

Donations

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There is a new feature on the blog this morning. You will see that there is a donations box in the right-hand column. After almost fourteen years of blogging, and more than 17,000 posts I have finally been persuaded that I should ask for donations towards the costs of running this blog, which includes my time for writing it.

I have long been resistant to this, and in any case usually found the income to meet the needs of my family, save for retirement and support others without ever having to seek support in this way. However, things change. And things have changed.

First, I have been asked by commentators here to add this box.

Second, when I asked about this earlier this year people said they would donate.

Third, my own circumstances are changing: I end my last paid university employment in a couple of months time, and that is now only one day a week. As a result I am now, as I was from 2005 to 2015, back to relying on grant income.

Fourth, funders have changed. Or rather, funding has. In 2015 the idea of asking for donations was in its infancy. Now it is not. Crowdfunding is now normal and funders are suggesting that I need to make an appeal of this sort. They point out that many blogs with 10,000 or so reads a day and more than 50,000 Twitter followers can be self-funding on this basis, and that therefore I have a duty to try this route before turning to them for assistance.

So, my long held resistance to this option has been overcome.

I am, of course, aware that there might never have been a worse moment than this to launch such an appeal. That, I know.

And I stress that I am completely committed to keeping this blog free to access. Nor I am going down the route of offering 'rewards' for donations. I do not have the time to mail out mugs, or whatever other incentives people seem to offer. And right now there is no free book forthcoming. Nor a name in a roll of honour. These things just seem to

exist to complicate the funding issue. I am simply saying that if this blog is to continue then the time has come when I need to ask for donations. It may not be able to do so otherwise.

I have no unreasonable expectation of the appeal: it may raise very little at all.

Alternatively, it may wholly fund my hopes to continue working in this way.

Realistically, if it could provide core funding for at least two days a week to let me be free to campaign on the issues that seem important to me, and which seem to attract people to this blog, that would be great. I do not actually want to give up working on other projects entirely, including academic ones. Their interaction with what I do here is important.

That said, the key point is that as many who take part in funding know, core funding for the purpose of thinking, which is what this blog is really all about, is very hard to secure. I once thanked the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust for giving me core funding for five years to literally let me think. From 2009 to 2014 that was utterly invaluable: many of the ideas here developed during that period. Securing grants of that sort now is nigh on impossible. But this blog cannot exist without thinking time.

If you'd like to support I would be grateful. And if you don't want to, or as importantly, you can't, that's also quite OK. You're just as welcome to keep reading. But thanks, either way.

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