



British Board of Film Classification 3 Soho Square London W1D 3HD t:020 7440 1570 f:020 7287 0141 www.bbfc.co.uk

News Release

1 August 2002

BBFC ANNOUNCES NEW PRESIDENT

The BBFC is pleased to announce the appointment of Sir Quentin Thomas CB as President. The appointment took effect on 1 August 2002. He succeeds Andreas Whittam Smith who stepped down after four and a half years.

Quentin Thomas has a lifelong interest in cinema. He combines this with a clear view of the value of the BBFC system, underpinned by his wide experience of regulation in the social and cultural field. Quentin Thomas said:

“I am very much looking forward to taking up this appointment and learning more about the difficult issues the BBFC has on its plate. At a time when the arrangements for overall regulation for the media and telecoms are being revised, the need for a separate body dedicated to prior classification of films and videos is clear, as the Government has recognised. The BBFC enjoys the confidence of the public, the local authorities and the relevant commercial and creative interests.

“The BBFC model is a good one: it is independent self-financing, effective and efficient. It provides clear guidance when it is needed. Its duties are carried out in the public interest, but with no charge on public funds. It has built up a highly professional team, working on inherently difficult issues. This is an exciting time to be joining the BBFC and I look forward to working with the two Vice-Presidents, Lord Taylor of Warwick and Janet Lewis-Jones and the Director Robin Duval and the staff of the BBFC.”

The Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport, the Rt Hon Tessa Jowell MP, will lay an order before both Houses of Parliament proposing to designate Sir Quentin under the Video Recordings Act 1984 as the authority responsible for making arrangements for the classification of videos and, where appropriate, video games.

Quentin Thomas left the Civil Service at the end of 1999 after a career in the Home Office, Northern Ireland Office and Cabinet Office. His last post was as Head of the Constitution Secretariat responsible for coordination and oversight of the Government's extensive programme of constitutional reform.

From 1988 to 1998 he played a prominent part in the Northern Ireland political and peace process. He led the team which first met Sinn Fein following the 1994 cease fire. He led the official team supporting Ministers in the 1996-8 roundtable talks, chaired by Senator George Mitchell, which culminated in the Good Friday Agreement (April 1998). He was knighted for "services to peace in Northern Ireland".

In the Home Office Quentin Thomas gained much experience of the criminal justice system, the criminal law (dealing at one point with the law on obscenity, indecent displays and film censorship) and various regulatory regimes, including: street offences and prostitution, immigration, animal experiment, broadcasting and gambling. His last post in the Home Office (1984-8) was as Head of the Broadcasting Department, with responsibility for advising on the development of broadcasting policy, including cable and satellite broadcasting, and on relations between government and the broadcasting authorities and other regulatory bodies. He was Secretary to the Royal Commission on Gambling (1976-8).

He is 58, married with 3 grown up children.

Notes for Editors

1. Sir Quentin Thomas was appointed by the Council of Management of the BBFC after an open competition.
2. The notice of intention to designate the President cannot be laid before Parliament returns from recess and must then lie for 40 days before both Houses. This will not pose any problems for the BBFC as the two Vice-Presidents, Lord Taylor of Warwick and Janet Lewis-Jones are both designated under the Video Recordings Act 1984.

Public Enquiries:	020 7440 1570
Press Enquiries:	Sue Clark 020 7440 3285
Press Office Manager:	020 7440 0383
Out of Hours:	Mobile 07946 423719