

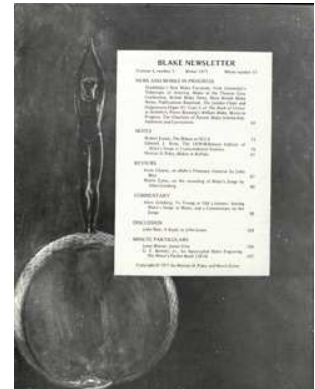
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**BLAKE**

N E W S

British Blake News

Michael Phillips

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From Michael Phillips, our Associate Editor at the University of Edinburgh:

For students of Blake perhaps the most significant event of interest in some years will be the Blake Exhibition due to open shortly at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. The Keeper of Paintings and Drawings, Mr. M. Cormack, has kindly written the following note with regard to the Exhibition and in particular the Exhibition Catalogue:

The exhibition is provisionally due to open on January 9th, but this may be changed. The paperback edition of the catalogue will be on sale *only* at the Museum, price £1 and a hard cover edition will be published by W. Heffer & Sons Ltd., Trinity Street, Cambridge and be available from all booksellers, price £3. The catalogue will comprise 96 pages of text including a supplement of the proposed bequest by Sir Geoffrey Keynes plus 74 illustrations on 44 pages of plates, and a coloured frontispiece. This should be available at the same time as the exhibition.

A review of the Fitzwilliam exhibition will appear in a forthcoming number of the *News-letter*.

On Sunday, 15 November 1970, at 8:00 p.m. Jack Lindsay presented at the Mermaid Theatre, London, an evening entitled "William Blake And Our World." Sir Bernard Miles and Josephine Wilson gave readings from Blake's works to complement Mr. Lindsay's discussion. The following note by Mr. Lindsay gives some suggestion of the evening's presentation:

William Blake, born in 1757 to a London hosier, early turned to art, and made his living as artist and engraver. But he was opposed to the dominant art-forms of his world and sought to express an imaginative vision, which he carried over into his poetry. He matured in the later 1780's as the French Revolution was breaking out, and found his inspiration in the conviction of vast changes going on which would culminate in a Last Judgement, or total reversal of things. He began a semi-allegoric epic on the French Revolution, of which a part got into proofs; but the extremely repressive situation of the 1790's led him to print his own poems with his designs by an etching process. He was thus led into a "prophetic" method in which he felt he could express the human situation at multiple levels, in its full inter-connections. His work ranged from lyrics of unparalleled intensity and simplicity, to the highly complex Prophetic Books. Disregarded in his own age, taken up to some extent by Rossetti and Swinburne, he began to come into his own with the turn of the century; and now, because of his utterly uncompromising spirit, is one of the few "great poets" of the past who maintains a direct and powerful impact on the young people of today in their various revolts and in their attempts to create their own art and poetry.

The rapidly increasing interest in Blake in Britain is further suggested by a new play by David Hare, "What Happened to Blake," recently performed at the Royal Court Theatre, London, and the poet Adrian Mitchell's play, "Tyger, Tyger," which has been announced for future production at the National Theatre.

In the *Times*, Tuesday, 10 November 1970, was a pen and pencil drawing by Henry Fuseli which apparently was at one time in Blake's possession. The drawing, which was to be sold at auction at Christie's on Tuesday, 17 November, was described as follows:

David and Goliath, by Henry Fuseli, R. A., bears Blake's initials and date 1779, pencil, pen and grey ink, grey wash, on Whatman paper dated 1794, 10 3/4 in. by 6 1/2 in.

Kathleen Raine's *William Blake* has been recently published by Thames and Hudson for their "World of Art Library" and contains 156 illustrations, 28 in colour.

MORE BRITISH BLAKE NOTES

From G. E. Bentley, Jr.:

Prophecy in England is not dead, according to the following notice seen recently in a London taxi:

CRIME AND BANDITRY, DISTRESS OF NATIONS, AND PERPLEXITY will continue to increase until the Bishops open Joanna Southcott's Box of Sealed Writings.

The notice is sponsored by The Panacea Society (Bedford, England) which was founded (according to their brochures) about 1916 to broadcast the ideas of "Eight Modern Prophets," the first two of whom are Richard Brothers and Joanna Southcott. (She is said to have died "of grief, because the Child disappeared at the birth," because it was only "the birth of the Child's etheric body.") They are also fostering "The 'Whosoever' Religion," "The Last Religion for the Last Times," based upon Joel 2.32: "Who-soever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered."

Christie's sold on 17 November 1970 a number of "Blake" works, including one (no. 140) called "Portrait of a man, said to be William Blake," by G. Harlow, which had previously been sold at Sotheby's on 29 July 1925, lot 147 (see *Blake Records* [1969], p. 223), but I am told by those who have seen it that it had no evident connection with either Blake or Harlow. There was also in the sale a counterproof of the Visionary Head of Queen Eleanor (no. 30) and a Blake drawing of what may be Saul and David (no. 29).

Sotheby's sold on 17 December 1970 *Urizen* [pl. 3] (no. 14) about the genuineness of which there is some difference of opinion.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

*The Golden Chain / Lyrical Poems 1964-1969* by Peter Russell. Venice, 1970. 48 pp. \$5. Although it is not our practice to review contemporary poetry in the *Blake Newsletter*, Peter Russell's book should be noted as being of unusual interest to our readers because of the impact of Blake on some of the poems published here. The title poem has as its epigraph five lines from the Fairy's speech in the introductory lines to *Europe*; a section called "Manuela's Poems" is arranged in nine short "Nights" and is also evidently indebted to Blake's idea of the Emanation. The book, published privately by the