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Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly, Volume 18, Issue 2, Fall 1984, p. 126
Blake Trust Chairman’s Report

We reproduce below the complete text of The William Blake Trust “Chairman’s Report to Members and Patrons”:

The new William Blake Trust was incorporated in January 1983 as a “company limited by guarantee,” under the same name as the former Trust. The Company assumed the responsibilities and obligations of the old Trust in April 1983 and the first meeting of the Council of Management was held on 21 April. The Members of the Council are David Bindman, Duncan Robinson, Lord Cunliffe, who kindly agreed to act also as Treasurer, and myself as Chairman. John Commander was appointed Executive Director and Secretary.

The other Members of the Company are all former Trustees: namely, George Goyder, who became Chairman after the death of my father in July 1982; Mrs. Joan Linnell Burton, who was Secretary for many years; Graham Reynolds; and Peter du Sautoy, whom we would particularly like to thank for the time, care and impetus which after the death of Arnold Fawcus he devoted to the old Trust as its Secretary and, perforce, as its Executive. To all of the former Trustees the Council of Management of the new Trust is deeply grateful for the concern and support that they gave over the years to the affairs of the Trust. We hope that as successors we shall follow their example, though we can hardly hope to match what the Trust achieved in their time.

It is gratifying that the Trust in its new form continues to enjoy its association with Philip Hofer, Paul Mellon and Charles Ryskamp, who agreed to be translated from Associate Trustees to Patrons; and earlier this year Robert Essick accepted our invitation to become an additional Patron. The term Patron which has been assigned to our trans-Atlantic associates may be thought curious, but for us its meaning is clear: we are fortunate to enjoy the benevolent regard of a very distinguished group of American cognoscenti and devotees of Blake. We shall do our best to live up to such support.

We are pleased to have associated with the Trust, two of the leading Blake scholars in Great Britain and the United States, David Bindman and Robert Essick, as a Member of the Council and as a Patron respectively.

I would also like to pay tribute to the patience and perseverance of John Commander, who sorted out the difficult and complicated problems involved in re-establishing the Trust so that it can under his able and expert management act as publisher of its own books and direct its efforts to the consideration of possible new directions for the Trust’s contribution to the knowledge and understanding of Blake.

We are now in a position to be able to direct our efforts to completing the publication of work in hand and to considering the future development of the Trust’s work. The first year and a half of the Trust’s activity has been largely concerned with—and to some extent inhibited by—the protracted negotiations involved in reaching a satisfactory agreement for the mutually desired termination of the role of the Trianon Press as publishers to the William Blake Trust. I am pleased to be able to tell you that this complex business has now at last been settled. The Agreement was signed on 16 July 1984 thereby bringing to an end a relationship which over a period of more than thirty-five years resulted in the creation, thanks to the energies, skill and