

## IAN LIVINGSTONE OBE

Pro-Chancellor,

Ian Livingstone is a pioneer of interactive entertainment and a world-renowned authority on computer and video games. He is Life President of Eidos Interactive, publishers of the Tomb Raider series of games. Ian is an influential champion of the UK video games industry and a strong supporter of BU's Media School and National Centre for Computer Animation.

Anyone who has dreamed that their hobby could be the basis of a stellar career could not find a better role model than Ian. His parents made sacrifices to see him through an HND Business Studies course, after which he went to London and worked in marketing. In the evenings he and old two school friends started playing board games as a cheap alternative to the pub. The bedsit gamers soon became inventors and marketers, and since those early days Ian has been at the forefront of the rapidly changing games industry.

Conventional shops in the 1970s would not stock strategy board games so in 1975 Ian, with Steve Jackson, founded Games Workshop to fill the market gap. Without start-up funding, they were obliged initially to live in a van, operating out of a tiny West London office and selling their games by mail order through their *Owl and Weasel* newsletter. An American games enthusiast saw the magazine and sent Ian a fantasy role-play game which he had designed. This was the revolutionary Dungeons & Dragons, which Ian and Steve recognised as a potential classic, acquiring the rights to launch it across Europe.

Dungeons & Dragons was the first major success for Games Workshop, which is now the world's largest fantasy and war-games company with well over 300 of its own shops, and thousands of other stockists, around the world. In 1977 Ian replaced *Owl and Weasel* with *White Dwarf*, the UK's first interactive games magazine, which has done much to popularise role-play games, so much so that there is now a flourishing market in back-issues.

From board games Ian moved to interactive game books. In 1982, again with Steve Jackson, he devised the Fighting Fantasy series which sold over 16 million copies in 25 languages. The books offered stories with multiple choices of direction but only one right way; criticised at first by educationists, they were later praised because they encouraged creative writing, and are now considered a major influence on today's computer and video games.

And after this came computer games. One of the first UK companies in this fledgling industry was Domark, whose first game Eureka was devised by Ian in 1984. He later joined Domark's board and led it to merge with Eidos Technologies, where he was in turn Executive Chairman, Creative Director and now Life President. Ian brought to Eidos many of its massively successful franchises, including the multimillion-dollar franchise Lara Croft: Tomb Raider game. He excels as an entrepreneur with a remarkable record of building and then selling successful businesses, but he is primarily a creative person who, in his own words, 'likes to create new things and then hire specialists to take the

ideas further, and thus keep his mind free to create'. Constantly observing human behaviour, he has a knack of knowing what people want, and his solutions show a range of influences including Tolkien, science fiction, myths and legends, fantasy literature and old-fashioned comics.

Ian is a leading spokesman for the computer games industry. He celebrates the diversity of games, emphasises the socially inclusive aspects of interactive entertainment, and advocates games technology as a learning tool for creativity. He passionately believes that his industry can play a central role in the recovery of the UK economy, but it will require an education system in which children learn to programme, as in China and other forward-looking countries. And art must be in the curriculum because, as he says, 'everything in life is a combination of art and science'.

As a result of Ian's success in advocacy, in 2010 Ed Vaizey, the Minister for Culture, Communications and the Creative Industries, asked him and Alex Hope to produce an independent report on the skills needed for the UK's video games and visual effects industries. The *Next Gen* report, published this year by the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA), argues powerfully for 'changes in the education system . . . to support the fusion of art and technology skills . . . essential for the future of all of the UK's creative and digital industries'. BU is delighted that this seminal report cites the Media School's animation courses as a 'shining example' of what the industry needs. Ian is a longstanding ambassador for the School, championing its graduates and helping to keep courses at the cutting edge of industry trends.

Ian is rightly described as 'a giant and a world leader in the games industry' and his outstanding achievements have brought him public and academic honours. He was appointed an Officer of the Order of the British Empire, and has received a BAFTA Special Award and a British Inspiration Award. The University of Abertay, Dundee has given him an Honorary Doctorate of Technology. Today Bournemouth University is proud to add its name to this remarkable record.

Pro-Chancellor, I have the honour to present Ian Livingstone, and I ask you to confer upon him the degree of Doctor of Arts, *honoris causa*.