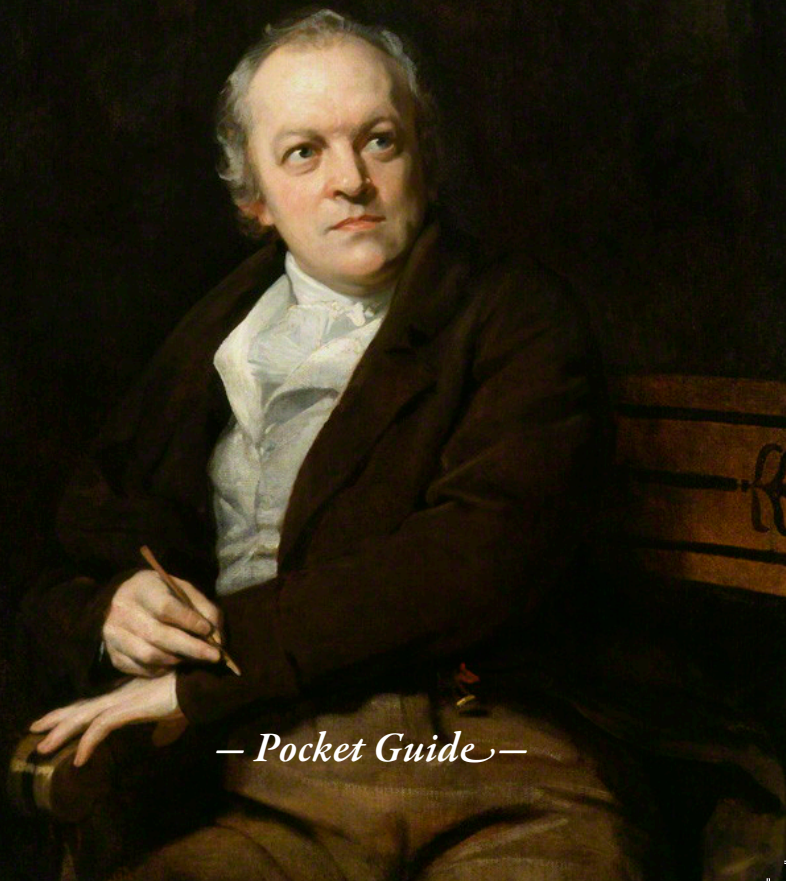


In 1800, the visionary poet, painter and print-maker William Blake arrived in Felpham with his wife Catherine and rented a cottage with views of open fields all the way to the sea. Blake spent three years in West Sussex, working as an engraver and illustrator for his patron William Hayley. While living in the village, Blake also started work on his epic poem Milton. He took great joy in the Sussex scenery and there is no doubt it inspired him to write And did those feet in ancient time, a poem from the preface of Milton that later became immortalised as the hymn Jerusalem. Famously, Blake was charged with sedition while living in Felpham after Private John Scofield, a soldier who was lodging at the nearby Fox Inn, accused him of shouting "Damn the King!" and "All soldiers are slaves." Blake was later cleared after a trial at Chichester Guildhall. Blake's return to London was not a direct result of this incident, but due to a number of factors, including the dampness of the cottage, which was affecting his and Catherine's health. One major factor in his decision to leave was certainly the souring of his relationship with Hayley, who failed to understand Blake's visionary genius. While Blake was grateful for Hayley's generosity, he realised he was in danger of being turned into a tame poet, engraver and painter. He therefore left Sussex before his artistic integrity was destroyed, immortalising Hayley in the epigram: "Thy friendship oft has made my heart to ache: Do be my enemy for friendship's sake."

The William Blake Trail has been created by students at Felpham Community College to give visitors to the village a better understanding of Blake's time in Felpham and its importance to his work. Interpretation boards are situated at six locations connected to Blake, starting in Hotham Park. The trail is accessible and takes less than an hour to walk. Each interpretation board offers insights into Blake's life in Sussex and features a QR code that can be scanned for further information online at www.blaketrail.org.uk

The William Blake Trail

FELPHAM | WEST SUSSEX



— Pocket Guide —

01. Hotham Park
The trail begins in Hotham Park. The first interpretation board can be found on the main footpath opposite the public toilets and near Hotham Park House, former residence of Sir Richard Hotham who developed Bognor into a seaside resort and sold land in Felpham to William Hayley, William Blake's patron.

02. Field View (approximately 15 - 20 minutes to walk from Hotham Park)
Follow the footpath around to the park main public car park and exit through the main entrance. At the mini-roundabout, turn left into Upper Bognor Road. The footpath narrows on the left so it is best to cross here and walk on the pavement on the right hand side. Turn right into Mead Lane and continue along it until it meets Hook Lane. Turn right into Hook Lane and walk straight on until you see the sign for Brooks Lane. Turn left into Brooks Lane and walk along the path until you reach the first right turn. Turn right here and the interpretation board can be found further down on the left. Here, you will be treated to the views over the South Downs that inspired William Blake to write *And did those feet in ancient time*. Blake regularly travelled from Felpham to Lavant to visit a spinster named Harriet Poole and it is widely accepted that this journey influenced his poetry.

03. Hayley's Turret (approximately 15 - 20 minutes to walk from Field View)
Continue in the same direction, past Ladybrook Community Orchard until you reach Felpham Way. Cross at the pedestrian crossing, walk over the bridge ahead of you and turn immediately right into Rife Way. Follow the road all the way around and turn right into Links Avenue. Walk along to the end of Links Avenue and turn left into Felpham Road. Continue along the road, past the row of shops, until you see Limmer Lane on the right. It is worth noting that on the left is St. Mary's Church, which features a Blake Memorial Window that is worth visiting. Turn right into Limmer Lane and keep walking until you see The Thatched House pub on the right; the location of our third interpretation board. The pub stands opposite the location of William Hayley's house, known as the Turret. Hayley built the villa following the death of his only son and lived there until his own death in 1820. The villa was demolished in 1961.

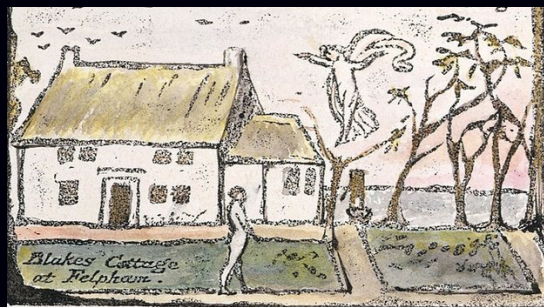
04. Blake's Cottage (approximately 3 minutes walk from Hayley's Turret)
Continue right along Waterloo Road, past the Fox Inn on the right. You will see our interpretation board on the left next to the entrance to The Old Rectory, close to Blake's cottage, one of only two remaining properties he lived in. Blake enjoyed living close to the sea in Felpham, writing to a friend that "The bread of sweet thought and the wine of delight, feed the village of Felpham by day and by night."

05. Sea View 1 (approximately 5 minutes walk from Blake's Cottage)

A stroll south past Blake's Cottage on Blake's Road will bring you to the seafront where our fifth interpretation board can be found near the beach huts. This board features more information about Blake's encounter in his garden with Private John Scofield and his trial in Chichester on the grounds of sedition.

06. Sea View 2 (approximately 10 minutes walk from Sea View 1)

A brisk walk along the seafront brings you to our final interpretation board, situated near Butlin's, which features more information on the way in which the Sussex coast influenced Blake and his visions. If you continue along the sea front and exit just past Butlin's, a walk along Gloucester Road will bring you back to Hotham Park.



The William Blake Trail has been created by students from Felpham Community College, thanks to a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund.



