The Making of 'Old Bungay'

> Bungay is a Lady with a 'Past'. A past which is half concealed and half revealed by such evidence as is supplied by her druidic Stone and Fair, both of which originate in that dim and distant pre-Roman period popularly conceived of as Celtic.[1]

This paper is based on the more contemporary aspects of my research for a forthcoming book on the folklore of the Black Dog of Bungay as a case study of folklore in the context of a rural community. The material I am presenting today is largely based on a condensed version of the chapter looking at the contemporary development of the Black Dog from the 1930s to the 1970s researched through snowballing interview technique, personal correspondence and archival research.

Bungay is a small country town of approximately 5000 people on border of Norfolk and Suffolk approximately 20 miles from the coast. Located on high territory and bordered by the river Waveny and located on the edge of the marshlands it has been the site of numerous settlements and fortifications since the Neolithic period. The town itself has a peculiar and gothic claim to fame. On August 4 1577 during a thuderstorm of "darkness, rain, hail, thunder and lightning as was never seen the like" the church of St Mary's was attacked by the apparition of a huge spectral hound.

Clergyman Abraham Fleming vividly describes the event in the following tract

> *"Immediately hereupon, there appeared in a most horrible similitude and likenesse to the congregation then and there present a dog as they might discerne it, of a black colour; at the site whereof, together with the fearful flashes of fire which were then seene, moved such admiration in the minds of the assemblie, that they thought doomesday was already come. This black dog, or the divile in such a likenesse (God hee who knoweth all worketh all) running all along down the body of the church with great swiftnesse and incredible haste, among the people, in a visible fourm and shape, passed betweene two persons, as they were kneeling upon their knees, and occupied in prayer as it seemed, wrung the necks of them bothe at one instant clefe backward, in so much that even at a moment where they kneeled, they strangely died… There was at ye same time another wonder wrought; for the same black dog, still continuing and remaining in one and the self same shape, passing by another man of the congregation in the church, gave him such a gripe on the back, that therewith all he was presently drawen togither and shrunk up ,as it were a peece of lether scorched in a hot fire; or as the mouth of a purse or bag, drawen togither with string. The man albeit hee was in so strange a taking, dyed not, but as it is thought is yet alive: whiche thing is mervelous in the eyes of men, and offereth much matter of amasing the minde..."*

[1] Harris, H.A Reverend. *Forward.* In Mann, Ethel, 'Old Bungay'. Heath Cranton Ltd: London 1933. 7.

Then, according to the legend and the widely circulated pamphlet of Abraham Fleming, the hound fled to Blythburg Holy Trinity church, the cathedral of the marshes where,

> ...placing himself uppon a maine balke or beam, whereon some ye Rood did stand, sodainly he gave a swinge downe through ye church, and there also, as before, slew two men and a lad, and burned the hand of another person that was there among the rest of the company, of whom divers were blasted."

The spectral hound then fled the church leaving great scorch marks on the door as it scrambled its way out. Intriguingly enough whilst the storm and the deaths (attributed to lightning striking the tower) are mentioned in the parish registry there is no mention of the Dog. Even a year later when funds for repairs are being discussed there is still no mention of the Black Dog or the story which is solely recorded in Abraham Fleming's tract and later in the Holinshead Chronicle for which Fleming was an editor. That being said tales of Bungay being haunted by a Black Dog were well established by the 19th Century and peripherally reported during the Witchtrials at Halesworth almost 60 years later. As Theodora Brown's research indicates tales of the Black Dog of Bungay are non-existent before the reformation.

In this sense story of the Black Dog, along with the tales surrounding the Bigods, has been a centrepiece of town identity in Bungay for a long time. They are also directly linked to the two most prominent historic buildings of Bungay's middle ages, Bigod's Castle on the Waveney and the Church of St Mary's home, to the 'Straunge and Terrible Wunder' of the Black Dog's attack on the church as chronicled by the Rev Abraham Fleming in his tract of 1578. These two icons of local folklore, to be found on the town's coat of arms, form the core of the folklore and history of the town. In the words of the Reverend Harris, 'Bungay is a Lady with a 'Past'. The town has a strong foundation myth located in the primeval past of pre-Roman Britain and is

chronicled by events closely linked to the national narrative of English identity rooted in the rural life of English country men and women. Events like the Roman Colonization, the Norman Conquest, the Reformation and the Civil War loom large in the town's construction of historic identity and physical vestiges of that history are clearly visible in the landscape of the town today. These stories are also seen in the historic buildings of the town, like the Fleece hotel and in related narratives, such as the history of the local Grammar School founded in 1565.

Central to this is the sense of historicity and identity, legitimised through links to a distant past found in the landscape, architecture and folklore, creating a sense of continuity moving through tradition, to heritage. Complementing this theme is a strong focus on the history of the aristocracy as remembered through the folklore of the common people. Attempts to make sense of the story of the Black Dog legend have typically focused on either finding a 'true' origin in remote antiquity which further legitimates the myth of a continuous unbroken link to the present, or the use of the tale to legitimate a contemporary supernaturalist perspective. In both cases the tale of the Dog looms large over the folklore and the town becomes a mere footnote to the Dog story. In many ways this does a disservice to the town which gave rise to the myth and provided the social, cultural and historical context in which the tale has evolved, allowing it to become a prominent symbol of town identity, community and solidarity. This paper will examine the development of the legend of the Black Dog of Bungay in folklore and symbolism as it became the primary representation of Bungay's civic identity during the early to mid twentieth century. Central to these challenges is the shift in Bungay's local representation from a regional centre of industry and trade to a self constituted 'historic town'.

As illustrated in Reverend Harris' forward to Ethel Mann's 'Old Bungay', there is a clear awareness of an attempt to shape Bungay as a self consciously 'historic town'. This is an important distinction to make. All towns have a history and in Europe and the British Isles many towns and communities have a history of settlement that stretches back into pre-historic times. However, this is different to being a 'historic town', a term which implies both an awareness and consciousness of that history and a sense that this feeling of historicity is an integral part of local identity. For Bungay, this sense of being shaped by history was inevitable. All around, in landscape and architecture were the symbols of its origins, aided and abetted by the idealism of more than a century of rural romantic storytelling. The links to the primordial past are can be easily observed in the surviving material culture, and in the culture of the popular imagination, reinforced by the overwhelming national narratives of Englishness linked to historical continuity. The contemporary attempt to preserve that past and nurture a sense of nostalgia for this past intensifies this process in the popular imagination.

The tale of the 'Black Dog of Bungay', embedded in the imposing presence of the historic and spectacular church of St Mary's (and more recently linked to the Castle of the Bigods), is very much part of this tradition. The tale and associated myths invokes a sense of mystery and supernatural awe. It brings the folklore of supernatural Black Dogs to the present, together with nuances of Celtic, Saxon, Viking and sometimes even Egyptian mythology.[2] This story takes one of the most picturesque and historical buildings in the town, the Church of St Mary's, and allows

[2] Stone, Alby. "Infernal Watchdogs, Soul Hunters and Corpse Eaters." In Trubshaw, Bob. (ed.) *Explore Phantom lack Dogs*. Heart of Albion Press: Loughborough. 2005. pp 36-56.

it to be situated in the centre of the town's consciousness. Rooted in local folklore dating back to at least the reformation, the tales of the Black Dog and the story of the attack in St Mary's, takes town identity and directly associates it with the rural traditions and customs of the local people. The folklore forms a direct symbolic and spiritual link to the past, creating a romantic narrative of continuity, timelessness and permanence in the face of ever shifting and changing modernity. This identity is also established in through the very visible depictions of the Dog symbol. The Black Dog is emblazoned on the town weathervane. It rides the 1577 lightning bolt that struck the belfry of St Mary's at the time of the legendary Dog's attack on the people of Bungay. The Black Dog can also be found on the coat of arms and numerous other representations in local literature, pamphlets, programs, games, shop fronts and titles of local organisations. Bungay boasts the Black Dog Running Club, Black Dog Antiques, Black Dog Football team, Black Dog Marathon and Black Dog Books. In sport, culture, commerce and council, Bungay's identity is tied to the mythical event of 1577.

However, this fixation on historicity as the basis of town identity is far more contemporary than it appears at first glance. Much of the paraphernalia associated with the Dog as the symbol of Bungay's identity dates to the peculiar circumstances which the town faced during the Great Depression and in the aftermath of the Second World War. What appears to be an organic manifestation of local folklore was, in fact, a deliberately constructed attempt to create a sense of historicity. It was an invented tradition utilised to offset the economic and social woes of the Depression. This is not to deny the long history of Black Dog folklore which has been prominent in the local imagination since before the Reformation but to make clear that the

appropriation of the hound as a signifier for the township of Bungay is comparatively recent and made as a response to pressing social, economic and political challenges.

Prior to the 1930's Bungay was first and foremost a regional centre of industry and trade. Throughout the eighteenth century the town had the epithet 'Little London' because of its rapidly growing population and industrial base.[3] Ever since 1672, when an act of parliament gave funds for the opening of the Waveney River for trade purposes, Bungay has been a centre of regional trade, manufacture and industry.[4] Indeed the old phrase "Going to Bungay for New Bottoms and New Cuts" was derived from the periodic need to recut and rebottom the river so as to continue navigation as detailed in S. Ashby's 1826 song.[5] The river trade through the seventeenth to the late nineteenth centuries was a central platform of Bungay's economy.[6]

Like much of East Anglia, farming related industries and associated seasonal labouring were an important part of the local economy. Occupational boundaries in East Anglia were often fluid, with people commonly changing occupations throughout the seasons, depending on the needs of the local economy. Much employment was 'by the job' rather than by trade. In the countryside in particular, trade building and construction work was notoriously short lived and there was a great

[3] East Anglian Magazine. 1975, 58-65
[4] Original document for taxation, bottoming, cuts and trade along the river located in the Ethel Mann papers at Lowestoft records office.
[5] East Anglian Magazine 1975. 58-65
[6] *Douglas Pluck The River Waveney - its Navigation and Watermills. 1994, P.15.* ,

deal of movement between one class and another. As Raphael Samuels argues, 'The country craftsman or mechanic was a man with two or three strings to his bow."[7]

This form of employment, and its centrality in the local economy, has often been neglected by historians due to its fragmented nature. It was difficult to systemically categorize and define in national statistics. Furthermore, the parochial nature of this economic activity meant that much of it failed to show up in national statistics. It was of such a short lived, or ad hoc nature, that it simply failed to register as occupations. In these circumstances the title of farm or field labourer seems to cover all.[8] This pattern of seasonally related work relates closely to the local Cottage economy which consisted of all the unofficial sources of income and resources on which most families relied for sustenance and survival in harder times. Unofficial barter, trade and production was a major part of the economy, along with poaching, which also formed part of the seasonal cycle of work and industry, integrated with the patterns of official industrial production, yet curiously hidden and neglected in local histories.[9]

So whilst there was a strong pattern of urbanization throughout England during the nineteenth century, the Waveney Valley region, and Bungay in particular, was extraordinarily densely populated. Partly this was due to the rise in population experienced across England during the nineteenth century but also because of changes in the local pattern of industry and economy. The demographic explosion of Victorian England was experienced in the countryside as well as in the cities and a regional industrial centre like Bungay experienced the brunt of this rapid population

[7] Sammuels. Ralph. *Village Labour*. In Sammuels, Ralph (ed.), 'Village life and Labour' . Routledge and Keegan Paul: London. 1975, 4-5.
[8] Samuels, Ralph. 1975, 3.
[9] Samuels, Ralph 1975, 6.

growth. It also had an impact on local culture as large numbers of 'itinerants' and immigrants were mobilized into regional industry and agricultural labour. This had the effect of further breaking up traditional seasonal patterns of labour and fragmented an already rapidly changing community demographic and placed further strain on traditional patterns of social organization.[10] In 1822, the Three Tuns Hotel in Bungay was used for the detention of men held in custody for breaking up threshing machines at Woodton, four miles north of Bungay. The workers were protesting against the new farming methods which were causing farm labourers much hardship, when their labour was replaced with new machinery. Cavalry had to be summoned from Norwich to disperse the rioters and the ring-leaders were marched off to Norwich castle and imprisoned pending trial.[11] Nevertheless, a vibrant growing economy and a sense of industrial progress was able to soothe most public concerns about potential damage to tradition, community and identity and which might result from an overpowering modernist construction of town and regional identity.

The sense of Bungay growing into a vibrant centre of local trade and industry seems to be predominant in the literature, media and culture of the nineteenth century. The town song, 'Old Bungay', written in 1826 and sung to the tune of 'Old Roast Beef', makes extensive references to the town's industry, trade and economic development but none to the town's pre-industrial history.[12] Similarly, in a review of the '*Eastern Daily Press*' and the '*Beccles and Bungay Journal*', along with its forerunner '*The Journal*', there was negligible mention of the town's pre-industrial history or economic development until late 1932. When the town's pre-industrial history was

[10] Samuel, Raphael. 1975, 10-11.
[11] (The Town Recorder: Five Centuries of Bungay At Play. F. Honeywood, C. Reeve, and T. Reeve, 2008)
[12] Copy at town museunm

brought into focus (such as in the '*the Journal,*' December 10 1932 discussion of the 1688 fire which destroyed most of the town) it was not presented as representative of the town's contemporaneous identity but as an analogy to the damage wrought by the 1931 earthquake, and linked to the harsh experience of the agricultural, economic and industrial depression of the 1930s.[13]

By all accounts the Great Depression had a traumatic impact on the town of Bungay. In my research I spoke to and interviewed people who had lived in Bungay at the time. They unanimously described the era as 'very hard times' and particularly 'hard for farmers and labourers'. The local papers of the early 1930s were solidly focused on the issues raised by unemployment and economic uncertainty. Public uproar from the unemployed and unionised labourers appears to have been a common experience, with the issues commonly presented in quite openly Marxist rhetoric. For example, on the 8th of July 1933 "*The Beccles and Bungay Journal*", reports a protest by local unemployed workers and farm labourers who were making the claim that capitalists 'buy from the cheapest market and sell in the dearest market. Business robbery proceeds unchecked.' Furthermore the protest spokesman argued that 'the remedy of poor wages, poor housing and tied cottages is incapable of relieving the suffering of workers'.

In 1933 the Waveney River, accepted as an icon of the town's prosperity, was formally closed for trade. At its peak the river carried extensive produce of malt, coal, corn and flour. It was claimed that local entrepreneur, Mathias Kerrison, had made

[13] The '*Beccles and Bungay Journal'*, '*The Eastern Daily Press'* and the '*Journal*' Accessed through the Lowestoft records office.

over a million pounds on the river trade during the Napoleonic Wars.[14] Whilst the locks of the river had already been out of commission since the mid 1920's, the official closure of the river undoubtedly had a major psychological impact on the already traumatised community. Similarly, Harry Rumsby, proprietor of the local iron foundry, discussed the problems wrought by hard times during the early 1930s in terms of having to take on dozens of 'little fiddling jobs to do outside of our proper work' that he should have refused but was forced to take on in order to keep the small town business afloat.[15]

Another blow was the loss of the town pump, already redundant but as a product of local industrial development in 1812 from a time of peak economic growth, its destruction in early 1933 by a traction engine owned by Messrs H.A Newport was a blow to community pride.[16] These patterns, tied up with the longer term impact of hemp production becoming redundant in the late nineteenth century, the decline in the agricultural economy and the collapse of industries dependent on river trade ravaged the social and cultural fabric of Bungay. These had been the economic foundations upon which the village infrastructure was based. By 1933 the town was described by the East Suffolk Town and Country Planning Council with these words, 'The town bears an air of industrialism and is dull.'[17]

It was in this particular circumstance of industrial decay, social upheaval and class conflict that Dr Leonard Cane, who was to become the driving force behind the

[14] '*East Anglian Magazine'*. 1975, 60.
[15] Ewart-Evans, Georghe. *Where Beards Wag All: The Relevance of Oral Tradition*. Faber and Faber Press: London. 1975, 38-39
[16] '*The Journal'*. May 13. 1933.
[17] *The Journal*. April 18. 1934.

reconfiguration of Bungay as a 'Historic Town', became Town Reeve. [18] Dr Cane was described to me by his daughter and contemporaries as a very forthright man who, as an avid amateur historian, was fascinated with Bungay's pre-industrial past and worked tirelessly for the recognition of the historical sites, stories and history of the town. After having become Town Reeve in 1932 he began a two-pronged attack on the town's malaise. On the one hand he began with a series of welfare and housing projects designed to alleviate the suffering wrought by the poverty of the Depression. On the other with a Hobsbawmian project of reconstructing the traditions, rituals and architecture of Bungay's past, including the tale and folklore of the Black Dog of Bungay. This latter project was designed to redefine the town's identity and sense of community pride through an antiquity linked to English heritage rather than former industrial wealth.

To alleviate the economic and social woes of The Depression, Dr Cane's first course of action was to develop a series of committees for welfare designed to investigate ways of generating economic growth and alleviating poverty for the people of Bungay.[19] One of the major developments of these committees was the formation of housing trust development bodies and the development of allotments to help reduce the poverty of those worst hit by the Depression. This process was aided by engaging in local building projects designed to highlight the town's history and demolishing the decaying remains of nineteenth century industrialism. [20] (The external structures of one of the numerous Maltings still stands today near the Chicken Roundabout and is being currently redeveloped as housing) This strategy was designed with a Keynesian

[18] Personal Communication with Mrs Peggy Clay (Daughter of Dr Leoanard Cane and Margaret English) July 9th 2008; Harris, John. *'The Town Reeves of Bungay'*. Witley Press: Hunstanton. 2007, 45.
[19] '*Eastern Dailt Press.*' Feb 16. 1933
[20] *'Eastern Daily Press.'* Feb 18. 1933.

economic impact in mind by generating local employment through the use of government and heritage funds which would flow into local businesses and thus instigate economic growth. However, this new economic growth would occur in the context of Bungay as a Historic Town based in local production and community rather than as a centre for regional trade and industry. To this effect Dr Cane also reconstructed traditions long since lapsed, such as the Town Dinner (fallen into disuse after 60 years), the Thomas Winfield Dinner and Sermon (originally Establised in 1593 to commemorate the founder and benefactor of the Bungay Grammar School) and began to compile contemporary accounts and scrap books of local history from print media and other sources. [21]

Probably the most significant of Dr Cane's historical projects in this respect was the archaeological dig at the ruins of Bungay Castle, located at the centre of town behind the Fleece hotel (itself an historic building dating to the sixteenth century). The castle at the time of Dr Cane's assuming the title of town Reeve, seemed to be long forgotten under Bungay's history of industrialism and the poverty of the Depression. The castle itself had been overrun with small scale cottage industry and shanty construction and much of the castle had been damaged by attempts to harvest the stone in 1766 by Robert Mickleborough. Depictions of the castle in the mid 18th century showed it to be derelict and dilapidated.

The archaeological dig, conducted between November 1934 to July 1935, financed with 460 pounds collected from private individuals and local societies was conducted by Hugh Braun, a well established architect and later an author on medieval

[21] Harris, John. *'Town Reeves of Bujngay'*. 2007, 45; '*Eastern Daily Press'*. March 3 1933.

architecture. Living in London at the time of the dig he stayed with the Cane family during the excavations. Of the funds raised for the Castle diggings, approximately two thirds were spent on local labour acting as a source of employment and a boost to local industry. Approximately 200 pounds were spent specifically on the wages of ex-servicemen. The dig also attracted a great deal of local interest and tourism during the summer of 1935 which further added to the funds and local markets.[22] This was significantly aided by the numerous articles and stories put together by Dr Cane. He also worked very closely with Hugh Braun and Ethel Mann, who's newly published book '*Old Bungay',* worked to bring the town's antiquity to the forefront of the public mind. Hugh Braun and Dr Cane collaborated on designing official robes for the position of Town Reeve based on medieval design and the Town Reeve's civic flag of the Bigod Lion the could be flown from the Castle tower.

The development of the Black Dog as a symbol of town identity occurred centrally in this milieu. Prior to Dr Cane's efforts the town was seen as pathos of economic damage wrought by the depression. To some extent it was viewed as a scene of post-industrial squalor. By 1935 however, headlines and newsprint stories routinely describe how 'the sun now shines on Bungay' and celebrated the town as a historic monument to English national identity and rural antiquity.[23]

The destruction of the town pump in 1933 had created a dilemma for Dr Cane. He wished to establish the site as a place for the town's first electric light stand however the pump itself, as a product of local industry dating from a time of economic prosperity in 1826, was extremely popular. There was a local outcry regarding its

[22] Braun, Hugh. '*Bungay Castle: Historical Notes and Accounts of the Excavation.*' Bungay Castle Trust 1991(1934), 1 & 29.
[23] *'Eastern Daily Press'* Dec 7 1934.

potential demolition and many people argued it should be restored despite its obsolete status as the town had been placed on main's water supply. Dr Cane's response closely followed his strategy of utilising the town's antiquity to finance economic, cultural and infrastructure renewal. He decided to follow the story of the Black Dog as 'a memorial to the weather' given the 1577 events occurrence during a 'storm of rain hail and thunder such as never seen the like'.[24] He put forward the proposal of the weather vane in the form of the Black Dog of Bungay which gave the new proposed electric standard a close link to the town's antiquity and tied the Church of St Mary's to the town's heritage and to the extensive work on the Castle.

This strategy was enacted through two main efforts. Firstly, a two page spread based on Ethel Mann's work 'Old Bungay', including the complete original text by Abraham Fleming combined with the verse from the 1826 reprint was published in the '*Eastern Daily Press*' along with a historical article on the events and its role in the town's history. This continual reference to the 1577 attack was maintained in local media throughout the period and gelled well with the already established folklore of the Black Dog in the township and surrounding district. Meanwhile Dr Cane's wife, Margaret, organized a competition to be conducted in the local schools for children to put forward designs of the Black Dog to sit atop the electric standard as a weathervane.[25] The Bungay Council received 150 drawings from Bungay Grammar, St Mary's Girl's School, Wingfield Street Secondary school, the Roman Catholic St

[24] Children's Newspaper Dec 23 1933. '*Eastern Daily Press*' Now 20 1933. '*Beccles and Bungay Jorunal'* April 15 1934.
[25] Interview with Peggy Clay, daughter of Dr Leonard Cane, July 7 2008.

Edmunds School and All Hallows (based in Ditchingham). These were exhibited to the public in the Chaucer's Institute during baby week of May 1934.[26]

The use of the town's children as the designers for the new standard was a very astute manoeuvre by Dr Cane as it drew the local community into the decision to replace the town pump by incorporating families into the design process whilst at the same time disempowering critics who opposed the town pump's removal by associating criticism with the designs of the children rather than with Dr Cane. It would be hard, with the local and even national media showing pictures of Miss Saunders 'proud as punch' of her design becoming a part of the town's history and culture, to attack her work personally. My interviews and discussions with Dr. Cane's contemporaries suggested that this was deliberately the case and that he was a very astute individual who knew well how to work the local politics of a small town.

Another astute move by Dr Cane was to associate the new electric standard with the story of the Black Dog, a prominent figure in the town's mythology. Whilst the population may not have had full knowledge of the tale of 1577 the folklore of a Black Dog haunting the Fens of Bungay along the Waveney River was a prominent part of regional folklore since at least the Reformation. Hugh Braun, in a letter dated 28th of June 1969 writing to folklorist Theodora Brown recalls the town's folklore of the Black Dog saying,

> I have been familiar with the Black Dog since 1930. I was restoring Bungay Castle in Suffolk and the Black Dog is a local celebrity with a monument over the town cross in the shape of a weathervane. A

[26] Letter from WM Lummis to Theo'Brown at the Theo Brown Collection University of Exeter. Norwich Journal April 15. '*Daily Mirror'* Now 23 1933. Daphne Saunders with her design.

> child of 10 whom I used to escort from school at weekends told me that she knew old Shuck quite well and that he sometimes fell in beside her as she walked to and from school. She had no fear of him and used to be quite sorry when, after a while, he disappeared.[27]

Similarly in Ditchingham, there are asides in Rider Haggard's commentary on the local folklore of the Black Dog of Bungay as discussed in the previous chapter, tales from the 1920s related that the Black Dog was described as 28 to 30 inches tall, black and shaggy with large glowing red eyes and would vanish when he came level with you when walking alone at night.[28] In contrast folklorist Nigel Harvey in 1927 commented that in his research into the folklore of East Anglia the Black Dog of Bungay had not been seen in living memory but was a prominent part of local belief and superstitions.[29] Similarly, folklorist Barbara Woods goes so far as to claim that "So far as I know the Black Dog is not known in Oral Tradition".[30] Whilst there is ample evidence to suggest the tale was well known throughout the region and that belief in phantom Black Dogs was prolific in the region, as detailed in the previous chapter, it is fair to say that the story of the attack of 1577 was far from the prominent symbol of public civic identity it became in the post depression era.

By taking a piece of local folklore and establishing it as a central part of the town's history, Dr Cane generated the Black Dog as an integral figure of the town's identity and brought the historic architecture, mythology and narrative of the town together under the one icon. The process of selection also worked to integrate the town into the narrative of Bungay as 'lady with a past' in terms of the shift from a centre of

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[27] Theo' Brown Collection University of Exeter.
[28] Theo' Brown Collection University of Exeter.
[29] Nigel Harvey *Folklore*, Vol. 54, No. 4 (Dec., 1943), pp. 390-391

[30] Woods, Barbara. *The Devil in Dog Form: A Partial Type Index of Devil* Legends. University of California Press: New York, 1959. p 24

industry to a 'historic town'. Similarly, the continual reinforcement through print media, public rituals and symbols worked to integrate the people, community and culture of the town together under a new identity as a historic town which also became entrenched with the town's emergence from the economic malaise wrought by The Great Depression. In this light the creation of the Black Dog as a centrepiece of town identity, history and culture is a very clear example of a Hobsbawmian 'Invented Tradition'.

In the case of the invented and revived historical traditions of Bungay by Dr Cane these were a response to the collapse of the traditional economic and social order of 19th century East Anglia through an attempt to reconnect with symbols, icons and ideals located in contemporary representations of the past. For Bungay, it was very much a sense of looking to the past with an eye to the future. Dr Cane's strategy consistently utilised the town's history as a vehicle for its economic, cultural and social restructure into a 'historic town' from the older sense of town identity as a regional centre of Victorian trade and industry. Similarly, as one respondent commented, by focusing on the issues of the ruling classes in the past, the antagonism of the working classes of the 30s could be circumvented and restructured in the context of tradition and history rather than class conflict.

Well established custom, along with the folklore, culture and working life of East Anglia, acted as the infrastructure through which this pattern of invention of tradition could operate. As Hobsbawm and Ranger argue, custom is the motor and the fly wheel within which tradition can be invented.[31] Dr Cane was able to make drastic

[31] Habsbam, Eric. '*The Invention of Tradition'*. 2-3.

changes to the town's architecture, economy and culture but only in the context of established custom and tradition. Hence the replacing of the town pump with the Black Dog standard and weathervane had to occur within the context of the town's community life, tradition and sense of history if it was to be accepted as legitimate. Dr Cane strategy of Romantic modernization did just that. By linking the modernization of the town's infrastructure with community through the competition and public discourse, linking it to local folklore with the image of the Black Dog and with tradition by the use of the tale of the Black Dog's attack on St Mary's, he took a controversial decision to modernize the town and transformed it to a statement of tradition, heritage and continuity.

Perhaps the most central reason why Hobsbawm's model is so appropriate here is that the reconfiguration of Bungay as a 'historic town' from a town with a history is that the transformation of 1930s Britain, is the central focuses of Hobsbawm's research. It relates to the deliberate and systemic construction of tradition within the rules of custom by the nation state and regional government to promote the sense of nationalism tied to heritage, culture and identity in a distinctly national context. Historic towns in this sense become icons of the English traditional way of life that provide the cultural basis, folklore and heritage of the nation as opposed to empire and industrialization as the centre of British identity. In this sense rural East Anglia ceased to be perceived as a backwater impediment to British industrialism as it was in the late 18th and Early 19th centuries but becomes an icon of eternal Englishness and the cultural basis of the English people.

In Bungay this is manifested in the narratives of the town's history, the prominence of the historic architecture, town icons like the Black Dog, regular rituals, regular stories of events in the local media[32] and the inculcation of the town's students with prominent and emotionally evocative tales of the attack on St Mary's. These processes work to emotionally connect the people of Bungay with the town's history and heritage and play a substantial role in shaping the town's identity and character. A similar process was enacted for the position of The Town Reeve which, under Dr Cane became far more ritualised with the creation and revival of invented traditions involving robes, medallions and ceremonies, shifting the role from the image of 'town dictator' as it was described on Dr Cane's assuming of the role, to the more symbolic role that it plays today.

These fears of economic decline, industrial decay and social crisis lead to the formation of a wide array of new social movements emerging during the 1930s. These were guided by the romantic idealism of the countryside, rural life and pre-industrial heritage as the source of both a renewal of English national identity and a panacea to the nation's ills.[33] It was in this context that Dr Cane's project for reconstructing Bungay as a historic town occurred. It was a time of cultural and economic crisis in which there was a significant need for social, economic and cultural renewal. It was also a time where the most prominent cultural and political response to this crisis of modernity was the reappropriation of the past as a source of renewal. In a very clear sense for Bungay the legend of the Black Dog became a symbol of that process and change and thus a symbol of the town. However in a twist of history which closely follows the Invented Traditions model presented by

[32] My study of the local print media found a tale around the town's history and particularly the black dog to be in the papers several times a week since 1934.
[33] Trentman, Frank. 'Civilization and its Discontents'. 585

Hobsbawm, after a generation the story of the origin of the iconic symbol seemed to retreat from the forefront of public memory, leaving only a sense of antiquity and continuity with a primordial past.

Despite its origins slipping to the background of public knowledge of the history of the Black Dog, the iconic image of the Dog upon a bolt of lightning was solidly established as the symbol of the town by the late 1940's. During the 1930's the coach of the Bungay football team had taken upon himself the title of Lord Bigod and his successor in 1948 called himself the Black Dog. The football club in turn took on the image as the symbol for the Bungay Football Team and the title of 'The Black Dog's' shortly thereafter. In a letter sent to Theodora Brown by the then Anglican Vicar of St Mary's the Reverend W.M Lummis in 1948, a current pamphlet of the football team featuring the iconic symbol of the Black Dog upon a bolt of lighting was enclosed indicating that the symbol as an iconic representation of the town was already firmly established. In fact in a later letter to Theodora Brown in 1948 he remarked on jokes at his first service there on August 4th 1946 (the anniversary of the 1577 event) that his own recently passed away black dog might run up the aisle replaying the original event.[34] In the 1951 Festival of Britain pamphlet, the Black Dog was also displayed as a symbol of the town's identity a year before it was taken up as a symbol of the town's coat of arms. Similarly, the Black Dog appears prominently above the Butter Cross in the banner of the Bungay Rotary Club, established in 1951 from the Antediluvian Society of the Water Buffalo.

[34] Theodora Brown Collection University of Exeter.

The town Coat of Arms itself was designed in 1950 by Mr Hellis Tomlinson who, in terms of the traditional motif for a Coat of Arms, designed the icon with the red lion of the Bigod family prominently displayed rising from the castle.[35] This was the design put forward to tie in with the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in which the context of attempting to tie the local English heritage with the pomp and pageantry of the English monarchy would have had the most impact. However, the Town Council rejected this image and put forward their own design which replaced Bigod's lion with the icon of the Black Dog designed by Daphne Saunders in 1934. Dr Cane described the Coat of Arms in an official guide to the town as 'a pictorial representation of Bungay Castle, standing above the river Waveney; above the gateways is the shield of Hugh Bigod, the Norman builder of the castle in 1164.[36] There floats on the river a wherry, as a reminder of the waterborne trade that used to be carried on by Norfolk wherries upstream as far as Bungay, which was well known as a boat repairing centre. The crest is the Black Dog of Bungay courant proper upon a flash of lightning.' W.M Lummis in a letter to Theodora Brown commented that 'When Bungay was granted a Coat of Arms the Black Dog appeared as the Crest. The Designer and I both wished it to appear in chief.'[37] The Town Reeve at the time, Mr John Marshall Clay who married the Daughter of Dr Cane, Helen Margaret Cane, was also the chairman of the football club. It was suggested to me that the prominence of the Black Dog as a symbol of the football club would have integrated well with its prominence on the town coat of arms, replacing Bigod's lion. Mr Clay, as the Town Reeve would have been central to discussions along with Dr Cane and Mr W.M. Lummis as to the design and it is extremely likely he would have played a prominent role in its selection. The suggestion at the time was that the Black Dog

[35] '*Beccles and Bungay Journal'*. September 22 1950.
[36] Cane, Dr L.B. *Bungay Suffolk. The official Guide to the Town and District*. 1954.
[37] Theodora Brown Collection University of Exeter.

was already by that stage seen as the quintessential representation of the town identity, far more than Bigod's Lion. Furthermore, by selecting the Dog along with Bungay Castle and the River Waveney, the Coat of Arms symbolically tied together the three most prominent aspects of the town's past. The coat of arms application cost the town approximately 100 pounds financed by public depositions collected by the Town Council.

The motto itself is very indicative of the invented traditions approach taken with the reconstruction of Bungay as a historic town. 'Moribus Aniquis Pareamus' – Let us Hold fast to the old Virtues. My research indicated that at the time there was some discussion and controversy over both the Coat of Arms design and the motto. One question was 'Why keep to the 'Old Virtues?'[38] This was responded to in terms of the centrality of Bungay's history and culture being an integral part of town identity and the motto and Coat of Arms were symbolic links, connecting the past to the present. Similarly, there was some inquiry as to why the traditional Lion of the Bigod's was replaced with the contemporary image of the Black Dog. Dr Cane argued this personally claiming that the focus was not on the crest but the Shield of the Bigods and that the Black Dog was a unique facet of Bungay's heritage and folklore.

Since the 1930s the Black Dog has become both the official symbol of civic identity and a symbolic representation of popular town identity. Outside of the issues raised by tourism and pop cultural representations which the image and story have developed certain sacrality as a symbol of the town. For example when the weathervane was taken down for repairs in 2002 it provoked an enormous outcry

[38] '*Beccles and Bungay Journal'*. Oct b1953.

amongst local townsfolk and in the local press, this outcry becoming particularly prominent when the repairs took longer than expected. The Black Dog weathervane and standard was more than a product of local industry: it had come to represent the spirit of the town as it were and its removal was an assault on both civic and cultural identity. Similarly, the Reverend Stephen Morgan, author of a novel based on the 1577 story and former Anglican Vicar of Holy Trinity Church Bungay, wrote a letter arguing against a proposed statue of the Black Dog to commemorate the 2000 millennium being constructed in St Mary's Churchyard in the centre of town. In the letter he argued that as in the 1577 pamphlet the hound was described as a manifestation of the Devil it was not really an appropriate statue for the sacred ground of a churchyard.[39] The letter provoked a flurry of responses for and against the statue, divided between those who agreed with Mr Morgan's position and those who defended the statue as a manifestation of town identity that transcended its religious origins.[40] Another claim was that the Dog was of pre-Christian origin and therefore beyond Christian concerns of it being a manifestation of the Devil.[41] Mr Morgan in discussion claimed to have been rather surprised by the level of response and commented that he had written a very general letter drawing attention to the described origins of the Dog story in Fleming's original pamphlet and asking people to "Just think about it, a statue of the 'devil in such a likeness' in a church? Is that really the best idea?"

Mr Morgan's own novel is written as a medieval detective story in the vein of the 'Cadfael' books with a large dose of irony and satire. In the book he combines both

[39] '*Beccles and Bungay Journal'*. November 29 1996.
[40] '*Eastern Daily Press*' November 30. Eastern Daily Press December 8 1996. Beccles and Bungay Journal December 6 1996. Beccles and Bungay Journal December 7.
[41] For discussion of the origins of the claim to pre-Christian antiquity of the Black Dog please see the previous chapter.

events of the 1577 incident with tongue in cheek references to people and places of Bungay today and uses footnotes and pseudo historical research to make fun of the 'invented traditions' nature of many of the town's claims to antiquity, such as the claim that the 'Chicken Roundabout' (The roundabout, at the village of Ditchingham by the Maltings, populated by a group of wild chickens and looked after by a local volunteer caretaker) is in reality descended from the chickens brought by the Saxon invaders of the 6th century. The book itself implies a sense of ironic awareness of the nature of invented traditions and their prominence in town identity in a mythic and a symbolic sense, defining town identity and promoting a connection to the past. Indeed Mr Morgan ties this story to the broader national narratives of folkloric identity, borrowing the tale of the Tower Ravens of London claiming that according to folklore if the Chickens should ever leave the Roundabout at Ditchingham death and destruction will befall the town of Bungay.[42]

This pattern of evolution has continued to this day with the rise of many stories surrounding the Black Dog taking root since the 1950s with some being taken up by the town's folk and becoming an integral part of the folklore whilst others are laid by the wayside or perceived with comical amusement. The central theme driving this process is closely linked to the centrality of antiquity and invented tradition in the Black Dog mythology. Claims which tie the central landmarks, characters and buildings of the town are developed, absorbed and promoted with great enthusiasm whilst others which feel disconnected from the model of Bungay as a historic town and its associated customs are quickly dismissed. There is a discourse around the nature of the Dog mythology, its role in shaping town identity and the narrative of the

[42] Morgan, I.S. *'The Kettle Chronicles'*. Wild Diggory Press: 2006, 16

history of the town that was firmly established on the basis of the invented traditions developed by Dr Cane and others and shaped by the custom and folklore of the community. This structure firmly rooted in neo-Romanticism and a nationalist sense of local history tied to local identity has become the foundation upon which the legitimacy of myths surrounding the Black Dog in the local community is founded. Intriguingly the overwhelming context of catholic and Puritan conflict which clearly underpinned social upheaval at the time of the reformation until the end of 17th century during which the original 1577 event was constructed is largely ignored in public discourse of Black Dog outside of formal histories. Instead the discourse of the Black Dog as a symbol of Antiquity is almost entirely focused on the notion of Bungay maintaining a unitary identity in the face of modernization.

The claim put forward by Anthony Hippsley Coxe in his 1973 book Haunted Britain for example, that the Black Dog is 'the transmogrified soul of Lord Bigod' has been taken up with great enthusiasm by the Bungay population despite there being no prior record of this claim prior to the early 1970's.[43] This story, which was taken up by the '*Eastern Daily Press'* in the same year and quickly became a feature of public perception of the Black Dog linked to the second of the two most prominent buildings in the town and a central figure in the town's history and foundation myth. This story has been developed and presented numerous times in the local media, school classes, and the town history as presented in a dramatised version during the Bungay Summer Festival. It was also a common subject in the literature of the Bungay society newsletter featuring regularly in stories and poems. The Black Dog itself remains a popular subject at the local schools with students regularly selecting the tale as the

[43] Coxe, Anthony. '*Haunted Britian'*. Pan. 105.

basis of artwork, fiction, play and games. Similarly, the claim that Arthur Conan Doyle based his tale on the Black Dog mythology of Bungay has been taken up very strongly with mentions to this effect in the local media and in the Bungay Society Newsletter. This parallels the claim put forward by Peter Haining in the Supernatural Coast that the story was based on Doyle's stay at Cromer Hall and was based on the story of the Norfolk Shuck, a story that was also displayed at the Norwich Museum.[44] In contrast the claim put forward by Janet and Colin Bord that the Black Dog may be linked to ley lines and UFO's was met[45] with a lot of amusement with one person making the following comment,

> 'It makes perfect sense, the Aliens are heading back to Alpha Centauri or somewhere and want to stop at the Fleece for a pint. They let the Dog out to go to the toilet and next thing you know he's run in the Church across the road.'

In this context there is a clear pattern by which the towns population are aware of representations of their Dog tale in the global environment but are very selective as to what myths can be accepted and incorporated into the broader folklore and which are to be ignored as either an outsider point of view or alien to their community identity. This is well evidenced by the view amongst the town's people today that the Black Dog of Bungay is not the same mythic creature as the Black Shuck of Norfolk in contrast to 19th and early 20th century claims to the contrary. There are antecedents to this differentiation of Black Shuck as a mythic trickster creature of the Norfolk coast from the demonic Dog of St Mary's turned symbol of town identity. For example, in her field notes, Theo Brown argued that the Black Dog of Bungay is a true Black Dog which appears exclusively in the form of a hound in contrast to the trickster shape

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[44] Haining, Peter. ' *The Supernatural Coast.: Unexplained Mysteries of East Anglia*. 1992. Westwood, Jennifer. ' *Friend or Foe: Norfolk Traditions of Shuck.*' In Trubshaw, Bob. '*Explore Phantom Black Dogs.*' Heart of Albion Press: Loughborough. 2005.

[45] Cord, Janet and Colin. '*Alien Animals: A Worldwide investigation'*. Granada Publishing London.1980. 103-104

shifting Black Shuck of Norfolk.[46] However, the insistence of this division which does not seem to have been as prominent in the 1930s, works strongly to differentiate Bungay as a community from the broader East Anglian region and reaffirms the Dog's role as an exclusively Bungayan symbol.

There is a very evident desire to tie the story which has become so central to the town's identity to a narrative that presents local history in the broader context of a locally based English nationalism. This pattern is intrinsically linked to a sense of connectedness to local place and identity, often manifested in the search for themes that contextualised local myth in Pagan antiquity. It is a theme which ties together the landscape, people, architecture, folklore and culture into a coherent whole which creates a sense of connectedness, historicity and authenticity. These themes, developed by Dr Cane in his use of invented and reconstructed traditions to restructure the former industry centre into a historic town, have become firmly entrenched as the dominant discourse of town identity and culture.

[46] Theodora Brown Collection University of Exeter.