

REGENERATION IDEAS

- 1) Closer identification of the Bognor Regis area to improve the Bognor Brand.
- 2) Better cultural links with the surrounding area

William Blake: poet, painter, printer and prophet. A genius of the imagination and one of the most radical thinkers Britain has ever seen. Today, his works are read, studied and loved all around the world but other than a handful of collections, nowhere in Britain celebrates his extraordinary craftsmanship and creativity. Felpham was the only place Blake lived outside London and in 1800 upon these, "banks of the Ocean" he beheld Jerusalem.

On walks around the area he saw with "four-fold vision" since "the doors of perception were cleansed".

THE BIG BLAKE TRAIL Background

The Big Blake Trail was launched in the summer of 2013 with a launch party held at Cloudhopper gallery, art workshops and poetry readings. The launch day was given good and favourable coverage in the local press.

The trail launched with a self-guided walk. The feedback on the 16-page colour brochure for the trail was extremely positive. Copies were requested by The Chichester Museum, the South Downs Trust, The Tourist Information Office and The Town Hall. In addition, copies can be found in London at the Blake Society Headquarters, The Chelsea Arts Club, Pallant House Gallery and Goodwood. In particular, Pallant House has requested that the proposed Sussex literacy trail is linked directly to the Blake Trail.

DEMAND FOR THE TRAIL GUIDES

The B&B's in Felpham all carry copies and last year Butlin's took 1,000 and said that they would

be interested in many more copies in 2014. The demand for the brochures has been so high that the original run of 7,000 estimated to be enough for two years is now nearly exhausted and a second print run is needed urgently.

The brochure has been valued for:

- (i) Attractive design (Loosemarbles),
- (ii) In-depth research (the Big Blake Project)
- (iii) Cultural content (the Big Blake Project).

We strongly believe that we met our own objective of producing a quality product to promote tourism in Bognor Regis and helped Bognor Regis take its rightful place.

We have been approached by another town much larger than Bognor Regis to see if we would be interested in producing a trail there.

The Big Blake Project has fully funded the first print-run. We now consider the product to be proven and request that Arun match fund the £2,200 raised so far in order to reprint the brochure in larger numbers and with the new map.

BESPOKE ARTISTIC MAP

Rather than just reprint the brochure, we have asked Chris Price (renowned illustrator and artist) to draw a Georgian-style bespoke map of Felpham and Bognor Regis with references to the Georgian period and Blake's anthemic words, inspired by his surroundings. This has objective has been achieved completely as the attached map designed by Chris Price copy shows.

The map is of Blake's Beulah which went beyond the boundaries of Felpham, hence the main focus of Beulah as Felpham and Bognor Regis but taking in important links to the wider area as well.

The Georgian heritage is a really interesting angle



and its unique to think that these, “banks of the ocean”, where William Blake claimed he imagined Jerusalem, are the same ones that Queen Victoria played on 20 years later. Jane Austen’s last novel (according to the British History online) was based in Bognor Regis and its main character was Richard Hotham. With the current trend for nostalgia, Bognor Regis has a lot to gain from reconnecting with its Georgian roots. Having a map so centrally located will do a lot to help the Bognor Brand.

The map has been very well received by people in the business including an out of area MP a Guardian journalist and London advertising executive.

Helen Wilson from ADC Parks and Gardens would also like a copy of the map on a plinth in Hotham Park because of the way it links the green spaces and the poetry trail signs that are soon to be installed. Obviously such a unique walking trail will improve health as well as cultural well-being.

IDEAS ABOVE OUR STATION

We have spoken with Southern Rail who would like to house at such a unique map at their site and Chichester University are in support. The Town Centre Manager is also supportive of this Big Blake Project proposal and want to assist. There will be shortly a copy of the map installed at Bognor Regis railway station.

Our plans for a ‘Chariot of Fire’ located at the British Railway Station designed or judged by an artist such as Andy Goldsmith have also been well received by Chichester University and Southern Rail. As have our plans for a poetry bench, which can include winners of the Twitter competition, and so be added to each year – as well as aphorisms from William Blake or James Joyce. We urgently request that Arun District Council’s regeneration team work with us on their own plans for the forecourt as not only will we deliver quality enhancements but we are confident we can also achieve value for money.

The Big Blake Project is essentially a regeneration project that will improve the brand and cultural well-being of Bognor Regis.

We would like Arun to:

- i) Work with us on the designs for Bognor Regis station to help promote a better cultural brand.
- ii) £2,000 to produce 20,000 copies of the new Blake Trail Brochure.
- iii) Provide a quality version of the Chris Price map in Hotham Park.

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