

GlassCuts

Special Commemorative Supplement to Edition 88

www.britishglassfoundation.org.uk



WHITE HOUSE CONE *museum of glass*

The British Glass Foundation (BGF) arose out of proposals by Dudley MBC in 2009 to close Broadfield House Glass Museum, home to the internationally renowned Stourbridge Glass collection. After establishing its credentials as an *inter-alia* facilitator BGF became a key partner alongside Dudley MBC and Complex Development Projects Ltd in creating a new purpose-built facility on the site of the White House, Wordsley that latterly was the home of Stuart & Sons before its closure in 2001. At the time of writing the shell of the new facility is all but completed and proposals are in hand to stage a series of pop-up exhibitions and glassmaking demonstrations ahead of the collection being transferred to here by mid-2017. Now read on ...



excited members of the selection team, their enthusiasm undimmed by the chill April wind and lashing rain, pose outside the newly-named *White House Cone - museum of glass* on 7th April 2016 following the historic announcement (*all participants listed in text below*)

So, what's in a name? Well, a great deal as it happens, particularly when that name refers to a brand new facility that, as yet, has minimal provenance and branding and which has to quickly set out its *bona fides*, credentials and role in a fiercely competitive world of marketing.

It's not simply a catchy title or snappy allusion, neither of which will stand the passing of time and changing notions of fashion; the name has to simultaneously reflect upon and illuminate many aspects, not least a sense of history, as an indicator of contemporary developments and a pointer to where we see it all in the future. It must appeal to as broad a church as possible, from glass enthusiasts to funding agencies, casual visitors to presentational executives and a plethora of potentially interested parties in between.

The name has to do what it says on the tin; be reverential without pretension and aim to serve as a beacon of excellence in perpetuity and beyond all others. It has to be 'hip' without pretention yet classy without elitism and provide an emblem around which all can comfortably muster. Above all - and often just in a fleeting moment such as the click of a mouse - it must instantly relate to people, some of whom may be many miles from our shores and who may never have even heard of Stourbridge, precisely who we are and what we seek to represent.

And finally, it must enjoy widespread public approbation otherwise all of the aforementioned becomes an irrelevance.

So, yes. There is an awful lot hanging on a name. Get it right and iconic status is virtually assured. Get it wrong and the consequences can be at least uncomfortable, at worst fatal.

No surprises, then, that the British Glass Foundation have been giving serious thought to a name to hang on their new museum for some considerable time. Although we may have had more pressing matters to attend to, such as building the actual museum itself, we never lost sight of the vital pre-requisite in securing a suitable nomenclature ready for its opening. This [Special Commemorative Supplement](#) relates for posterity the tale of how we tackled it.

We start against the backdrop of our fundamental *ethos* that this is very much a *People's Museum* in which elitism plays no part. Central to this philosophy is our policy of keeping everyone informed of the facts as soon as they become available to us; hence our communications strategy - constantly under review - which has already resulted in the unprecedented take-up success of our email bulletin *GlassCuts*, the efficacy of our news releases and our excellent relations with the media, and the accessibility of our website. When it came to sorting a name we were as one in declining the services of professional marketers; we decided that not only should *The People* have their say, we reckoned that at the end of the day they would also know best what they wanted to see it called.

Thus, lo did it come to pass that we set the wheels in motion along those lines. It's all recorded in the back issues of *GlassCuts* (viewable at www.britishglassfoundation.org.uk) but to save you the trouble of trawling through that lot we'll give you a synopsis here ...

We first primed the pump by a number of early hints followed by a brief item preparing the way for a naming exercise. Having sown the seeds we gently developed the theme until Issue 78 dated 21st October 2015 which carried the statement:

As progress at White House proceeds apace BGF is mindful of the need to establish its bespoke identity. This is crucial in establishing a marque that will offer an immediately recognizable branding and character that will remain fit for purpose well into the 21st century, perhaps even beyond. Not only must we get this right first time, it must also reflect the aspirations of its own heritage and the people of Stourbridge who are so inextricably allied with it. BGF will shortly be announcing plans for public consultation and direct engagement with the community in their quest.

Issue 81 dated 21st December 2015 saw us go for the jugular in a pre-Christmas strike:

The British Glass Foundation (BGF) is seeking to engage with the local community in identifying a suitable name for the new glass museum that is scheduled to open in 2017. It is intended that the final choice of name will be one that reflects the combination of the past glories of Stourbridge Glass, it's contemporary status and its future direction, with the new facility being its epicentre and showcase. The name should therefore be highly impactful, immediately recognizable and with a longevity factor that identifies the image of Stourbridge Glass well into the 21st century.

This is not a competition per se but should be seen more as an opportunity to offer a positive involvement by engagement in the process. Suggestions are welcomed from any individual or group. Whilst no guarantee is offered as to the final choice, participants can be assured that all submissions will be taken into consideration.

The BGF is similarly also seeking to identify a suitable logo to accompany the name. Suggestions are welcomed under the same terms as above.

Closing date for submissions is 29th February 2016. The final choice for both name and logo will be announced publicly shortly thereafter.

Graham Knowles, BGF Chairman says: *'The choice of name and logo is crucial in helping to establish and maintain the image of the new museum as a global brand. It is therefore vital we get this right first time, and it is only proper that the people of Stourbridge and the wider world of glass who have all supported us so magnificently should now be offered the opportunity to have their say.'*

In the longer term BGF recognizes the prerequisite for lines of communications such as websites, contact details, social media links, diaries and bookings etc. These are under consideration as part of an on-going programme of roll-out and details will be announced as they emerge.

We were expecting a response but wow, how you responded! Suggestions, many of them accompanied by logos, came in by the score and it was self-evident that we had tapped into a rich seam of awareness. Some were brilliant and ticked all the boxes, others were novel, *avant-garde* or tangential and some were, frankly, downright oddball. But, as we shall see, every single one was considered.

By this stage we were coming under a fair bit of pressure from various quarters to hasten proceedings, not least those wishing to rent space, set up business or otherwise utilize the facility. Whilst we recognized the validity of these concerns and the need for a measure of alacrity we were equally conscious that we had only one shot at this and so we avoided being pressured by sticking to our original plans, the next element of which was to compile a panel of The Great and the Good as judges.

This sounds simple but, as is often the case, we had a devil of a job pulling together a pool of people who were simultaneously competent, willing and available. Having managed to do so, the date was set for Thursday 7th April 2016 and the venue was, fittingly, the Red House Glass Cone directly opposite the new museum.

Expertly chaired by Will Farmer of Fieldings Auctioneers in Stourbridge and *Antiques Roadshow* presenter, the impartiality of the proceedings was witnessed throughout by independent spectators including representatives of the media. Guests of Honour were Steve and Jayne Waltho, Mayor and Mayoress of Dudley. There were in total 9 judges on the panel. Will commenced by asking us to consider each entry individually and without discussion.

We then went through the entire list together and gave our initial votes. Many received no votes; several received a handful but after this first ballot the substantial 'long list' was already down to 3. There then followed a period of free discussion on the pros and cons during which each voter was invited to forward the cause for their choice.

They were all good and it was close, but come the final vote the verdict was unanimous with 9 votes. You can't get fairer - or more decisive - than that. Handshakes and congratulations all round, and then outside on a chill wet April morning for the obligatory photos and interviews.

The general consensus is that the final choice hits the spot and says it all, encapsulating as it does the original name of the site and its history together with a clear expression of its function and all in an elegantly simple, non-jingoistic expression that will be a boon to the marketers and the graphic designers alike.

Talking of which and as alluded to above, we were mindful that several submissions were replete with logos, some of which were little short of excellent. It was decided this represented an area that merits further scrutiny, again with a view to getting it right first time. The logo will therefore follow by a separate exercise in due course.

This will also afford time to gauge the reaction to the name, which may also have a bearing on the logo design, so this one will be thought out just as carefully. Watch this space.

And that's it; just another day in the coming together of a new home for the world renowned Stourbridge Glass collection, but a day of enormous significance within the Grand Scheme of things and one in which everyone was clearly proud to have taken part.

For the record, those judges were:

Will Farmer, Fieldings Auctioneers	Chairman
Mayor & Mayoress of Dudley	Representing the Community
Graham Fisher MBE	Trustee, BGF
Meriel Harris	Trustee, BGF
Allister Malcolm	Trustee, BGF
Stuart Connelly	Represent Dudley MBC
Ian Dury	Represent the Glass Community
Jacqui Watson	Fundraising & Marketing Consultant

Impartial observers included:

Rory Walsh	Royal Geographical Society (with IBG)
Bev Holder	Chief Reporter, <i>Stourbridge News</i>
Steve Leath	Photographer, <i>Express & Star</i>

Chosen name was submitted by Lynn Boleyn MBE

Honourable mentions go to Mary Spence MBE and Meriel Harris

Much thanks to everyone else who submitted an entry.

Quotable quotes

'This is such an important decision and I feel incredible honoured and proud to have been part of it. This museum I'm sure is going to live long after most of us are gone'.

Chairman Will Farmer

'It's looking great; it's virtually finished. We're looking to open in the middle of the year - and it will be fully up and running in the next 18 months.'

BGF Trustee and judge Graham Fisher MBE

News item and interviews link

With grateful acknowledgement to Bev Holder, Stourbridge News.

http://www.stourbridgenews.co.uk/news/14411260.Name_for_new_Wordsley_glass_museum_is_revealed/

Also thanks to *Express & Star* and for their coverage of this event on the day.

The BGF wishes to convey its sincere appreciation to all those who have contributed toward what history will eventually come to see as a significant moment in the ongoing and epic saga of Stourbridge Glass. Particular thanks go to the judging panel and to all the good folk of Stourbridge and beyond who gave them so much to actually judge.

Special mention also to Mayor Steve Waltho and Mayoress Jayne Waltho who graciously attended and contributed to proceedings and who have consistently supported our efforts to give Stourbridge a world-class glass museum to be proud of. And which now has a name.

Keep your eyes peeled; it's going to be famous ...

WHITE HOUSE CONE

museum of glass

Thank you all. We are on our way.

Graham Fisher MBE

Graham Fisher MBE
PR & Comms
www.britishglassfoundation.org.uk

THE BRITISH GLASS FOUNDATION GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE SUPPORT GIVEN BY
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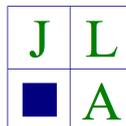


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Also Jane Alexander and colleagues at JLA Consulting for advice on the securing and management of
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Details of other BGF partners and sponsors at: www.britishglassfoundation.org.uk/the-foundation/

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