

Graphics

On the next sheet, you will find an example of a graphic panel to be mounted on each lectern.

Each board will contain information relevant to William Blake's connection to each location. Each panel will feature approximately 300 words, images and a QR code to link to video content created by students at Felpham Community College.

The oak border of each panel will feature an engraved quote from a William Blake poem.

When the meadows laugh



WYB

The William Blake Trail

FELPHAM | WEST SUSSEX

BLAKE AND HOTHAM



On the 18th January 1787, just 13 years before the poet, William Blake, came to live in Felpham, Sir Richard Hotham laid the foundation stone of his new town, Hothamton.

Believing in the curative nature of the sea air, Hotham saw a business opportunity to attract some of the rich and famous from Brighton (such as the Prince of Wales) and Weymouth. In all, he bought around 1,600 acres (6.5 km²), including some from the Duke of Richmond in 1790, and the laying of the foundation stone thus marked the beginning of the process by which Bognor Regis became a popular seaside resort.

Sir Richard Hotham built Hotham Park House in 1792 (the original clock tower of the chapel remains for you to see today) and on 27th April 1798, Hotham sold some land in Felpham to William Blake's patron, William Hayley. Hayley built his home, The Turret, there. William Blake also experienced the restorative

power of the sea. In a letter to Thomas Butts written in 1800, Blake recounts his joy at observing nature from the sands of Felpham beach:

*To my Friend Butts I write
My first Vision of Light,
On the yellow sands sitting.
The Sun was emitting
His glorious beams
From Heaven's high streams.*

Sir Richard Hotham died on 13th March 1799, eighteen months before Blake's arrival in Felpham, and was buried at the parish church of St. Mary Magdalene at South Bersted. His grave can still be seen there to this day and an annual wreath laying ceremony celebrates his contribution to the community and the fact that, as with William Blake, one person's vision can live on through future generations.

The William Blake Trail is supported by students at the Felpham Community College thanks to a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Funding raised by
The National Lottery
and awarded by the Heritage Lottery Fund



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scan the QR code below. Alternatively visit
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with the lively green

And did this feet in ancient time

02.

WB

The William Blake Trail

FELPHAM | WEST SUSSEX

A LEGACY FOR LIFE



As you look out towards the South Downs and surrounding countryside, it is easy to see where the inspiration for William Blake's epic poem, *Jerusalem*, came from:

*And did those feet in ancient time,
Walk upon England's
mountains green?
And was the holy Lamb of God,
On England's pleasant pastures seen?*

The poem, which was drafted while Blake was living in Felpham, celebrates the countryside and rural idyll, but Blake also promoted the ability of the individual to make their mark upon humanity. Handwritten at the bottom of *Jerusalem*, he pens an inscription from the Book of Numbers in the Bible:

*"Would to God that all the
Lord's people were Prophets."*
Blake was committed to producing works to stir our consciences against the injustice and

violence he saw within Victorian society. He wanted us to be free from the '*mind-forged manacles*' mentioned in his poem *London*.

He suggested that barriers to progress, either spiritual or practical are created in our minds, borne out of our experiences and the inability to think outside of our personal reality.

Having been used by the National Union of Suffrage Societies in the 1918 celebrations of women's enfranchisement, Millicent Fawcett (leader of the suffragists) wrote to the English composer Hubert Parry '*Your Jerusalem ought to be made the women voters' hymn*'. Having heard Parry's musical arrangement for the poem and experienced assemblies singing it, Grace Hadow (the Vice Chairperson of the Women's Institute) proposed that it become an anthem for the Women's Institute (W.I.) in 1923.

Perhaps fittingly, the first W.I. meeting in England was held on 9th November 1915, in *The Fox Goes Free* pub in nearby Charlton.

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It is the greatest of crimes



WYB

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BLAKE AND HAYLEY



Born on 29th October 1745, William Hayley was Felpham's most famous and influential resident during his lifetime, renowned for his poetry and literary works. He was Blake's patron, commissioning a number of works including portraits of famous literary figures for his library.

Although Blake's works are seen as influential today, his paintings received little attention during his lifetime. His early career was as an engraver but he developed new approaches and techniques in painting and printmaking over the course of his life.

His decision to follow his own interests in the arts, such as poetry and landscape painting, often made it hard for Blake to make a living. Whilst Hayley saw portraiture as more profitable, Blake felt that it went against his creative integrity and it became a source of tension between the two. By January 1803,

the relationship between artist and patron had deteriorated considerably and Blake wrote to his brother James that "as a poet he is frightened at me, and as a painter his views and mine are opposite". This was one of the reasons Blake decided to leave Felpham later in 1803.

Commenting on his former relationship with Hayley, Blake later wrote in his notebook:

*Thy friendship oft has made
my heart to ache:
Do be my Enemy for
Friendship's sake.*

Hayley died at Turret House on 12th October 1820. The house was finally demolished in 1961 and you are now standing opposite its former location.

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to depress true art and science

Away to sweet Felpham



The William Blake Trail

FELPHAM | WEST SUSSEX

WILLIAM BLAKE'S COTTAGE



This cottage is one of only two remaining properties that William Blake lived in.

Having dwelt in nine properties throughout his life, Blake and his wife moved here in 1800. Blake considered the village to be idyllic and wrote to his friend, Mrs Anna Flaxman that:

*"The bread of sweet thought
and the wine of delight
Feed the village of Felpham
by day and by night."*

At this time, England was on high alert due to Napoleon taking control of France following the French Revolution. A peace treaty made between Britain and France in 1802 was soon broken by the French and British Soldiers were stationed at intervals all along the South Coast, including at Felpham, in case of an invasion from the Revolutionaries.

One such man was Private John Scofield, a soldier with the First Dragoon guards who went into William Blake's garden on 12th August 1803. The two men exchanged words and Blake physically escorted Scofield off his land and towards The Fox Inn. Blake was accused by Scofield to have shouted "Damn the King!" and "All soldiers are slaves" but was later acquitted in Chichester.

With his tenancy agreement coming to an end and the damp in the cottage affecting his and his wife's health "my wife has agues and rheumatisms almost ever since she has been here" (letter to his brother James dated 30th January 1803), Blake and his wife returned to London on 18th September 1803.



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for Heaven is there

God damn the King!



WB The William Blake Trail

FELPHAM | WEST SUSSEX

REBEL OR MAN OF THE PEOPLE?



On Monday 15th August 1803, John Scofield a Private in the 1st Dragoon Guards, swore before John Quantock a Justice of the Peace in Chichester, that on Friday 12th August William Blake had assaulted him and uttered words of sedition.

Scofield stated he had tried to leave the garden peacefully, but Blake had pushed him out and down the road and then followed him and twice taken him by the collar while Scofield himself made no resistance. Scofield also stated that Blake had said that if Napoleon invaded he would win easily and that Blake had damned the King and said all soldiers were slaves.

It is commonly known that Blake clearly had misgivings about those in authority:

*How the chimney-sweeper's cry
Every blackning church appals,
And the hapless soldier's sigh
Runs in blood down palace-walls.
From London.*

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However, he was found not guilty of the charges at the Quarter Sessions in the Guildhall, Chichester on 11th January 1804 with five witnesses who claimed to have seen the incident.

Whether the villagers acted out of fondness for William and Catherine Blake or as a result of their opposition to the presence of troops (which was thought to have caused a shortage of supplies, increased drunkenness, fighting and a general deterioration in behaviour), the kindness of the villagers of Felpham were praised in a letter William Blake wrote to his friend, Thomas Butts on 18th August 1803:



*"... THE PEACEABLE VILLAGERS
have always been forward in
expressing their kindness for us,
and they express their sorrow
at our departure as soon as
they hear of it. Everyone here
is evidence for Peace and
Good Neighbourhood."*

THOMAS BUTTS | Aug 18th 1803

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All soldiers are slaves!

To See the World in a Grain of Sand,



WVB

The William Blake Trail

FELPHAM | WEST SUSSEX



A VISIONARY POET

In 1800, William Blake wrote to his friend Thomas Butts:

*Such the vision to me
Appear'd on the sea.*

It is clear that Blake found his time in Felpham highly inspiring and the serenity awarded to him by the landscape fostered great visions and stimulus for his writing and art. In a letter to John Flaxman, dated 21st September 1800, Blake wrote:

*Heaven opens here on all sides her golden Gates;
her windows are not obstructed by vapours; voices
of Celestial inhabitants are more distinctly heard,
& their forms more distinctly seen.*

William Blake had claimed to see visions from early childhood. In a letter of condolence to his patron William Hayley, who had lost his son just four days beforehand in May 1800, Blake wrote:

*I know that our deceased friends are more really
with us than when they were apparent to our
mortal part. Thirteen years ago I lost a brother,
and with his spirit I converse daily and hourly in*

*the spirit, and see him in my remembrance, in
the region of my imagination. I hear his advice,
and even now write from his dictate.*

He had reportedly seen visions from as young as four years of age and his Victorian biographer, Alexander Gilchrist, spoke of him having seen "a tree filled with angels, bright angelic wings bespangling every bough like stars", at the age of eight or ten in Peckham Rye, London.

As you walk along the promenade, gaze out over the sea and contemplate the thoughts and ideas of a visionary poet who, in his poem Auguries of Innocence, urges us to:



*"... TO SEE A WORLD
in a Grain of Sand,
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm
of your hand,
And Eternity in an hour.*

WILLIAM BLAKE | MON 00th 1800

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and Heaven in a Wild Flower