In a change to our regular programming, we don’t have a video game on the cover of this month’s issue. Instead, we’re highlighting AKUMA — an upcoming short film that has all the makings of a samurai saga, complete with roaring fires and flashing blades.

Why? Because London-based studio Dimension has used a combination of Epic’s Unreal Engine 4 and MetaHuman Creator to bring AKUMA to life. It’s the perfect illustration of what can be done with those tools – and a signifier, perhaps, of where independent video games and film production could be headed in the months and years to come.

Where studios working to a tight budget might once have had to find artful ways of avoiding putting detailed, humanoid characters in their games, they can now use MetaHuman to freely add textured, fully rigged digital people to their projects. Of course, not all games (or short films) require hyper-real human characters, and tools are only as effective as the people who use them. But in the right hands, MetaHuman Creator could prove to be revolutionary – and it’s still early days for the cloud-based app yet. You can find out about Epic’s future plans for the platform in our interview on page 6.

Meanwhile, I have to bid a fond farewell to features editor Ian Dransfield, who heads off for pastures new this month. He’s been a part of the magazine almost from the beginning, and the old place won’t be the same without him. Godspeed, Ian!

Ryan Lambie
Editor