

BLAKE'S COTTAGE, FELPHAM FUNDRAISING STRATEGY

Reflections towards a Vision Statement

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We are not turning Blake's Cottage into a Museum. The aim would be rather to make of it the Forges of Los to bring forward Blakean vision: Imagination and Dissent.

That there are virtually no extant personal objects that belonged to Blake offers an interesting symbol for reflection about the way he built his life, created his work and the destiny he fulfilled. That in spite of his significance in British and the world's culture he's still buried in an unmarked grave, most of the houses he's lived in have been demolished and there is no object of his to display in a museum may suggest that the energy that drove his art and life burnt through creation and constant transformation, and was not of the kind to be tamed in the form of a museum or institutionalized culture.

Now to preserve the Cottage as a symbol of Blake's legacy we need to work with institutions, create some sort of organisation and administrate. How are we going to do that while respecting this essence of Blake's life and work, so powerful that it left for posterity its recognisable mark in the form of no personal possessions?

To start with then, the Cottage should not be possessed by anyone. It ought to be administered, and opened up, by a board with representatives of the parties involved, who yet would be there to further Blake's vision, rather than to represent their own organisations. The function of the Cottage's open door could be interesting. What if the emphasis shifts from a door open for people to get in, to one open so that the fruits of Imagination go *out*? Thought of as Los's forges, the Cottage's physically finite centre can become an infinite source of energy made manifest through creation, in the arts and literature, in thought, in mental fight for freedom, in true science.

The organisations involved would therefore have the challenge to think of imaginative ways of honouring Blake through the organisms they represent, without betraying those organisms but mainly without betraying Blake's spirit, without bending the functions of the Cottage to fit their own interests. We would have to learn to think in terms of integrating the vision of all those organisms for a single purpose instead of thinking of their own separate interests – the organisations involved would have to dispense with their selfhoods and concentrate on building a forge.

The connections with South Molton Street, if we keep access to it, the University of Chichester, the Felpham Festival, the Tate, etc., would then work not so much through bringing all of them physically into the Cottage, but in taking to them the fruits of what is conceived in the Cottage. The Cottage would host special events of everyone involved: book launches, talks, small exhibitions, but the stress would be on what is born there to go outside. People with specific projects would gather there and give them shape. Resident writers or artists for specific periods would create works to give to the world. Perhaps a programme of monthly conversations around Blakean subjects may be started, limited to a few people so that conversation is truly possible (booked on a first-come first-served basis).

Headline activities

- Seek views and advice from professional fundraisers and e-marketeers. Contact Oatmeal founder Matthew Inman for advice.
- Build extensive networks through social media, and negotiate access to other appropriate networks.
- Invite high-profile figure(s) to be patrons of the campaign.
- Create a register of expressions-of-interest and keep them interested.
- Present Blake and the fundraising campaign with an excellent, engaging story (including a video). Perhaps re-set Parry's setting of Jerusalem for our target demographics.
- Develop a vision for how the cottage will be used. We need to be able to tell a convincing and attention-grabbing story in a soundbite, and in detail.
- Choose crowd-funding platform, and decide donation amounts. Prepare and/or commission 'rewards'.
- Keep in review current crowd funding campaigns (eg CUK's selfie).
- Secure promises of initial seed-funding donations from existing contacts.
- Approach wealthy philanthropists and organisations to match-fund donations.
- Run other fund-raising and awareness-raising activities, such as a charity auction, video competition, Felpham Blake Festival, Proverbs of Hell (aphorisms) competition.
- Create a Trust structure that can legally acquire the cottage.
- Raise awareness in national press. Circulate engaging press releases periodically.
- Launch crowd-funding campaign. Target: £1.5m, stretched into three chunks: £500k to buy the cottage; £500k to renovate; and £500k to endow.
- Three-level appeal to potential donors.
- Funding deadline: 31 October 2014.

Month-by-month timetable

Month	Activities
March	<p>Start building Twitter following. Target: 500 followers. Make strategic decisions (see starred questions below). Start seeking advice from experienced fundraisers. Create a register of expressions of interest.</p>
April	<p>Start writing the campaign 'story'. Contact directors about the crowd-funding video. Discuss and finalise crowd-funding rewards. Start negotiating access to networks. Start setting up Trust structure. Secure a patron for the campaign. Twitter target: 1,000 followers.</p>
May	<p>Commission crowd-funding video. Commission crowd-funding rewards (if necessary). Issue press release with news of video and patron. Finalise first draft of campaign 'story'. Continue negotiating access to networks. Twitter target: 2,000 followers</p>
June	<p>Approach wealthy philanthropists and organisations about match-funding. Monitor crowd-funding video. Continue negotiating access to networks. Finish setting up trust structure. Twitter target: 3,000 followers.</p>
July	<p>Start securing promises of initial donations. Continue approaching philanthropists about match-funding. Monitor crowd-funding video. Finalise negotiations over access to networks. Twitter target: 4,000 followers</p>
August	<p>Issue a press release with an update. Continue securing promises of initial donations. Secure match-funding promises. Finish crowd-funding video and campaign story. Finalise crowd-funding rewards. Twitter target: 5,000 followers</p>
September	<p>Launch crowd-funding campaign Target band 1 donors: personal, pre-notified contacts. Target band 2 donors: social media followers.</p>
October	<p>Target band 3 donors: other networks Issue press release with funding plea. Regular updates during the campaign (to previous donors).</p>

Questions & Suggestions

Preparation

What is our demographic target group? (This will affect how we build our networks in advance of the campaign.) People with interests in:

- Blake
- Poetry
- Art
- Engraving
- Printing
- Spirituality
- Non-conformism
- Psychology
- Illustration
- Literature
- Felpham
- Conservation – Gardens, Horticulture, RSPB (birds in Blake)
- Blake as a genius marginalized by Society
- Anyone who shares Blake's birthday

Which networks or doorkeepers should we approach?

- Martin Myrone, Curator at the Tate
- Anna Keay, Director of the Landmark Trust
- Barry Sheerman, MP, founder of Clare Cottage and Social Entrepreneur
- Glen Powell, Felpham Parish Council
- Graham Jones, West Sussex County Council
- Richard Brooks, Sunday Times Arts Editor
- MP for Felpham, MEP for Felpham
- Universities
- The Londonist
- London's Small Literary Houses
- Alliance of Literary Societies
- Poet in the City
- Friends of Art Fund, Tate, V&A, British Museum, BL, Whitworth ...
- Temenos Academy (we'd offer the Cottage for special lectures)
- Publishing Houses: Enitharmon, Vala, Golgonooza Press (Brian Keeble).
- Ditchling Museum. They may offer some advice or have a stronger participation in the campaign, given Gill's affinities with Blake.
- Clare Cottage
- Keats House
- Thinking that Blake was not against science, but rather against the Urizenic approach to it, we may open also the Cottage's doors to projects of imaginative science and look for some kind of partnership with The Wellcome Trust or The Royal Institution.

What can we offer to organisations in exchange for access to their networks?

- Nothing necessarily – most organisations will be glad to help, and any of their members who donate will get the rewards as laid out below.
- Others might wish to offer their members something marketable

- We cannot offer use the space on a permanent basis, but the Cottage would be open for book launches, and we'd offer the link with Chichester University and the Felpham Festival.
- We could think of events that can be held in both places, doing small "tours".

Who could we approach to be a patron of the campaign?

- Philip Pullman
- Patti Smith
- Alan Moore
- Peter Ackroyd
- Tracy Chevalier
- Rowan Williams
- Robert Plant
- Iain Sinclair
- Johnny Depp
- Russell Brand
- Ray Davies
- Prince Charles (through his being Patron of Temenos Academy)
- JK Rowling
- Kenzaburo Oe
- Ben Okri
- Neil Gaiman
- Michael Eavis, founder of Glastonbury Festival
- Alistair Darling (shares birthday with WB)
- Anyone who shares Blake's birthday
- People on Desert Island Discs who chose Jerusalem or Blake's Collected Works

Who might donate artwork or objects for the campaign?

- Patti Smith is also a photographer. She might donate copies of limited editions.
- Robert Plant.
- To famous people in the campaign we should rather ask for something creative. To a musician, a Blake-inspired song, for instance, or a musical setting to a Blake poem. There are several musicians from whom we may get this, including Patti Smith, Ray Davies, etc.

The Campaign

How do we tell the story of the campaign?

- A video
- An imaginative positioning of the significance of Blake on the Blake Society website
- An animation in the Japanese tradition eg Hayao Miyazaki The Wind Rises,
- Reward crowd-funding itself manifests the purpose of the Cottage: to give creatively

Who could direct the video?

- Ken Loach
- Danny Boyle
- Alan Parker

- Tim Burton
- Jim Jarmusch
- Wim Wenders

Who could be in the video?

- Philip Pullman
- Patti Smith
- Alan Moore
- Peter Ackroyd
- Tracy Chevalier
- Rowan Williams
- Robert Plant
- Iain Sinclair
- Russell Brand
- Johnny Depp
- Ray Davies
- Prince Charles (through his being Patron of Temenos Academy)
- JK Rowling
- Kenzaburo Oe
- Ben Okri
- Front person, an actor or actress eg Helena Bonham-Carter, Patrick Stewart
- Our committee should be represented, pitching the idea to camera, with the 'big names' providing back up.

Which crowd-funding platform should we use?

- Indiegogo or ...

What rewards could we provide?

[for 'Fourfold donations': £4, £44, £444, £4,444 etc]

- Blake map of London & Felpham.
- Screen-printed luxury print of Blake Map.
- High quality download of the Blake Map / computer desktop image.
- Personal day tour of Blake's London
- Bottled sea water from Felpham
- Names included somewhere in the renovated building
- Limited artwork 'ownership certificates'
- A new currency (the Golgonooza).
- Visiting rights to the cottage.
- Fragments of Blake's door
- Gifts of Blake originals (the Society has two 18C books with WB engravings)
- Signed books from literary Patrons and Blake-related authors
- Sleeping in the Cottage, once opened.
- Trianon prints (those we have for modest contributions; we may get some of the collectable ones for higher contributions).
- One of Blake's commercial engravings.
- A year membership of the Blake Society
- Membership of the Tate, V&A and/or the British Museum
- Planting of an Angel Oak with the donor's name in a plaque (or pebbles?).

- A week of Blakean quotes in text messages (to honour the moment of the day that Satan cannot find).
- Invitation to spend a Glad Day in the Cottage, including conversation with some of the Blakean authors, artists or scholars involved in the campaign.
- Inscribing the names of donors on bricks.

Who could we approach to match-fund the money we raise?

- Richard Branson
- Alan Parker
- Patti Smith
- Kris Kristofferson
- Lord Browne
- David Milliband
- Robert Plant
- Prince Charles (through his being Patron of Temenos Academy)
- JK Rowling
- Grant Making Trusts eg The Monument Trust
- Waterstones
- Foyles
- City Hedge Funds
- Art Fund

Who could go on our list of probable donors?

- Blake Society members
- William Blake Circle
- Blake Archive
- Arun Council
- Heritage Lottery Fund (to prove kudos)
- Women's Institute

Afterwards

(*) How could the cottage be used?

- A residence for a persecuted artist: House of Refuge.
- A home of the imagination.
- A museum.
- Learning centre for universities.
- A home for the paper-printed-book.

What happens if we fail to raise the full amount?

- Donate the Cottage to the Landmark Trust
- Rent Blake's floor in 17SMS

What happens if the appeal is vastly overfunded?

- Attempt to acquire 17SMS.

What will the relationship be between the Cottage and the House at 17 South Molton Street?

- An Axis conjoining: Reason v Imagination / Intuition v Rules / The City v The Sea / Institution v Individual