Simon Carter - Managing Director, Lead Programmer, Designer

Formerly a project leader at Bullfrog Productions Ltd, Simon works with his brother Dene as Managing Director of Big Blue Box. He is also the head of the programming department, and as such directs the programming development of all the company's projects.

Having been trapped with his brother in Gibraltar for some 4 years, Simon returned to the balmy climes of England with 9 top graded GCSE's and an award for writing fiction. Having always had a burning ambition to be a writer, Simon studied English Literature, Psychology and Maths at A Level, all of which he passed with distinction. It was at A Level college that he met Ian, now the Box's director of art, with whom he spent many an hour failing his supplementary studies in guitar, clumsily playing the first five bars of 'Feelings' over and over.

Despite his literary ambitions, Simon was convinced by his brother Dene, who was by then something of a veteran in the computer games industry, that it would be easier to make vast wads of cash writing games instead. With such mystical words of wisdom guiding him, Simon put his ambitions to one side and decided instead to pursue a dream involving leprechauns, pots of gold and well-oiled women with large breasts and loose fitting bikinis. Bizarrely, these dreams led him to a University course in computer science at Brunel.

After a year of women who would make a Russian codpiece look feminine, Simon found himself with the highest grades on his course. With these qualifications and a few game demos he had written, Simon approached Bullfrog for a summer work placement, for which he was accepted. After two weeks of working with Peter Molyneux, Simon was assigned a supporting role on Magic Carpet. A few months later, Peter offered Simon the chance of working with him on Dungeon Keeper, in the role of Lead Programmer. Simon never did return to university.

During the three-year long development period of Dungeon Keeper, Simons' brother Dene joined Bullfrog and was immediately assigned a programming role on the project. Simon and Dene worked closely together, designing, scripting and programming a very large portion of the game. They also spent a fair amount of time camping up the games' PR. Once Keeper was finished, Simon moved on to lead a team developing an experimental R&D project, designed by Dene, code-named OGEL. Once the project had been completed in testbed form, and had been received by Bullfrog to much acclaim and excitement, the two brothers decided to put into practise their long term dream of starting up their own company.

Simons' interests include reading, playing the piano, writing and cooking. He has had a deep love of computer games since the age of nine, when he was found drooling over the hot rubber keyboard of his brother's Spectrum, trying to get Horace his skis. Like all of the Big Blue Boxer's, Simon has been known to indulge in role playing games, although he has rather less of a passion for big wobbly swords than Ian.

Simon's musical influences include Kate Bush, The Divine Comedy, The Smiths, Tori Amos, Bach, Chopin and, somewhat incongruously, Nine Inch Nails. A passion for the films of David Lynch has given Simon a fascination for poorly working neon lighting and portable tape recorders. Having worked together for more than four years, Simon and Peter Molyneux are good friends, and Simon has fond memories of regularly thrashing Peter at Dungeon Keeper at 3 o'clock in the morning, to the sound of Peter's hysterical, high-pitched screaming.

Dene Carter - Managing Director, Lead Designer, Programmer

Co-Programmer on Dungeon Keeper and Populous 3 (Bullfrog 1997)

Dene published his first game in 1985, at the age of fifteen, working from his bedroom during school-nights. The game was completed in just two weeks and made him enough money to start his first company 'Electralyte', together with programmer Andrew Bailey. Two hit games followed - Druid and Druid II. Druid was unique in a number of respects; it was the first cooperative two-player computer game, and it was the first UK game to be licensed to Japan. The sequel, Druid II was converted to the Commodore Amiga by a small, inexperienced development team who would eventually become 'Bullfrog'.

Dene left the world of video game development to continue his education at Kingston University where he received a BA in Business Information Technology. During his degree course, Dene worked in one of IBM's AI software development groups which provided experience in intelligence programming.

Once he received his degree, Dene began work at Bullfrog, following his younger brother, Simon, who had joined a year earlier. He quickly became a key member of the Dungeon Keeper team. During the project's roller-coaster development Dene was responsible for the interface design, unique engine lighting features, and sections of the AI code.

Once Keeper was finished Dene helped design the new user interface for Populous 3, and became Keeper's PR front man in Japan. These tasks completed, Dene designed a unique game concept code-named OGEL with which he won the Bullfrog Games' Day - and the right to officially develop the project. He and his brother coded up a demonstration of the game for EA, before leaving to form Big Blue Box Studios.

Dene's thirteen years of experience in the computer game industry has covered machines from the Commodore 64 and Sinclair ZX Spectrum to top of the range PC hardware. His lifelong passion for computer games has had some unfortunate side-effects and he can frequently be heard describing the real world in game nomenclature, to his wife's irritation. His favourite games include Nethack, Angband, Mario 64, Zelda (Gameboy), Super Puzzle Fighter 2, CastleVania X and anything by Julian Gollop or Eugene Jarvis.

Besides games, Dene is obsessed with dark-ambient music and eighties bands. His inspirations include music from the Cold Meat Industry label, Lycia, Bleak, DeadCanDance, Love Spirals Downwards and a long list of obscure performers who can only just be classified as music. His music collection has been known as 'Hell in a friendly CD format'.

With a bewilderingly complex system of beliefs Dene is Big Blue Box's moral guidance officer and couples this with an equally fervent need to preach the word that is gaming fun to the masses. Dene's enthusiasm for the gaming cause is so great that he can often be found spreading the word in some of London's seedier nightspots.

Ian Lovett - Art Director, Lead Artist, Designer

Formerly an artist at Bullfrog working on the tightly scheduled ThemePark 2 at Bullfrog, Ian is Big Blue Box's Director of Art.

His career to date has included:
Senior 3D artist on Probe entertainment's 'Forsaken'. He supervised both PSX and PC versions as well as working closely with the external N64 team.

Ian first met Simon Carter during their first wild days at Sixth Form College. From that fateful meeting there was to form a friendship that would, years down the line, culminate in the formation of Big Blue Box studios.

During those college years Ian continued to develop a long-standing interest in role-playing systems and in particular 'Live role-playing'. This went a stage further when he founded a live-role-playing club in 1990, which is still active today. At the height of its popularity it was the largest club of its type in the south of England, comprising of over 150 members. One of the reasons for its popularity was the simple yet rewarding rules and the magic system, which Ian himself developed.

Despite Ian's interest in rule systems and game design he still managed to find time to put together a strong enough portfolio to win a coveted place at Salisbury art college on one of England's finest photographic courses. Having decided to take a short break from his fine arts background he spent two packed years learning everything from set design and lighting to the use of complex large format cameras as well as an in depth knowledge of all types of photographic printing.

Having gained a HND qualification after two years Ian was lured away from finishing his degree by the bright lights of the games industry. Moving to lovely Croydon, Ian joined Probe entertainment and within a year worked his way to become a Senior 3D artist. He was responsible for a team of artists and worked on Probe's flagship

game of the time, 'Forsaken'. During this period Ian found himself working to resolve many of the technical and art issues that beset such a technologically advanced game, demanding that he worked from Acclaim's New York office while trouble-shooting for the Forsaken team.

Eventually, seeking a return to his 'pure' art role, Ian was tempted away from Probe by the prestige and reputation for quality that was embodied by Bullfrog productions. There, he joined the ambitious Theme Park 2 team and quickly secured himself a reputation for originality and innovation. He was responsible for everything from final 3D ride design to concept artwork.

As well as owning all of the popular and some not-so-popular role-playing games on the market and still writing occasional adventures for his LRP club Ian maintains a wide range of interests. He cites as his personal non-gaming influences everything from the music of the Cocteau twins to 'Johnny the homicidal maniac' by Jhonen Vasquez. Perhaps slightly surprisingly Ian prefers to take his art influences from well outside the world of video games. Despite this, certain games have earned a place in his heart for both their look and playability, among them are Zelda (SNES), Total annihilation (PC), Thrust and Labyrinth (BBC B) and Xenon 2 (Amiga).