

First Draft Second Version Film Script for Blake's Cottage Appeal

Make of Blake's Cottage a Haven

[Image followed by text on blank screen]



The Imagination is not a State: it is The Human Existence itself

Intro

Narrator [Russell Brand? Philip Pullman? Perhaps standing in the Tate's Blake Room?]

On 12 August 1827 a man died in London. He died singing "of the things he saw in Heaven". He was

one of the most radical artists and poets England has ever seen, who took the leap from 18th Century poetry to the grounds of Romanticism. He had devised his own method of printing that engendered unique illuminated poems that still delight and fascinate people all over the world. He is now recognized as one of the great English geniuses of all times.

His name was William Blake. He died as he lived: in poverty and ignored by most. Though he died singing, he had known of bitter despair and there must have been moments when he almost gave up.

He lies in an unmarked grave. Only two buildings are standing of all those in which he lived, and other than a handful of museum collections nowhere celebrates his genius and the gifts it bestowed to the world.

We want to change that. That's why we are inviting you to help make of the Cottage where Blake lived in Felpham in the Sussex Coast of England a home for the dissenting imagination.

Part 1 - Blake experienced reality as something much vaster than the dead clutter we tend to mistake for the substance of our life. He believed that we all have access to the vision that makes our own divinity manifest. That vision nurtures his verse, one of the most powerful of his age. Its influence is felt not only in literature, but in modern thought and psychology as well. His art left behind by gigantic leaps the stiff produce of the art establishment of his day, whose leading figure was Joshua Reynolds.

He earned his living as a commercial engraver of excellence, yet a great deal of his commercial endeavours brought him more loss than profit. He was extraordinarily prolific. The vastness and complexity of his work are exemplified in "Jerusalem", his greatest illuminated poem --a titanic execution written and illustrated on 100 copper plates, of which he did not sell a single copy.

He was denied membership to the Royal Academy on the grounds of "the absurdity of his designs" and "extravagance in his art." He was never commissioned for the great works of public art he longed to create. His only solo exhibition held in 1809 received few visitors. Not a picture was sold. He was described as "an unfortunate lunatic, whose personal inoffensiveness secures him from confinement"; his work as "wretched pictures", the fruit of a "distempered brain".

He kept on reminding us why the arts are essential to human life. It is to a great extent thanks to William Blake that people all over the world look at the artistic creation of Great Britain with reverence.

What he received from his contemporaries in exchange for his genius was derision, humiliation and neglect.

On the year of Blake's death one of his patrons stated, "His Dante is the most wonderful emanation of imagination that I have ever heard of. His fate is a national disgrace; while his pious content is a national example."

Part 2 - Now, every single day someone is being inspired by William Blake somewhere in the world. He's studied in universities, books and articles about him are published all the time and new generations of artist and thinkers walk guided by his inspiration and example.

Those who love and admire him are eager to see the places where he lived and created. In London they find a small Georgian house with only one floor resisting the crushing pressure to turn the whole building into a den for commerce. They can't understand it. Why this most emblematic of English artists, who has given so much to the world, doesn't have a place to celebrate his life and work?

We have now the opportunity to change that. The Cottage where he lived in Felpham is on sale and we have the sole right to purchase... but we need to raise £600,000 by 31 October 2014.

It was while living in the Cottage that Blake wrote the words for the hymn *Jerusalem*.

It was here too that he was arrested and charged for sedition, and where he worked for a well-meaning but mediocre patron... who indeed patronised him. Though besieged, he kept on executing the dictates of his genius.

We will honour Blake's unyielding spirit by turning the Cottage into a haven for creation and free thought.

It will be put into a charitable trust to be held in perpetuity and will invite individuals and groups to conceive and create. Part of the building may function as a House of Refuge for persecuted writers. It will host events of Blakean interest and related to the work developed by its residents.

Its core values will still be those that sustained Blake through a lifetime of struggle: Imagination and dissent.

With your support this Visionary Home will be possible. We are inviting everyone each to give a small amount through this crowdfunding appeal. Then the Cottage will belong to everyone for the benefit of the nation and indeed the world.

So please donate - Let us make of Blake's Cottage a Haven.