, that despite its length, this article is but a brief glimpse into the past and remains a short selection of information and events I could get my hands during the limited time I spent writing this. It cannot begin to be a comprehensive resource. It’s also very much biased by being written by me. Please enjoy ☺.

Pre-Zine: Predecessors and Precursors

A while before starting to write this article, I’d been trying to get together a lineage of all the Presidents, from the society’s founding President to the present day. I’ve been told that the SU keep pretty much zero records about their societies, to the point where UoN Manuscripts team are [actively seeking](#) for societies themselves to submit their own memorabilia to showcase student events both past and present. Fortunately, after contacting many past Presidents and other committee members, each helping me in turn to contact earlier committee members, I was able to put together an idea of when and how the society was founded, as well as an almost-complete lineage of Presidents!

I was [told](#) by ex-committee and long-time (2002-2013) member Dawn Hazle, that our current society, then called the *Science Fiction and Fantasy Society*, was a “resurrection” of an older Sci-Fi society that had been defunct for a few years, from which we inherited a library of Sci-Fi books. Even today, we can assume we still have many of these books due to many containing stamps of “NUSFS”, which you can see to the right. A search on LinkedIn paired with an educated guess suggests that this society was called the *Nottingham University Science Fiction Society*, and from this [LinkedIn account](#), must have existed at least at some point during 1984-1988. [A message](#) from ex-President Matthew Hardy, the President from the 1998/99 academic year, tells us that the current incarnation of the society started in 1996, during which he was a member.



¹Feel free to jump to the end of this article if you want to check out the lineage records for the President

Zine #0: The Prototype

[Zine #0](#) was released for the start of the 2009/10 academic year, the very first Zine released, and contains among others: a statement from the society's President (Sam Kurd) who put the Zine together; society news; a list of upcoming events; reviews on various forms of media (games, books, TV series, films); artwork; poetry; the committee's thoughts about *District 9*; a short story; and a caption contest (featuring Mooch, displayed to the right). The Zine finishes with the statement "The Zine will Return...", fulfilled in only half a year by the release of Zine #1 in March 2010.



Both the numbering of the issue as #0, its short length of 14 pages, and the President's opening statement shows that this issue was a kind of prototype, with the President asking for alternative names for the magazine besides "The Zine" to be submitted to our forums. History of course tells us that the name stuck ☺. While the forums we hosted eventually stopped being used and are now no longer accessible, back then they were in regular use by members and covered various topics; anyone wanting to be elected to the committee had to post their manifestos there up until almost 2014. In Zine #9 there's an article that looks back on the naming of the Zine, including the results of the poll ("The Zine" won xD) and the subsequent disagreement on whether to pronounce it 'Zine (Zeen, as in Magazine) or Zine (Zine).

Briefly discussed in issue #0 is an overview of the previous year's "Can't Stop the Serenity" event, which had been held on the 17th June 2009. The "Can't Stop the Serenity (CSTS)" event was a charity screening of Joss Whedon's sci-fi blockbuster *Serenity* (sequel to the popular sci-fi TV series *Firefly*), which are held worldwide each year to "raise funds and awareness to support the charity **Equality Now** in their work for the protection and promotion of the human rights of women and girls around the world". More information concerning these screenings can be found at the website <http://www.cantstoptheserenity.com/>. Our screening in Nottingham raised over £300 for charity, and the CSTS event became a recurring annual event for our society, being held all the way into 2012.

Even back in 2009, anime was in the Zine's tagline ("The latest in SciFi, Fantasy, Anime and Cult. Free!") and was one of the society's regular weekly events, which were run on Mondays. However, the name of the society at that time was still the "University of Nottingham Science Fiction and Fantasy Society (SFFS)". This old name can for now at least still be seen in the url of our Facebook page, <https://facebook.com/groups/sffsoc>. Although we had technically had an Anime Representative since the 2008/09 academic year, it was only in 2012/13 that "Anime" was added to the society's name. My old records from the forum say that anime was introduced to the society in December 2007, where an unaffiliated anime society/group wanted either SFFSoc or RPGSoc to book rooms for them, but in their discussions SFFSoc decided to add anime officially and run anime nights properly each week. Rumour also has it that the founding of the local non-University anime society Namsoc is also related to these times, presumably with members unable to form a University anime society because SFFSoc was officially running events; however I've not been able to confirm what happened. My records do however say for certain that the first official anime night at SFFSoc was on Monday 21st January 2008, though people had been meeting up unofficially for a "good while" already.

Zine #1: Origins and Precedent

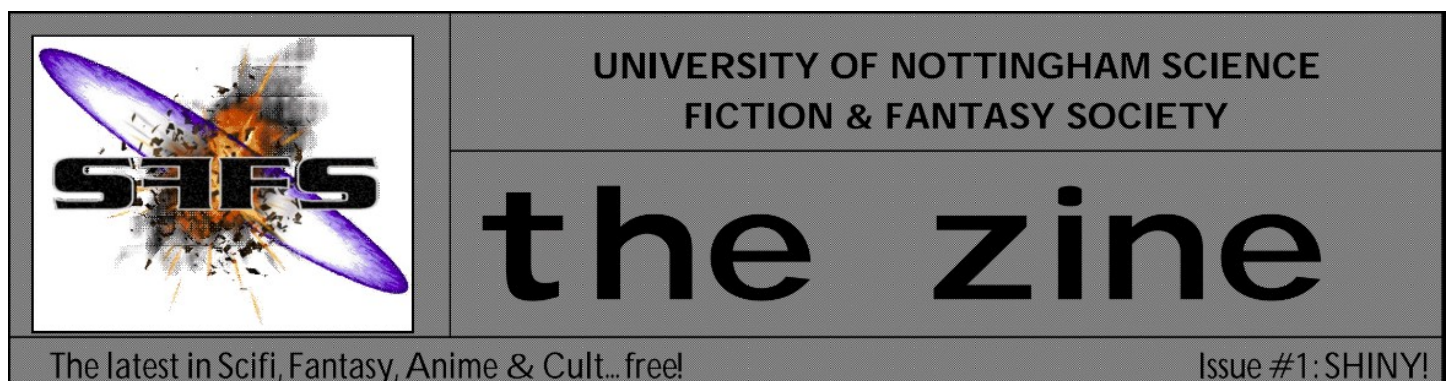
[Zine #1](#) was released at the end of March 2010, again headed by Sam Kurd, who had been President for both the 2008/09 and 2009/10 academic years. With a similar structure to #0, and a detailed description of then-upcoming CSTS 2010 screening, Sam helped set the precedent for what The Zine contains. In messages on Facebook, he told me that:

“The idea [of the Zine] was to showcase talent from the members and foster a greater sense of community beyond ‘we watch a film and occasionally go to the pub’. We had some incredibly talented members, and I’m super proud of everyone who came forward to submit stuff.

The actual Zine was a bit of a nightmare to edit as I had almost no experience with DTP and Publisher and any of that stuff. Nel and Hal did way better with it than I did!

I remember there was also a huge argument on the old SFFS forums (no A at the end in those days!) as to whether it should be Zine or ‘Zine. Team Zine forever.”

I was also told by another ex-President, John Steele (president for 2005/06 & 2006/07), that “*The Zine was an idea which had been floating around since about 06/07, but it wasn’t until Sam came to the helm that anyone tried to actually get it off the ground*”. Issue #1 is the first “proper” Zine release, with 24 pages filled with love by members (It is by no means the longest though, with #4 clocking in with 43 pages!)



Included is a reflection on the CSTS 2009 screening event, with plans for a second round in June 2010; artwork drawn by members, reviews of the film *Moon*, TV series *Masters of Horror*, and the book *Twilight*. There is also poetry, short stories, a book chapter preview, speculation about an upcoming film, and the results of the previous caption competition!

The original intention of a termly release was met here, and while most Zines in general met this release schedule (typically one for the start of the academic year, one concluding it), this also began the tradition of people not ~quite~ meeting their own release schedule. Good luck James! *[Editor’s Note: Just the one this year, but I think we’ve made up for that by making this by the longest one yet! -James]*

Zine #2:

Events both Past and Present

[Zine #2](#) came out in October 2010 while Phil Friedel was President (2010/11), and features a few reviews, stories, and lists some of the new books added to the library, reaching 22 pages. The continued use of the name “Captain’s Log” for the President’s opening comments as well as the general contents of the Zine gives an idea of the interests of the members then.

Like in previous Zines, our regular events are described within the first few pages (revealing that Sci Fi evenings used to often watch TV series after finishing a film). In this Zine however, it is particularly interesting to see that the fortnightly Friday events were once called “Geeky Crafts nights”, not quite the Alternate Friday concept we currently have today (and especially given the number of events we ran on Saturdays instead of Fridays this year :P). The idea of a Geeky Crafts Night reappeared in later years, with the [Cosplay Workshop](#) in 2014, as well as events such as Cubecraft crafting nights. Members have even tried making a manga before!

Fortnightly Geeky Crafts nights:

Starting Friday 1st October. Venue: Portland C27

Geeky Crafts Night is a chance for you to try out whatever crazy project has been plaguing your mind, or just to help others with their plans for world domination! Either bring your own materials, or use the society’s Lego to craft your insane creations.

Geeky Crafts Friday: Alternating Fridays, C27 Portland, 7pm

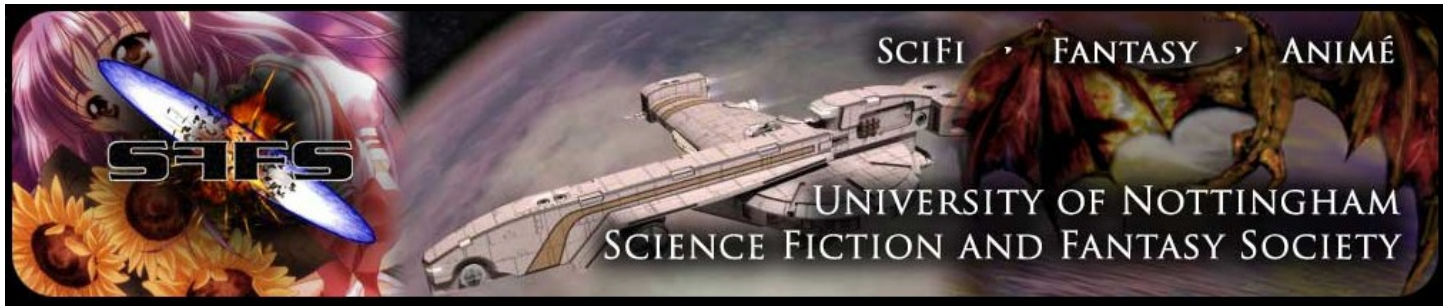
Bring along your wool/model kits/papier mache/Lego/paper/writing/long term projects and enjoy this opportunity to try out those crafts you've meant to get round to trying your hand at! Enjoy the informal & laid-back atmosphere!

Besides regular events, this Zine also gives us a list of the non-weekly events that were planned for the Autumn term, such as “Escape from Week One” (which became the Sci-fi intro film night) , “Meet and Greet”, Anime Intro night, “Geeky shopping trip tour” (most recently revived this year by yours truly as the “Geeky Nottingham Tour”), and the Halloween event to name a few; all events run at some point over the last few years. The “Quiz” was at this point simply a part of the “Welcome Meeting”, the first Wednesday event after the week one events, and not its own dedicated alternate-social event run later in the term.

It’s hard to say quite how long these events had already been going for, but clearly changes year by year mean that while some events are still done in the same way, many are quite different or no longer done at all; for example the “Quazar” and “Eye of Aragon” events ran for a few years but stopped around 2012. The Anime Intro session is now typically a film, often attracting large numbers of people. The alternate Friday events were very frequent in 2013, with a variety of different events run over both terms, but they have been less frequent since then until this year. Similarly, the Christmas meal social hasn’t been run in several years, but this year made its return, hopefully to be continued in the years to come. In contrast events such as the Halloween event and the Pumpkin carving event have remained staples of the society and with little interruption continue to this day :D (and we still do pass the parcel at them!).

Zine #3: Making Films and Playing Minecraft

Just as Zines #0 and #1 were released within a single academic year, so too were Zines #2 and #3 released within a single year (2010/11), with the Zine #3 released in March 2011. However, the editor of Zine #3 was not Phil Friedel, but instead was handled by Harry “Hal” Martin, who went on to become the President for the subsequent 2011/12 academic year. It looks like the committee position of Zine editor had been made for this year, as it reappears as a committee role in future Zines. Here the Zine is titled ‘Zine, presumably to emphasise the “correct” pronunciation, and it covers the usual regular events, some upcoming events at the very end of the 2010/11 year, fanart of Star Trek and Spiderman, multiple short stories, and more. A new header for the Zine using our original logo had also been created, and this continued to be used until Zine #6.



New to this Zine is plans for a "SFFS Movie", though there is not much specific information present here. However, skipping ahead to Zine #4 (from October 2011), these plans became *Jeremy*, a short film about a disturbed young man who uses a zombie apocalypse to get closer to the object of his affections. Produced under the name “BlackStumpFilms”, the film was written by Sam Kurd, directed by James Boucher, and made by the University of Nottingham Science Fiction & Fantasy Society. The film can be seen at www.youtube.com/watch?v=0nD36jwXXqw, with a number of fun behind-the-scenes clips at many familiar locations seen at www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oy8Tey5AmZg. Another short film made with members of the society, called “Codex Noctumbra” was also released in 2013, and can be watched at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iT7pbj4R48w>.



Back in 2011, Red Dwarf was much better known to the society and its members, with a quiz by Graham Moore truly testing even the toughest of fans' knowledge!

Reviews of games include Minecraft, which had been in beta for only 4 months and at that point had sold only 1.5 million copies (it is now at ~154 million sales). The society even had its own unofficial multiplayer server!

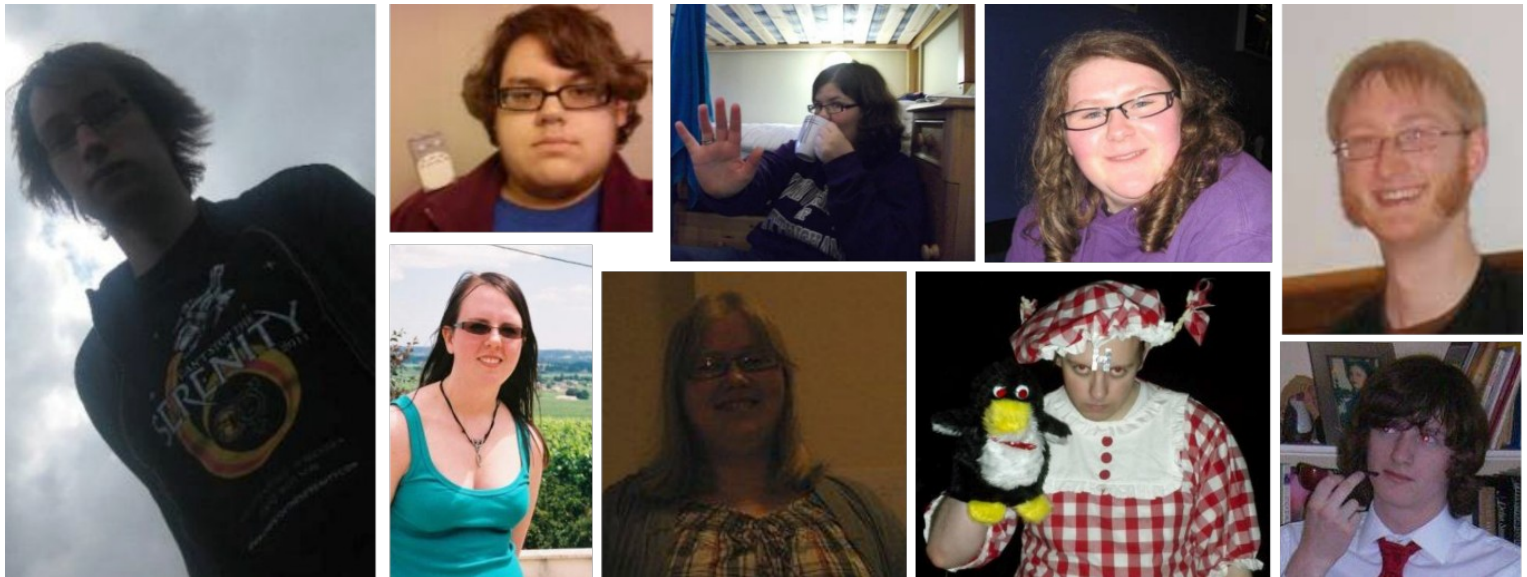


Zine #4:

The Committee Roles, and a History of Halloween Parties

[Zine #4](#) was released in October 2011 by editor Nel Taylor, and is a whopping 43 pages long, the longest of any Zine released. Contents include the usual summary of regular events, a puzzle, the first part of a serial story, a short story, a final fantasy quiz, a review on the rise of e-sports and of Starcraft 2, some drawings, and more!

Notably this issue was the first to have a “Meet the Committee!” section, which gives a glimpse into both the committee roles at that time and the people in those positions. The roles described here were eventually changed and rearranged in 2013 (and further changes have been made in this year too). For example, the Sci-fi representative didn’t exist at this point, instead the President ran the Sci-fi nights. Given that we ran our own forums and had our own domain and email address, a webmaster was a useful role to have; however, the role of webmaster, librarian, Zine editor and parts of the secretary were later merged together to create the communications officer. It was also just before this academic year that our current [Facebook group](#) was made, so if you are feeling curious go take a look at some of the first posts made on it.



This Zine is also chock full of history, with the very first M.A.S.C.O.T., Matthew Spencer, telling us about why he created the role and what the role was originally for. Through contacting some of our older ex-members, it turns out that MASCOT is an acronym here, apparently originally standing for “mocked and scorned, creature of torment” (though the name as an unknown acronym was itself mocked in later years [by candidates](#) for MASCOT). An article by Dawn Hazle, an ex-Social sec and longstanding member, also covers in depth the history of our Halloween party event, which I highly recommend checking out if only for the fantastic cosplay photos :D. The event has been going on at least since 2002 and had been dotted all over the place in the city, until it settled down at The Johnson Arms pub for many years!

As mentioned earlier, this Zine has more details on the short film “Jeremy” that the society helped to produce, requesting members to audition for the main roles, volunteer to help, and provide donations where possible. The society was very fortunate to have James Boucher, as his interest in producing videos wasn’t limited to just short films, and he recorded several events that were run over the year. This included the Halloween event <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ND13J7wnqIY>, as well as recording our first ever guest speaker, an author talk with Philip Reeve (author of Mortal Engines)! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9uLDjkXVK5Y>

This Zine also includes a “What’s on at anime this semester?” by the Anime Rep at the time, Dan Rizzo, giving a relatively spoiler free review/synopsis of the set series, Gurren Lagann.

Zine #5:

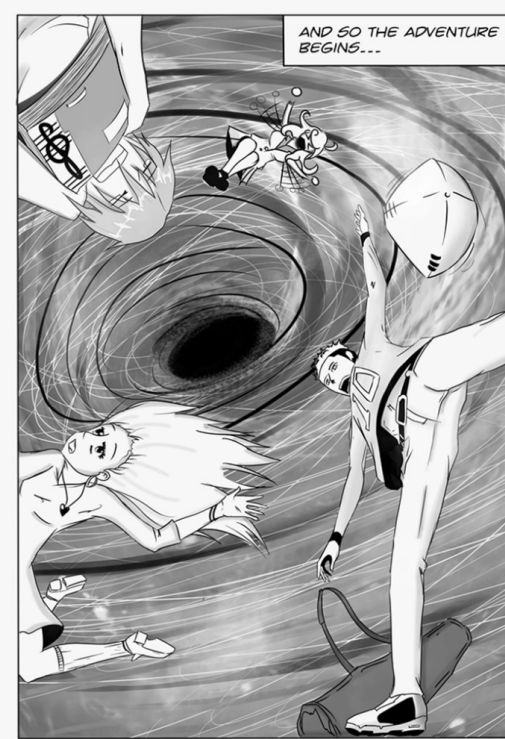
Adding Anime to the Name

[Zine #5](#) came out at the end of April 2012 and was once again edited by Nel, this time reaching a whopping 40 pages. This Zine not only announces the results of the AGM elections for the 2012/13 year, but it also tells us that at this AGM, the word “anime” was added officially to the name of the society, making us the *Science Fiction, Fantasy and Anime Society*. Of note to me specifically is the election of James Titmuss to MASCOT, who remained the MASCOT for the majority of the years I was a member of the society, and continues to this day to be the key-holder to lots of our digital infrastructure (such as the sffasoc.co.uk domain, which he still pays for).

Relatively speaking, this Zine is full of reviews, covering a few book series including *The Mistborn Trilogy*. There is a review on the *Timesplitters* videogame series, reflecting on what made it memorable; and by the newly-elected Anime rep Mike Begg we have reviews of two rather different anime films: *5 Centimeters per Second* and *Redline*. The film *Redline* was used in 2013 as the “Intro to Anime” session’s film, and again in 2016 due to its earlier popularity 😊. There are some short stories, many based off the “Pictonaut” challenge, where you write a 1000-word story based on a single image. There’s even a quiz on “alternative movie titles”, which you can have a go at if you like. There are a couple of drawings, including one from the anime set series *Gurren Lagann* by Jonathan “Jonti” Levine.



The drawing earlier in the Zine by Laura Beach, and her subsequent drawings in Zine #6, are of note because she later went on to help organise the mini manga group. From asking ex-members, the mini-manga group was started in 2012, and was managed by Laura for two years before being succeeded by Alexandre Dumont for one year. The group met on Friday evenings, sharing and critiquing their personal works, while also collaborating on making their own manga! You can see a couple of the more-finished pages below:



Zine #6: Reminiscence and Guest Speakers

[This issue](#) came out in December 2012, and on the very first page introduces the new committee mentioned in #5, including editor Holly Pownall. With anime officially in the name of the society, the logo had also been remade to the more recognisable illuminati-like symbol you'll have seen in emails.

As 2012 was my first year as an undergraduate, I'm quite nostalgic about the time from here on out. As you can see from the flyer below, we had a nice mix of old and new events listed, many of which were actively revived this year with my encouragement and the rest of the committees effort :3. (Sadly we were unable to run the treasure hunt or scavenger hunt this year, maybe next time?) Neither E126 or C27 exist in Portland in their current forms anymore, so I can't go and take photos, but C27 was too small for its purpose that year; during the intro to anime session I remember I'd had to sit at the back of the room using the tables as seats, squashed between two others, with the radiators uncomfortably close. I think that some committee members actually stayed outside during the session to make more room!



2012/13

**University Of Nottingham
Science Fiction,
Fantasy & Anime Society**



The Science Fiction, Fantasy & Anime Society exists to provide its members with a steady and nourishing diet of films and TV series old and new from a variety of genres, to cater likewise for those with more literary tastes with its expansive library, and to create a friendly community of people with common interests.

Regular Nights

Every Monday, 7pm for 7:30 start, C27 Portland Building

Monday Night is Anime Night! We begin with an episode or two of a series chosen to watch throughout the term (after auditioning series for the first couple of weeks), and then follow with a film, more series, or whatever you like. As always, feel free to bring anything you think we would enjoy watching!

Every Wednesday, 7pm for 7:30 start, E126 Portland Building

On Wednesdays we watch a SciFi or Fantasy Film. Anyone can bring their own DVDs, then we choose what to watch via the sometimes confusing system known as "all stick up your hands and we'll attempt to count". Afterwards the same insanity is repeated for TV shows, and then it's off to find a quiet place to sit and discuss all things geeky.

Every Second Friday, 7-10pm, C27 Portland Building, Starting 12th Oct

Alternate Fridays are when we hold those other events that don't quite fit on our other nights. Author talks, Cinema Trips, Bowling Socials, Treasure Hunts, Pumpkin Carving, and more. If our members will enjoy it we will do our best to make it happen. As our president will tell you, it's Alternate because we do different things every other week.

The Library

The society has a Library of around 1250 books, free to all members. With a wide range of SciFi and Fantasy books, and growing collection of Manga and Graphic Novels, we have something to suit all tastes. And, in the unlikely instance we don't have a title you are looking for, our Librarian is always happy to go in search of more books to add to our ever growing collection. So go ahead, borrow all those epic series you've always wanted to read, but never found the chance.

The Zine

The Zine is a termly output for our members' creative projects and opinions. With short stories, art, reviews and listings of coming events, it's the perfect thing to help waste away the time you should be spending on Coursework.

See <http://sffsoc.co.uk/zine> for previous editions.

For more information email committee@sffsoc.co.uk or visit <http://sffsoc.co.uk/>

Membership £3!

Coming Events

Escape WeekOne - Wed 26th Sept, 7pm for 7:30 start, E126 Portland

Escape from WeekOne with our first film of the year! Unlike our normal Wednesday events, where we vote on what we watch, for Week One we will be watching 70's SciFi classic West World, and then retreating to our favourite local pub, just 5 minutes off campus, The Johnson Arms.

Meet & Greet - Sat 29th Sept, 8pm, The Johnson Arms

A meet and greet to get to know us all, at one of our regular haunts. Don't be scared, we only want to steal some of your sanity! Meet 7:30pm at the Portland Building Steps if you need a guide to get there.

Introduction to Anime - Mon 1st Oct, 7pm for 7:30 start, C27 Portland

At the first Anime Night of the year we introduce new members to our voting system, and offer a selection of easily accessible Anime. If you haven't watched any before this should be a great place to start; if you're a seasoned otaku then come along to enjoy a nostalgic old favourite and maybe discover some new gems.

Welcome Night/Quiz - Wed 3rd Oct, 7pm, West Concourse Lounge, Portland

Join us for the Welcome Meeting, complete with such clichés as The Quiz and associated confectionery prizes! Meet the Committee and get to know our members. Come and see if you have found your home away from home.

Geeky Shopping Trip - Sat 6th Oct, 12pm Meet at Portland Building

A guided tour around all the shops in the city centre that you should know. We show you the best places in Nottingham to get comic books, retro-clothing, milkshakes, and more. A return bus ticket to town costs £3.40.

Anime Choose a Series - Mon 8th Oct, 7pm for 7:30 start, C27 Portland

Many series enter, only one may win! Join us to choose which series we will watch at the start of Anime Night every week this term! Bring your most loved DVDs, and we will watch as many episodes as we can before choosing the champion.

Alternate Friday: Treasure Hunt - Fri 12th Oct, 7pm Meet, C27 Portland

Rival teams of 3 or 4 set out on an epic quest for confectionary treasure beyond your imagination! The quest will be difficult and take you to distant lands filled with unimaginable horrors, or more likely around the lake on campus.

Alternate Friday: Pumpkin Carving - Fri 26th Oct, 7pm, C27 Portland

Alternate Fridays continue with a pumpkin carving session, creating decorations for our Halloween Party the following night, where prizes will be presented for our favourites. Tickets cost £3 to cover the carving equipment and your pumpkin.

Halloween Party - Sat 27th Oct, 8pm, The Johnson Arms

It's Halloween, our one opportunity to remove our masks, scrub off all that makeup, unbind those grotesque hidden wings, and then put on a costume even more bizarre than our true appearances. With Apple Bobbing, a carefully selected horror movie, and other amusements, join us for a night we promise you'll love! Costumes, while optional, are strictly encouraged, on pain of non-specific punishment.

Plus:

Bowling, Christmas Meal, Cinema Trips, Set Film Nights, Quasar, Guest Authors...



*Left to right: Zoe, Dalek, Kay and Cain:
the long-term managers of The Johnson Arms*

While the Johnson Arms (often referred to as the JA) is mentioned here as “one of our regular haunts”, it became quickly clear to me that this was THE haunt of the society, with the landlady Zoe Head (along with co-owners Kay and Cain) being incredibly welcoming to us over the years, and the large beer garden being the perfect place to give a large group of loud nerds their own little corner (when it was warm enough, at least!). Most people would go there after pretty much every event, including after the regular Monday and Wednesday events. Zoe is a huge Doctor Who fan, and the inside of the JA not only had the odd piece of artwork from the series, but they had a full-sized Dalek too!

All the Halloween photos seen in this Zine are from the Jonson Arms pub, and looking back at the Halloween history article in Zine #4 tells me we’d been going there for Halloween since 2009. One year we even had Zoe contact us, telling us that someone else was trying to book the pub on our usual Saturday, and that despite us not having booked it yet, she’d held it back for us 😊. After almost 11 years running the place, [they decided](#) to move on to other things, and served their last drinks on 2nd March 2018 :/ The pub has held two new sets of managers since.

The Zine itself has descriptions of our regular events, and here you can see that the “Geeky Crafts Friday (FORTNIGHTLY)” has been replaced by the “Alternate Fridays”, with anime and sci-fi pretty much staying the same as before. One of the Alternate Friday events listed here that we’d just started doing were author talks; following Philip Reeve we had one by Paul Kane in March 2012, Christopher Priest in November 2012, and in November the following year got to listen to Alastair Reynolds. For those who have seen Netflix’s recently released *Love, Death & Robots* animated anthology, two of the episodes (*Beyond the Aquila Rift* and *Zima Blue*) are based on his Alastair’s novels. The Zine also mentions trying to make a short stories anthology, which I’m afraid I don’t know much about.



*Christopher Priest with society President
Mike Krawec and his Mum!*

Just before the release of this Zine we also had the society’s first trip to Hyper Japan in London, which we sadly don’t have many pictures of, but whose popularity certainly encouraged the first trip to MCM held in the following year.

Zine #7:

Committee Role Changes and Crossdressing?

[This Zine](#) came out in March of 2013, again by Holly Pownall, and as before has several previews, reviews, drawings and stories. One unique event described here was the [City Run](#), a city-wide scavenger hunt where certain events had to be completed and recorded in a limited time; the best in urban-treasure-hunt-meets-public-embarrassment event we've ever run!



Tiffany Ka-Wing Tang

15 March 2013

Last call for City Run!! We have some awesome stuff lined up for you all, including:

1. Grovel to the lions in market square. Photo proof: 20 points
2. Ask a stranger what year it is, act VERY surprised when they tell you, and then run off screaming "There's still time!". Video proof: 70 points.
3. In Buffy the Vampire Slayer, when you slay a vampire it turns to dust. Slay a vampire and bring back the dust as proof. 30 points.
4. Do a dramatic reading of a blurb of a manga or anime of your choice(video proof) 30 points
5. Do the naruto ninja run across market square (Video Proof) 40 points

And lot's more to surprise you!!

So if you're interested SIGN UP FOR YOUR GROUP DOWN BELOW NOW!!!!!! NOW!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Call for any brave participants for the City Run event



We also have the only knitting I've seen in a Zine on display, so go check this one out 😊



The then-anime rep, Mike Begg, has written a 4 page review on just why he loves Kuroko no Basuke; he goes on to become President for the 2013/14 year and on our first trip to MCM group cosplays as the generation of miracles :O

As you can go on to see in the next Zine, the committee roles ended up being changed at an EGM in this year (on the [27th February 2013](#)), where the roles and responsibilities of the President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Librarian, Secretary, Social Sec, Webmaster, Anime rep, MASCOT and Zine Editor were consolidated into the positions of President, Treasurer, Social Secretary, Anime Representative, Sci-Fi & Fantasy Representative, Communications Officer, and MASCOT. More changed than you might think: the role of Secretary was split between the President and the Comms officer; the Librarian, Webmaster, and Zine editor were entirely consolidated into Comms officer; the Anime rep and newly created Sci-fi rep were both given Vice-President responsibilities, while the President naturally stopped running Sci-fi & Fantasy nights. The MASCOT, having been technically responsible for nothing since 2006, was at this point made formally responsible for ensuring a smooth handover and to represent the interests of associate members. Hopefully this article can count as my handover...

The two main reasons for these changes were streamlining the committee structure and making Anime and Sci-fi & Fantasy “equal” in the constitution, and in hindsight this consolidation did unfortunately help to kill the regular release of the Zine :/. While we’ve more recently met with issues concerning the SU assuming you have a Secretary position, which we also addressed at the EGM this year, the changes made here were for the most part necessary and overdue, especially regarding the Anime rep and Sci-fi rep. It’s a whole ‘nother story that the SU never got this new constitution, and no one realised until this year...

Many of you will be aware of a strange tradition we currently have, where candidates for President are... encouraged to wear a dress or skirt as they give their speech at the AGM. This was pretty much entirely started by Ben Brown (aka Ben-chan), President for the 2014/15 year. He ran uncontested for President the previous year, and during questions at the 2014 AGM on Monday was asked if he would consider wearing his maid outfit (seen already at a previous social session) to the following Wednesday night AGM, which he then did. He also went on to wear it when he hosted the following AGM as President, cementing the tradition for every successful candidate for President since. It was only following this that a strange coincidence was drawn: there was once an old tradition that people who ran for the Secretary position should wear a dress at the AGM (I vaguely recall this being related to Star Trek?), and following the consolidation of the role of Secretary into the role of President, this seems to have somehow unconsciously persisted...

*Three generations of Presidents.
Left-to-right: Ben Brown (2014), Alastair Davis (2018), James Thackway (2019)*



Zine #8:

MCM Comic Con and a Tribute to C11

Released in November 2013 by Tang Ka Wing, [this Zine](#) has more of the usual creative content, as well as introducing the new committee for the 2013/14 year. It however unfortunately lacks descriptions of any of the upcoming or previous events that were run, and for the first time there is also no subsequent Zine created and released in the Spring term. As such, I am free to write a bit more than normal about one of the biggest contributions of this year to the traditions of the society: our first trip as a society to MCM London Comic Con (26th October 2013)! We've got an entire album of photos on Facebook which you can look at here: <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=oa.607452712644914&type=3>.



Historically MCM had been avoided because it clashed with date when we'd always held our annual Halloween party (the Saturday before Halloween), and there was less interest in travelling all the way to London for a convention. We resolved this by doing the pumpkin carving and Halloween party on the weekend after Halloween, which still worked out great. We've gone to MCM every year since, and it's rapidly become **the** core event of our society, attracting lots of new members each year and providing a great opportunity for them to get to know each other and existing members early on.



Given we were almost over capacity in the previous year (and we expected our membership numbers to be higher), we were able to secure the large Portland C11 room for pretty much [all our sessions](#), which remained our main room for most sessions for the next 4 years. Back in 2013, not all the rooms had a Blu-ray player, so this was also part of the reason we were able to “acquire” C11; this made watching Redline at the [Intro to Anime session](#) even better! (though we damaged the speakers doing so...). While probably bigger than we usually needed, the extra space was great for our introductory events (which could attract over 100 people) and gave an unobscured view to all due to the raised screen (rarer than you think for non-tiered lecture rooms). The extra size was also great for when we held [our quiz](#). Sadly, as part of the recent redevelopment of the Portland building, [the room was destroyed](#) in the Summer of 2018, and many societies have had to look for new rooms elsewhere on campus. It is now a dance studio.



C11 before... and after...

In this academic year we also went to EM-Con Nottingham 2014 (the first EM-Con ever held), which became known to some of us as “Queue-Con” due to many people attending waiting over 4 hours to enter the venue, many giving up and seeking refunds (itself a 1-2 hour queue!). The then-President told recounted the event by saying *“god it was horrific, worst event of my life”*, and as such we were at the time hesitant to go back in the following year (feel free to read some testimonials [here](#) and look at some photos [here](#)).

EM-Con is now big enough to have events run at Burton, Nottingham, Worcester and Derby; its Nottingham event is now held at the much bigger Motorpoint Arena too.



Zine #9:

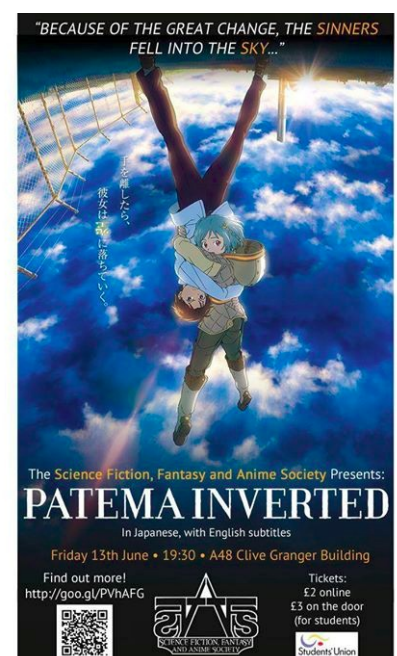
A Record of my Time...

[Zine #9](#) was produced by Comms officer Ian Ince and released in May 2015, following most of the events of the 2014/15 academic year. At the time of writing it was also the last Zine made, though if you are reading this you know that this is no longer the case xD! While attempts were made between then and now to modernise the Zine by creating a tumblr (<https://uon-sffasoc.tumblr.com/>) for continuous “Zine” publication, nothing (besides an archive of Zines #0-8) was actually submitted. I was on the committee during this year as Anime Rep, so be warned that the rest of this account will be a little biased ☺.

Originally released in March 2015 with a whopping file size of 250 MB, Zine #9 contains a **lot** of images, and reaches 30 pages long. Fortunately, the Zine was re-released in December 2015 with a bit of image quality optimisation, improved formatting, working links, and a significantly smaller file size (reduced to 60 MB). Nonetheless its file size is still six times larger than any other Zine, due to the extensive and impressive use of photos. If there is only one other Zine you read because of this article, try this one ([link](#))

The Zine has the traditional “meet the committee” section, in which you might just spot a familiar face..., it has some fan art, and includes review of *Dragon Age 2*, *Seconds* by Bryan Lee O'Malley, and *Avengers: Age of Ultron*. Foregoing any book chapters or short stories, new types of articles to this Zine include two anime figure reviews (Good Smile Company's Miki Sayaka and Lucy Heartfilia), a “DOs and DON'Ts” for attending conventions, a retrospective look into the now defunct forums on the naming and pronunciation of the Zine, an “Ask the Anime rep” chat log, a record of what anime was watched each week over the year, and links to the President's and ex-Presidents anime year roundups on their blogs. The change in content submitted to this Zine compared to that of #8 and #7 is a pretty good indicator of how interests had changed over the years, and how things changed over the period in which most of our longstanding associate members stopped attending.

As someone who ran for MASCOT this academic year on the manifesto that I would try to revive many of the events that we'd once done regularly, I'm especially grateful that this Zine also has a record of every single event that was run in 2014/15, giving you an idea of what I was pursuing, whether we were successful, and what its possible for a committee to do. Back then, I was lucky enough to be able to organise, ticket and host two licensed advance theatrical anime screenings at the University, specifically of *Patema Inverted* (13/06/2014) and *Giovanni's Island* (14/11/2014). Both events were tough to organise, and the SU caused us a lot of grief for the first one; I must thank the then-Treasurer Rebecca McClelland for her help throughout. But the result was well worth it ☺, not only did many members attend, but some members for Namsoc and the public purchased tickets and turned up, and surprisingly for *Patema Inverted* anime fans from Crytrek even turned up and joined us at Mooch afterwards!





One of the other new events of the year was the cosplay workshop, organised almost more by members than by the committee to help each other prepare costumes for MCM. It was a great collaborative event, making the group who went to MCM a lot tighter knit.



MCM was run for the second year, and remained just as popular; you can see our album [here](#) and check out the Zine if you also want to see photobombing Jesus!

Our traditional events were also at full strength with the Halloween party being similar to this year, only being held at the JA.



Nick Hyde (social sec) manning our Freshers' Fair (left); me (Anime rep) and Stuart McCunn at one of our regular anime sessions (top right); various members at mooch after having watched Giovanni's Island (bottom right)



2015-Today:

The Dark Ages and a Conclusion

There are lots and lots of things I've not been able to mention, but with the first 10 Zines now covered, we enter the "dark ages" of no Zines, the period where I have an excuse to bring this article to an end. There are lots of events I'd like to write more about here, such as guest speaker Jonathan Clements teaching us about the history and financing of anime, our first Japanese workshop (aka *Pondering Nippon with Hugh*), our various collaborations with all manner of societies, other crafting events such as Pepakura, new social events, and more. There are the various weird things that'd be fun to look into more, such as this year we found that the SU didn't have our updated constitution from the 2013 EGM and AGM, so that e.g. Sci-fi rep didn't constitutionally exist. I'd also love to look more into how certain things seem to recur each year, such as the ironic sports round in the annual quiz, the questions of "president vs vice president" and "where will you hide the money" that appear at AGMs, and the consistent week one schedule. Or write a bit more about why our society had so many associate members in 2012, or how the library has gone from house to house to house for years before we started having to reduce the number of books we have, or how ex-committee always seem to win the quiz. But I'm out of time.



Thank you very much to everyone who helped answer my obscure questions about the past that I sent your way, and to the current committee who are the real heroes in bringing these ideas of the past into the present. This especially includes the creation of this issue of the Zine by James, without which I would have had no excuse to write this article. Finally, thank you to all the society's members and committee members present and past, since a history only exists because of you. Until next time.

-Matthew Thomas

SFFA Soc Lineage

A lineage of all known Presidents and Anime Reps since the society's refounding in 1996.

Year*	President	Anime Rep
1996	???	N/A
1997	???	N/A
1998	Matthew Hardy	N/A
1999	Andy Atkins	N/A
2000	Dave	N/A
2001	Ross O'Brien	N/A
2002	Neil Siddons-Smith	N/A
2003	Fraser Daly	N/A
2004	Matthew Spencer	N/A
2005	John Steele	N/A
2006	John Steele	N/A
2007	Nicola Buckley	James Bullock (Acting)
2008	Sam Kurd	James Bullock
2009	Sam Kurd	Dan Biran
2010	Phil Friedel	Mike Clewett
2011	Harry Martin	Helen Worrall
2012	Michael Krawec	Mike Begg
2013	Mike Begg	Mike Barnfield
2014	Ben Brown	Matthew Thomas
2015	Sam Hindley	Cat Kendall
2016	Mike Robson	Ben Moss
2017	Ben Moss	Lewis Johnson
2018	Alastair Davis	Fallon Leigh-Smith
2019	James Thackway	Alastair Davis

We know that there was a Sci-Fi Society called NUSFS between 1984-1988, but any more details like it's founding and closing year. We do know that after being closed it was refounded in 1996 as SFFS.

The society was renamed SFFAS in 2012 and again into Anime Society in 2019.

MASCOT DESIGNS

~ART CORNER~



As part of the society's change to "Anime Society", the president Alastair decided it was a good time to get a society mascot!

Here are some of the potential designs as drawn by society members:

Mascot design
by Dave Timermanis



Nott-tan
by James Thackway



HOOD19-2
by James Thackway



I wasn't an anime fan when No Game No life aired in Spring 2014, but it was one of the first few anime that I watched when I first did become an anime fan because it's become a classic. It must have great rewatch value because I have rewatched it 3 times since initially watching it, just to see the Steins;gate and Jojo references. No game no life adapts the first 3 volumes of the light novel but the cliffhanger at the end of the anime is not from the end of volume 3, it is actually from the end of volume 6. This means that if Madhouse made a season 2, they would have to retcon the ending of season 1. However, I have read the light novels up to volume 7 so I know exactly what would be in a season 2:

****Minor Spoilers for Season 2****

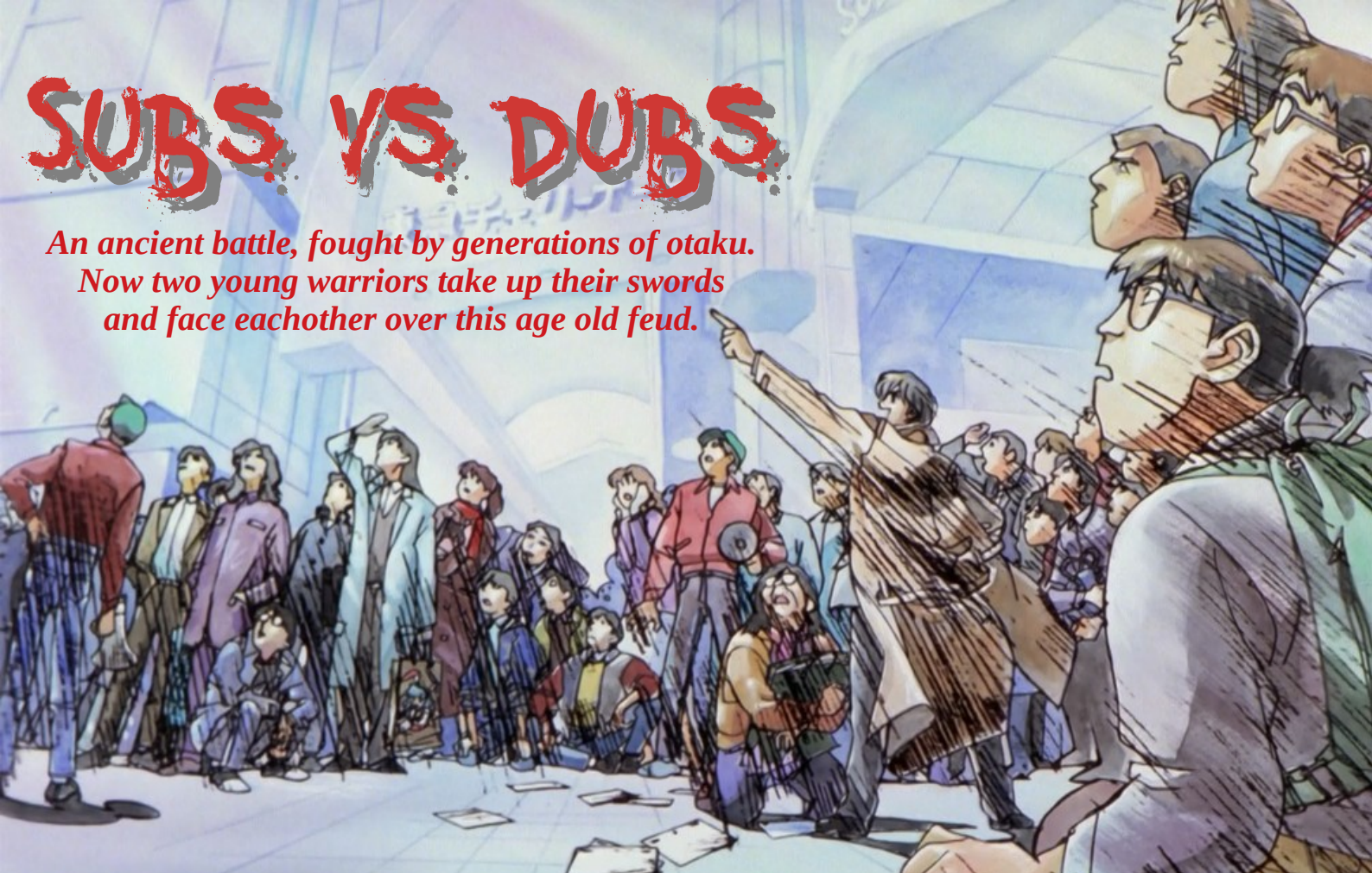
Season 2 would follow the gamer siblings take on the worst game of all: love! Sora and Shiro are approached by a Dhampir (basically a vampire) called Plum who asks for their help in saving his race who are on the verge of extinction. The story would follow 「」 and co go to the home of the Exceed Rank 15 Sirens under the sea, which is also home of the Dhampirs because the Siren queen has put herself to sleep until she finds true love. Many have tried to win the queen's heart, and all have failed. In order to wake the queen up, Sora and Shiro must enter the queen's mind to win her heart in a visual novel style dating sim game. In order for 「」 to beat this game, they must seek the help of Jibril's race and her sister.

Since volume 6 has been adapted in the no game no life film, and season 2 cannot be done without volume 8, season 2 would either be a 10-episode anime based only on volumes 4&5 or be a rushed 12/13-episode season adapting volumes 4 through 8 minus 6. Therefore, I don't think there will be a season 2 any time soon. That and Madhouse are shit at giving us sequels. Madhouse, please give us season 2 because it has a beach episode.

-Cameron Johnson

SUBS VS DUBS

*An ancient battle, fought by generations of otaku.
Now two young warriors take up their swords
and face each other over this age old feud.*



Round 1: Nick Stathakis

Why Anime Dubs are, Objectively Speaking, all Bad

The controversy surrounding the superiority of subs or dubs in anime is one that has been prevalent in the community since anime became popular in the West. Subjectively speaking, a viewer can find either the sub or the dub more entertaining, however, objectively speaking, all dubs are of inferior quality to their original Japanese counterparts, without exception, including beloved dubs like *Cowboy Bebop*, *Baccano* and *My Hero Academia*. Due to the difference in directing and language, the quality of voice acting and several other reasons, it is easy to distinguish why dubs are, without fail, inferior.

The main reason dubs are worse is due to the nature of the director's role in the original production. Those who have seen *Shirobako* will know that directors of anime hold the creative vision of how the many aspects of an anime will synergise. For instance, a director decides the way in which the voice actors and the animation work together to result in a more cohesive product, which brings to life the director's vision of the anime. However this vision is shattered in the production of a dub since the director has no oversight, and as a consequence the characters' dialogue feels stilted and out of sync with the animation. The interplay between the director and writer of a show is also vital to its success since the dialogue and word order is also choreographed alongside the animation. Consequently in comedy dubs, either the punchline doesn't match the word order or, when the creators of a dub attempt to address this issue, the joke loses its punch due to clumsy word order. Linking back to the idea of the director's vision, the director and his team hand pick the voice actors who would suit the characters best and advises them on how to emote the characters based on their vision on how that character should act. As you can imagine, this doesn't occur in the dub due to the lack of the original director's oversight, stripping the character of nuance leaving a bland, superficial character in its wake which doesn't reflect the director's intentions with a character. In summary, the director plays an integral role in the consistency, flow and integrity of the characterisation and story in an anime, so when dubbers attempt surgery on the brain of an anime, the final dub is left lobotomized.

Another reason why dubs can never replicate the quality of a sub is due to the intrinsic differences between the languages. The most notable difference for dubbing is the number of syllables in a sentence. Because Japanese is based on a syllabary, essentially an alphabet based on syllables instead of individual consonants and vowels, there are far fewer unique syllables and far more syllables in the average word than English. Even though Japanese is spoken faster than English, it doesn't make up for the longer sentences and words. Hence, the time allocated for a line of dialogue, which is decided between the Japanese



director and the Japanese writer, is frequently too unnaturally long, or in some cases short, for the English voice actors. The notable English voice actor Matt Mercer, responsible for Kiritsugu in *Fate/Zero* and Jotaro in *JoJo*, said, “The boundaries are right there, you have no wiggle room, and you have to fit right into this tiny little wedge and make it seem believable and natural” demonstrating how English voice actors have no choice but to speak unnaturally to fill the allotted time creating an awkward, inferior product. Therefore the linguistic differences leaves production feeling dislocated due to the chokehold on the English voice actors.

Dialogue in dubs often loses the original meaning of the anime. In light of extreme timing restrictions, conserving the meaning of the dialogue is a challenge for those dubbing anime since the meaning is often compromised for swiftness of speech. As a result, much of the nuance of the dialogue is cleaved, essentially ruining the uniqueness of the characters and brushing over deeper themes in the story. Many may argue that the same issues are present in subs; there are often mistakes made and jokes mistranslated which don't work in English. However if the subs you are watching are broken or of poor quality, there are a plethora of other fansubbing groups who have subbed the show to choose from, hence there will be a higher chance of accuracy. Also, subbers don't have the issues relating to time restrictions, so they can convey the meaning behind the dialogue in however many words they feel would be most effective. Additionally, good subbers don't attempt to translate/adulterate the names of cultural items like food and clothes, etc. Frequently, dubs attempt to translate food items like mochi or other paraphernalia like daruma which ruins the meaning of a gag or meaningful moment of the show, and can often be very jarring when the characters exist in a Japanese setting and use incorrect names for what they interact with. Therefore both the identities of the characters and the cultural significance of their actions are mangled by the dubbing process leaving a disfigured Frankenstein of an anime in its wake.

Dubs also generally have lower quality voice acting. Japan produces around 60% of the world animation so, as you would imagine, there are far more voice actors and people who want to be voice actors in Japan. Top voice actors in Japan can earn in the region of \$600,000 whereas top voice actors at Funimation earn in the region of \$90,000 which, is demonstrative of a more competitive market, which in turn leads to a greater quality of voice acting in Japan. Additionally, esteemed voice actors in the West don't usually dub anime and rather go for roles in western animation and video games, since there is more money to be made and, as a result, very little talent makes its way to the anime dubbing industry. Furthermore, the method by which dubs are recorded leads to a more fragmented performance. When an anime is recorded in Japanese, voice actors will stand together in front of the screen which plays the anime they are dubbing (in Japanese), whereas for western dubs, voice actors perform independently. This key difference enables the Japanese voice actors to play off each other's energy and produce a far more natural and synergetic performance. Hence the voice acting in dubs tends to come off as dissonant, fractured and overall a less cohesive experience. Those who have heard children and high schoolers in western dubs, particularly moe anime like *K-On*, can attest that the



voices of women in the west simply aren't as high as those in Japan. Some argue that the breaking of immersion Westerners feel in dubs is also present when the Japanese watch anime and that, since Westerners don't hear Japanese outside of anime, they are unable discern the difference. Nevertheless, the higher pitched, Japanese performances are undoubtedly more childlike to English ears than English performances are to Japanese ears due to the natural, average difference in pitch. Hence the casting of children and high schoolers in dubs is often poor and immersion breaking. Voice acting for dubs lacks the emotion, lustre and consistency of their Eastern counterparts, reducing the characters to possessed husks talking in a voice which is not their own.

Many cite Baccano as an example of a good dub since the show is set in the US which some believe is complemented by American voices. Despite having voice actors with apposite east coast accents, the quality of voice acting is atrocious and furthermore, how important is the language being spoken to the final product? It is not the Japanese which makes subs better than dubs but rather the quality of the final product which is dependent on the method of production.

Others claim that Cowboy Bebop is a rare example of a well made dub. After watching a large portion of the dub with the society this year I've come to the conclusion that, despite being of higher quality compared to most dubs, it is still inferior to the sub. Spike and Jet are voiced well for the most part, however occasionally their performance comes off as robotic. The rest of the cast is mediocre at best as many side characters and background characters have hysterically bad voice acting, ruining the tone of the show and breaking the immersion. Especially when the original is so well acted, there is no reason to watch an inferior product simply because it is better than most.

Many cite dubs like Ghost Stories or Garzey's Wing as examples of good dubs since they're so bad they're good. In fairness, these productions are more enjoyable to watch dubbed but anyone would agree they are not of higher quality as a production even when the originals are trash.

In a similar vein, many claim that anime is more enjoyable to watch dubbed since they can focus on watching the anime instead of reading the subtitles. However anime is an audio-visual medium: what one hears is half the emotional engagement. Dubbed voices are of a lower quality, lack in synergy within the cast and gel poorly with the characters they are playing, leading to a dearth in emotional engagement between the viewer and the anime itself. Understanding dialogue is of course important however an emotion can be conveyed without language. Would you be more moved watching someone grieving in another language expressively, or someone grieving in English with almost comedic emotional distance and insincerity?



To conclude, dubs are objectively worse than subs in terms of technical quality due to a plethora of aforementioned concerns. However that isn't to say they can't be enjoyed more in a subjective sense: everyone's tastes are different after all. In truth the only true way to watch anime is to become fluent in Japanese. Otherwise you can't understand the nuance of the show and the cultural relevance of certain gags; much of anime won't make sense without at least a rudimentary understanding of Japanese culture. So my parting advice to you all is to buy a Japanese textbook and start studying in order to *truly* understand anime as an art form.

-Nick Stathakis



Round 2: Dave Timermanis

A Response to Linguistic Alienation

My esteemed colleague Nick recently wrote an article on the difference between subtitled and English dubbed anime and came to the conclusion that subs are objectively superior to dubs. I will give this statement a charitable reading and assume that this is meant within the confines of any given show so that direct comparison is possible. I don't think it's controversial to say that a good dub, for example Baccano (we'll come back to this particular example later), is superior in both technical and narrative aspects to something in Japanese that native speakers find unbearable (Elfen Lied comes to mind). However, even in the case of a direct comparison I still have some issues with the conclusions drawn and will here attempt to give some counterpoints.

Much is made of the directors importance and how integral their vision is to making a particular anime be all it can be. I agree that the director is the central member of a production team and once upon a time this guiding hand didn't reach the across the ocean, but times have changed. As the western anime market has grown so has involvement of studios and staff in how their work is handled by third parties. The english release of Evangelion 3.0 was delayed for two years because Hideaki Anno wasn't happy with the voice and translation work and while simuldubs now may be semi-independent of the work being done in Japan Space Dandy, the first dub of this kind, saw significant involvement from director Shinichiro Watanabe.

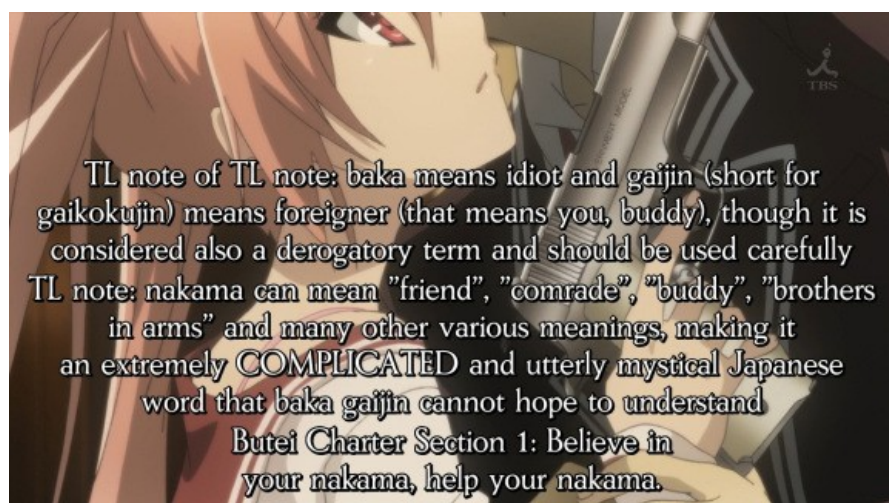
Speaking of Watanabe, an argument that is commonly brought up to support the preeminence of subs is that they are closest to the directorial vision and "as originally intended". Thing is, sometimes a directors vision is limited by practical constraints. I really don't think Watanabe wanted the American agent in Zankyou no Terror to speak in horrible English, but that was the closest he could get to an American who also knows Japanese with the actors available. In interviews he's said that the dub of Bebop is good because the voices fit the characters, even if they are different from the ones he cast. He has even worked on some anime projects that were made specifically for English, such as the Blade Runner Blackout 2022 short and parts of the Animatrix, and it is very clear when watching them that this was the intended experience. Horikoshi Kohei, writer of My Hero Academia, has also said that he prefers the American voice of All-Might because that's what he had in mind for the character, a classic American-style comic book hero. While not an anime, the definitive version of Metal Gear Solid is the English one as it is a very western story and had Hideo Kojima casting the English actors himself. It's hard to say without direct confirmation what the unstated, ideal directorial intent would be in a lot of cases, especially ones where the work is heavily inspired by western media, settings and styles.

Not everyone was happy with Nick's strong rhetoric...



In most cases, though, I don't think directors give much thought to how their work will be presented in different parts of the world and this is where localisation comes in. Language is a tricky thing and reflects the cultural history and modes of thought of its native speakers. No translation can fully capture implications, wordplay and expressions and this problem persists regardless of whether you're reading subtitles or listening in English. The translators and voice directors working on anime are often fan and voice actors themselves, so they're well aware of the issues regarding retention of meaning. A good dub writer is able to convey the overall flow and meaning of dialogue well enough without making its delivery impossible or too stilted within the narrow bounds actors face when recording lines. I say well enough because the problems of pacing, meaning and animation timing are irresolvable, though they have gotten better at mitigating these effects over the past decade. However, I believe dubs can, in some cases, be a lesser evil compared to some of the issues inherent in subs.

Subtitles can relay information more accurately and retain the expressiveness (and meaning, for those who understand it) of the original acting, but there are issues. I'm sure some of us remember early 2000s fansubs that had reams of text and translation notes, sometimes blotting out the entire screen. They did give us some truly amazing translations, though.



Examples of some interesting subtitle choices...



While sub writers don't face the pacing issues that hamper dub actors, the immediate delivery of entire sentences of dialogue regardless of the rate at which they are spoken desynchronises events on screen and our knowledge of them. This isn't much of a problem except in cases where the timing of when the audience gains certain knowledge is absolutely crucial. Most notably this affects comedy anime. Poor delivery or translation will ruin a joke, but so will knowing the punchline several seconds before its visual cue. Neither is ideal, so which compromise you choose depends, from a technical perspective, on how professionally the dub/sub has been produced. As has been so adroitly pointed out the only way to get the full experience with anime is to learn Japanese, but this is a steep barrier as true understanding would require one to actually live in and partake of Japanese culture and social life for a substantial time period, not to mention learning dialects and other regional oddities.



Xenoblade Chronicles 2 has some outstanding Welsh accented dub acting

Speaking of regional oddities, the differences between American (where the vast majority of anime dubs are produced) and Japanese voice acting also need to be addressed. Anime is a large, native industry in Japan, so it naturally attracts more money and talent than revoicing an existing, foreign product does in the West. The attitude towards animation on a wider scale is also very different between the two countries, with serious, dense and philosophical animation often being relegated to the status of a "cartoon" over here, something merely for children and weirdos. Professional voice acting education is also not something that has much presence outside of Japan, so the pool of good English voice actors willing to work on anime is much smaller than their Japanese counterparts. Because of the small number of people working

in the dubbing industry statistical analysis doesn't really work, so the best English actors are likely to be as good as the best Japan has to offer, there's just far fewer of them. All of this combined makes the probability of any given dub being equal or superior to its original version based purely on technical aspects rather slim, but certainly not impossible.

When it comes to intonation and timbre there isn't all that much difference between Asians and Westerners in our daily conversation, but there is a significant divide in culture and this affects voice acting as well. In Japan female characters often have exaggerated voices (moe characters being a particularly notable example) while men are played fairly straight. In western animation the opposite is commonly true with men being overacted as either buffoons or gruff heroes, whereas women are played in a more grounded manner. Why this is the case is a whole other essay, but just watch some of the Last Airbender, Gravity Falls or even the old Cartoon Network classics (who remembers Johnny Bravo?) and this difference becomes rather apparent. This leaves dub actors in a rather awkward position as they have neither the cultural background nor experience to successfully voice moe characters and they therefore (mostly) fail. On the other hand, there are some archetypes which I prefer dubbed, mostly eccentric and/or burly dudes. If one gets too used to a particular way of how things are done then a different paradigm will feel alien and may take a great deal of exposure to get used to and some people just don't see enough reason to undertake such a readjustment.

However, if it were just the technical aspects that decided whether one watches dub or sub there wouldn't be much competition, but there are other factors involved. Two that usually sway me one way or the other are setting and focus. If a show is set in the west or a fictional setting heavily influenced by western culture I will generally prefer the dub as it makes more sense for these characters to be talking in English and thus immersion is enhanced. Baccano is a perfect example of this. The show is set in 1930s America and gives the actors an opportunity to show their range by using the various New York accents of the time, a feature that strengthens the authenticity of what's being presented and is impossible to recreate in Japanese. Black Lagoon is another series that works great in English because the setting can utilise it so much better. As a global lingua franca it makes perfect sense that the international cast would converse in English. More importantly, though, Japanese lacks the kind of visceral, immediately gratifying profanity that colours so much of the shows character. I don't think every setting of this kind benefits from an English voice track, but they it does happen more often than with other shows.



The other point is focus and as an example I'll use the movie Redline. The focus of the movie is clearly its breathtakingly animated blood-pumping action rather than the fairly unengaging writing, so having to constantly look away from all the movement to read subtitles is a bit of a waste. Especially when one considers that the performances of both the original actors and their western counterparts are decent across the board, no one entirely dropping the ball or standing out. Another example of a shows focus making one language preferable to another would be FLCL (or Fooly Cooly, if you prefer). I find that the most engaging aspect of it is its atmosphere and, when combined with the relatively non-specific setting, a soundtrack heavily inspired by brit rock and overall good casting, it becomes far easier to immerse myself in the weirdness when I'm not constantly having to read a transliteration of whatever was just said.

Everything I've said here only applies generally and notable exceptions can be found in abundance, but the entire argument of subs vs dubs is far too general. The people working to provide us translations and voices for our favourite characters are mostly just fans themselves and whether or not we get along with their work sometimes just comes down to personal opinion. Anime is an art-form and judging how it is to be best experienced based purely on technical aspects undermines the role of the individual and the way they relate to it. This may not be much of a reason for why dubbed anime is better than the alternative, but it is a reason for why some prefer it that way. And Nick, once you can write a response to this entirely in kanji, maybe we'll talk again.

-Dave Timermanis

An exhilarating clash of great minds, with solid points on both sides.
Who won? Who Lost? I know who's side I'm on at least!

Hopefully this battle has lead us one step closer to ending this pointless, endless war of attrition: may one day there be peace across the anime voice-acting fan community... as if...



This Year in the Society



SCIENCE FICTION, FANTASY AND ANIME SOCIETY

This year has been a great year to be on committee, and I hope a great year to be a member!

We've had great fun watching, enjoying, discussing and analysing everything SF, Fantasy and Anime (although mostly the latter). We've somehow socialised with others every single week and we've even produced a 30+ page long fanzine! This year has truly been an amazing year.

But none of it would have been possible without this year's amazing committee, so here they are:



*Fallon Leigh-Smith
Anime Rep
She read MAL blurbs*



*Alastair Davis
President
He went to meetings*



*Finn Sheridan
Sci-Fi Rep
He performed Sci-Fi CPR*



*Graham Smith
Treasurer
He counted the money*



*Jack Howarth
Social Sec
He was sociable*



*James Thackway
Comms Officer
He had great anime taste*



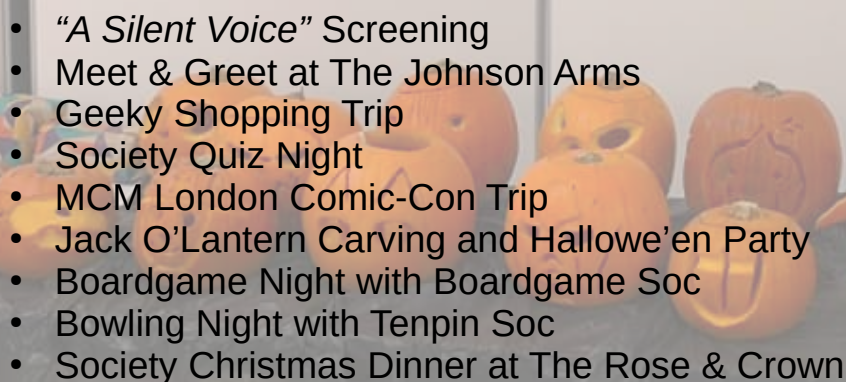
*Matt Thomas
MASCOT
He was old*

I'm also happy to say that we have elected a new, full committee for next year! Congratulations to everyone who was selected. There are some old names, some new; here they are, next year's committee:

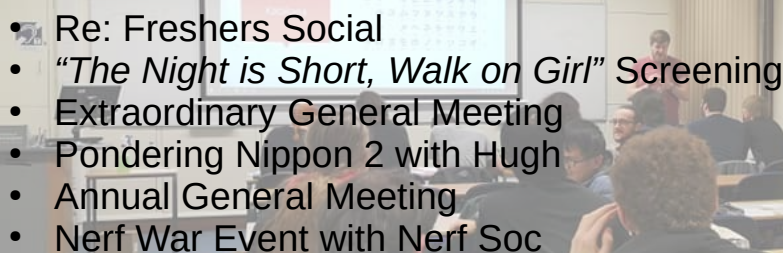
- James Thackway – President
 - Cameron Johnson – General Secretary
 - Nick Strathakis – Treasurer
 - Alastair Davis – Anime Representative
 - Michael Goaten – Communications Officer
 - Joseph Fagan – Social Secretary
-

Over the **60** events we've run this year, along with our weekly anime and sc-fi screenings we've also run many other eclectic events, some of which may be questionably related to the society's aims, but nevertheless:

First Semester (September – December 2018)

- 
- *"A Silent Voice"* Screening
 - Meet & Greet at The Johnson Arms
 - Geeky Shopping Trip
 - Society Quiz Night
 - MCM London Comic-Con Trip
 - Jack O'Lantern Carving and Hallowe'en Party
 - Boardgame Night with Boardgame Soc
 - Bowling Night with Tenpin Soc
 - Society Christmas Dinner at The Rose & Crown

Second Semester (January – May 2019)

- 
- Re: Freshers Social
 - *"The Night is Short, Walk on Girl"* Screening
 - Extraordinary General Meeting
 - Pondering Nippon 2 with Hugh
 - Annual General Meeting
 - Nerf War Event with Nerf Soc

Annual Statistics:

- 60 events over 24 weeks of university
 - That's an average of 2.5 events every week.
 - That means a mean waiting time of only 34 hours until a society event from any point in the academic calendar!
- 144 paying members
 - This makes us one of the largest student societies in The University of Nottingham!
- About 300 miles worth of traveling to London and back
 - This is equal to about 8,700 miles collectively, but that's a stupid stat
- At least 34 society trips to Mooch
 - With some quick arithmetic, that sums to a minimum of 116 imperial gallons of alcohol, enough to fill 3.5 bathtubs
- 47 pages of Zine
 - About 20,000 words total, written by 5 contributors
 - Matt alone wrote 7286 words, followed by Dave with 4742 words and Nick at 2919.
 - All edited over just 5 days...



SFFA 2018/19





Goodbye, Sci-Fi & Fantasy

By Matthew Thomas (MASCOT 2018/19, Anime Rep 2014/15, Member 2012-present)

I'm Matthew Thomas, your current (2018/19) MASCOT and “resident old guy”; hopefully you’ve talked to me at some point or seen my messages on Facebook over the last year. I've been a member of the society for a long time now, from my first year as an undergraduate in October 2012, to the present day (May 2019) as a third year PhD student. As an undergraduate I met my main group of friends because of the society, who I continue to meet up with regularly; during my PhD I was happy to once again be able to meet so many fantastic and lovely people (and take time to de-stress). Both as anime rep in 2014/15, and MASCOT this year, I’ve helped run a number of different anime and social events for the society, and have cherished the experience and opportunities this gave me. In particular I had a lot of fun this year running the Geeky Nottingham Tour, an event I first experienced for myself 6 years prior when I had only been in Nottingham for just two weeks; it’s been great to have been able to give back in this way. Both through attending and running events, I was able to meet people and have so much fun, and thus the society has come to mean a lot to me.

As current members likely know already, and readers may know from our the earlier stuff in this Zine, we held an EGM on the 20th February 2019 where we held a vote asking members if the society should focus on just anime in the future, which was successful. Therefore in my time here I have seen the society go from adding anime to its name (beginning in the 2012/13 year), to removing everything in its name but anime (2018/19 → 19/20).

This breaks my heart.



Nonetheless, I was part of all the committee's discussions on whether this change should be made, and I agreed with the others to bring this change to the EGM as something we thought would be for the best. Following the nearly unanimous vote of approval at the EGM and the constitutional change approval at the AGM, our members also agreed. We thought that this change had become necessary given the extremely low and continually dwindling turn-out to Sci-Fi & Fantasy sessions, with attendance to sessions during the second term typically being between 1 and 3 people, including the rep. We thought that realistically, making this change would be for the best not only for almost all of the current members, who are overwhelmingly and predominately anime fans, but also for the few current Sci-Fi & Fantasy members. By making this change, it opens up the opportunity in the future for a new Sci-Fi & Fantasy society to be created by current or future students, something our previous existence prevented. It also allows our now anime-specific society to run more anime-specific events if we want, while still continuing with our various traditional social events. The upcoming committee intends to fully support any nascent Sci-Fi society that appears at the University if one appears during their tenure.

My agreement with this decision does not however make the change less sad to me, especially when I think back fondly to the vitality, warmth and friendliness of my first Sci-fi Fantasy night hosted many years ago by Michael Krawec.

The committee was unanimous in wanting to preserve SFF(A)Soc in some way when we considered things early in the academic year. Therefore, we first put a lot of effort into finding out if it was possible to remove anime from the society (i.e. return to being just Sci-Fi and Fantasy), while simultaneously making a brand-new Anime soc, despite the administrative effort this would require. But we found that we were effectively too late. Potentially a "split" like this could have been accomplished two or three years ago, but the present lack of interest amongst members to become committee members for a Sci-Fi & Fantasy only society prevented us from doing this. We simply didn't (and don't) have enough members interested in Sci-Fi & Fantasy sessions to sustain this aspect of the society, let alone enough to run a new separate dedicated society.

Of course, if we had chosen to not bring this issue to a vote, and somehow found someone to be next year's Sci-Fi & Fantasy rep, we would still be "kicking the can down the road", as none of the fundamental issues would have been solved. You might argue we should have nonetheless decided to have given this a go, since there is a chance that we might obtain and retain more members interested in Sci-Fi & Fantasy next year. However, we were the "next year", with several previous committees being unable to prevent the decline but unable (or possibly unwilling) to commit to making a split or taking more drastic actions, and asking the next committee to try to resolve it. We tried a lot of different things to both retain and revive interest in the Sci-Fi regular events, as have previous years' committees, but it is sadly a fact that were the Sci-Fi & Fantasy sessions part of their own society, then they wouldn't have had the membership to be an affiliated SU society for a good number of years now.

The cause of the Sci-Fi & Fantasy membership falling has also been discussed between us a lot, and it is my opinion that the presence of anime in the society likely contributed to this somewhat. Having said this, it is also very clear that the rise in the popularity of anime and the fall in the popularity of Sci-Fi & Fantasy has in general had little to do with us and much more to do with a change in the interests of newcomers to the university. We aren't unique in being an amalgam of these interests, nor in having anime added to the society later on, nor in having a dwindling interest in Sci-Fi and Fantasy; e.g. Bath University's SFFA Society. Naturally a change in interests of newcomers to the university becomes a change in the interests of our membership, and then in turn a change in interest of our potential committee members. Eventually we decided that the cause itself is actually irrelevant, as the important thing for us was deciding what we were going to do, and this was what was focused on and discussed at the EGM held.

In conclusion, I think that this change has been a long time coming that none of the recent committees have wanted to do, including us, the current committee. No one wants to change something they care about a lot, that they'd had so much fun at, and that their predecessors cared about. This holds even for those who hadn't attended any Sci-Fi & Fantasy sessions, as there is fondness to preserving the current name, and preventing losing touch with the society's past. I know only too well that nostalgia and tradition can be quite powerful at preventing change. However, for the majority of our current members and expected future members, the removal of Sci-Fi & Fantasy is a very minor change, which will allow for a larger range of anime related activities to take place. In addition, we think that it is also for the best for those at the university interested in Sci-Fi & Fantasy, who may not have been able to find a place they could make their own in the past few years; this change creates the opportunity for a new Sci-Fi & Fantasy society to be founded, which we would support. We hope that this change allows our society to evolve in a positive direction with its members interests at heart, while also retaining and celebrating all of what made SFFASoc especially fun (social events, quiz, geeky tour, etc.), for so long and for so many.

Still, this means this is the last year a society called SFFA will exist.

We're gonna carry that weight.

-Matthew Thomas



Anime Sessions 2018/19

Title	Type	Episodes Watched
A Silent Voice	Film	Completed
Abenobashi Magical Shopping Arcade	TV	1
ACCA 13	TV	13 - Completed
Baccano	TV	1
Btooom!!!	TV	1
Carnival Phantasm	OVA	4
Cells at Work	TV	1
Cowboy Bebop	TV	13
Durarara!!	TV	2
Girls' Last Tour	TV	2
Hinamatsuri	TV	12 - Completed
Humanity has Declined	TV	5
Kono Subarashii Sekai ni Shukufuku wo!	TV	10 - Completed
Kono Subarashii Sekai ni Shukufuku wo! 2	TV	10 - Completed
Land of the Lustrous	TV	3
Noragami	TV	2
Noucome	TV	2
Panty & Stocking with Garterbelt	TV	2
Re:Zero – Starting Life in Another World	TV	1
Space Battleship Yamato 2199	TV	1
Toradora!	TV	25 - Completed
Toradora! Bento Battle	OVA	Completed
The Devil is a Part-Timer!	TV	1
The Night is Short, Walk on Girl	Film	Completed
Yuru Camp	TV	2

Plus there were unofficial outings to see the film screenings for:

- Mirai of the Future*,
- My Hero Academia: The Two Heroes*, and
- Penguin Highway*.

Sci-Fi Sessions 2018/19

Title	Type	Episodes Watched
Arrival	Film	Completed
Annihilation	Film	Completed
Black Mirror	TV	2
Continuum	TV	1
Contact	Film	Completed
Doctor Who	TV	1
Event Horizon	Film	Completed
Farscape	TV	1
Firefly	TV	14 - Completed
Oblivion	Film	Completed
Sense8	TV	1
Serenity	Film	Completed
Star Trek (2009)	Film	Completed
The Big Bang Theory	TV	1
The Expanse	TV	1
The Guardians of the Galaxy: Volume 2	Film	Completed
The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy (2005)	Film	Completed
Valerian and the City of a Thousand Planets	Film	Completed

That wraps it up for The Zine this year, I hope it is something for you to remember your time here, and for future society members to dig up out of the archives and think: “*wow, these guys were autistic*”.

And worry not! The Zine **will** be back next year, as next year’s society president I’ll make sure my favourite society tradition is carried on! See you then.

-James Thackway



THE ZINE issue #10 was fully written, produced and edited by the Science-Fiction, Fantasy and Anime Society of The University of Nottingham in May 2019. All contributors' works are their own.

Credits:

James Thackway (editor),
Dave Timermanis,
Nick Stathakis,

Matthew Thomas,
Cameron Johnson,

the committee, for making the events possible,
and the members, for making the society possible.

This may be the end of SFF, but its legacy will live on along with the society, The Zine, and our memories.

The society is dead! Long live the society!

THE ZINE