



Akenfield

A film by Peter Hall

Based on the best-selling book by Ronald Blythe

Based on Ronald Blythe's acclaimed oral-history book *Akenfield: Portrait of an English Village*, Peter Hall's extraordinary long-unseen film *Akenfield* offers a lyrical yet authentic depiction of British pastoral life. Now newly restored in 2K by the BFI National Archive, it will be released on DVD and Blu-ray for the first time in a Dual Format Edition on 25 July 2016. The discs are packed with special features including a making-of documentary and interviews with cast, crew and author Ronald Blythe.

Akenfield tells the story of a farming family who have lived for generations in the bucolic Suffolk village of the film's title. Real-life local farmhand Garrow Shand gives a compelling naturalistic central performance, in three roles, as farmhand Tom Rouse, his father and grandfather – a lineage which has experienced hardship, happiness and love, and struggled with the pressures of mechanisation, two world wars and shifting social mores.

A profoundly romantic work of sublime poetic realism, *Akenfield* boasts compelling performances from its cast of non-professional actors (drawn from the living communities of several Suffolk villages) and a sweeping, rhapsodic orchestral score composed by Michael Tippett (*Fantasia Concertante on a Theme of Corelli*).

The influences of this quietly dramatic, humorous and deeply moving film, about the family ties that bind and the desire to escape deep roots, can still be felt in the lyrical, personal work of other directors such as Terence Davies and Mark Cousins.

Special features

- Brand new 2K digital restoration by the BFI National Archive
- *Akenfield Revisited* (Rex Pyke, 2004, 39 mins): making-of documentary with extensive interviews
- *Akenfield on Location* (1973, 19 mins): 16mm footage capturing the film's production
- *On-set Interview with Ronald Blythe* (1973, 3 mins): filmed on the first day of production
- *An Interview with Sir Peter Hall* (2004, 12 mins)
- *An Interview with Garrow Shand* (2004, 11 mins)
- *An Interview with Ronald Blythe* (2004, 15 mins)
- *An Interview with Rex Pyke* (2016, 37 mins): newly-filmed interview with the film's producer
- *Akenfield Cast and Crew Interview at the National Film Theatre* (2004, 27 mins): on-stage interview, presented with original mute 16mm location footage
- Production Stills Gallery (4 mins)
- Illustrated booklet with writing by Sir Peter Hall and Ronald Blythe, and full film credits

Cont...

.. / 2

Special screening of *Akenfield* at BFI Southbank, NFT1 – Wednesday 20 July

Akenfield can be seen in a rare outing on the big screen in NFT1 at BFI Southbank on Wednesday 20 July at 18:10. The screening will be followed by a conversation between members of Peter Hall's family and other guests, hosted by Sam Dunn, Head of BFI Video Publishing.

Tickets are on sale now at www.bfi.org.uk/whatson

Product details

RRP: £19.99/ Cat. no. BFIB1209 / Cert 12

UK / 1974 / colour / English language, with optional hard-of-hearing subtitles / 98 mins / original aspect ratio 2.35:1 // BD50: 1080p, 24fps, PCM mono audio (28kHz/24-bit)

DVD9: PAL, Dolby Digital 2.0 mono (192kbps)

Press contact:

Jill Reading, BFI Press Office

Tel: (020) 7957 4759

E-mail: jill.reading@bfi.org.uk

Images are available to download at www.image.net under BFI DVD & Blu-ray

BFI releases are available from all good home entertainment retailers or by mail order from the BFI Shop Tel: 020 7815 1350 or online at www.bfi.org.uk/shop

1 July 2016