

# Constitution of OUSFG

Last amended Michaelmas 2006. Changes from Trinity 1999 to Hilary 2006 are not recorded here.

Title of Society: the Oxford University Speculative Fiction Group

Purpose of Society: To bring together readers of science fiction, fantasy and associated fields for their mutual benefit and enjoyment and to provide facilities for this purpose.

## 1 In General

### 1.1 Terms

- A. In this constitution the terms “person” or “persons” shall denote any or all members in accordance with section A.
- B. Hereinafter, the terms “society” or “group” shall denote only the Oxford University Speculative Fiction Group.

### 1.2 Conditions

- A. The membership shall be in accordance with Proctoral regulations and shall be bound by the terms of this constitution.
- B. All members of this society are but shadows of fish.
- C. This society is not subject to the static paradigm.
- D. Peter shall be able to act at interrupt speed.

## 2 Organisation

### 2.1 Official Positions of the Society

- 1. There shall be three offices of the society,
  - (a) President (section 1),
  - (b) Secretary (section 2,

(c) Treasurer (section 3).

The holders of these offices shall be known as officers.

2. Officers shall be in statu pupillari.
3. In addition to the offices, there shall be five posts,
  - (a) Newsletter Editor (section 3.1),
  - (b) Ghost in the Machine (section 4),
  - (c) Librarian (section 1),
  - (d) Video Representative (section 3),
  - (e) Speaker-to-Animals (section 5).
4. There shall exist titles that the society may confer upon members. Some titles shall be constitutionally enshrined, but others existing only until the next general meeting of Hilary term can be created at the passing of a motion at any general meeting without putting them in the constitution and thus enforcing future generations to continually fill the positions.
5. Offices and posts are official positions of the society, as are those titles enshrined in the constitution. The Senior Member (section 20) also holds an official position.
6. No member shall hold more than three official positions, and no more than a single office, and the holding of those three official positions shall be within the Proctors' regulations. Should there be insufficient candidates for official positions, then they can be left empty, with the exception of offices which must be filled.
7. All those in official positions will hold those positions until the end of the general meeting in Hilary term in which their replacements are elected, with the exceptions of alternate procedures mentioned elsewhere in this constitution.
8. All official positions will be elected for the duration of three terms (except where such an election is to fill an office, post or title left vacant by a resignation or dismissal), at the general meeting of Hilary term, with the exception of alternate procedures mentioned elsewhere in this constitution.
9. Any member of the group duly seconded may stand as a candidate for an official position that is elected at a general meeting.
10. Nominations for the official positions must be made at least one week before the general meeting. A nomination will be considered to have been received if it is the possession of one of the officers.
11. Any duly seconded member may stand for any previously uncontested official position at the general meeting.

12. There shall be a title “Genital Piercing Officer”. The holder of this title will be required to revive the conversation should it flag. The Genital Piercing Officer is not an officer in the constitutional sense.
13. There shall be a title “Beard of OUSFG”. The holder of this title will be required to attempt to grow a beard.
14. There shall be a title “Invisible” of OUSFG. The holder of this title will be told what to do at the appropriate time. This member shall also be gifted with a name as an invisible, which is the only name by which they are to be referred to in any official OUSFG business.
15. There shall be a title “Dead Hand of the Past”, or simply “Dead Hand”. The Dead Hand shall be a tool of the Council of the Wizenod (see section 4).
16. There shall be a title “Chief of Special Projects”.
17. There shall be a title “Evil Doctor Tim”. Evil Doctor Tim’s rôle shall be to persuade people to do things for the society (such as stand for committee posts, or run meetings).
18. There shall be a title “Bugbear Prodger”. The holder of this title shall make incorrect use of language where possible.
19. There shall be a title “Bugbear Tender”. The holder of this title shall pontificate about incorrect use of language and put a stop to it where possible.
20. There shall also be a Senior Member, who shall be a resident member of the congregation. The Senior Member is not elected and shall remain Senior Member while still eligible or until the committee decide to replace the Senior Member. The Senior Member has the right to stop being Senior Member at any point. The Senior Member shall not be financially responsible for the society. The Senior Member does not have to fulfill any other requirements for membership to be a member of the society, and shall always be a member of the society whilst Senior Member.

## 2.2 Duties

1. The President will preside at meetings of the committee, and will organise ordinary meetings of the society. The President will also be responsible for organising the banquet of Hilary term, as under section 8. The President should provide sex, drugs and rock ’n’ roll for the members. [Note: these can take any form.]
2. The Secretary will deal with any forms or letters that may be sent by the Proctors or by any other correspondent with the group. The Secretary will also be in possession of a current copy of the constitution and will

inform Daily Information of the events for each term (sending a schedule through pigeon post). The Secretary will also be responsible for organising the punt party in Trinity term, as under section 9.

3. The Treasurer will be responsible for the maintenance of the society accounts, the collecting of membership fees, and giving notice of lapse of membership to those whose membership expires. The Treasurer will be jointly responsible with the treasurer of RPGSoc for the organisation of the Christmas party (see section 7, wherefore no person may be treasurer of both societies at any one time). With the agreement of the committee, the Treasurer can delegate responsibility for joint ventures to another member. The Treasurer, Secretary and President shall be signatories to the society chequebook, which shall be in the possession of the Treasurer.
4. The Ghost in the Machine will be responsible for the maintenance of the society web site.
5. The duties of the other posts of the society are detailed in section 3.

## 2.3 The Committee

1. There shall be a committee comprising nine positions (excluding those eligible under section 2).
  - (a) There shall be a President, as under sections 1a and 1.
  - (b) There shall be a Secretary, as under sections 1b and 2.
  - (c) There shall be a Treasurer, as under sections 1c and 3.
  - (d) There shall be a Newsletter Editor, as under sections 3a and 3.1.
  - (e) There shall be a Ghost in the Machine, as under sections 3b and 4.
  - (f) There shall be a Librarian, as under sections 3c and 1.
  - (g) There shall be a Video Representative, as under sections 3d and 3.
  - (h) There shall be a Speaker-to-Animals, as under sections 3e and 5.
  - (i) There shall be a Senior Member, as under section 20.
2. The committee shall also have the power to co-opt up to two members onto the committee.
3. The core committee shall be the three officers (see section 1) of the society.
4. The external committee shall be all the holders of posts (see section 3 and also sections 6 and 4) of the society, and those eligible under section 2.
5. The committee consists of the core committee, the external committee and the Senior Member.

6. The Genital Piercing Officer may on occasion be upgraded from a title to a post (see sections 15 and 4). On such occasions, the Genital Piercing Officer becomes a member of the external committee (as under section 4).
7. The committee shall run all the day-to-day affairs of the group, and will take decision accordingly, advised by any subcommittees they may create. Such subcommittees shall comprise at least three people of whom at least one must be a committee member and shall speak for the said subcommittee at the meetings of the committee.
8. There will be at least two meetings of the committee each term, one of which will take place in the two weeks before any general meeting.
9. Written notice of any committee member's absence should be sent to all committee members at least one day in advance.
10. All proceedings at committee meetings are confidential except for any report of the committee. An abstract of the matters discussed and decisions made at committee meetings shall be available to the membership on request.
11. A majority for a committee meeting shall require at least the majority of members of the committee whose subscriptions are still in order, have not resigned nor been dismissed.
12. All voting in committee shall be one vote per person, not one vote per position held.
13. The committee shall have the power to suspend a person's membership for up to a total of EIGHT weeks in any one academic year, and they may in more serious cases expel from the group any member deserving such action.
14. Any member wishing to appeal any verdict reached under sections 13 or 4 shall have the right to appeal to the Senior Member. The Senior Member may then call a general meeting as under section 6, at which the appeal shall be put to the vote. Members who have been expelled have direct right of appeal to a general meeting.

## 2.4 General Meetings

1. There shall be at least one general meeting per year, at which the accounts for the year will be submitted, and any elections will take place.
2. Any motions for inclusion in the agenda other than in 1 must be sent to the Secretary at least two weeks before the general meeting.
3. The general meeting shall be held in Hilary term, unless it be a general meeting called as under 6, when it shall be held within THREE weeks of full term from the date of request.

4. If any other business other than in 1 is to take place, then written notice of said business must be put on display in the library for at least two weeks before prior to the general meeting.
5. A general meeting shall be deemed to be in session and duly constituted if it shall have twelve eligible members or two-thirds of the eligible members of the group present, whichever is the lesser number. Eligible members do not include unofficial members.
6. A general meeting other than that required by 1 shall be called if requested by
  - (a) the committee,
  - (b) the Senior Member,
  - (c) either one third of the total official members or thirty official members, whichever is the lesser number, in writing,
  - (d) a member who has been expelled from the group or from a committee post, for the purpose of presenting an appeal against this expulsion.
7. Any other business shall be any motion properly proposed at the time allotted in the agenda.
8. The duration of the general meeting shall be in accordance with the Proctoral regulations and the regulations of the place wherein it is held.
9. The chairperson of the general meeting shall be the President or any person duly delegated by the President, or by the committee if the President is not available, and will not be eligible to vote except as under 9.
10. The chairperson of any OUSFG meeting shall have the absolute authority to decide whether to be called chairman, chairwoman, chairthing or merely chair.

## **2.5 Voting and Majorities**

1. Any motion to dismiss a committee member must have the votes of two-thirds of the committee meeting in favour, or three-quarters of the members who are present at a general meeting.
2. Any motion to expel a member as under 13 shall require two-thirds of the committee in favour.
3. Any member putting forward a motion either
  - (a) to be reinstated to whatever (s)he has been expelled or dismissed from, or
  - (b) to quash a verdict under 13 or 4

must have two-thirds of those members who are present at a general meeting in favour of the motion.

4. All motions to change the constitution must be passed by a two-thirds majority of those members present at a general meeting. These amendments come into effect at the end of the term in which the general meeting is held (or earlier if the committee so wishes). It will also require a two-thirds majority in a committee meeting to be ratified.
5. All other motions in committee or at a general meeting require only simple majorities to be passed.
6. Voting in all matters at general meetings will be secret ballot and STV if any member present so wishes.
7. In the event of a tied vote at a committee meeting, the President shall have the casting vote.
8. In the event of the core committee being all agreed in a committee meeting, and yet being overruled by the external committee, the core committee may, but are not obliged to, form an Überofficer, which has only the power to overrule the external committee and then it is unformed.
9. In the event of a tied vote at a general meeting, the chairperson shall have the casting vote, and shall exercise this vote to break the tie.
10. All those whose memberships are in order and who are not otherwise proscribed from voting shall be eligible to vote at meetings and hold official positions (see section 2.6).
11. The chairperson and one committee member or ordinary member duly appointed shall act as returning officers at the general meetings.
12. No proxy votes are allowed.

## 2.6 Memberships

1. There shall be four basic lengths of memberships within the group: termly (section 2), yearly (section 3), life (section 4) and eternal (section 5). There shall be two additional categories distinct from and compatible with each of these; quantum (section 6) and retrospective (section 7) membership. There shall also be inanimate (section 9), ineffable (section 10) and hereditary (section 11) memberships, which are of different types and act as modifiers of membership as set out below. Modifiers of membership may not be purchased unless a length of membership is already held, whereas additional categories may.
2. Termly membership shall last until the end of 9th week at the end of the term in which termly membership was bought.

3. Yearly membership shall last until the end of 9th week at the end of the Trinity term at the end of the academic year in which yearly membership was bought.
4. Life membership expires upon clinical death, so individuals revived from cryogenic suspension will no longer be considered members unless they have paid for a new membership or are in possession of eternal membership.
5. Eternal membership does not expire; resurrected/reincarnated members will be considered still to be members conditional on the evidence indicating their identity satisfying at least one half of the committee. Members who do not return from the dead will have their newsletter read to them by a psychic, left on their grave, or cremated for their reading pleasure (provided that they specify in their will the method of communication and leave sufficient funds).
6. Quantum membership shall entail that, should a counterpart/alternate self of that member cross into this universe from another, that any such counterpart/alternate self shall be a member here. The counterpart theory which is to be used is that expounded in the philosophical papers of David Lewis, if at all. This membership also permits a member to remain a member if the member were to go back in time and alter events so that the member never existed, although the non-existent quantum member will not be eligible to vote nor to occupy a committee position.
7. Retrospective membership shall entail that the member shall be a member from the beginning of the member's life or the dawn of time, whichever is the later. This does not entitle the member to past newsletters or any retrospective actions at meetings the member failed to attend. Retrospective membership may also be bought without the member possessing any of the other forms of membership, in which case the membership shall be considered to have terminated upon the payment of the subscription.
8. Any individual member possessing quantum, retrospective and eternal membership shall be recognised as one of the Ancient Order of Fools, and shall be treated with a certain amount of caution, if not respect.
9. Inanimate membership shall entail that the member cannot vote or otherwise participate at official meetings: such membership shall be compatible with any of the lengths. Life membership shall however expire instantly since an inanimate member shall be *ipso facto* considered clinically dead. This membership is also compatible with both quantum and retrospective membership. Inanimate membership shall cost half the current cost of the length of membership it modifies.
10. Ineffable membership shall be a requirement for continued membership upon any member who becomes an entity of "above-local" existence (e.g.



omnipresent; a god or deity of any sort; a chemical element; a subatomic particle type; etc.). Non-local entities cannot be created by vote. Ineffable membership shall cost a reasonable small amount, in line with quantum or retrospective membership, as a prophylactic measure, but any member who has become above-local shall be required to pay an amount twenty times this figure for ineffable membership if the member does not yet possess it.

11. Hereditary membership shall cost half the current cost of the length of membership it modifies. If an hereditary member has no length of membership, that member shall be able to purchase a length of membership at half the current cost. An hereditary member with no length of membership shall not be allowed to vote nor hold any official position of the society.

Consider the unary relations  $H$ ,  $I$  and  $J$ :

$H$  is true of  $x$  if  $x$  is an hereditary member of the society

$I$  is true of  $x$  if  $x$  is a member of the society

$J$  is true of  $x$  if  $x$  obtained hereditary membership in a non-hereditary manner

Consider the binary relation  $P$  such that  $P$  is true of  $(x, y)$  if  $x$  is the parent of  $y$ .

We assert that:

$$(\forall x)(J(x) \supset H(x))$$

$$(\forall x)(H(x) \supset I(x))$$

$$(\forall x)((J(x) \vee (\exists y)(P(y, x) \wedge H(y))) \equiv H(x))$$

12. There shall also be Fred membership, conferred by general acclaim in accord with the committee. This membership entitles the member to attend meetings, etc. as any ordinary member. Any such member attending the banquet must make a speech.

## 3 Society Business

### 3.1 Newsletters

1. The group shall produce a termly or twice-termly newsletter, which will be free to all members of the group, containing news and information, reviews of sf and associated fields and any other material deemed by the editors to be of interest to the group members. The Newsletter Editor shall be elected as under section 8 and any other editors shall be appointed by the committee. The Newsletter Editor shall represent the editors as a member of the committee (see section 3.1).

2. If the editors wish to publish a newsletter covering more than four sides of A4 paper, or wish to print more than two newsletters per term, they must first obtain permission from the Treasurer, or from the President if the Treasurer is one of the editors.

### 3.2 Events

1. The ordinary meetings of the society may consist of, but are not limited to, library meetings, video meetings, author meetings and discussion meetings. Any other meetings deemed appropriate by the committee may also occur.
2. At least once a week during full term there shall be a library meeting (section 2), unless exceptional circumstances prevent this. The Librarian is responsible for organising these meetings.
3. The society may show videos to its members, and only its members. The Video Representative is responsible for organising the location and obtaining the videos.
4. Members of the society may prepare a discussion for the rest of the society.
5. The society may invite authors to speak to the society. The Speaker-to-Animals is responsible for organising these meetings.
6. The extraordinary meetings of the society occur once a term, not including general meetings. These are the Christmas party in Michaelmas term, the banquet in Hilary term and the punt party in Trinity term. Each of the three officers is responsible for one of these events each, as detailed in section 2.2.
7. The Christmas party is jointly held with RPGSoc. It traditionally occurs on Saturday, 7th week of Michaelmas term. It is primarily organised by the Treasurers of the two societies. Any change in date must be ratified by both societies.
8. The banquet occurs in Hilary term. It is primarily organised by the President. It should not clash with the banquet of RPGSoc, and to avoid this dates should be organised in Michaelmas term.
9. The punt party occurs in Trinity term. It is primarily organised by the Secretary. It should not clash with the punt party of RPGSoc, and to avoid this dates should be organised in Hilary or Michaelmas term.
10. Owing to the clash of events with RPGSoc, it is recommended that both the banquet and the punt party dates should be organised in Michaelmas term when the Christmas party is being organised. If both societies wish the same dates for both events, then an accommodation is recommended whereby each society gains one preferred date.

11. Should any member hear of the death, heretofore unheard of, of any member, the news should be immediately reported to the society. Upon receipt of this news, preparations should be made for a society wake. Finance for appropriate beverages and bakery goods can be derived from ticket sales. If the news is received late, the wake should occur retroactively.

### **3.3 The Library**

1. The committee shall appoint a Librarian who will be in charge of the library and who will be a committee member (as under section 1f). The term of office of the Librarian shall be as long as the committee and/or the Librarian see fit.
2. Members have the right to use the library according to the rules and regulations of the library. The committee shall have the power to redraft the rules and regulations at a committee meeting without a general meeting. In the absence of an official record of these rules and regulations, it can be assumed that any member may borrow an unlimited number of items from the library for an unlimited amount of time, provided that the member shall return any item on request from a committee member. Regular meetings shall be held whereby members shall have access to the library.
3. The committee shall have the power to buy or sell books and magazines or do whatsoever it regards as beneficial to the library.
4. The committee shall have the power to fine any member who has transgressed the rules and regulations of the library. The amount of such fines will be decided by the committee and will be made known to members. In the absence of such notification, it can be assumed that no fines will be charged. The committee shall also have the power to charge members for the replacement of books or other items borrowed if they are not returned within the stipulated time.

Lemon Curry [a recipe]

### **3.4 Council of the Wizeden**

1. There shall exist a shadowy organisation behind the scenes of the society. This shall be known as the Council of the Wizeden, or merely the Council. Only those detailed under section 2 shall be in the Council. The Council shall exist merely to determine when the society becomes boring. They shall have no other purpose, and shall have no power other than that detailed in section 4.
2. Only active members of the society who have been members for at least five years are entitled to belong to the Council of the Wizeden. Of these, only those who have turned up to at least one society meeting a term for the previous three terms, or three society meetings in the current term

shall belong to the Council. If, during any given term, a member belonging to the Council of the Wizeded does not turn up to a society meeting, that member shall no longer belong to the Council of the Wizeded until such time as that member has again fulfilled the previously stated requirements. The Senior Member shall not belong to the Council of the Wizeded unless the Senior Member fulfills requirements for membership other than being merely Senior Member. Any member eligible who does not wish to belong to the Council may leave it at any time.

3. The oldest member belonging to the Council of the Wizeded shall be termed the Haggard One. The Haggard One shall chair any official meetings of the Council of the Wizeded. If the Haggard One does not wish to be the Haggard One, then the next oldest member belonging to the Council of the Wizeded shall be the Haggard One instead.
4. The Council of the Wizeded have the power to activate the Dead Hand of the Past. They may use this power when they deem the society to have become boring. The Council of the Wizeded must hold an official meeting and a majority vote in favour of activation must be passed before the Dead Hand can be activated. The Haggard One shall inform the Dead Hand that activation has occurred. Upon activation, the Dead Hand shall upgrade the Genital Piercing Officer from a title to a post, and the Genital Piercing Officer shall thus join the committee, to try and prevent the society from remaining boring. The Genital Piercing Officer shall remain a post and on the committee only until the next general meeting in Hilary term.

As above, so below.

Discuss.