

What Happened with the Blake Cottage Appeal

Chapter VI.

I am dedicating this chapter and the next one to show how work on the Cottage appeal kept going, under the pressure of our close deadlines, while the Blake Society’s Chairman, Tim Heath, was in his six-week retreat, and how the experiment of working with Ms Paige Morgan, who was in the USA and whom Mr Heath had imposed on the project due to their personal relationship, unfolded, until the appeal was nearly destroyed.

As seen at the end of Chapter V, some progress had been made in the sense of an atmosphere of open collaboration. Ms Morgan was still clueless about the project, which meant quite some waste of time in having to brief her, but she showed a disposition to learn. I was aware of how difficult it must have been for her to be trying to join a project in which she found herself out of her depth, in her circumstances, and following the lead of someone of whom she had been very jealous (jealous enough as to irrupt in the Cottage project in the first place). After all, she had had herself her fair share of humiliations at the hands of Mr Heath, and she too had been hurt by his reckless involvement of his personal life in the Blake Society. I appreciated her seeming efforts at friendliness and willingness to work, and on my turn I gathered all the patience I had and made every effort to make her and her ideas feel welcome.

On 16 July 2014 Mr Heath sent me the following email:

This is a test of a new email address hello@blakesociety.org
It should forward automaticallly to Secretary@ and Chair@

I asked him what it was for and he responded:

The email is for setting up a Just Giving account.

On 3 August I asked:

Have you been receiving emails to hello@blakesociety.org when donations come through Just Giving? I haven't so I wonder if that email is still working.

He responded only:

The hello address is for enquiries, donations are recorded through reports.

I found it strange that we were not receiving any query there, when so many people were asking about the Cottage through other means. It is worth bearing in mind that Mr Heath never allowed me to have access to the records of neither our Just Giving nor Indiegogo accounts.

It is also important for the reader to remember this email address, since what happened with it later on is evidence of the corruption of the campaign that Mr Heath and Ms Morgan incurred in.

Another element worth remembering to understand the unfolding of events and the degree of bullying involved is the situation I was in while working on the Blake Cottage appeal: I was ill, dealing with constant flare-ups of some serious chronic health conditions. I was also under tremendous financial stress and accommodation problems. The Chair knew all this. He knew that work on the Cottage appeal, and on my own writing, was helping me keep my optimism. However, when Mr Heath unleashed the severe episode of bullying after he had forced Ms Morgan into the appeal, his first

weapon was to suggest that I was angry at him not because he was incurring in unacceptable and irresponsible behaviour, but because my trials were making me “unbalanced” – a classic bullying tactic, as we all know. I am copying here some excerpts of an email I sent to him on 30 July 2014, that showed my commitment and just how important the Cottage project was for me; it may also help the reader see just how vicious it was of Mr Heath both to do what he was doing and to use my hardship as a means for bullying me.

I saw *In Lambeth* today and I enjoyed it a lot, found it very moving. I talked to the actors afterwards and they are keen to help with the Cottage campaign. [. . .]

The play is beautiful, painful too, and it raises many important questions that have always been there and will always be, with no clear answer at all. And it made me think about the Cottage (at some point the Blakes' garden is actually compared to a sanctuary by Paine).

[. . .] the play helped me remember that the questions arising from this situation are in fact universal, no prerogative of mine, that there is still the chance of choice in our life, no matter how constrained we feel -- the choice at least of dignity, of having a voice. [. . .] More and more I feel that dignity sustaining me: that I am a writer and I never stop, no matter what. [. . .] The Cottage project feels like strongly adding to that sense of dignity: to be working on this, trying to restore to the world a space of the far greater dignity (not to talk of course of genius!) of an artist who struggled so very much while asking all the important questions, including the unanswerable ones, with the poet's prophetic voice.

I came out of the play feeling even happier that I can work on something like this, trying to raise £600,000 to buy the Cottage where one of the world's most inspired and radical artists lived and created while being myself without a proper home and in danger of losing even that. I felt that the efforts put by a handful of people with little resources and complicated lives into such an endeavour matter very much indeed, that this is the kind of work not measured by wages, nor even by standards of success, that can contribute even in the humblest measure to make of this a better world -- a work of devotion and integrity, to offer something to a world that is all torn by war and grief and greed and sheer banality, and honour thus the spirit of William Blake, no matter if we feel we'll drop dead soon by the weight of our own struggles. [. . .] So let's hold on to that in trying to secure the Cottage. I think Blake would be grateful.

In an email of 7 August I kept Mr Heath updated about the progress of work with Ms Morgan, aiming at full transparency but also at consistency. I was worried about Ms Morgan's lack of knowledge of the project if she was to be in charge of our webpage. I also asked him about the best way to communicate while he was in his retreat, for though I wanted to respect his time there, there was much work to be done and we simply could not afford for him to be disengaged for six full weeks.

I will send Paige the document we worked through with Henry as an inner circulation vision statement, where the purposes of the Cottage are clearer as that may help her with the webpage. I'll also give her the names of those who already support the campaign, remind her about mentioning the crowdfunding campaign and the possibility of including in our programme the house of refuge for persecuted writers. Let's make sure please that we are agreed on what the webpage says. [. . .]

Finally, I am not sure what is the best way to deal with so much work while you are at the retreat for a great deal needs your approval. I will try not to ask too many things but there will still be emails coming and going, answers needed. Yet I do hope that you manage to coordinate your days so that you devote to the Blake Society only a part of the day.

So on the same day I sent to Ms Morgan the promised material, with copy to the Chair:

I am sending you some information that may be useful for the webpage.

We have the core of what we want to say, and that is the leaflet that can be adapted in a way that functions for the page. That was thoroughly worked on through several versions, has circulated widely, has managed to get people interested and has had a good response.

But perhaps it is helpful if you take a look at a document regarding the vision for the Cottage that Henry, Tim and I worked on in June. It was meant for inner circulation [. . .] Of course much of it would not be appropriate for the webpage but it may help to clarify things regarding the project's purpose.

(There are other documents: earlier vision statements, notes for the Parliament launch etc if you need more info, but perhaps this is enough for the moment. Later perhaps if we open a blog we can write up the different aspects we talked about at the launch event.)

It is important that we mention that we will be launching the crowdfunding campaign in September.

It is also important to mention that part of the Cottage's programme may include a space to function as a House of Refuge for persecuted writers (as stated in the attached document), who would then engage in the Cottage's outreach literary activities.

Finally, let's mention those persons who are already endorsing the campaign: [. . .]

I hope this helps. Please let us know your ideas.

She responded:

Excellent, Adriana -- thank you for this, and your follow up email. I'll work it in, and have it up in the next 24 hours or so.

Meanwhile, I had devoted a weekend to put together my ideas for a first draft of the script for the video to accompany the Indiegogo appeal, and had sent it to Mr Heath. He said that it was complicated, without bothering to say why or where, and that I should try another version (in a phone call he had said, nonchalantly, that working on the first draft he was rejecting had "given me something to do", as if I didn't have enough.) At the same time, he wasn't answering to several questions I had about the campaign, including answers we had to agree on for several people's communications. So on 8 August I wrote again:

I can answer to [. . .], I just want to make sure that we do not duplicate the response. If you happen to see this email now (quarter to 4) let me know if you prefer to answer yourself. Otherwise I will.

Let me know any comments or answers to my emails from yesterday.

Regarding the script, you said it was complicated. Remember that it is a first draft from scratch without knowing exactly how many actors we may have, whom, etc.. We simply had to start somewhere. When you have time make your suggestions so that we can work on it as we agreed.

Have you written to [. . .] about this yet?

Finally, how long should we wait for a message from [. . .] before we try to contact [. . .]?

This were pressing matters – we had to have the crowdfunding page, and the video, ready for 19 September, and raise all the money by 31 October. My email was sent after Mr Heath's visit mentioned in Chapter V from his retreat to London, when I had warned him about the kind of nonsense that I would not engage in regarding Ms Morgan's participation. I knew that when he went into silent-mood it could last for ages, and I had the precedent of the episode in which he and Mr Henry Eliot had been working on the Cottage behind my back. I worried that his silence might imply he was planning to do the same now with Ms Morgan, so I wrote again:

I have invited [. . .] to support the campaign [. . .]

I am still concerned with the script --and the lack of a filmmaker, as the PR meeting did not help in that direction. Do consider what I said yesterday about my first draft. If we are not going to have Blake and/or Catherine as characters, just a voice-over ([. . .] perhaps) I can try another simpler draft in that direction, but I need to know what you think, we need to get on working on this as we agreed. [. . .]

I called you earlier because you have not acknowledged a single work communication from me since Wednesday --some of the things I've been asking or commenting are important.

Is anything the matter?

[. . .] If you need me to be clearer, I am trying to tell you that things can really be fine if we want them to be so, that there is no need for conflict, and that the fruits of our work can really be meaningful. But we need to be honest and we need to know that we are communicating.

One of my emails yesterday mentioned my difficulty in finding the right balance so as not to disrupt you but at the same time not blowing it if I do things on my own. I truly wish the Cottage campaign had not overlapped with the retreat, I'm truly sorry, but time is pressing and a few brief signs of life, and answers as to how to proceed in concrete matters are necessary. Would you want me to work more on my own and just give you a brief at the end of the week? Then I will do that but *that* brief will need to be acknowledged. Other things that are more pressing and need our collaboration, like the script, we'll have to deal with with more frequency. So please tell me what do you need so that we can do things right, while your retreat is fruitful and I do not go under unnecessary stress. [. . .] I hope we're not being locked into yet another lack of communication trap. I hope we can work together, for we believe in what we do and what we do matters.

I received no response.

Then on 11 August Ms Morgan got in touch, sending me her draft for the webpage that she had promised to have ready in 24 hours four days before. It was a kind email, thoughtful and in a spirit of cooperation. I was relieved.

Her document though, was a mess. It was not really a draft, but two pages with copy and paste excerpts from previous working documents that I had sent her. It was worrying that she had mixed up a document aimed for internal circulation among the campaigners as information for the public, instead of using the document from which she actually should have drawn the material that we had created months before, and though she added two useful paragraphs about the Blake Society's work and context for what the "dissenting imagination" was, the rest of the document was not a draft but questions to me.

The document that she would supposedly create, therefore, still had to be written from scratch. And it was urgent. That night I spent some two hours creating the document, answering to her questions, explaining to her why an internal document should not be the contents of the webpage... I decided to do this kindly. Again, I considered the difficulty of her own position. I knew she was insecure, and she had seemingly laid down her arms and truly want to help. I made my edits as tactfully as I could. I praised the two ideas that she had contributed and did my very best to make her feel welcome, encourage her and give her confidence, rather than rubbing in her face how useless her document was. I sent her my notes for the launch in Parliament so that the purposes of the project became clearer to her. Anyone with a forensic mind that's interested can see my edits to that document. I don't include it here because it's a confusing amalgam of scratched-out paragraphs, inserts and comments, riddled as it is with track changes. The only thing that Ms Morgan needed to do then was to accept the changes, and the document would be ready. I had made her work for her.

I was happy that it was so easy to do so with such good will. I was also relieved to have finished the job off, because it was urgent and because we couldn't risk a slovenly presentation of the project to the public. I sent her the revised document attached to the following email:

Thank you so much for this. It will really help to hold all the information as a whole, and the part of history that puts the dissenting imagination in context is quite relevant and makes things much clearer.

I send you the document with suggestions (most of them integrating the info in the leaflet). Comments are in bold and highlighted in grey.

I am sorry if I was not very clear before, that I believed the core contents was already in the leaflet and the other document was for internal circulation and I hope I haven't made you waste time, but I think it is good that we share that document so that we all have things clearer. Your questions help with that too, we will have to bear them in mind as the project goes along.

I am also attaching the notes that I made for the launch in Parliament. Perhaps later we could add a bit of each section of our presentation, with these and Tim's and Henry's notes brushed up in tabs within the page, but if meanwhile my notes are helpful in any way take a look at them.

It is a bit of a drag to have all this coming and going of documents but it is also very helpful for us to clarify what we want even to ourselves, and your template is definitely going in the right direction.

So I think if there is no great discrepancy with my suggestions and comments and Tim is happy too with the overall contents, just work around this as you think best and go for it.

Let me know if you have more questions.

Hope this helps!

Ms Morgan answered with an email with some questions, and thanking me and saying that she might not send me the final document that night because there were power cuts where she was. I sent her a friendly email to put her at ease:

I'm glad it helped and don't worry, there's no rush, we can build things up little by little this month towards the core of the campaign in September. [. . .] And last night I forgot to add in my comments that most important thing, which is precisely to say that in mid September the crowdfunding mentioned in the body of the text will start, and to make that really prominent.

This was 12 August, we had a little more than a month to formally launch the campaign, but Ms Morgan must have understood my "there's no rush" in a quite ample manner, because **I never heard from her again**. She never bothered to accept or even reject the changes; she simply disappeared, in that whimsical manner of working of hers that I was already familiar with in the Blake Society. In the end, as the reader will see, I ended up accepting my own track changes and that was the document that appeared in our webpage.

Meanwhile, I kept on working on the appeal. I had contacted a potential donor from a family trust with an interest in Blake. I had a fruitful conversation with this person who kindly gave me a couple of hours of her time, but she had questions that needed urgent answers. I called Mr Heath to ask for his assistance as the potential donor had made clear that she wanted those answers soon so that she could talk with the other Trustees. I received no answer from Mr Heath. On 14 August I wrote to him to inform him again about my meeting and asked him how would it be less disruptive for his retreat that I communicated with him: through email or phone? I sent him a text message too in case he didn't see the email since the internet connection at his retreat was unreliable.

My health was still fragile. On top of my chronic conditions (I had recently been to A&E with stroke-like symptoms), I was developing asthma that went undiagnosed for a year and left me exhausted. I was working very hard. I had too much on my plate, including preparing one of the events I organized for the Blake Society on September (an event at the Zoo with children from Kids Company, reading "The Tyger" to the tigers"), and I needed to get work done with some fluidity so that things didn't accumulate. Mr Heath knew all this.

He responded to past 11.00 pm with a strange two-line email in which he seemed to be disparaging either the potential donor, or her concerns. So I wrote to him:

It was an important conversation with several points I need to discuss with you. I have been trying to communicate since the afternoon, now I will sleep if I may. [. . .] I wrote this afternoon to let you know about something important for the Cottage. I needed your assistance. You said not a word nor answered to my calls. It was important that we talked today. It is work, something we believe in and that is an enormous challenge so we need to communicate well.

I am doing all I can to respect your retreat. But I have a life too, my own schedules and needs and other projects, I too need to organise my time. I am working on this, just as yourself, extremely hard every single day. You know I'm struggling hard for my survival as well, and I have not been feeling well at all since the day I was in A&E. I am not complaining: I am doing this because I want to, it is making me very happy and hopeful to work for the Cottage, but I need to know I am not isolated, and be sure that me and my work are respected, all the time, not whimsically one day then ignored the day after.

I do not want to fight Tim, we are doing important work for a very beautiful project. But I am tired and being ignored annoys me a lot, in this particular case it will mean accumulating things to do that I might have started to get clear today had you been accessible. May we talk tomorrow morning and I tell you what happened? At 12.30 I'll leave for a meeting with the girl coordinating the Tyger workshop, then my afternoon will be complicated...

The following day Mr Heath called me. He told me off for wanting to answer to people too quickly and said that the potential donor could wait. I didn't agree on that and I found it strange that, with the extremely tight deadline that we had to raise the funds for the Cottage, and our agreement on how useful it would be to have some substantial amount already raised before the launch of the crowdfunding appeal, Mr Heath was so offhand about this opportunity, now that someone had shown real interest. I'm not sure whether if Mr Heath was behaving like this because he had already decided to do what he would do very soon and therefore a potential donor found by me, thanks to the generosity of one of my contacts, should be treated with contempt (in a previous chapter we have seen how he had the same attitude regarding a speaker I had found for our Annual Lecture), because the potential donor had mentioned that one of her fellow Trustees had doubts about the Blake Society because of its lack of seriousness when he had submitted an article for the Journal, or simply because he was, again, confused.

In any case, we managed to get through some of my questions. Not all of them though. Mrs Searle from the Big Blake Project had been writing to us with several questions and proposals. I wanted to know who was going to respond to her so that our emails were not replicated, and Mr Heath was not answering to that. I wrote to him:

Thanks Tim for calling earlier, and sorry for the impatience.

I think I got annoyed because my initial email was careful to say: something important, what is less disruptive *for you*, call or email? I was trying to respect your retreat *and* convey something I thought urgent.

So if when I do that you just text quickly, "call you at X time or day", or "email details", then you won't be much disrupted and I'll know my concerns are not ignored. Do that if you want only in the evenings, but if the matter seems urgent (at least to me) not so late it seems as if it's passed you by. Can we do that if something like this comes up again?

There's a bit of stress on us so simple codes like this may help make it less.

Let me know if I deal with Rachel's email --which I'd do at some point during today or this evening, my day is complicated.

The following weekend was devoted to write a second version of a script for the crowdfunding video (it's also in the Documents section of this webpage: <https://blakecottage.files.wordpress.com/2016/06/first-draft-second-version-script.pdf>). I was also working, as we had agreed, on the proposed text for the Indiegogo page. I sent all this to Mr Heath on 17 August:

Here's a draft for a different version of the script. A few points:

- It has an intro and part I and II - I found it difficult to work on completely separate scripts.
- I have looked at the Indiegogo appeals with most donations - videos are indeed longer than 1.40 m. It would be very hard to convince people to give us money for this and explain who Blake was in such a short time. This script I calculate may last 4 m.
- I have not made any attempt at all to replicate the language of the campaigns I've seen. They vary wildly and each is appealing to the people that will get to see it through the networks they choose, so I am still bearing in mind who we're hoping to talk to through our own networks.
- I had problems to insert suggested images (I've been working on the small computer all weekend). We can leave that for when the script is ready.
- The text that follows the film in most campaigns is very similar to their script. I am working on that too, and there we may have space to add some quotes.

I had no response. Mrs Searle kept on writing to us in the meantime. She too had proposals for the video and had found a filmmaker, so on 18 August I asked Mr Heath whether if he wanted me to meet with them. Time was pressing. He called me then, not to answer to my questions but just to ask what was happening with the text that Ms Morgan was supposedly working on, why it wasn't yet on the webpage. I explained to him that I hadn't heard from her since I sent her my revision, so he asked me to send it to him. On 20 August I forwarded to him my last emails to Ms Morgan that she had left unanswered:

This is the last email I sent to Paige re the webpage. As I said there, there is no need of pressure to have the whole page ready right now but two things are of essence:

To mention now the crowdfunding campaign to be launched next month, and to mention who endorses it (she has the list) I asked you earlier if we can mention [. . .]. Otherwise if we direct someone to the page now, it looks as something very small, not too much in the way to success if they then go to Just Giving and it looks like all we're holding onto.

I'll forward you in a moment the other email with the corrections.

Followed by an email with the document in question attached:

And this is the one with the corrections, hope you can open the files.

I hadn't touched our section for the Cottage in our webpage yet, that looked sad indeed, because that was supposed to be Ms Morgan's job and I didn't want to create a conflict. However, there were these crucial bits of information that were urgent and I was getting worried. We'll hear more about this later. For quite a while, the webpage would still remain intact, the work done on the document untouched, and Mr Heath was not responding to my questions, or those of Ms Searle about the film. On 22 August I wrote to him to tell him we needed to get back to the Big Blake Project. I was by then walking on shards, since Mr Heath seemed to be in one of his moods of silence and inaccessibility in which contradicting him might result in conflict:

Should I tell her we're working on it and will contact her later? Send me instructions - if you're silent by afternoon I'll assume you agree and will write to her.

Hope you're well and enjoying things there.

This was his response:

Dear Adriana,

To let yourself be driven by other people's emails leads only to a false path. Relax, have faith, do not presume on my silence. I will speak to you later today.

I had no idea what he meant by being driven by other people's emails: those "other people", the Chair and I were co-campaigners for a public project of which he insisted on calling himself a leader, we had pressing deadlines and he was not communicating with us. I responded:

Where on Earth does this come from, Tim?

. . . I had answered to you as I think you deserve but it seems wrong to me to write in anger so I did not send you that. You are in a retreat, a space supposedly conducive to some peace and reflection.

I am trying to live in peace as well. And things here are extremely hard, I am living through very hard days, very trying conditions so I do not want to make the mistake of misjudging your email as I believe you misjudged mine.

Please read my email again, then read yours. Then think. I'll do the same, will try to let the anger pass, then we can talk later if you want.

Just one thing I'd ask you to bear in mind - that if there is not going to be acknowledgement, and gratefulness, for the work I am doing right now in such difficult circumstances (mine own and the difficult communication while you're away) I will simply stop. I simply cannot be stretched any farther.

While all this was going on, I still was trying to gain access to the Cottage. Yes, you read well. Despite all my work for the Cottage appeal and the Society, I had never been to Blake's Cottage. Not once. At the beginning of the appeal the other people we had invited to be part of the consortium had asked to visit as well and Mr Heath had said a visit would be arranged soon, but it never materialized.

Since I joined the Blake Society Committee I had wanted to see the Cottage and had asked Mr Heath to either invite me along when he visited the then owner, Mrs Heather Howell, or to put me in touch with her telling her I wished to visit. I thought that as a Trustee of the Blake Society Mrs Howell would find it less intrusive, as she was by then frail. Mr Heath's change of subject – not even refusal – every time I mentioned the subject stopped me from approaching Mrs Howell directly; I found it humiliating to be by then not only a Trustee of the Blake Society but its Secretary and having to approach Mrs Howell as part of the general public because the Chair refused to introduce us despite his being often in touch with her. As would be the case with the whole Cottage later, it seemed that Mr Heath believed that contact with the then owners of the place was somehow his prerogative. When we started the campaign I told him that had to change, that I should be able to visit the Cottage if only to be able to tell the public what it looked like as I worked in the campaign. By then Mrs Howell didn't live in the Cottage anymore; the keys were in the hands of the property's managers and only Mr Heath could tell them who was "allowed" to visit. He agreed at last with me, and yet refused to organize a visit for me (i.e, simply telling the property managers that I would be there). This situation continued until the day that he needed for someone to accompany a journalist for the appeal (the reader will find about that later). This was a journalist in a hurry. So, though I dedicated to the Blake Cottage appeal so much of my work, my energy, my life, I've only been in the Cottage once, for a 20 minute visit with a journalist in a rush. I hope this helps the reader understand the extent to which Mr Heath has always believed that Blake's Cottage belongs to him only.

On 26 August 2014 I reminded him again about the need to arrange my visit in an email in which I also updated him about my work on the appeal and new contacts I had found, who were potentially willing to help. I had been asking him also whether if he had news from the Heritage Lottery Fund: we had applied for a grant that would allow us to set up the consortium to run the Cottage. He didn't respond to any of my questions, just wrote two days later to say:

The HLF emailed to say they have posted a bundle of documents confirming the grant - and how to claim it - to the Church.

I had also been telling him, on the couple of phone conversations we had had, that work was accumulating as our deadline to launch the crowdfunding appeal got nearer. I still hadn't heard from him regarding the plans for the video or the two versions of a script that I had sent him, on which we were supposed to be working together while he was on his retreat. I told him that as soon as he came back from his retreat we needed to have an urgent meeting, to which he agreed. I was hoping that meanwhile he had responded to the Big Blake Project, since he had so curtly "instructed" me not to do it myself. I didn't want to tell them unreliable information, I needed to know what was happening with our work and the Chair's lack of engagement made it impossible to know.

At that time, my work for the Cottage appeal involved doing research to try to find more potential donors, contacting those potential donors and potential supporters (dozens of emails per day), going to collect our post every other day from St James's Church in Piccadilly to see if we had more donations or correspondence related to the appeal, making deposits of the donations in the bank, keeping a record of them, writing letters to each individual donor who gave by cheque on stationery that I had designed... In short, apart from campaigning I was also doing all the secretarial work related to the appeal. I was also working on the preparation of our Tyger event.

All this time, Ms Morgan continued being disappeared.

My own circumstances continued being pressing. To his email of 28 August I replied:

I went yesterday to collect the post and it had not arrived yet. Did they tell you more details? This is good news anyway, no matter how much they gave us.

I don't think I can pick it up tomorrow (and I can't today), though I may try after a CAB meeting and if I'm feeling well. Life here very difficult and in a sort of emergency state, I'll tell you on your return -- the BS will have to bear with me.

However, because I knew it was a matter of urgency, I did collect the letter after that CAB meeting, and it was great news: we had received the HLF grant. I was of course overjoyed, so I texted the Chair immediately. He didn't deign to respond, not even to say "thank you". It was a Friday and he was, at long last, returning from his retreat that weekend. In my text message I had also reminded him about our work meeting; on the phone we had agreed that it would take place as soon as he came back. He didn't respond to that either.

I still didn't know if he had responded to the Big Blake Project about the video or when we were going to continue work on my scripts. **It was 29 August. The crowdfunding appeal would supposedly be launched on 19 September.** So I wrote to him to ask if he had received my text with the good news; reminding him of the need to respond to Mrs Searle's email, who was again trying to get in touch with us, and reminding him that:

. . . I don't do downright rudeness, nor is it wise to alienate through rudeness the local people so I suggest that we do answer to her.

There's a lot to coordinate now both for the campaign and the BS but I can't think at all this evening anymore-- a trying day, [. . .] and don't feel well so I'll leave my brain to recover. You too take your return easy if you can and want, but give signals of life if possible just to make sure I'm talking to someone and that he knows about the HLF, whose letter this humble Secretary collected today after receiving his email.

I received no response. I didn't hear from the Chair at all that weekend, nor did the Big Blake Project. The chance for us to receive support from the potential donor I had been in touch with had been blown by the Chair's lack of prompt communication. I was ill, and exhausted. On the evening of

Monday 1st September there would be a Blake Society meeting focused exclusively on the Tithe Grant, for which I had also been doing my bit. I decided not to go, the whole issue of work for the Blake Society and the Cottage was starting to seem like a farce to me. I needed to engage the Chair in our work for the Cottage but I was angry and didn't want to discuss that while other Trustees were trying to work on a different project. Then I received an email from Mrs Searle, to which I have alluded on Chapter IV. She was desperate to hear from us, she feared we had decided not to go ahead altogether and had tried to find me through LinkedIn. So I wrote to her, at last.

It was hard to write that email: I didn't know what to say. I sensed that something very bad was going on but didn't know what it was exactly, nor where we were standing in regards to the appeal, so I told her that I had been ill, had been going through very trying days, had hoped that perhaps Mr Heath had already been in touch with her. All of which was true, but not all that helpful in view of the urgency of the situation.

Mrs Searle responded with much kindness. She mentioned again a grant for the appeal that she had been working on and that we were about to lose because of our lack of communication; she was desperately trying for the institution to wait for us. She rightly said that lack of communication "for two weeks in the busiest part of the campaign" was very odd and questioned the Blake Society's Commitment.

I forwarded her email to Mr Heath by the time I thought the Blake Society meeting had ended:

I really have no energy to respond to this, nor do I know what to say, and it is very unfair that I should be the one to do so.

and told him that the campaign started to feel to me as well a thing of the past, since he was ignoring it completely.

I received no response, so I called him.

He answered the phone in the jolliest of moods, asked why I was calling and was very surprised that I was angry. I asked him why he hadn't responded yet about the urgent work meeting we had agreed we'd have; what was happening with all our work for the campaign, and reminded him that we were supposed to be launching the crowdfunding appeal in **18 days**. He blamed me for "not having respected" his retreat. He said that I was angry only because I had so many problems and was ill so I was "projecting" them on him. I told him that instead of using that bullying argument he might try instead to be even more responsible, and responsive, if a colleague of his was working so hard and going through such trying times while he, supposed leader of the project, disappeared. He then suggested I was becoming unbalanced because of my circumstances, told me not to lecture him and hang up the phone on me.

The Chair of the Blake Society and supposed leader of the Cottage appeal, who hadn't honoured a single work agreement with his co-campaigners for months, still refused to say when we would meet to resume work, and hang up the phone on the Blake Society Secretary, who was also co-leading the campaign with him – the only other Blake Society representative working on it apart of him, since as we have seen Ms Morgan had done nothing and was nowhere to be found – , and the Big Blake Project.

What followed was unedifying. I was beside myself with fury, and very distraught. I called him, he refused to answer the phone, I called again... I was also very worried. I knew Mr Heath very well and I sensed that what was really going on was far graver than it seemed (grave as that was), and that it had to do with the games he and Ms Morgan indulge in, for some incomprehensible reason, around William Blake. I was even worried about Mr Heath, because I had witnessed in the past that when he

became unduly irrational he might be going through a very bad patch. The pressure I was under included the enthusiasm of people supporting the campaign, my contacts asking me about how things were going, and me having nothing to say . People were very excited about what seemed to be a wonderful initiative, with coverage in the national press and some papers abroad. The responsibility was enormous. So I calmed down, thought things out and sent him the following email:

Tim, I am really serious -- you cannot treat me, or anyone, like this. You do not treat other human beings like this. It is simply *wrong*.

I was trying to explain to you that I had to respond to Rachel because I do not treat people like that. Nor should the Blake Society do so. Even if we're in a working misalliance, people are people, and ignoring them only breeds anger and ill-will.

As for your silence towards myself, its unkindness, and irresponsibility, are hard to believe.

I have dealt as best as I've been able to with the unheeded decisions, inconsistency and confusion. I tried to ask you in a million ways, always with so much care and walking on shards because you were so inconsistent and impatient, how could we make things function best while you were away, and all I received was unkindness, ingratitude, conflicting messages, and not one single decision respected. How can you possibly say I did not respect your retreat? All I have been asking is for respect from you as well, and to respect other people's circumstances just as much as you expect them to respect yours.

The unkindness of your silence includes not having even curiosity to ask what is it that is going so wrong with a colleague, and once dearly loved friend, but you can be sure that I am in a situation of extreme fragility and emergency, and rather ill too. In it, working for what I love, including the Cottage project, has brought me comfort, solace and joy. But I cannot, and should not, take the stress of your lack of communication, and my disappointment and sadness about the whole thing are profound indeed.

I ask you sincerely -- is anything wrong? Are you OK?

Retreats are complex processes that challenge our lives and our focus on things. Have you lost interest in *our* campaign for the Cottage? Or are you in one of those moments, perhaps, when some forms of communication seem really impossible to you?

If that is the case, say so--it wouldn't be the first time that through some unbelievable miracle we manage to do something at least a tiny bit right while being under seemingly unbearable pressure.

Otherwise you will have to behave responsibly and treat people, and their work, with respect.

It may not be too late to learn to find again within you the sources of kindness and respect for others that are indeed there somewhere --I have seen them, though it is true that not for a long while--, and it may also not be too late to stop taking people for granted.

You must know that I do not want to fight with you and that the anger that your rudeness sparks in me is not only something I do not want --it makes me even more ill. You know I try to understand why you behave the way you do. But I have my limits, and if you cared to know the circumstances I am in now you'd perhaps understand that you cannot really push any farther and that the arrogance of what you said on the phone to me tonight, its unkindness and the rudeness of hanging up are despicable, and undeserved. I have truly had enough of it all, and of your selfishness and ungratefulness.

What is truly behind this? Are you trying perhaps to push me out of the project again? Is there not the slightest chance that you may stop and wonder whether if you may be doing things wrong?

If you really cannot see how appallingly you are behaving, I really mean it: perhaps you should ask for help, for only someone self-absorbed to the point of break-down can believe that he has the right to treat other human beings this way, or that he can get away with it. Do not do things Tim, that you will have reasons to regret afterwards. You've done far enough of that already.

He finally responded with an email to say that we'd had our work meeting the following day.

We did. It was tense at the beginning and he told something about me “writing terrible letters”, but as was usually the case with our work together, the tension eased soon and we were going through our list of tasks seamlessly, the enthusiasm back. He didn’t mention though whether if he had contacted the Big Blake Project yet. Since Mrs Searle stopped asking questions I have the impression that from that moment on he chose, again, to communicate with each of us separately, without hardly ever copying us in, so that we couldn’t know what was being discussed with the other. In any case, throughout our meeting I was relieved that things seemed to be on track again.

Mr Heath accompanied me to my bus stop. And then a disturbing transformation took place. Despite having known him quite well for several years, I had never seen him like that. In a matter of seconds he had become very angry, but it didn’t seem to be an anger directed at me. He said very unfair things: that he didn’t know why he bothered to work so hard for a project when he had to put up with people like me and Mrs Searle, who only negated his work. The intensity of his anger was odd, the way he said things was odd too. I felt he was talking to himself, not only because of the disproportionate unfairness of what he was saying, but by his way to deliver it. It’s very hard to put into words what happened then, but my instinctive feeling was that Mr Heath had made some decision known only to himself from which there was no return, and that he was trying to convince himself to go ahead with it, trying to find a justification. He told me again that if I had got angry it was only because I had problems in my life and was ill and was trying to project that on him. I asked him if he really couldn’t see that you don’t treat colleagues like he did and he shouted “See? You’re doing it again!”. And walked away.

As I went back home on the bus that night, I was not even angry. I was just very afraid. I felt I was entering into some zone of darkness and danger that I wasn’t sure I’d be able to negotiate. I was right.

EVIL IS HELL

William Blake considers evil to be a state of error. I agree with him. During the past few years I have been able to witness, and experience, on its receiving end, quite too much of states of error abounding in the Blake Society.

Like Blake’s sleeping Albion, his erring Satan that is, indeed, a “State”, are deserving of all our compassion. After all, they reflect states in which the whole of humanity dwells at some point or another, and therefore the hell they create, that is an exact reflection of the hell they live in, affects us all. Compassion, however, is not collusion, and it is the opposite of the concealment of truth.

By the beginning of September 2014 my whole being was telling me that I had fallen into the jaws of ev... well, of a substantial state of error. I didn’t want to be swallowed by its darkness. I even considered the possibility that the enormous pressure I was under might indeed be making me see such darkness where there was none, so I stuck to the work tasks that Mr Heath and I had agreed upon during our meeting on 2nd September, which included his revision of my scripts for the video. The following day I saw an event announced about literary houses and alerted Mr Heath about it, as it might be good for the appeal. It was also a sign of peace:

Finally, I think it might be worth while to go to this - a chance to network with the curator and other people, spread the voice about our campaign.

Let me know if I book tickets, £5 each

He didn't answer. Instead of that, I received immediately a message from our Paypal account that showed that Mr Heath had bought *three* tickets for the event. That was odd. I knew his patterns of behaviour, that included his much favoured element of surprise, so in an email I thanked him for buying the tickets and asked him who else was coming. I received no response, so I left him a message to call me. He did, and said that he had no idea who the third ticket he had bought would be for, but he had bought it because it was impossible for him to be alone with me. He was in one of his moods of utter irrationality so I could not even be angry. I thought it was more of a passing tantrum and decided to insist on dialogue instead. I sent him an email:

Thank you for dinner and listening last night, and for your call today.

Thank you also for letting out how you felt. Though I was hurt for what struck me as unfair, I could see how frustrated and hurt you feel.

It made plain the fracture in communication. I feel equally hurt and frustrated - if we both feel used so badly, there are things we're both misreading.

I know you are still upset and it's not the best moment to tell you what my experience is in working with you, so will leave it for another time.

I'm glad we talked today. As I said, I often expect hurt or rudeness from you but I try to curve it, for it is unfair for both if I let it grow and get carried away instead of clarifying things. What you said today hurt, proved that at least part of my paranoia had some grounds and the third ticket was some form of attack, but I understand you're very angry and will take it for what it is.

Thanks for speaking out anyway.

In our phone conversation Mr Heath asked me to send to him that old document for the webpage that Ms Morgan hadn't finished, this time without the track changes. That's how I ended accepting my own corrections, in the absence of Ms Morgan, and sent him the revised document:

I am attaching what you asked me to send you on Tuesday: an update of the webpage document with no track changes, as best as I've managed with the unfinished material we had.

I don't know how much you followed at what stage this document was on your retreat so I explain: Paige sent me a document that was part draft and part questions. I answered to her questions and suggested revisions to the draft. If in doubt, you can find all the questions, answers and reasons for my suggestions in the document I sent you before (the one with track changes), and you can refer also to our exchange of emails that were copied to you.

In my emails I also suggested we mentioned at the beginning the start of the crowdfunding campaign and who endorses it. Since no one has touched the document since and that information is truly important, I have added that here today so that is a change from the document I last sent to Paige.

For the rest what I have done is what you asked me to: to simply accept my track changes. I polished smaller details. If a few things remain looking as a draft, it is because a final document has not been produced yet.

Of course the idea was to choose Blake images as well, the ones in the leaflet work well I think and we may want to use others as well.

Bear with me with the other chores please. Things have accumulated -- what I had hoped to avoid -- and I am struggling much.

That document, i.e., my work, is exactly what appeared in our webpage. Only an introductory paragraph with an odd comment about artists “doing and making things” was added. The rest was entirely my work; Ms Morgan had got away with doing nothing for what was supposed to be one of her major tasks for the appeal.

Mr Heath and I kept on communicating. Confusingly, he had started to show some concern about my own problems, so I thanked him and tried to restore a space of understanding that seemed to me crucial to be able to work in peace:

[. . .] You mentioned on Tuesday that you felt negated. It is important that you know that I do not negate you or your work: I respect and admire both.

One may get angry or frustrated over concrete issues and feel negated too, yet that doesn't mean things can't be talked over and, above all, that doesn't mean an invalidation of the other person. It is important that you know that I have never meant to invalidate you; that I care about clarifying these things for our work's sake and for our own; that it is wrong that we go on angering and hurting each other like this. We must find the knot that keeps on pushing us both to the edge, and untie it, and learn to do what we have to do together for the time we have to do it, with peace, and with joy.

That is our duty too. So I will go out of my way to make things clear to you, so that you know that I do not like being hurt and cannot accept it, but I certainly do not want to hurt you either. Never. At least from my side, I see it as my duty to drive that message home to you. I never want to hurt you and I always wish you well, profoundly, and will always wish you well, from however far apart we happen to be.

Despite having apparently restored communication, Mr Heath still wasn't honouring our work agreements, including his revision of my scripts for the film. We hadn't followed up either communication with the potential donors for the Cottage that I had been in touch with. So on 8 September (*eleven* days before the supposed launch of our crowdfunding appeal) I wrote to him:

Let's have an update on the points for the campaign we went through last week, I am not quite sure what's happening now, and please don't forget a draft for me to work on for [. . .].

No response, so I wrote again the following day:

We need to update about the campaign... it starts in little more than a week's time.

I will circulate tomorrow a simplified proposal of rewards as we agreed. I have also a huge list of people to send emails to when the campaign is ready, for their networks. I guess each of us addresses those we have made a contact with and we also approach any new individuals or organisations we think might help. [. . .] What about my visit to the Cottage?

As I said in my phone message I am also concerned about my work on the film/text for the crowdfunding appeal. I'd prefer to talk on the phone about that so if you can give me a ring please.

He responded asking me not to circulate the list of rewards yet, which I found odd. He also said that Mrs Howell was away so I couldn't visit the Cottage yet, and that the film needed to be emotive, but he said nothing about actual work on a film that should be ready **in 10 days' time**. He added that we'd talk the following Thursday, the day of the event about literary houses. I wrote to clarify:

May I know why you don't want me to circulate the simplified rewards list yet? By "circulate" I mean only between you, Paige and myself so that we decide on a definitive list. Again, I'd rather not leave it to the very last so that things don't accumulate for me, I'm still under too much and am trying to "spread" chores among my days. [. . .] I understand about the film needing to be emotive. I did not mean my work on the website text but on the script which as I said might work for the crowdfunding text instead. Let's clarify things then on Thursday.

On Wednesday both Cottage and Blake Society tasks that needed Mr Heath’s approval were accumulating, so I wrote again:

I called and left you a message but I don't know if you're hearing them.

So here's the email format: [. . .] At what time are we meeting tomorrow and where before the event? You said we'd talk then about my concerns regarding the contents of the campaign -- which starts within a week, and I still know nothing about what we're doing. We really won't be able to do anything right if you cannot even answer the phone to me. [. . .] Let's remember what we're trying to do, all the work we've put on it already, and do what's coming right and without secrecy (you, me, Paige and whoever else wants to believe in this). We won't enjoy anything otherwise.

The email was friendly, an attempt at clearing the tense work atmosphere. His response was curt, saying that he had a meeting immediately before the event so we couldn't meet, and ended with "Please redact the projection of your emotions from your emails." Still, Ms Morgan was disappeared.

Thursday came. I went to the event, knowing that things were not right. I arrived early and reserved a seat for Mr Heath – I had forgotten about the third ticket, that I had considered a whim of his. He arrived, indeed with a third person. This was Miss Parul Jani. Miss Jani is another of Mr Heath’s female friends. Mr Heath used to lend her space in his rooms in 17 South Molton Street for some classes that she gives and that he usually helped her prepare; he even substituted her on occasion (I don't know if that's still the case). She had often interfered in Blake Society events, even though she was not even a member during all the time I was a Trustee, and he had tried to impose her to give a talk for the Society without consulting the Committee (he didn't when he first tried, but got away with it the year after I left the Committee). Ms Jani interfered in particular when I was working on the organization of the events at hand, and Mr Heath chose to shield himself behind her when he had behaved callously to me because of his involvement with Ms Morgan. Ms Jani was, to put it somehow, one of Mr Heath’s preferred weapons when he was trying to humiliate me.

I was very angry. We had to launch a crowdfunding campaign that, as far as I knew, was completely stranded, **in ten days time**, and all Mr Heath could think of was playing his old games with women. I confronted him, asked him what on earth had happened with all the work I had been doing and why he refused to answer. I asked Ms Jani whether if she realized that Mr Heath was using her as a shield, asked her what it felt like to be his bodyguard. Mr Heath angrily told me that the appeal wasn't my work, that he had started work on the Cottage 22 years before, which is, of course, a bit of an overstatement, when all he had done was to befriend the then Cottage’s owner to earn her trust, that he was about to betray.

I soon realized that I had to calm down. My anger would lead me nowhere, and it was a public space. I told Mr Heath that it was very sad to treat each other like that when we had such beautiful work to do. His eyes welling up, he changed the subject, but at least said that we'd have a work meeting on the weekend. Ms Jani was standing there all the while. I have no idea where what happened next came from; I just found the whole situation unbearably sad, all that pantomime because of of Mr Heath’s personal chaos and how he mixed it up with work. I felt sorry for all of us, so I gave Ms Jani a hug, told her "this is just so painful", and left.

Mr Heath wrote to me the next day to arrange for a meeting:

Thank you for attending Dr Johnson's House.

Saturday evening after your obligations at the Buddhist Centre would be good time to meet - Hampstead, 6pm?

If you could now send the Rewards document that would be helpful.

It didn't bode well. He wasn't copying Ms Morgan and my instinct told me that he was asking for the rewards document so that they could work on it on their own –basically, a document that I had been meticulously updating from the beginning of the campaign and to which I had contributed a great deal. But I decided to trust, against all evidence. Again, the trust offensive. As the email above

makes clear, I'm a Buddhist. I wanted to believe that good faith could turn the "state of error" round. So I sent him the document and answered:

Thank *you* rather, Tim, for attending, as it was me who invited you.

6 at Hampstead station is fine tomorrow.

Clarifying: when I talk about "my work" I have been referring specifically to my work for the crowdfunding campaign, and the campaign in general, that I have been trying to convey to you feels to me suspended in a vacuum since your arrival.

Of course I respect your life's work in furthering Blake's legacy, and have always supported it wholeheartedly, surely you know that. I believe in your work more than most people you'll ever know - and that may include yourself some times.

Attached the rewards, simplified as best I could given the stalled communication. You'll explain to me tomorrow what's the dynamics now.

The dynamics were worrying. We did work, again, seemingly smoothly in a café. Mr Heath said that he was revising my scripts for the video now and that would ask Mr Philip Pullman whether if he'd like to appear in it. I was very worried though, because we had such a short time to do it, but I tried to trust him. At some point, he started to get nervous, looking constantly at his phone. I had been trying to engage the BBC Proms in the campaign. Suddenly Mr Heath said that he had to get back home on time for the Proms because "they" had devised a plan for them regarding the appeal. I instantly knew that "they" were him and the disappeared Ms Morgan. I also knew, because of the way that he was behaving, that it would be pointless to question him. Out of delicacy I'll save the reader the details; suffice it to say that at that moment it became clear to me that, without the shadow of a doubt, Blake's Cottage had become the new toy in the personal games that Mr Heath and Ms Morgan played around Blake.

We walked out of the café and again, just before saying goodbye, Mr Heath told me that my behaviour at Dr Johnson's house had been unacceptable. He tried now the racist tactics, saying that while that might be normal in Mexico, my country of origin, it was not well seen in England and would jeopardized the campaign. I reminded him that it was him who was jeopardizing it by involving his personal life in our work and attempting at humiliating me. I also told him that whenever he wanted to discuss something with me he should do so while we were still talking at a table, like adults, rather than wait until the second before saying goodbye to attack me, then leave, which is exactly what he did.

I knew then that whatever work was left, I was very much on my own: I felt I could not go to the Blake Society or the Big Blake Project with the news of how Mr Heath was dragging the project in the mire. Our deadlines were so close; I felt that no one would believe me and it would just make matters worse.

On 15 September Mr Heath copied me on his response to a representative of the Ashmolean Museum, who was asking whether both him and the Blake Society could be engaged in the festival that would accompany the major Blake exhibition that would open the following January, curated by Michael Phillips. As seen in previous chapters, Mr Heath did engage with the festival but actively cut off the whole of the Committee from it; never even mentioned it to us.

I felt all I could do was to continue working with good faith. On 15 September I updated Mr Heath on my progress with work on the appeal, explained that the following day I had work to do in Oxford so if Mr Pullman agreed to appear in our video, I could record him. Mr Heath would be going

to an event in Felpham. We were running out of time. He didn't respond, so early on 16 September, **three days** before the supposed date for our launching of the crowdfunding appeal, I wrote again:

I'm off to Oxford -- how's the progress with the contents of the page, your edits to the text, the rewards, a film?

I'm worried about time since you're going to Felpham, and it is Tuesday already. I won't be able to check my emails today until probably the afternoon or early evening. Please send me what has been advanced so far so that I can take a look at it today; tomorrow I can work too of course but as I told you I have a housing appointment in the morning and an English PEN roundtable in the evening so my time will be limited.

It is truly important that we're working together at this crucial stage and that we are agreed on the contents of the indiegogo page. Hope you understand my worries.

He responded just to say that he hadn't heard from Mr Pullman yet and added "enjoy Oxford". **No response whatsoever about my questions regarding our work.** So I asked again:

Thank you Tim... and what about all the rest? I *really* need to know.

I hope you're enjoying Felpham.

Please let me know what is happening when you get back.

I kept on receiving emails from people helping us with the appeal, asking me questions I could not answer anymore (i.e, how we were doing?), and telling me about the efforts they were making to spread the word. Again, I didn't know how to answer to them.

One of my concerns had been all the while how much Mr Heath had endeavoured to keep the rest of the Blake Society Committee in the dark regarding the Cottage appeal. We hadn't had a meeting for ages and his retreat had brought much of our work to a stall. So on 17 September I sent to the Committee an email sharing an article about the campaign that had just appeared in *The Guardian*. I also told them that we were launching our crowdfunding appeal on 19 September and tried to engage them in the appeal. It was odd that Mr Heath had been keeping them in the dark, but I also found the Blake Society Trustees' lack of curiosity and absolute lack of initiative to help us appalling. I felt that in the dangerous situation that we were in now, they needed a call to wake up and remember that we *all* were responsible for a public appeal that was taking place just then. I was also hoping that Ms Morgan would say something, clarify what exactly her position was in it:

Hi All,

I hope you were happy to see the article in *The Guardian* about the Cottage campaign and its mention in the newsletter,

The past few days we have been receiving an increase of donations through Just Giving (plus a donation sent by post) and I think that we are creating a positive sense of expectation. Do visit the Cottage section in our webpage and you will see how every day we have a tiny bit more.

The project is meaningful, reflects ideals held by many through many years to make of Blake's surviving houses spaces that truly celebrate him and his work and perhaps this time the ideal is quite close to becoming possible --which might also mean a way for preserving South Molton Street as well.

I hope you are all happy about this. Please do spread the word and when the link to the crowdfunding appeal is ready this week, send it to everyone you can think of. As you know, the Blake Society is leading this effort and we should all share in the excitement, and the joy if we succeed.

That day Mr Heath called me, to say that he was asking for some people's opinions about the crowdfunding page (which page, if work on it was stalled? what people?), and to tell me off for having written to the Committee, and for having told them about the date for launching the appeal, on which we had decided from the very first meeting we had had to start work on the campaign at the beginning of the year. He said, angrily, that he had only agreed on that date to please me, then hang up the phone on me.

I was very scared. My contacts kept on asking me how we were doing. We had loads of support, were publicly endorsed by many people, people were constantly giving us money, with extraordinary good faith. I sent him an email to urge him to lay his weapons down, but received no response.

Apart from an enthusiastic email from fellow Trustee Rod Tweedy, the rest of the Blake Society's Trustees seemed to continue in blissful slumber. Not one of them helped the appeal's effort, in any way whatsoever.

Later that day I had more news to update Mr Heath with, so I wrote, adding:

I'll add their names as endorsers to the webpage, let's add them too to the crowdfunding page (please, how is that going?) and [. . .] to the rewards.

Let's talk later, we really must put things together now.

No response. It was **two days** before the launch of the crowdfunding appeal. I was by then feeling terribly ill under the strain. I had been to a meeting with English PEN, that if the reader remembers, we had invited to be part of the Consortium the year before, even before the campaign started, and who had been very enthusiastic and had already given us much support. When they asked me how things were going and to please send them the link of the crowdfunding appeal as soon as it was ready, so that they could put it in their social media, I hardly knew how to respond. One of my contacts there, a friend of mine, looked at me, concerned, and said that I looked ill. Which of course I was. In the evening I wrote to Mr Heath again:

Is everything all right?

I just called you... it is Wednesday evening. The campaign goes online on Friday and I have seen nothing of the actual page, of the edits you told me on Saturday you'd do to adapt my script to the text, I do not know if we have a film or not...

Please Tim, get in touch. I was at English PEN today, they asked me if everything was ready. I felt horrible. There is so much expectation, we have been working so hard together on this for months, I have put in so much work yet I am being kept in suspense at this stage... it is not right.

I have a responsibility towards the people I have contacted, I am far too involved by now to simply walk out.

It is this kind of thing that sparks my misgivings, or my anger: to be kept in suspense, thrown out of the loop, my questions disregarded, which amounts to my work being disregarded... This lack of communication is wrong and similar situations sparked the misery of these past weeks.

I am doing my best under unbearable tension --to sort out my housing issue will be very complicated, the work issue is fragile, my health is everyday more and more fragile. I am doing my best to keep my calm but I fear I may snap. I don't want to get angry at you again, and for that not to happen it is essential that I know that my involvement and work in the campaign are being respected. Not only for my sake of course. All my very hard work was done with a purpose, the contents of what goes online is important and I have done a lot regarding the contents of the campaign as a whole. We've worked on what we have agreed and on an ideal we share.

I truly cannot take any more stress. I have been asking you all week.... Please, what is going on?

I received no response whatsoever. Sleepless, I wrote again in the small hours:

Tim, it is very hard to work like this --I don't know anymore how to make you see that when you ignore the straightforward questions of a colleague, particularly regarding work at such a crucial stage, you're creating conditions for conflict.

Inconsistency is also not helpful --to say you disagree on things that you had agreed on before makes people extremely confused. It is unfair then to accuse them of "mistakes" that had first been an agreement.

We still need to talk about the misunderstandings during your retreat --concrete work issues, and not emotions-- that triggered our recent fights. It is important that we have that conversation. It may dissolve quite a few misgivings, and it may also help you see that you too can make mistakes and that they do affect people's work and can make them incredibly frustrated.

It is also very frustrating that you find so much at fault in what I do yet hardly ever seem to find a word of recognition or appreciation. I know you do value my work, and make good use of it, but it is draining to be just told off all the time.

Have you never realised that I often do things by my own initiative, guessing and not having a clue whether if you'll be happy or angry, because there is no communication with you?

People can't work in a vacuum Tim. Colleagues working with you do not give you "advice": *they work with you*. And they have to be listened to, their doubts answered, their work acknowledged. Isn't it normal that they want to know how things are progressing on the week the campaign will be launched? That shows their care. It would be highly abnormal and a sign of weird indifference if I did not want to know whether if we have a film or not, or how the campaign will look like, and have my say, at this late stage.

I know this is proving a week of very hard work for you and the stress of not having things ready yet affects us all in different ways. I hope you won't take it badly if I say this is what I had wanted to avoid, why I was so concerned about timing during these past weeks.

I acknowledge my anxiety may be irritating. Your hardened bad mood at dealing with the most basic attempts at communication is not very nice either, but we are both stressed and have been angry so we'll have to make allowances...

Just do keep me updated tomorrow. And I'll ask you some concrete questions too, if I may.

Suddenly, at lunchtime on 18 September, **one day** before the launch of our crowdfunding appeal, Mr Heath called me. He was friendly, kindly, in great spirits. He told me that of course he would not go online with the crowdfunding page without my approval, that he was working on its revision, and that he was working on the film (he didn't say with whom or how). He said that everything would be ready in time, gave me some updates about other matters related to the appeal and work with the Blake Society, asked me for my updates, told me to be relaxed because everything was under control and we would be online the following day. He promised to me that he would send me that day the Indiegogo page for my approval.

I felt some relief. I felt that at this stage, with so much at stake, we really needed to try to trust each other, however implausible it seemed. I emailed him with the updates he asked me for and ended the email with a:

I'll disconnect for a while --filling in a form for housing issues, then going to buy the Tyger workshop's material. If anything sort of urgent arises give me a call or text me. It's OK for me to work late tonight if needed when the page is ready, and good luck with the film.

And then I felt almost happy, the old enthusiasm came back: the appeal was on. We had stumbled a lot but the crowdfunding appeal would be online the following day, and we would still have chances to get Blake's Cottage and turn it into a centre of creation that belonged to everybody. That might make the horror of the previous weeks seem worth while.

But the hours passed and there was no Indiegogo page, no news from Mr Heath. **Past 8.00 pm** I sent him another email:

How are we doing?

I assume that tomorrow we will each send the link to as many contacts as we can and we have sort of clear who is following up who. It will be quite too many emails so I suppose you won't want me to copy you into all of them, but do let me know.

(And of course let's send a message to the newsletter list as well.)

No response.

Around **9.00 pm** I sent him a text message asking him if he needed help.

No response.

At **11.00 pm** I sent him another email titled "What is the matter":

You said today that you'd be in touch, and that you would not go online by yourself without us all having seen the page.

I know it must have been a challenging day, including the film, and you may not have finished. I suppose the campaign won't be ready in the morning but I don't want to go on supposing: I need to know.

It is important that I see the page before we go online. That's what we agreed on and we are supposed to be working on this together. I am not here only to check if people received a "thank you" note in Just Giving, and my say on what goes on in the campaign page matters.

If we are going online later in the day, remember I have an appointment with the MP early in the afternoon. I may have to leave home at 12.

I will go to bed, very angry by now, very upset, trying to cool the anger... I cannot be waiting all night if I have not heard a word from you. I'll get up early in the morning to see if there's your email with the page.

These are the things that make people angry Tim --the constant breach of agreements, the lack of communication, and the lack of consideration for people's time and involvement in work.

If you didn't finish that's OK, the 19th has 24 hours in it. But an email, a text message saying what is going on costs you nothing and makes the difference between working in peace and trusting each other, and working in anger and mistrust. Just some kindness, some respect... It's not asking much.

He sent me a text message saying:

Adriana, please stop. If we need your help, we will contact you.

That "we" I assume was Mr Heath and Ms Morgan. The breach of agreements accompanied by bullying had come back. I called him. He answered the phone, said "It's 11 o'clock", and hang up on me.

The following day, we of course were not online. There was no crowdfunding appeal at all, despite our having told there would be one to what by then was hundreds of people. My contacts

were eagerly waiting for the link to send it round to their own contacts and in their social media ... And Mr Heath and Ms Morgan had hijacked the Cottage appeal.

The anger, the worry, the fear, had me in a state of shock. I went to work like that on an interpreting assignment all day. I called Mrs Christina Vinall to tell her what was happening. She was very worried. We had started to develop a friendship and I had confided to her a while before about Mr Heath's involvement of his personal life in the Blake Society. She was sympathetic for my distress but also extremely concerned in regards to the appeal and the Society, and told me she'd asked Mr Vinall for advice.

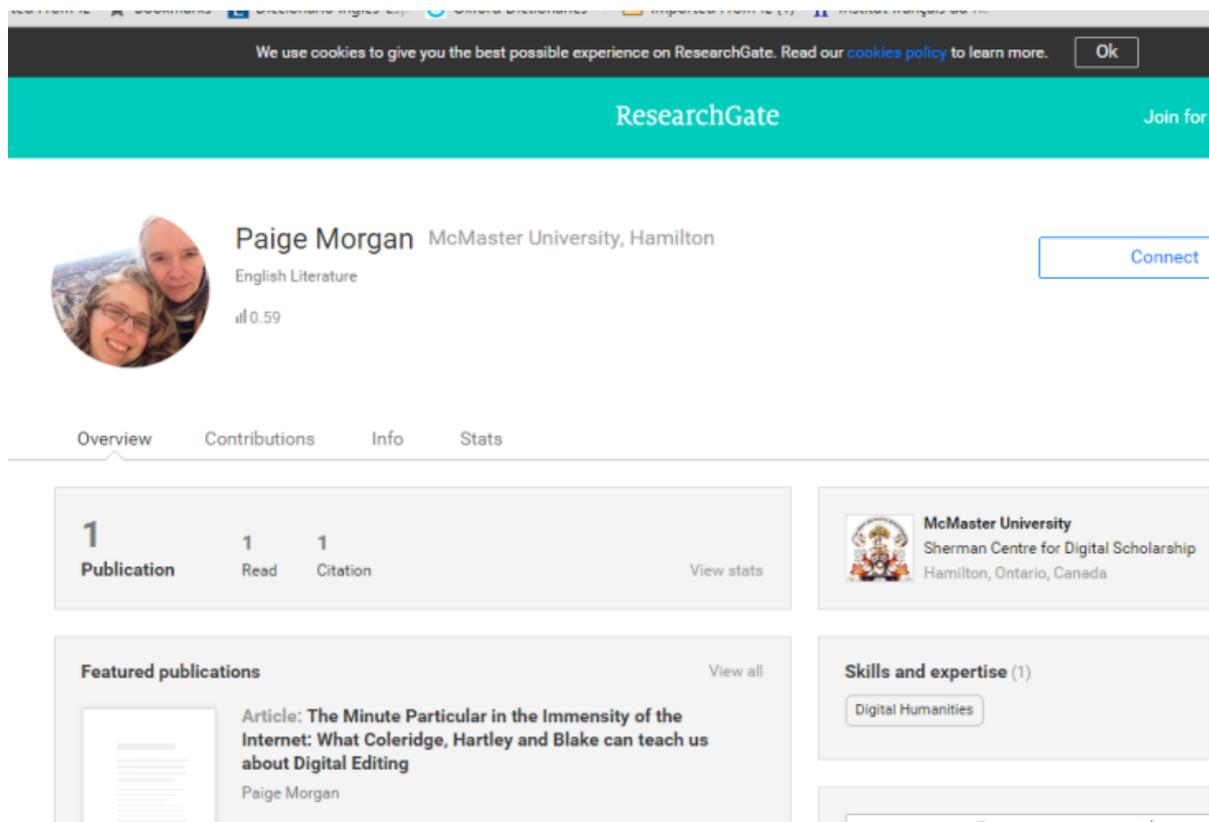


I had obviously decided, by then, to leave the Cottage appeal and the Blake Society. But I couldn't simply walk out. Things needed to be arranged in a way that the appeal was protected and safe, as well as the Blake Society itself.

Again, out of delicacy, I will save the reader the details of how the work of the Blake Society was an element of play and power in Mr Heath's and Ms Morgan's personal relationship (not even our Committee meetings were spared). The events of those weeks had replicated their pattern of behaviour, founded on the element of secrecy and the element of surprise. They seemed to favour the reckless regarding how their behaviour might affect our work, as was the case with the Society's Journal, and an element of cruelty regarding other human beings, as I had learnt in my own person – they always aimed at causing as much harm as possible.

But this was no Blake Society Journal or little Committee: this was a huge public project supported by hundreds of people, and their games had to be stopped. Earlier that year a member of the Blake Society had told me, confidentially, that she had heard rumours that Mr Heath wanted to live in Blake's Cottage and that "a key member of the Blake Society" had "embezzled funds for website work in the past long before you joined the Blake Society." Of course I was careful not to believe a rumour without evidence, but I had seen enough of Mr Heath's unscrupulous behaviour, and as far as I knew, before I became a Trustee Ms Morgan was in charge of the website. It might be an incredibly unfair rumour, it may all be entirely untrue even now, but the reader I think will understand that, in view of what I had experienced, I felt the Blake Society had to be extremely careful.

The messages of enthusiasm and good will we were receiving from the Cottage appeal donors kept on haunting me: it was simply not right to betray that good will with such an ugly outcome. Mr Heath's and Ms Morgan's inability to understand the boundaries of the personal and the professional in regards to William Blake were disturbing. The following screenshot of Ms Morgan's idea of a professional profile in an Academic website may give the reader a clearer idea of what I'm talking about (the man in the picture with her is Mr Heath):



In the grant application for the Heritage Lottery Fund the Chair had asked for an unexplainable amount of £700 “to visit projects that have used the new techniques of raising funds through crowd sourcing”. We were being very careful with our limited resources and that was an extraordinary amount for something we had never agreed upon. Such a need had never been raised in our working plan and it made no sense: what we needed to see would be in any case successful literary houses, not successful crowd sourcing projects, and the amount was too large in comparison to what we were allocating to all our other efforts. Since what Mr Heath and Ms Morgan had hijacked more precisely at that moment was the crowdfunding appeal and she had mentioned her “study” of such campaigns, I was very worried that there would be misuse of funds. At the moment (for all I know, that may be the case even now) only Mr Heath and Ms Morgan had access to our Just Giving account (the same would happen soon with our Indiegogo account), so before I left the appeal and the Society, I had to raise the alarm within the Committee.

I first called Mr Henry Eliot. I naively thought that, given his earlier involvement in the Cottage appeal, he would be concerned. He sounded surprised but not particularly interested, just said, quite politely, that I should talk with Mr Heath, who was very kind and surely was willing to clarify things with me. I called then Mr Antony Vinall, who so far, and as I stated in previous chapters, seemed to me to be a responsible and grounded man. He was angry when he heard mention of the personal elements involved in the problem and said he didn’t want to know anything about it. But he was also already very worried about the Cottage appeal, so he ended up listening.

During that awful time Mrs Christina Vinall was very kind to me and very patient. I was very distressed, and felt an unbearable grief to have to part with a project that had meant so much to me because of other people’s lack of scruples. I will always be grateful to Mrs Vinall for her kindness. She

often told me, on the phone and by email, that I shouldn't allow such horrible people to destroy my spirit. She had seen how hard I worked for both the Society and the Cottage and was dismayed at Mr Heath's and Ms Morgan's lack of ethics.

However, I never understood why she always ended up reaching the same conclusion: that horrible though what they were doing was, Mr Heath was the Blake Society's Chair and in everybody's eyes he was leading the Cottage appeal, so I was powerless and would have to leave. I wonder why; why she thought such a state of affairs – the abuse of power against women in a workplace, that involved serious betrayal of the public and leaving a public project in the hands of people with no scruples – was acceptable. She must have commented matters with Mr Vinall. I fail to understand why it never occurred to them that what was urgent at that moment was for them to challenge Mr Heath and Ms Morgan immediately, or to cast a vote of no confidence against the Chair.

I left a message on Mr Heath's phone telling him that I was resigning but we had to agree on a responsible way to go through that. In fact, the first stage of my Tyger project (a workshop with the children of Kids Company prior to our visit to the Zoo) would be taking place the following week. I received no response. I wrote to him:

I don't know what to say if people ask me about the campaign. It is my reputation too that is at stake, I have faced up so many people, have been so involved in this...

We need to work out the best way for me to fulfil my responsibilities with my projects and my involvement with the campaign while we plan the transition for another secretary to step in.

You have been walking on very dangerous ground doing what you're doing, for the reasons that you're doing it and I am not sure how aware you are of the importance and value of the things that you are jeopardising here.

I have reached my limit. I'm out, but it has to be in a way that is best for all and that I can still finish the things I am responsible for, so we will need to talk.

Take care of yourself. God bless you.

Must have been very distressed indeed, a Buddhist invoking God... But that was exactly how I felt, since Mr Heath had seemingly plunged into a path of utter destruction.

His response was:

Thank you for your note and message. [. . .] Your resignation will be put to the next Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Blake Society.

The true contacts you have made on behalf of the Blake Society will continue to support the aims of the Society.

I could not possibly wait until our next Committee meeting: my contacts for the campaign were still waiting for the link to the crowdfunding appeal, asking me what was going on, and I had no answer to give to them. I didn't want either to have to expose Mr Heath before the whole Committee regarding his personal issues. It was, indeed, hell. I answered:

No Tim, we have to talk first, you and I, before any Committe Meeting.

I still want to know what is happening with the campaign. I am still part of it and in order to draw out of it we need to work out how that is going to be done, I am not just going to be dropped off, having my work stolen and losing face before everybody I have been in touch with.

Be an adult and tell me what has been going on.

No response. I tried again:

Tim, we need to talk, like adults.

You know that you are doing wrong, one of the most ethically disgraceful things that you have done in your life.

We should not put that into the Committee, it might well mean the soiling and destruction of the whole BS and our projects. You and I have to sort this out like two reasonable adults --a fair way for everyone for my stepping out, and I cannot simply be dropped off the campaign on the day it was supposed to start, for the sole reason that you refused for two weeks to tell me what progress was being made --with my work, stolen work, the work of someone who, apart from you, does care about the Cottage and knows what she is doing.

Talk to me, because I am not going to allow you or anyone to trample on me like this

No response. I wrote to Revd Lucy Winkett, Rector of St James's Church in Piccadilly, where the Blake Society was founded. It was our official address and we often held events at the church. She seemed to me the best person to turn to in search of advice in such a delicate situation, and the previous year I had already told her of my concerns during one of Mr Heath's bullying episodes. (During our meeting later on that week, for which I was very grateful, Revd Winkett agreed that what was happening was ethically wrong, that my concerns were grounded and that it was right for me to leave both the Blake Society and the Cottage appeal and to tell people that I believed the principles with which the latter had started had not been honoured. Now St James's is also the official address of the Blake Cottage Trust, and I would really like to know whether if Revd Winkett has ever challenged Mr Heath about his reckless behaviour, that jeopardizes not only the Charities he runs, but the reputation of St James's itself.)

I contacted Mr Heath again – the pressure of not knowing what to tell to my contacts, the fear about what was going to happen now, after having received so much support and money, felt unbearable.

Tim, you have already incurred into unethical behaviour regarding the campaign --a public campaign with a national and international reach, that has involved already many people of good will, to which people are already giving money, around one of the world's greatest poets and artists.

We know why you are doing it, and what is the word that best defines your behaviour.

Don't make it bigger. I am asking you to sort out with me, in a fair way, the *practical* (not emotional) steps for me to leave while still respecting everybody's work and projects. We need to talk before any meeting, otherwise you're leaving me no choice but tell the Committee what has really happened.

It is my work, that has been so committed and so huge, and it is also the work of your lifetime and the whole Blake Society what is at stake. Think. Wake up and see what you are doing. Seek help, do what you have to do to be able to go back to an ethical behaviour. Don't destroy things like this. It is about time that you face up like an adult the consequences of your actions.

He wrote to me an appeasing and disingenuous email, that implied as well that he was pushing me out of the appeal:

The Crowdfunding campaign will begin as soon as it is ready. There is a fundamental problem within it that we are not seeing (in the meanwhile you are always able to point people towards the JustGiving site, if you or your contacts have no patience).

When it is ready to launch, I will let you know, of course, to canvas your views.

Meanwhile, you need a break. You have passed the threshold of tolerance for aggression.

And please stop ringing my phone late at night - it disturbs all the carers.

Why not go down to Felpham for the Saturday Festival - the BS will pay your fares.

Please focus your efforts on the War event and the Tyger event - these are more than sufficient for one person.

Congratulations on the announcement by the ZSL!

I tried to make it clear to him that I would not be manipulated, while still clutching at straws in the hope that we could reach some form of dialogue:

You will understand now why I was worried - precious time was wasted, we wouldn't have been late if we had stuck to agreements. And in a collaborative work, I should know what the problem is and you should have answered to my concrete questions, instead of ignoring them and being rude to me.

Yes please, canvas to me when it is ready.

I have certainly passed the threshold of tolerance for aggression - yours, that's why I'm leaving the BS.

I do need a break and I will take it: we have to discuss the practicalities.

If you were polite enough to answer the phone or my emails with very straightforward questions from someone working with you, there would be no need to ring you late at night.

Yesterday afternoon we talked perfectly OK, you promised you'd keep me updated later in the day, then did not deign to answer to a text message enquiry at 9.30, nor to my call and email around an hour later. How do you expect anyone not to be angry and insist on your telling her what is going on?

I will concentrate on the War event and the Tyger event --and my involvement in the Campaign. We created this together, we gave shape to it, first with Henry then you and I. The campaign should be in charge of those who created it out of an ideal and strong principles, those who understand it and care about it.

We agreed that we all would work together and it was working, with much generosity involved in spite of difficulties. Then the agreements were broken, there was secrecy, procrastination, and I was dropped off the loop. Since you came back you have been inconsistent, dishonest, working in factions and provoking me.

You know how much the campaign owes to me, and that what you're doing is unethical. I won't be trampled over.

I can't go to the festival in Felpham tomorrow, I have a day-long interpretation and will be offline most of the day. So if it is ready during the day you will have to wait for me to see it in the evening before it is launched.

Thank you for your congratulations.

The next morning Mr Heath sent me an email that only said "test", with an email address in it. In my distress, I didn't recognize it as that email for Just Giving that he had originally set up for both of us to receive enquiries.

I wrote to ask him what it was:

I did receive this. What is it for? Donations?

As I said last night, I will be leaving home soon and won't be able to connect until the evening, so if the page is ready during the day bear with me for a few hours and I will look at it as soon as I'm back.

Mr Heath's response was:

Apologies - the mail was mistakenly re-directed to you.
The error has been corrected.

We'll soon read what was really happening with that address. Meanwhile, I still didn't know when we were going online. The Chair mentioned a technical problem but hadn't specified what it was. He still hadn't sent me the contents of the crowdfunding page to revise, as he had promised he would do. I wrote:

I do need to know what the problem is, when are we going online.

In any case and to save time, I gather the problem is technical or administrative but I can still take a look at the contents of the page as it is now --what we had agreed we'd work on together, so please send it to me and do keep me informed of what is happening.

I received no response. My contacts kept on asking me when were we going online so that they could share the link. On 21 September I wrote to Mr Heath again:

It is irrational to go on like this. I remind you that you and I are the persons publicly responsible for this project. You cannot drop me off it, nor can I walk out, because I have already drawn people into it and am responsible before them. We created this together and we have to see it through together, like adults, regardless any problems between us.

Please remember that this awful state of affairs obeys our fighting over your refusal to communicate with me regarding the progress of the project, your keeping me in suspense, and your procrastination.

I have told you before what is at stake. I must remind you also that you have a duty not only to respect the endless days of works that both Henry and I have put into this project and the work Luis has done regarding the financial side of it. We have a duty and a responsibility towards:

Heather (her good will and wishes for the future of her house), the whole of the Blake Society including the Committee, the people endorsing the campaign (most of whom were invited by Henry and myself), the people who have already given money through Just Giving and the post, the Heritage Lottery Fund, the lawyers, the people who have accepted to be in the Board of Trustees, the people who have supported us and helped us such as English PEN, or have at least offered support or shown interest such as The National Trust. The list is endless, the people we have been in touch with are far too many.

We have also a responsibility of course towards Blake, his Cottage, all those who love Blake. And towards ourselves, it is a matter too of self-respect.

It is all those people that you are betraying by doing what you are doing. The bullying that preceded your attempt at pushing me out of the project --pushing out the person who created most of it along with you--, all of it because of your personal life, is a betrayal to all those people. You cannot treat Blake's Cottage as you have treated the BS Journal. It is wrong. It is ethically wrong. You have no right to betray all these people because of your intimate affairs. People are waiting to hear from us. The procrastination, your keeping me in suspense, the lack of communication and your provoking my anger so as to have an excuse to kick me out all stemmed from the moment you brought your private life into the project.

What am I supposed to say now, if people turn to me to ask what's going on? That I don't know because the BS Chairman is not accountable for his actions?

We have to see this through together. You will have to communicate with me. By the way, my position regarding the Board of Trustees was left in the air when we talked in July. I fear you may be trying there the same tactics than with the campaign so I tell you here: I do want to be in the Board of Trustees, in the capacity of co-responsible and co-creator of this project. I do not need to be in the BS for that.

I entreat you Tim, come back to your better self. Think. However hard it may be for you, think of what you are doing. It is wrong, and dangerous. You must have some strong framework of ethics and perhaps support in the Quaker community that you may turn to now. Think of what ethical behaviour might mean in this particular case. Come back to your better self, do not destroy all this work started with so much devotion, enthusiasm, good will. Do not betray it, and Blake, do not betray us all.

No response.

In the following chapter we will read how the Blake Society Committee reacted to this dire state of affairs.