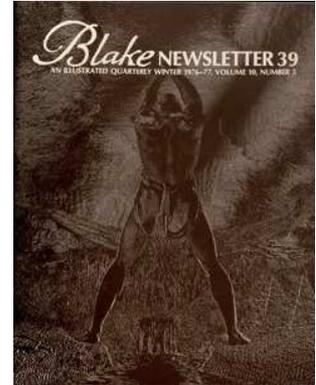


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BLAKE

N E W S

Samuel Palmer in the Market

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News

Newsletter Publications

We would like to call our readers' attention to the list of items for sale by the *Newsletter* printed in every issue with the editorial information inside the front cover. There is our reproduction of *America*, of course, but also a number of special back issues, including the handlists of Blake material in the British Museum Department of Prints & Drawings (issue 20, edited by G. E. Bentley, Jr.), and in the Lessing J. Rosenwald Collection (issue 35, edited by Ruth Lehrer). Readers who did not subscribe to the *Newsletter* before 1970 should note that we publish a reprinting, in two parts, of the issues first published at Berkeley, 1967-70.

News Always Wanted

It has been a long time since we reminded our readers that we always welcome news, which naturally includes conferences, recent publications, and the like, but also--when readers tell us about them--lectures on Blake and related subjects, classes handled in some special way that would interest our readership, work in progress (dissertations of course, but also any other work on Blake), queries--in short, "professional" news as well as items of more casual interest.

Our Bibliographer's Request

The *Newsletter* Bibliographer, Thomas Minnick, asks that you keep him and his Annual Checklist of Recent Blake Scholarship in mind when you write or run across Blakean items that might escape his notice. Duty calls: all the virtues of the Checklist involve its usefulness, and it can be most useful when most timely and most complete. Certain categories of information--reviews of books on Blake, for instance--are notoriously resistant to comprehensiveness, especially up-to-date comprehensiveness, and anything you can do to help will be appreciated.

Romantic and Modern Literature: Seminar

According to Annette Levitt of Temple University, the title of what has been the MLA seminar on Blake and the Moderns will be changed this year to The Romantics and Modern Literature. The panel will be restricted to three members speaking for no more than fifteen minutes each, to allow time for discussion. Requests to attend the seminar may be sent to Professor Robert Bertholf, Department of English, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio 44242, and to Professor Annette Levitt, Department of English, Temple University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19122.

Blake & The Moderns

Professors Robert Bertholf and Annette Levitt are editing a collection of essays on Blake and the Moderns. While most of the papers have been decided upon, there is space for one or two more. If you have an appropriate essay, write to either of the editors. For their addresses see the previous news item.



MLA Seminar: Laocoön

In the opening paragraph of Irene Tayler's article on Blake's Laocoön, interested readers will find further information on the 1976 MLA Blake seminar, announced originally in *Newsletter* 38.

Samuel Palmer in the Marketplace

A recent series of newspaper articles has gone very far toward documenting the suspicion, first voiced by David Gould in a letter to *The Times* in 1970, that many of the paintings sold in recent years as Samuel Palmers have been modern fakes. The most recent installments in the story have come from *Times* sales-room correspondent Geraldine Norman, who traced several of the doubtful paintings to Thomas Keating. In a letter to *The Times* in August Keating admitted painting many imitations of the works of Palmer as well as of other artists. In a 27 August interview on *Nationwide*, a BBC television news program, Keating said that he had painted his imitations with the aim of showing the greed of art dealers who make their fortune off of artists whose works are bought for as little as possible and are sold as expensively as possible, a situation in which Keating says he has found himself for a lifetime of painting. Keating also claims that his imitations appear clearly as imitations to anyone who cares enough about Palmer to find out what Palmer's paintings really look like, and Keating's point in this case seems to be carried by the numerous doubts expressed by Palmer experts over the past few years about several paintings on the market.

According to stories in *The Times*, about thirteen paintings attributed to Palmer are being seriously doubted. The first Palmer to be questioned was a drawing of Sepham Barn, acquired along with three other Palmers by Leger Galleries in Old Bond Street in 1970 from Jane Kelly, Keating's girlfriend. The authenticity of the Sepham Barn drawing was doubted

by Gould in his letter to *The Times*, but also by Sir Karl Parker, of the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, and by Raymond Lister, of Cambridge. Gould pursued the matter in correspondence with several other experts from 1970 until this summer when Geraldine Norman finally put the story in print.

Keating claims to have imitated many artists in the past several years, including among others Rembrandt, Gainsborough and Reynolds, Constable, Turner, Degas, and Renoir, but he has also confessed to being a bad imitator--and wondered how so many could have been taken in. Keating is now collaborating with Geraldine Norman and her husband on a book about Keating's years as an imitator, and he has volunteered to assist a committee of inquiry set up by the British Antique Dealers' Association to look into the matter of the thirteen doubted Palmers. (Readers who want more details of the story should see *The Times*, which has printed articles on the faked Palmers almost daily since mid-July.)

Forthcoming Publications

Geoffrey Keynes has edited a Blake Trust volume on Blake's Laocoön with twelve monochrome reproductions and commentary, bound in half leather, that is now scheduled for publication by Trianon Press toward the end of 1976.

All the engraved and etched prints that Blake designed himself, including the works in illuminated printing, will be reproduced in a forthcoming volume edited by David Bindman and Deirdre Toomey. There will be about 600 reproductions, an introduction of about thirty pages, and brief comments on each plate. Thames & Hudson expects to publish the volume in 1977.

A Correction

In Frank Parisi's review of the Oothoon Dance Theatre production of "The Mental Traveller" (*Blake Newsletter* 36, Spring 1976, p. 128), Heidi Parisi is listed in the credits as choreographer. In fact the choreography was by Heidi Parisi and Neil Tennant.

Scripting a City of Art: Golgonooza

A buzz saw tears through fresh timber, raining a shower of wood shavings on the heads of workers slathering mortar onto layers of brick. The construction crew is small, the labor large: transforming a dream into a reality.

The dream is the collective vision of a group of local artists drawing inspiration from the spiritual ideals of the Romantic poet William Blake and his mythical city of art, Golgonooza.

The artists claim dedication to the rebirth of that city, to perpetuating Blake's divine humanity, his cosmos of spiritual--yet human--beings.

One way of perpetuating is to record the written word, and by building a "scriptorium"--a printing

house based on the handiwork of medieval monks and ancient engravers--the Golgonooza group hopes to begin publishing the works of Blake, local poets and their own writings.

Among the artists building the two-story structure that will house the scriptorium in Millfield are Assoc. Prof. of Art Aethelred and Alexandra Eldridge, proprietors of the Church of The Blake Revival; Daren Neglia, who has just returned from a nine-month stint as an apprentice in the Center for Book Arts in New York; architectural designer David Calahan; writer and illustrator Doug Lovelace and woodworker/ironcaster/jack-of-all-trades Nick Engler.

With a shop of friends skilled in various trades from stonemasonry to building design, the group is aiming toward completion of the scriptorium by late fall.

Watching the building go up brick by brick, it is hard to visualize what the strange combination of timber, old bricks and stone will look like. But a glance at designer Calahan's intricate blueprints reveals that the building is not as haphazard as it appears.

Calahan, who claims the plans were just the fruit of a few spare hours, searched for a cubit--the Biblical measuring unit--that would reflect the spirit in which the building was designed. Most ancient cathedrals were built with cubits, measured by dimensions such as the distance to Jerusalem or the length of the church bells' wave-length, he said.

"Blake found--or constructed--twenty-seven cathedral cities in England, each representing a quality, a psychological reality. He divided the world into twenty-seven ages, represented by those cathedral cities, each with a remarkable feature," Calahan explains.

"It works out neatly," he adds. "Blake was able to master a means of making it more comprehensible, more real to study the Bible, to make it all seem less accidental.

"The number twenty-seven is also a recurring number in Blake's cosmology of the civilized world, so my cubit became twenty-seven inches, and the rest of the building was based on that."

Other considerations for the scriptorium were a strong foundation, inner space for a printing press, a bookbinding workshop and individual working areas in two stories.

The finished facade will be an eclectic mix of medieval half-timber house, Gothic cathedral, gables, sheer-buttressed walls and "elaborated barn," he noted.

"It was great to have the opportunity to do an irresponsible building with no authority, no money or time limit. It was harder on my conscience, though--I got away with things I never could have working for a client.