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Q U E R Y

Answers to Hard Questions: The Residence of Thomas Butts

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QUERIES

In the letter to Butts, Jan. 10, 1802, Blake adds a postscript "Your Obliging proposal of Exhibiting my two Pictures likewise calls for my thanks; I will finish the other, & then we shall judge of the matter with certainty," and again, on August 16, 1803, "that passage in my rough sketch which related to your kindness in offering to Exhibit my 2 last Pictures in the Gallery in Berners Street. . . ." Does anyone know anything about this exhibition, and did Blake exhibit?

Ruthven Todd

In the final version of Blake's Notebook poem "English Encouragement of Art," occurs the curious line "Menny wouwer both Bungleishness & skill (E 501). Erdman suggests that "Menny wouwer" is "Cromeklan for maneuver" (p. 787). Perhaps; but it occurs to me this may also be a pun on Meynheer Wouwerman, referring to the Dutch painter Phillips Wouwerman.

Morton D. Paley

Answers to Hard Questions: The Residence of Thomas Butts

Mr Ruthven Todd speculates about where Blake's patron Thomas Butts lived (*Blake Newsletter*, 11 [1968], 25-27). Thomas Butts was by 1789 living in a fine large house at about Number 9 on the north side of Great Marlborough Street, Westminster. The house was rated at £44, which suggests that it was considerably more pretentious than Blake's house a few hundred yards away at 28 Poland Street, which was rated at £18. I do not know when Butts arrived in the Marlborough Street house, but he had not been there when the rates were collected in 1787. (This information is based upon the rate books for Great Marlboro[ugh] Ward in Westminster Public Library, Buckingham Palace Road, London.) Blake's letters were addressed to him at this house through 1803.

Thereafter he moved to a more elegant neighbourhood, for in 1808 George Cumberland wrote that "Mr. Butts [lives at] Fitzroy Square Corner of Grafton Square 27 [word illeg]" (BM Add. MSS. 36519 1, f. 401). This is presumably the house at 17 Grafton Street (which was on the corner of Grafton Street and Fitzroy Square) where Butts died in 1845 ("Thomas Butts, White Collar Maecenas", *PMLA*, LXXI [1956], 1066n).

G. E. Bentley, Jr.

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