

## Chapter V

### A VERY LONG RETREAT, AND A VERY BAD IDEA

To recap, let's go back to the chronological developments of the Blake Cottage appeal: Mr Henry Eliot, Trustee of the Blake Society, had left the campaign after his brief involvement. That meant that the Blake Society's Chairman, Mr Tim Heath, and I were the only representatives of the Society leading the appeal, along with the Big Blake Project in Felpham, who were gathering a lot of local support.

The original deadline we had to purchase the Cottage exercising our legal option to buy was 31<sup>st</sup> October 2014 – an extremely tight time frame –, and therefore, while still applying for funds from several Trusts and organisations and contacting potential donors, we had agreed to focus on a crowdfunding appeal. We were hoping to raise the bulk of the necessary funds running the campaign on such a platform for six weeks prior to our deadline, which meant that we had to launch our crowdfunding page on 19 September, a date we had all unanimously agreed on from the onset at our first work meeting early in the year. As explained in Chapter IV, we also had to make a short video to accompany this appeal.

To concentrate our efforts on a crowdfunding campaign was Mr Heath's idea. I wasn't so sure about it, but I was not familiarized with this kind of efforts, considered him more experienced than me and trusted his instinct. As it turned out, the crowdfunding appeal was a considerable failure (we raised £3,788 only, a rather ridiculous amount compared to our £520,000 goal). It's hard to know, though, whether if it was simply the wrong platform to raise such a big amount of money in so short a time, or whether the whole appeal was ruined by the severe mismanagement and chaos behind it, about which the reader will learn very soon.

We had all agreed as well on setting up a Just Giving account on the name of the Blake Society. In it, we were unequivocally telling the public that they were giving their money to the Society, as we have seen in Chapter II. Mr Heath had dealt with the initial paperwork. Then on 21 July he called me from outside London to ask me to send a bank statement to Just Giving to finish setting up the account. He then confirmed his request with an email:

Dear Adriana,

Just in case I have to ask you to post the copy of the HSBC Reserve Bank Account statement (Zero funds in Account) to Just Giving:

The Blake Society Application Reference Number is [ . . . ]

I assumed Mr Heath was on holidays, but imagined he'd be back soon, since we were about to host a Blake Society event the following weekend – a printing workshop led by Professor Michael Phillips.

The said event took place and afterwards Mr Heath and I went for a walk, then to have some coffee: during those few hours we talked, quite enthusiastically, about the Cottage appeal. It was the last time that we held anything resembling an honest conversation as colleagues before Mr Heath virtually hijacked the project, causing such disruption that he nearly destroyed it. During our conversation he told me that he had invited Prof Phillips to be part of the consortium that would run the Cottage, and that he had accepted. The frankness of our conversation included Mr Heath acknowledging that Prof Phillips was a very ambitious man. We've now had the chance to see just how misguided that ambition was, and why Mr Heath was keen to have in the Trust he'd create men whose ambition was big enough to override principles. At the moment, though, I was delighted: Prof Phillips is an eminent specialist on Blake, we had just come out from an inspiring workshop printing Blake's

replicas led by him, and furthermore, the printing press that he'd had made for the upcoming exhibition curated by him at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford would afterwards find its home in the Cottage. From that moment on I repeatedly told Mr Heath that we should find ways for Prof Phillips to engage with our appeal, and suggested ways in which we could join efforts so that the exhibition and the festival that would accompany it – in the organisation of which Mr Heath was apparently taking part – helped gather support for the Cottage project.

As it will become evident, Mr Heath would ignore my suggestions. He also made sure that his communications with Prof Phillips were kept completely apart from the rest of his fellow campaigners, and he also kept his involvement in the festival practically hidden from the Blake Society Committee. Despite my being the only other Blake Society Trustee working for the Cottage apart from himself and my constant urging him for us to work together with Prof Phillips during the exhibition and the Festival, I only found out by accident about the inauguration of both, to which I was not invited – nor was the Blake Society Committee invited to the festival, though the organizers had asked Mr Heath about the ways in which we could be involved.

To keep both the Blake Society and his fellow campaigners apart was crucial in Mr Heath's intentions to appropriate the project, and one of the results was that Prof Phillips, despite having been invited to be part of the Blake Cottage consortium, didn't do anything at all for the campaign. Nothing whatsoever. We (Mr Heath, the Big Blake Project and I) did all the work, then the Cottage simply fell on his lap. I don't know whether if Prof Phillips might have been more involved had Mr Heath not actively made sure there would be no communication whatsoever among ourselves, again following his principle of divide and rule. As we will see in another chapter, at some point he did ask what he could do, a question that Mr Heath ignored. What I do know is that Prof Phillips's ambition is big enough as to make him incapable of wondering if everything is as it should, even when people raise serious concerns, or indeed of showing any respect for the people who did the work that he, as a member of the Blake Cottage Trust, has now contributed to steal.

On the day of the printing workshop, 26 July 2014, Mr Heath had other two pieces of news for me. One was that, despite being so close to our deadlines both for launching the crowdfunding appeal and for gathering the funds to acquire the Cottage, he had not come back to London from a short holiday, but actually would be here only for a day, because he was in a six week research retreat somewhere in the country. *Six weeks*. It was a very worrying piece of news, as it left me with the brunt of the work for the campaign as far as the Blake Society was concerned, apart from my work as Secretary, that had become more demanding because our members' interest in the Cottage appeal.

I had of course to earn my living as well, since work for the BS is on a voluntary basis. Mr Heath was fully aware of the fact that my health was fragile. He also knew that the past few years had been extremely trying for me in many ways, including bereavement, and that I was exhausted; that I had serious financial and accommodation problems and was working very hard in order to sort out that situation, apart from all the work I was doing for the Cottage appeal and the Blake Society, so it struck me as a tad inconsiderate to me, and irresponsible, to go away for so long precisely at that moment, leaving me in charge. I had no doubt either that he knew that my own writing and my enthusiasm for my work for the BS and the Cottage were what kept me going in my difficult circumstances, and that therefore he trusted I would do whatever was necessary to keep things running.

So I was taken aback and, at the same time, I was happy for him to have such a chance to devote time to himself and his other projects. I knew too that Mr Heath had had some extremely hard years himself and there was no way to deny that he more than deserved some real respite. When I told Trustees Mr and Mrs Vinall about Mr Heath's retreat though, they weren't so understanding. They

were in fact infuriated that he had left at such a delicate moment. As we have seen, Mr Vinall was always concerned about the repercussions for the Blake Society if the Cottage appeal went wrong. They found out about the retreat because I told them: Mr Heath never even bothered to inform the Committee as a whole that he would be absent for so long. From that moment and until they made a u-turn, after I contacted the Charity Commission a year later, Mr and Mrs Vinall openly expressed their belief that Mr Heath was behaving in an appallingly irresponsible way.

However happy I was for Mr Heath's deserved chance for respite, I told him of my serious concerns regarding the Cottage appeal. He told me that he would connect regularly to internet so that I could keep him updated about my work, that we could talk on the phone now and then too when necessary, and that we'd manage to go ahead. We agreed on the work to be done (enormous) during his absence. This included the very pressing matter of the video for the crowdfunding appeal. Mr Heath was keen on the idea of a famous actress cross-dressing as Blake but we were considering other options too. One of our agreements was that I would write the script for the film, would send it to him and he would find the time to make changes and suggestions then send it back to me: in short, the script would be a collaborative work between the two of us.

Then he gave me his second piece of news: that fellow Blake Society Trustee Ms Paige Morgan, who lives in the United States and had never uttered so much as a word of interest in the project to the Committee, would join the Cottage appeal. Now that was some very worrying news indeed. Mr Heath made his delivery and then looked up at a video screen in the café we were at, smiling, and made some inconsequential comment about whatever was being shown there.

I knew from experience that when Mr Heath acted like that, it was pointless to try to engage him in any dialogue. He'd simply refuse to even acknowledge the attempt, so I took all these troubling news with me to ruminate at home and try to find the best way forward.

#### **CRONYISM IN BLAKE'S HOUSE**

For the reader to understand why it was worrying to hear that Ms Morgan (who holds a PhD and specializes in digital humanities) was to join the appeal, they should know what her position in the Blake Society is exactly.

When I joined the Committee in 2011 she had already been a Trustee for a couple of years (she had been co-opted at some point in 2009, after the formal election of Trustees at the AGM). I found her presence in the Committee mystifying, as I failed to understand what her interest in the Society was, or what she actually did from her quarters in America. The equivocal nature of her position in the Committee seemed worrying to me. She struck me as a visibly insecure person, who masked her insecurity with aggressiveness (on occasion it would turn to downright aggression), cunning, an overstating of the work she did and self-aggrandisement, which led her to some contempt for truth. During my years in the Committee, she never managed to convey what was her motivation for being a Blake Society Trustee. On the first committee meeting every year the Chair used to ask us precisely that question and, apart from once mentioning that she had joined thinking it would be good for her academic career and the Society would be grateful to have her, or stating that her aim was to give more online presence to the Society in the web and show her commitment regarding our non-existent journal (more about that later), she was never able to articulate anything else, not even when prompted by the Chair's question of what she would like to see happen on that particular year. She had no vision, no projects, no discernible interest at all.

Nevertheless, since I joined the Committee I noticed that she had been entrusted with a certain degree of power. Until 2013, for instance, only she and the Chair had access to the

administration of the Society's webpage, which she was supposed to run. It was a slovenly page, in urgent need of updating, editing and proofreading. This situation changed when a new Trustee (no longer in the Committee) took on the task of tidying it up and coordinating our social media. This person also asked the other Trustees for ideas for its further improvement, on which she worked punctiliously, and this uplift is the basis of the webpage that the BS has now. That year I, as the new Secretary, was also granted access to the webpage administration, but somehow Ms Morgan kept on nominally holding the position of webpage administrator – perhaps, I thought, because she did fix things when something went wrong technically.

Ms Morgan also proofread the Society's newsletter, written by the Chair (to which we all contributed items), and in the absence of any personal initiative on her part, the Chair used to assign her jobs to do. During one of my first committee meetings, for instance, that Ms Morgan did not attend through teleconference, Mr Heath decided that she, along with two other fellow Trustees, would be part of the Subcommittee in charge to administrate one of his pet projects, the Tithe Grant. The rest of the Committee had some input in the Tithe Grant every year, and in my own experience Ms Morgan was not good at engaging in work with us. Until I left the Society the Tithe Grant was always a responsibility in the hands of her and some other Trustees, by the Chair's decree. The minutes of the 2012 AGM reflect that in the Treasurer's report:

We thank Prof Josie McQuail, Paige Morgan and Andrew Solomon for the utmost care they took in sorting out the 13 applications that were received for this grant, and for their advice to the Committee on how to set up this procedure and arrive at a final selection by the Committee.

(despite the failures of communication in the process that year); however, the Tithe Grant is something that Ms Morgan has claimed to have "developed" by herself in her professional profiles.

I ignore what Ms Morgan did for the Blake Society before my time. All I know is that during my four years in the Committee her work was whimsical and minimal, that she was barely present even in the teleconferences with which we tried to engage in our meetings those Trustees living in the United States, that she wasn't very good at engaging with her fellow Trustees and seemed to be under the impression that she had was entitled to hold some power while doing very little. Her presence and work were in fact so marginal that she didn't really amount to being a problem, with one serious exception: the Blake Society's Journal, of which Mr Heath had named her editor.

Until the year I became a Trustee, the editor of the publication had been Dr Angus Whitehead, a member of the Society. The last issue of the Journal was in fact published in 2007, and up to then it had been appearing on a yearly basis for 9 years. The Society's minutes of the 2009 AGM, at which Ms Morgan had not been elected as a Trustee, mention her as assistant editor. It isn't clear to me in which date she had been appointed for that role, despite her not being a Blake Society Trustee. As a member, she had joined the Society in 2008. The "many years" in the Society mentioned in the minutes obviously refer to Dr Whitehead alone, who had joined in 2003, and this is therefore an early example of how truth has been twisted in order to force Ms Morgan into important positions within the Society. Below is the relevant excerpt of the minutes:

Dr. Angus Whitehead did not nominate himself as a Committee member this year but remains an Editor of the Blake Journal with Paige Morgan as Assistant Editor. Together they have many years of experience of the Society, but are not current Committee members. Angus is resident in Singapore and Paige in Seattle, USA.

Later on that year Ms Morgan was co-opted as a Trustee, bypassing therefore the formal election at the AGM. In the minutes of the 2010 AGM it is stated that she had now nominated herself, adding that she had been co-opted the previous year since she had “assisted” as “co-editor of the Blake Journal”... that no one had seen.

By the time I joined the Committee in 2011, Dr Whitehead, who had recently moved to Singapore, had stepped down from his role for the Journal, and Ms Morgan became the sole editor... The sole editor of a Journal that from the moment she was appointed in 2009 till I stopped my subscription as member of the Blake Society on January this year never existed, and if the Blake Society’s webpage is to be trusted, it still doesn’t exist as I write these words, on 2 April 2017. That makes it **eight years** of something promised to the Society’s members that has not been delivered (ten in fact if we count the two years without a Journal before Ms Morgan was appointed), and later on in this chapter the reader will have the chance to see evidence of the appalling lack of transparency regarding this non-existent publication. The reader will see that there have been ongoing questions and concerns of members that have gone unanswered, as well as some questioning as to why the Blake Society had appointed editors that lived so far away from its quarters in London.

One of my first exchanges with Ms Morgan had to do in fact with the ghost publication: when I joined the Society as a member in 2009, before I became a Trustee, I sent to the Chair a piece on Blake’s London as a submission for the Journal. He told me that he had passed it on to the editors. I heard nothing from them. The Chair once asked whether if they had responded. I said no and he said he would remind them of my piece and ask them to write back to me. Still, I heard nothing. Then I became a Trustee. By then Ms Morgan was the sole editor of the Journal, and in one of her frequent visits to the UK she approached me after a Blake Society event to say that Mr Heath “had gone as far as showing her” my piece. And that was all. I was puzzled, and never heard another word from her about the matter. My puzzlement increased when I realized that many potential contributors, including members of the Society and Trustees, were receiving the same treatment.

Ms Morgan’s unreliability and whimsical attitude towards her work for the Blake Society were usually reflected in petty ways, and her attempts at affirming some kind of power were generally harmless. But her irresponsibility as far as the Journal was concerned was serious, and members were complaining.

During my time as a Trustee I received several aggressions from Ms Morgan, work-related and personal (as we soon will see, she didn’t seem to understand the boundaries between both spheres), and was often witness to her rather plain displays of cunning. There was much there that was unpleasant so I won’t trouble the reader with the details. After all, she had been so far inoffensive, since the aggressions were as puerile as they were distasteful.

Other Trustees had problems with her as well, particularly related to her procrastination of work. Some of them, like the Treasurer Mr Luis Garrido, and other Trustees who have now left the Committee, were angry about the situation with the Journal. The problem was that they didn’t go beyond making derisive remarks about it (such as calling it the “apocryphal journal”), usually when the Chair was not present. On a couple of occasions I told these Trustees that talking behind their colleagues’ back was inappropriate and they should bring their concerns to the Committee meetings, so that we could put things right together. But no one ever had the guts to address the Journal problem directly in any meeting, and I soon realised that Ms Morgan could do as she wished in the Committee and go unchallenged. For some reason, she was untouchable.

When problems with the Cottage appeal got serious and I raised the alarm, fellow Trustee Christina Vinall and now ex-Trustee Rod Tweedy both told me, on the phone or in person, about their bemusement as to what on earth was Ms Morgan doing in the Blake Society Committee. (In fact the Chair himself, in December 2013, shortly before the Cottage appeal started, and at the time the nominations of Trustees for the coming year were open, told me that there was no point in having Trustees in America, since they did so little.) Mr Garrido told me several times on the phone that Ms Morgan was a 'nasty' colleague and had been so since before I joined the Committee. In an email of 2012 that he and his wife, Mrs Carol Garrido, who was then also a Trustee, sent to the Committee with a long list of grievances, they had already pointed, with no little irony, at Ms Morgan's unaccountability and her seemingly untouchable status in the Committee, and on a telephone conversation on January 2016, two days prior to the Society's AGM, he told me that before my time both he and Mrs Garrido had been about to resign because of Ms Morgan's lies. We'll get back to that revealing conversation in due time in this testimony. Trustee Josie McQuail has also had problems with Ms Morgan, something she confirmed to me on a phone conversation in June 2016, on the day the Blake Cottage Trust organized an "open day" at Blake's Cottage (another rather revealing conversation that we'll comment in due time). The inconsistencies and complaints regarding Ms Morgan's work have also included withholding of information and/or material (such as a whole set of Trianon prints with Blake facsimiles destined for promotion) from her fellow Trustees.

Most worrying of all was, and is, the sole reason why Ms Morgan is a Trustee of the Blake Society, and why she was now (back in July 2014) being forced into the Cottage appeal - and that is her personal relationship with the Chair, Mr Tim Heath.

#### **SOME REFLECTIONS**

I do not know how many people will follow this testimony. It is long, and it may not, I'm afraid, offer much in the way of practical solutions to the problems faced by Blake's Cottage now.

It certainly has no use for all the people who only want to forget that there are any problems at all. By this I mean all those who are now involved in the Blake Cottage cover-up, be it by active lying, or by turning a blind eye, and this is by now quite a lot of people - some very powerful, some very famous.

However, it is a testimony. If anyone ever wants to know what really happened with the Blake Cottage appeal, and how it was that so much mire was thrown at William Blake and his legacy, this testimony will be here. I am confident that, as time goes by, its relevance will become clearer. So before I continue with the chronological account of what happened with the appeal, I will share some reflections, in the hope that one day someone will take stock. Even if only a single person listens, and does their bit to defend Blake's legacy from the people who have soiled it, the effort will have been worthwhile. This account will also mean the existence of an important document for the history of literary legacies in this country and, I hope, an eye opener about the dangers of trusting certain Charities too much.

The answer to the question of why I'm writing this has several layers. First of all, I am doing this for Blake. Filthy dealings in organisations are, unfortunately, an every-day occurrence, but I think that for them to be condoned in organisations, and a project, that purportedly exist to protect Blake's legacy, is a particularly vicious insult to an artist and poet whose entire life and the whole breadth of his work were devoted to defy all forms of falsehood, tyranny and slavery. Blake devoted his life and work to a courageous spiritual and aesthetic quest that sought true liberation and the beauty that accompanies a free individual, and a free society. He sought the integration of all the psychic forces

within us that makes such liberation possible, and during his life he was put down and maligned by people like those who are now throwing mud at him and deceiving other people in his name – people to whom I don't think he would have ever opened the door to his house. Or cottage.

Whoever is reading this must remember that the Blake Society and the Blake Cottage Trust have been consistently lying to donors, BS members and the public for nearly four years now, and that their financial statements are untruthful, overlapping and with significant amounts of money missing, as has been endlessly documented in this webpage and by other campaigners (such as author Beryl Kingston). They must also remember that they have allowed the Cottage to go into severe disrepair, and that while the Cottage appeal was for a project in Felpham, Felpham's campaigners, supporters and community have been either used or lied to, treated with contempt, and have received far too many insults.

I worked for the Blake Society and for the Cottage appeal because I care about Blake's legacy. I believed fiercely in the need to do work that arose from principles that Blake himself believed in – his "Improvement in the things of the Spirit" –, with the joy that should entail. It has therefore been exceedingly painful, and infuriating, to witness from such close quarters the enormous insult that Blake has received at the hands of people who claim to defend his legacy: the insult in the form of deceit and abuse of the good will and the generosity of people who love Blake; in the form of endless lies; in the form of harm to concrete human beings and defilement of a beautiful project inspired by him; in the form of bullying, concealment of the truth and a sickening lack of courage and human dignity.

I am doing this (making this ignominy public, writing this testimony) for all the donors and supporters of our campaign, all those who believed in us and in what we promised to them. Every single day during our campaign we received donations, and very moving messages. People gave what they could – sometimes, indeed, more than what they could comfortably give. I read every single message left in our Just Giving and Indiegogo accounts, and I collected the letters sent to us by post: donations made with great care and love, some accompanied by a drawing or card made by the donors themselves. Some people gave us money in memory of their dear departed ones. All this has a human value, and ever since I realized what was happening with the Cottage, what Mr Heath was doing with such recklessness and callousness, these messages and the generosity of all these people has haunted me. Their best feelings and their best intentions did not deserve to be betrayed like this.

I am doing this for Mrs Heather Howell, who generously gave us the legal option to acquire the Cottage, then patiently extended the original deadline, because she believed in us; because she believed Mr Heath when he told her of plans that he would then betray; because she trusted him and our campaign to fulfil her expressed desire that the Cottage should be in the hands of a Trust conformed of people who loved Blake, and instead of that what had been her family home for decades was dragged into the mire. It is a horrendous betrayal, and lack of respect, for Mrs Howell and her family.

I am doing this for everyone who supported us in many ways apart from giving money, including actively spreading the word about our campaign through every means they could, putting us in touch with potential donors and advisers, offering to create rewards for the crowdfunding appeal, giving us media coverage, publicly endorsing us or opening their doors to their offices in Parliament to launch the campaign.

I am doing this for the Big Blake Project, who were invited to the campaign by Mr Heath, whose enormous amount of work and good faith were used and abused and who ended up being

elbowed out and receiving only insults and humiliations at the hands of Mr Heath and the Blake Cottage Trust; I am speaking out because the unfairness with which they have been treated constitutes harm done to concrete human beings that should not be condoned. I am doing it for the people in Felpham who supported our campaign with such good will and generosity, trusting us, and who have only received signs of contempt from the Blake Society and the Blake Cottage Trust.

I am doing this for myself, because I gave to the Cottage project, and to all the work I did for the Blake Society, my very best: unswerving commitment and devotion, inexhaustible work, my passion and my talent. Because this meant doing work to protect the legacy of an artist so important to me that, along with other couple of authors, was the only reason why I crossed the ocean to come and live in London (I was born in Mexico), a poet who inspired me to write a 900 pages novel that has been my most important piece of writing so far; because the Blake Cottage appeal, that was born to honour this poet and share his creative vision with others, has also been one of the most important projects in my life, yet by the end of it the sole mention of William Blake made my stomach hurt and I could not bear being near anything that had to do with his work – a kind of ‘artist orphanhood’ from which I am recovering only now, and the kind of instinctive reaction that people show when they have been considerably harmed. Because my work, generosity and good faith were also used and abused and the fruits of my work stolen; because I was viciously bullied; because specific people willingly harmed me as much as they could while the whole of the Blake Society Committee not only cowardly stood and watched, but in fact asked me to save the project’s and their own reputation. Because the whole horrid situation kept me scared and harmed for too long a time, and made me very ill. Because I had to leave the appeal so as not to end up in hospital, yet the Trustees that, even by their own admission, saw me serve the Society with impeccable integrity, hard work, commitment and good faith, didn’t care. Because by the time I left the appeal and the Blake Society I was almost broken. Because all the powerful people who even now are protecting the Blake Society and the Blake Cottage Trust and should know better have been warned about what happened yet have ignored the warnings, showing the same contempt and lack of respect for truth and for other human beings as Mr Heath and the pitiful Charities he runs. Because it is not right to harm a human being as I have been harmed, and it is not right to collude or condone it. Because if I saw another person being abused this way, I would stand up for them and would not keep quiet. So I am standing up for myself.

I am doing this because throughout the past three years running into four I have been telling the truth. I am therefore doing it for truth’s sake. Truth was important for William Blake.

#### **THE HUMAN SOCIETY**

Somewhere in this webpage there’s a quote about not believing someone who’s telling the truth being, next to killing her, the worst thing you can do to a person. My ordeal with the Blake Cottage appeal has brought the meaning of such words home to me in the form of a living nightmare. But it has also opened my eyes and taught me a lot about human society. Now that I’ve regained my strength, I can follow the unfolding of the story with great interest. I think it could have been material for another of Blake’s Prophetic Poems. Albion is indeed asleep, and we are often far too distant from divine humanity.

The principles of politics and power that Mr Heath invoked to justify his behaviour early in the campaign (alluded to in an earlier chapter of this testimony) have been the energy fuelling the development of events. What this means is that by now there are many, many people “doing politics” about something that is not theirs; people plotting, scheming and colluding in a cover up because of what they call “interests”. *None* of these people, with the sole exception of Mr Heath himself, ever worked for the Cottage appeal, and only a handful of them made any donation. None of them knows

anything at all about what the heart of the project was, and Blake's Cottage has not been an important part of their lives. None of them truly believed in this project. It meant nothing to them, apart from, for some, the prospect of power and prestige – which is, still, *meaning* nothing. None of them cares. And yet, they are all ignoring the people who conceived this project along with Mr Heath; the people who believed in it, and worked to make it happen; the people who do care, and have raised the alarm about all the wrongdoing that has been involved; those of us who have been taking the brunt of the harm done and know what is at stake. They are either actively scheming and doing politics, or else passively turning a blind eye, just to preserve some form of status quo. We're talking not only about the Blake Society and the Blake Cottage Trust, but also about famous patrons and a president, celebrities, powerful lawyers, cultural institutions and even a church, local authorities, the lot.

None of these people knows of the poignant messages that accompanied the donations that we received for this project; none of them knows, or cares to know, just how sickening it is to betray these donors and their generosity. But it *is* sickening, and therefore I have warned many people. I have wanted to stop people from giving more money and trust to a couple of Charities that have proved not to deserve their trust or to be willing, or capable, to take proper care of their money. I have also wanted to stop these Charities from abusing the good name of people with a high public profile who have supported them (learning in the process that for some such people being a patron, president or supporter of "good causes" is nothing but empty gestures to accumulate prestige, while they couldn't care less about what it is that they are actually supporting, as they steadily defend their ignorance instead.) The responses I have received from many of the people I've warned are of several kinds: to say how sorry they are to know things are so wrong, yet there's nothing they can do; to completely ignore me, without even bothering to ask for any evidence I had about what I was telling them, without even saying that they thought what I was telling them was untoward; or to acknowledge that what was happening was wrong (and this includes the whole of the Blake Society Committee at one point, as we will see shortly), and saying that therefore the best thing would be for me to try to save the appeal and the Society's reputation or, when they saw I couldn't stay there anymore, to say that I should then leave the appeal and keep my mouth firmly shut.

Some of the people I've warned know nothing of me; they don't know that I am a respected author in my country of origin, and far more important than that, that throughout my life I have been an individual respected for her uncompromising integrity. The Blake Society Committee knew this and in fact often praised me for the way in which I brought precisely that integrity into my work for the Society. Neither those who know me nor those who don't have had any reason to respond to my warnings with the contempt of silence, that implies the consideration that the person talking to them is not worth responding to (and some of them were very happy to engage in communication with me when the campaign was running). None of them has any right to negate a person who's going through the difficult task of warning others about somebody else's wrongdoing.

A name for such behaviour is fear. All these people are maybe afraid, some way or another. All these people seem to believe that reputations and the institutions some of them represent are more important than truth, and therefore more important than ethics. They may not be fully aware of it, they may be justifying their behaviour somehow, telling themselves this is "the way things are". All of them are busy people. And yet... I'm sure that William Blake deserves better than this.

On what all these people seem to agree is the fact that there are some kinds of truths that should not be told. A person can be slandered in private places (which is what the Blake Society is doing now regarding me), but unpleasant truths (such as cronyism involving the romantic interests of people in power) must never, *ever* be made public, and it doesn't matter if there is deceit of the public and actions bordering on the legally fraudulent involved. They seem to agree also on preserving the

status quo in what concerns sexism in our society, for it is clear that, had I been a man, I would have never received the treatment I have from all of them; or to say it differently: had Mr Heath been a woman, he would have never been allowed to get away with even a fraction of what he has done, with the collusion, through silence and/or involvement in the cover up, of them all.

Again, fear - but there is something else, something more primitive. It is the mechanism of bonding within the tribe that leads on its turn to scapegoating. The scapegoat is usually a person who tells a truth that threatens the tribe. The people and institutions I'm talking about have been very afraid of tarnishing their or others' reputations with a Blake Cottage scandal, or by making a stand. Some of them seem to be afraid of how their reputation will be affected if the public finds out that they supported a Charity that tricked them, placing a kind of superstitious faith in reputation as the very fabric of their reality. I've dared to speak out, to threaten that reality, therefore I ought to be sacrificed.

Indeed, since I started to raise the alarm, first within the Blake Society Committee in 2014, then publicly last year, I have had to inform people about very unpleasant things. And to be sure, I have on occasions been very distressed. I have been scared to see what has been going on, when we had such an enormous responsibility towards so many people, and with considerable amounts of money involved. But neither the unpleasant nature of what I said, nor my distress, were reasons to punish me. What was happening **was, and is**, very unpleasant. I have had more than enough legitimate reasons to be distressed, and I have dealt with them with an integrity and courage that I'm not sure many of these people, however illustrious, possess.

On the other hand, the Blake Society Committee witnessed how I was being directly harmed. They acknowledged it, yet when they saw I would speak out they gave a U-turn and decided to gang up against me, flagrantly contradicting themselves and following the lamentably human, morbid impulse to further victimize a victim, feeling, I suppose, that the communal harming of another while siding with those who hold power means security to the members of the group and therefore their own survival. Quite tribal. Fascinating, but not nice when the scapegoat is yourself.

None of these persons seems to have ever stopped to consider the fact that I've been speaking out because I was, and am, very worried, despite my expressing my concerns to all of them: I've been worried for the Cottage project, for its donors and all those who publicly endorsed it, for my own well-being, for the Blake Society, and even for Mr Heath, who has seemed bent on destroying his own work so recklessly. With astonishing irresponsibility, none of those protecting the Blake Society and the Blake Cottage Trust seems to be wondering whether if I actually have sound reasons to worry. And I do. So, again, when things get worse – as they inevitably will if Mr Heath and the Charities he runs aren't called to task – none of these persons will be able to claim that they have not been warned.

So much for human society.



For the Blake Society's newsletter in March this year, Mr Heath chose a curious collection of items. Some of those who know that something is wrong yet have chosen to ignore it and cozy up around the Blake Society are represented there. Yet more interesting is Mr Heath's choice of a couple of items about different forms of civil disobedience, as if somewhere in his mind he still believed that the Blake Society represents in any way William Blake's libertarian spirit. Surely a man who has appropriated a public project through dishonesty, abuse of power, deceit of the public, bullying and murky finances, as well as the Charities that collude with him, have stopped being members of the dissenting tradition! Particularly if in their infamy they shield behind the protection of one of the most powerful firm of

lawyers in this country, as they boasted themselves at their latest AGM: the same firm, apparently, that handles the private fortune of Tony Blair.

The last item in the newsletter is even more baffling. It's a cringe-making video produced by the University of Oxford to celebrate the International Women's Day. This depressing example of women patronising and infantilizing themselves, that shows a next to zero understanding of what is a dignified humanity, of whatever gender, is something odd to find in the BS newsletter, since it has nothing whatsoever to do with Blake. However, we can see women there telling each other that we should never allow men to bully us, so it is even more extraordinary to find this video being shared by a man who is capable of bullying people of whatever gender, but particularly adept at bullying and humiliating women.

Is Mr Heath cynical, or thoroughly confused? I believe that he's, tragically, both. In the past four years he has shown that there is no shortage of ill will and cynicism in him, but far too often he has turned things around this way, which makes one wonder: if he's accused of bullying he'll come up blaming others for doing precisely that; if his dishonesty, lack of ethics and respect for others, and his constant lying as he destroys a beautiful project are exposed, he'll put some message in the Blake Cottage Trust's webpage talking about truth, justice and beauty. If accused of stealing other people's work, he'll steal for the BCT's webpage the ideas and language of documents that I prepared for the Cottage campaign. He has even kept in that webpage the very last images by Blake that I chose to update our own page at the end of the campaign in 2014!

I do believe that this is partly the reflection of a thoroughly confused state of mind, a hall of distorted mirrors in which Mr Heath ends up seeing himself as if on the other side of his own actions. His confusion has confused us all.



Those who have been following this testimony must have realized that on many occasions throughout my work with him, I did believe in Mr Heath. I will never deny that. For years I thought that he had a subtle and insightful understanding about what William Blake's work means. I was seduced by, and grateful for, both the sophistication and the simplicity with which Mr Heath elicited beauty from Blake and shared it with others with great generosity, and seemingly moved by Blake's ideals of holding such beauty in our everyday life. I trusted him, and despite many conflicts I trusted him again and again, because very often he seemed to be worthy of human trust. I thought he had a beautiful mind.

It is tragic now to see how many of us trusted him with Blake's Cottage, how the Big Blake Project did all they could to trust him as well despite all the confusion in his way of working described in Chapter IV. So many of us trusted him unreservedly for years... He chose to squander all that trust. He proved to have no understanding of its value, or of the real possibility of goodness in this world, despite the fact that those of us who started the Blake Cottage appeal with him set out to work together for bringing a bit of beauty and goodness into a world in sore need of it. And this, beyond how infuriating his actions have been, is unbearably sad.

#### **SLANDER, AND CERTAIN KIND OF TRUTHS**

When I told Mr Heath that I would leave the Cottage appeal because I could no longer take the harm (to the project, to myself), during a baffling discussion that was everything but a dialogue, for a moment he tried to imply that I was leaving and had been upset, and misguided, for personal reasons. Equally, the Blake Society seems to be claiming now that I am speaking out because, as Treasurer Luis Garrido told me in an email last January, I have "resentment".

Their version of the story is that I am doing all this to have some kind of revenge on Mr Heath, and also on Ms Morgan, out of spite. The behaviour of all those people colluding in the cover up, or at least turning a blind eye, that I have mentioned above, the contempt implicit in the way some of them have chosen to ignore me, makes me suspect that the slandering has gone a long way. In this regard it is important to note that whatever the BS and BCT Trustees are saying among themselves and to others in order to justify their actions, has been behind my back, without giving me a chance to defend myself, despite the endless times that I have asked them to open up so that all of us involved in this issue could sit together and talk face to face, like decent human beings who have nothing to hide. Whoever has chosen to believe them has done so too without bothering to hear me out. All of them seem to agree that, in certain circumstances, it is OK to deceive the public, betray their generosity, and cause harm to innocent people, just to guarantee that no one will rock the boat.

Now what are those special circumstances? Which are the taboos in our society that make it unacceptable to tell the truth, but perfectly acceptable to slander and backstab the people saying it?

Some readers may have perceived already glimpses of something more than admiration from me for Mr Heath, when I describe the time when I thought he was worth trusting. They are right. A long time ago, Mr Heath and I were very close. And this is the sole offence for which I have been punished by the host of people mentioned in this chapter, many of them people who don't even know me. A particularly vicious kind of tribal behaviour, and not very Blakean.

When Mr Heath invited me to become a Trustee of the Blake Society, he chose not to inform me that he already had a lover in the Committee. It goes without saying that, had I known, I would have declined his invitation. However, I found out when I was already fully immersed in my work for the Society. And though many times I thought about resigning, I rebelled against the idea, because I loved my work in the Society, because I cared about Blake's legacy, and because, as far as I knew, the Blake Society was not the private property of Mr Heath, even if he sometimes seemed to forget. I guess therefore I am also being punished for not having left earlier; for having put aside the poisoned atmosphere of the Committee, however noxious it was for me, and having worked with passion, commitment and care throughout the structure of the Society, from organizing events and fund raising to my Secretarial work and up even to designing stationery and envelopes seals. I *cared*, and a dysfunctional Committee which, largely, seemed satisfied with remaining an amateur organisation forever, though they relied a great deal on my work and were always ready to sing my praises, now are happy to slander me because I've had the guts to say how things really are in the Blake Society, and because I've behaved with a degree of integrity that they can't even begin to understand.

To be fair to Mr Heath, it is also true that throughout the painful years that followed my realisation of just how enmeshed his personal life was into the fabric of the Blake Society, we both tried to rescue our friendship and the profound affection between us while trying to save everything that was of value in the work we did together, and though he went through that process in the same way that he seems to do everything else in his life – i.e., being generous and loyal with one hand, bullying and treacherous with the other –, he did try. For those attempts and what I learnt from him, I sincerely thank him. I also do know that the mess he had created within the Committee of the Blake Society cannot have been easy for him to negotiate.

To suggest that I am speaking out now out of resentment shows, to start with, a great ignorance of the human heart. It is hard enough to denounce anybody, as everyone in the Blake Society Committee have shown themselves by cowardly colluding in a cover up despite their many grievances against Mr Heath. Now do they have any idea of what it feels like to have to denounce the wrongdoing of someone you have truly loved? Lacking in imagination though they are, they *saw* me:

a woman on the verge of breakdown, terrified and heartbroken, trying to put things right and doing all in her power so that exposing Mr Heath wouldn't be necessary. They witnessed my perpetual good will, how much I tried over and over again to reconcile conflicts, to open a space for absolutely everybody – and this includes Ms Morgan – so that whatever solution we found to our work conflicts would be fair to all, so that we could all work things through together and be safe. They saw me collapsing as all my efforts failed. They praised me, thanked me, and witnessed quite a lot of harm being done to a fellow colleague and human being that they admired and were grateful to without batting an eyelid. And now, because I was ready to find reconciliation for work conflicts but would never be ready to admit unethical behaviour that meant deceit of our members, donors and supporters and gravely jeopardizing the beautiful project they all believed in, these people think I should be punished, and slandered. I don't know how they can sleep.

I am going to show in this testimony the evidence of how much I tried to save the Cottage appeal and the Blake Society in a way that was humane, with truth, with integrity and without putting anybody against the wall. I repeatedly opened the door to Mr Heath, to Ms Morgan, then to the Committee as a whole, for a dignified solution that would hold the integrity of the Cottage project as the priority. It is the evidence that I acted from the exact opposites of resentment: from forgiveness, and kindness.

#### **A TRIAL**

I return to the timeline of this testimony: when Mr Heath informed me, without giving me a chance to respond, of his decision of forcing Ms Morgan into the Cottage appeal, I pondered on what would be the best course of action.

I didn't walk out, on the one hand, because of the terrible injustice that would have meant for me: this was a project I believed in, that I had contributed to create, and on which I had already worked devotedly and extremely hard. The seriousness with which I was thinking about this project is reflected in several documents, many of them in the "Documents" section of this webpage, to which I have just added an email to Mr Heath of 2 July, prior to our launch of the campaign in Parliament, and which was the basis of the notes I made for that event: <https://blakecottage.files.wordpress.com/2016/06/some-thoughts-about-the-cottage.pdf>. So why should I step out just because the Blake Society's Chair had decided, again, to indulge in abuse of power? I knew that Ms Morgan had no interest in the project, that it was a whim, and that the whim had much to do with the fact that I had a leading position in the Cottage appeal. I was not ready to be trampled on like that.

On the other hand, there were much more serious considerations, and they had to do with responsibility. I was, along with Mr Heath alone, representing publicly the Blake Society in the running of a by now very public project. We were already receiving money and enormous support from quite a lot of people, and I had personally asked for the support of many of them, some of whom were publicly endorsing us. We were working in collaboration with the Big Blake Project who were doing an enormous amount of work on our behalf. There were articles in the press. We were being publicly endorsed by several people with a high public profile.

I knew that I had no chance to reason with Mr Heath about how inappropriate the imposition of Ms Morgan in the project was. He was moreover in his six-week retreat, which meant he would be even more inaccessible than usual. I felt that we were in a very delicate moment, crucial to the Cottage appeal yet with the Society's Chair absent, and that to go and raise the alarm with our passive Committee precisely then would only bring chaos. (In fact, and incredibly, considering what was at

stake at that moment, we didn't hold a single Committee meeting during almost the whole of the four most crucial months of the Cottage appeal.) As for the Big Blake Project, the problem was of too personal a nature that exposed inner failings within the Blake Society Committee, as to go and bother them with that.

I knew (and the way Mr Heath delivered the news of Ms Morgan's imposition corroborated this) that both of them favoured secrecy and the element of surprise whenever it was a matter of either inappropriate handling of Blake Society concerns, such as the Journal, or of doing harm to others – they actually seemed to favour the mixing of both –, and that an attempt at dialogue was not a possibility. In fact, Mr Heath never bothered to inform the Committee of his decision, and Ms Morgan's "participation" in the Cottage appeal was handled by them both as a secret. I did tell Mrs Christina Vinall, who knew the reasons why Ms Morgan was a Trustee. She said "Oh". So it wasn't until the time that things got very bad and I initially resigned from the Society months later (we will get there soon in this narrative), at the only meeting we had after the Chair had returned from his retreat up to the end of the Cottage appeal, that the Committee first heard about Ms Morgan's involvement. I am pretty sure also that Mr Heath never informed his co-campaigners in Felpham, the Big Blake Project, that there was purportedly a new member in the appeal team. It was, quite palpably, a secret, and I was left very much on my own to deal with the problem.

It was serious. The irregularity of Ms Morgan's involvement in the Blake Society was tolerable for a small literary society that had room for much amateur business, with a dysfunctional Committee of which she was absent enough not to be getting in the way, but we had seen already what had happened with more serious issues such as the Society's Journal. The following link leads to a file in the Documents section that presents a panorama of the irregularities surrounding it: <https://blakecottage.files.wordpress.com/2016/06/inconsistencies-and-lack-of-transparency-regarding-blake-society-journal.pdf> . Such things simply should not be allowed to happen to Blake's Cottage. I knew that Mr Heath could be reckless and irrational whenever Ms Morgan made her appearance, that there seemed to be things that he was "allowed" or "forbidden" to do and that he would indulge in whims, however irresponsible or however harmful. To have walked out and left the Cottage in their hands would have been utterly irresponsible of me.

Therefore I decided to try to turn things round. How? By bringing in the element of the open door. Thus far, and in spite of her several and unpleasant aggressions, personal and as a colleague, I had simply ignored Ms Morgan. I knew why she behaved the way she did, and that the mess that Mr Heath had caused by his constant mixing up of his personal life with his work around Blake was obviously painful for her too. So what about opening the door, welcoming her and hoping that straightforward work let all the nonsense go out of that door as well? I decided to do that. If they favoured secrecy, covert actions and working in the dark, rather than accepting their dynamics and being on the defensive, I'd offer them the chance of working with transparency, openly and beneath the sun, so to speak.

I still believed that we were creating a large and professional consortium of accountable individuals and organisations to run the Cottage if we succeeded in buying it. Therefore I was pretty sure that, should my invitation to open cooperation fail, such a Consortium would never allow Mr Heath and Ms Morgan to get away with the irresponsibility, whims and abuse of power that were rife in the Blake Society Committee. The Consortium would be able to stop all damage on its tracks, so I hoped that we could concentrate on what then was the most urgent priority: pull the Cottage campaign through, get the necessary funds, deliver what we had promised to the many donors and supporters we already had. Then the Consortium would be set in place and that would give no room whatsoever for lack of transparency or murky goings-on.

So I decided to give it a try. If I was naïve, if I failed to see that Mr Heath would not even consider to allow such a Consortium to exist, I apologize to donors and the public. All I can say is that, standing between a rock and a hard place, in a moment when the Cottage campaign needed all our concentration, that was the only feasible solution I could think of.

Therefore, when on 29 July 2014 Mr Heath asked me to send to Ms Morgan the list of ideas for rewards for the crowdfunding appeal that we had been all working hard on since the project had started, on which we had agreed we'd keep on working together before he broke his fateful news, and to which I had added new ideas just the week before, I sent to them both the following email:

Hi Tim, and welcome Paige to the Cottage project.

Attached is the draft list of rewards. It includes all the rewards that had been thought of during the past months of work, plus new ones added last week.

This is a very beautiful and inspiring project --lots of hard work, thought and devotion springing from an ideal that has been held and discussed in fact for years, are already behind it. It is most Blakean in spirit, working despite many obstacles towards that ideal, to offer to others something --sanctuary no less-- that transcends us and may bear many fruits, fruits that we may never even get to see ourselves, since the Cottage will hopefully be there, if we succeed, for generations to come. This devotion and clarity of purpose have been nurturing the project so far. I'm sure we have it in us to take care so that it will keep on nurturing it to the end.

Thus started my trust offensive. I was hoping that good faith and undeserved trust would wake both Mr Heath and Ms Morgan into responsibility, into respect for work and respect for others.

Ms Morgan, though making no comments about my invitation to honour all the work done and the projects' aims, responded innocently and cooperatively enough.

She didn't have a clue, though, of what the Cottage project was: she didn't know the work we had done before or what we were doing at the moment; she didn't even know what our aims were. Therefore, and since the Chair had very much washed his hands off the matter sheltered in his retreat, from where he communicated only sporadically, I had now to brief Ms Morgan about absolutely everything she didn't have a clue of. It wasn't the best moment for an induction course – not with our deadlines so close, with the Chair absent and when I had already so much on my plate –, but I was determined to keep peace, appreciated Ms Morgan's initial spirit of cooperation, and patiently explained to her everything I could. She had some good practical ideas about pricing and shipping of rewards items and I appreciated that too. It was a great relief to be working in a climate of cooperation... a climate that lasted exactly six days.

Guesswork around Mr Heath's proverbial ambiguity and the work agreements we had made about our own responsibilities for the project pointed in the direction of assigning Ms Morgan to contribute to the list of crowdfunding rewards and implementation of their creation and distribution, work on the section of the Blake Society's webpage dedicated to the Cottage, as well as the technicalities behind the setting up of the Just Giving account (for which the Chair and I had already cleared the paperwork) and the Indiegogo page. After all, her sole credentials for this project seemed to be her having supposedly "studied" crowdfunding campaigns for four years, and her being savvy with all things related to the digital reality. Though I was bent on my trust offensive, I was not willing to let someone who had no knowledge of the purposes or indeed ideals of the project to interfere in the contents of our communications with the public. Therefore I smelled trouble when, after sending for the Chair's approval a draft letter for inviting artists to create rewards for the crowdfunding appeal, he, from his retreat haven, wrote back:

Thanks for the draft letter.

I am copying to Paige for advice because what goes in the letter needs to echo what's on the Cottage page of the website. And the Cottage page needs expanding from a holding page into a substantive vision.

I didn't believe Ms Morgan was in a position to advise about something she didn't understand. But I didn't want to fight, so I let it be and on 3 August responded, pointing as tactfully as I could to what we actually needed to say and to what had to be improved in our webpage, in the hope that she'd be able to work with that :

Thank you Tim.

The letter to artists should be a bit more personal than the webpage, and it would be best if it did not quite repeat what the latter says (they'd be guided to it via the link anyway).

Yes, I think the webpage needs to be a bit less stark. We have the leaflet, that went already through so many revisions, to work even more from; the section "The Vision" is truly important. To go on playing with "Where shall we take our stand..." etc. and perhaps more images would give it more of a soul.

I was thinking also that it was important to say in the webpage that we are launching the crowdfunding campaign in September.

Then on 4 August I saw with dismay that Ms Morgan had already set up the Just Giving page (with a technical mistake, as we'd find out months later when some donors could not send their donations; a mistake that I had to put right, when Ms Morgan had already fled the scene). The text in it couldn't be more opposed to all our carefully thought presentation of our project. It said something along the lines of "Help us turn Blake's Cottage into a public building". I was puzzled, wondered if it had been suggested by Mrs Searle of the Big Blake Project because they were keen on creating a visitor centre, but the Chair and I had been adamant that the main purpose for the Cottage was to be a space for creation. We didn't want it to be just another literary house, we didn't want to mislead the public, and to say that what we were doing was in order to turn the Cottage into a public building was misleading, uninspiring and, in fact, the opposite of what we had so painstakingly been trying to articulate for months. I wrote to Ms Morgan, again, as tactfully as I could.

And that was the end of the initial spirit of cooperation. Ms Morgan's insecurity assumed the well-known form of aggressive self-assertion. She defended herself by saying that she was drawing on Mr Heath's ideas for grants applications, which she had mechanically taken out of context. She had not even bothered to look at the initial leaflet that we had circulated to launch the appeal! I tried, again, to explain to her what we were doing. I sent her the leaflet. Rather than trying to understand what we had done, and why, she tried to assert herself by raising objections that showed just how much she was *not* behind this project, and how little she understood what we were trying to do. In her eagerness to outsmart me, she didn't seem to realize that she was raising objections to excerpts from the leaflet that were in fact not written by me, but by Mr Heath, and to do so she resorted to the kind of puerile aggressiveness that was usually behind her attempts at asserting herself, with sentences such as,

I just want to make sure that people who are new to the campaign can learn what we mean by that phrase. \*I\* don't know what you mean by it -- and I have a PhD in 18th century literature and am on the Executive Committee of the Blake Society!).

I didn't respond. One thing was to give a chance to the Blake Society Chair's lover to understand our project and learn to work on it. A very different one was to waste our time, with all the work to be

done and deadlines looming ahead of us, in dealing with Ms Morgan's aggressive insecurity (in the following chapters the reader will see how spectacularly it was manifested months later) and holding pointless discussions about a project she knew nothing of. I had witnessed already far too often in the Blake Society Committee how she wasted our time by trying to protect herself to mask her inefficiency. It was an unprofessional way of moving forward, so I'd draw a line.

On 6 August the Chair deigned to come to London from his retreat for a Cottage work meeting with a potential supporter (apart from the day already mentioned when he came for Prof Phillips' event, this was the only time that he did so during those six weeks in which the supposed leader of the Cottage appeal disappeared, while the Big Blake Project and I kept on doing the work). After the others left I raised the subject about Ms Morgan. In keeping with the behaviour of a man who abuses power in order to force his lover into a project, his response was to disown his own ideas in order to support Ms Morgan. Never mind that we had devoted endless hours to articulate our vision for the project; he threw all that down the drain to say that it was OK to say "Help us turn Blake's Cottage into a public building". He knew I was right to oppose it, and proved so by discretely changing later the text in the Just Giving button (that changed several times until the Blake Cottage Trust opened its own account) to something closer to what I had suggested and that reflected the purpose of our campaign, but on the day of the meeting he presented a cynical front, said that Ms Morgan had to be in the campaign because she knew so much about crowdfunding and was so generous that she even gave money to some campaigns. He also said (exactly the same words he used when he had earlier invited Mr Henry Eliot to the campaign) that she was "a good administrator". Then he made an inappropriate joke in which he seemed to be pointing at his predatory prerogative as the Chair of the Blake Society.

I told him that the nonsense should stop immediately; that going down that route would jeopardize all the work we had already done and the future of the project, and warned him that I wouldn't work if they were unwilling to take things seriously. Despite his nonchalant, cynical attitude that day, he must have listened, and must have warned Ms Morgan too, because things changed. The campaign continued, with Mr Heath absconded in his retreat and keeping in touch only when he felt like it. Ms Morgan and I went through another period of collaborative work in a climate of seeming cooperation and good will. Alas, it would also be extremely short-lived. After that, the whole campaign made a dangerous dive into hell.

What hell looks like at the heart of the Blake Society will be the subject of the following chapters.