

The Hotspur

The Parish magazine of St John's Healey.

March 2006



Eat. Be happy. Bark often.

DOGS NUMBER

BARKING AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE. A GLOSSARY.

Afrikaans	woef	Finnish	hau hau/vuh vuh
Albanian	ham ham/hum hum	French	ouah ouah
Arabic	haw haw	German	wau wau, wuff wuff
Bengali	ghaue-ghaue	Greek	gav
Catalan	bup, bup	Hebrew	haw haw (hav hav)
Chinese	wang wang	Hindi	bho-bho
Croatian	vau-vau	Hungarian	vau-vau
Danish	vov	Icelandic	voff
Dutch	woef	Indonesian	gonggong
English	bow wow, arf, woof, ruff ruff	Italian	bau bau
Esperanto	boj	Japanese	wanwan, kyankyan
Estonian	auh	Korean	mung-mung (wang-wang)
		Norwegian	voff, vov-vov
		Polish	hau hau
		Portugese	au au au (nasal diphthong)
		Russian	gav-gav
		Slovene	hov-hov
		Spanish	guau guau
		Swedish	vov vov
		Thai	hoang hoang (with falling tone)
		Turkish	hav, hav
		Ukrainian	haf-haf
		Vietnamese	wau wau



Black Dog White Bark by Erica Van Horn 1994

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The Swiss architect Le Corbusier bound his favourite book, Cervantes' Don Quixote, with the skin of his dead dog (see below). This issue of The Hotspur contains no animal parts but is devoted to dogs because 2006 is their year in China and, from time to time, it's probably worth celebrating our symbiotic relationship with the beasts. Science, space travel, language, myth, music, art: scratch any subject and you'll find a wet nose, four legs and doggy breath lurking somewhere beneath. This is just as true under the pews of Healey Church, where Muffy, a small dog of great charm and aroma, notches up the most regular attendance of any of us.



The fireworks in December raised £97.82p for the Pakistan Earthquake Appeal.

Once again, a thousand thanks for the generosity of The Hotspur's contributors, supporters and friends. The free poem this month was made especially for the magazine by Jon Bewley. Treasure it, you'll never see its like again.

THE HOTSPUR IS EDITED BY JAMIE WARDE-ALDAM, DESIGNED BY NEIL EDMUNDSON
AND JAMIE WARDE-ALDAM AND PRINTED BY JOHN OVERTON.
ANY ENQUIRIES SHOULD BE MADE TO THE EDITOR ON 0778 973 7252.

The cover photograph is by Keith Arnatt and is taken from his classic 'Walking The Dog', Omega books 1979, regrettably without permission, as I couldn't track him down.

WEE GOLD PUFF

PURE ORANGE. WEIGHT 3½ LBS. ◊ ◊ SIRE: SUNDOWN OF DARA

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WEE GOLD PUFF is a glorious Orange with a stand off coat of the right texture, a well coupled up cobby little chap with small ears, fine bone. Beautiful expression and splendid action, and is of the world famous DARA STRAIN. He is the sire of the following Winners.

BLAZE OF GOLD, GOLDSPECK, JOEHAD, STARGOLD, SHELTON STARRID, STARBARN, LADY VIOLETTE, GOLDWYN, PRINCE CORONACH and several others. Another stormer will shortly be benched.

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Beware of the Diamond Dog! by Stephen Bayley

Beyond fur and bones and friendship, beyond pedigree chums, what are the meanings of 'dog'?

Well, for a start, to dogs we owe cynicism and physics. In the days before pet food and pooperscoopers, a prince of Macedon introduced himself to a famous fellow living in a barrel with the words "I am Alexander, named the Great". The man in the barrel replied "I am Diogenes, surnamed the Dog" (on account of his low, slovenly habits). Alexander asked if there was anything he could do, by way of improving conditions in the barrel. The philosopher said yes, he could get out of his light. Thus, cynicism from the Greek for dog

A little later, Isaac Newton's dog, Diamond, caused a fire in his study, destroying important papers carrying calculations about the state and nature of the Universe. Issuing only a simple, mild reprimand to his furry friend, this catastrophe required the physicist to start over all again. Thus in metaphor and in fact, dogs have been responsible for the entire framework of human perceptions, from morally grievous cynical philosophy to the inspiring Universal Law of Gravitation, described by the divine Anthony Storr as the greatest abstraction ever construed by Man.

A wide range of meaning is therefore associated with dogs. It is revealed in the use of the word as a prefix. Generally, this happens in three ways.

First, to denote the masculine, as in dog-otter. Second, to denote the inferior or unsatisfactory, as in dog-parsley, or dog-cheap, or dog-tired. Third, to express the spurious, as in dog-Latin (A kitchen in dog-Latin being, for example, a 'camera necessaria pro usus cookare; cumsaucepannis, stewpannis &c').

It is curious how, for an animal held in such affection, the associations seem always to be negative. In meteorology we have the Dog Days of 3rd-11th July, so called because the Romans said that during this time the Dog Star and the Sun were in the Heavens simultaneously thus doubling already disagreeable temperatures. Then there is dog-eared. This is never good, either in books or as a metaphor.

Nor does anybody want to be a dogsbody because this is to suggest a menial condition, an inclination towards drudgery. On the other hand, perhaps more positively, there is the role, not to say position, of the dog in sex... Nancy Friday's interviewees testified to the surprising erotic status of the Alsatian in the imaginations of bored Connecticut housewives.



Dirty Dog photograph. Joel Fisher

But personally, for insights into the essential nature of the dog I prefer philosophers and poets. Pascal, sitting alone in his room, reviving cynicism, said 'Puis je vois l'homme, plus j'aime mon chien'. While in 1736 Alexander Pope wrote a fine epigram for a royal dog collar:

I am his Highness' Dog at Kew;

Pray tell me, Sir, whose Dog are you?

And then there is Oliver Goldsmith's wonderful Elegy on the Death of a Mad Dog, published in the 1776 Vicar of Wakefield, but probably written six years before :

And in that town a dog was found,
As many dogs there be,
Both mongrel, puppy, whelp, and hound,
And curs of low degree.

This dog soon bit a man, creating a wound 'both sore and sad', but the result of this injury gave rise to four delightfully paradoxical lines

But soon a wonder came to light,
That show'd the rogues they lied;
The man recover'd of the bite,
The dog it was that died.

It all goes to show that whether mongrel, puppy, whelp or hound, dogs always carry meaning as well as fleas.



The Hellhound – Man's Best Fiend?

The wraith-like **Iain Smith** investigates Black Dog myths.
Sorry, no Labradors. Woodcut by **Gavin Uren**.

'There's a hellhound on my trail' sang Delta bluesman Robert Johnson, reviving an ancient archetype that runs through thousands of years of myth-making and storytelling. Indeed, few legends have proved to be as persistent as that of the fearsome black hound with blazing red eyes pursuing the renegade soul. But why on earth should man's best friend have also acquired such a sinister alter ego?

Whatever the source of the tradition, it is a very old and widespread one, as the connection between hell and hound can be found across most Indo-European mythologies. The most well-known of these hellhounds today is Cerberus, the watchdog at the entrance to the Greek Underworld. Usually depicted as having three heads (in some versions, Cerberus has fifty heads - which means a lot of Pedigree Chum) he had a starring role in the 'Labours of Heracles'. In fact it was Heracles' final and most arduous task to bring Cerberus alive to

the court of Eurystheus. Luckily for Hades though, Heracles thoughtfully let him go afterwards - after all, good guard dogs are hard to find. He would of course have saved himself a lot of bother if he had taken a tip from Orpheus who simply pacified the brute with the soothing strains of his lyre.

Space prevents a full recounting of the Vedic mythology of the four-eyed dogs of Yama, or indeed the shamanic traditions of the colossal cur that guards the underworld realm of Erlik Khan; but it goes without saying that hellhounds are a common species around the globe. Perhaps this is simply because the dog's guardian role in this world makes it the perfect candidate for a guardian in the next. The dog is after all man's oldest domesticated animal (traceable back to at least the Palaeolithic) and has enjoyed a close relationship with humans ever since, guarding home and hearth. It would seem reasonable to imagine storytellers elaborating on this everyday role to invent a guard dog for the dead. In Britain, archaeology has even produced evidence for the ritual killing and ceremonial burying of dogs at important sites. These animals seem to have been specifically killed to serve as spirit guardians - a practice that could have further strengthened the development of the hellhound myth.

However, there may be a much darker explanation, as the association of dogs with death may also be due to their taste for carrion. During the Bronze Age, only the elite were buried and there is considerable archaeological evidence that corpses were simply left for scavengers in the manner of the modern Tibetan sky burial. Accordingly, it was probably a part of everyday life to see stray dogs gnawing on human remains: a spectacle that would have been even more vivid in traditional cultures where it is a common belief that the soul of an animal is absorbed by the act of eating it. Could these have been the original hellhounds?

Whatever the source of the archetype, the idea of the hellhound has survived into modern times across Britain, transmuted into the folk tales of phantom Black Dogs. These sinister hounds prowl the dark lanes and lonely fields at night and go under a host of different names such as Barguest, Trash and Padfoot. However, the Black Dog seems to be particularly associated with East Anglia,

where he is still known as Black Shuck. Linguists still argue over whether the name derives from 'scucca', the Old English word for a daemon, or from a simple dialect term meaning 'shaggy'.

Folk literature abounds with accounts of sightings of Black Shuck and his friends, but the most famous of the breed must have been the Black Dog Of Bungay which terrorised the good people of that agreeable little Suffolk market town on Sunday, the 4th of August 1577. According to the legend, a violent thunderstorm struck the church at Bungay accompanied by a terrifying black dog which killed two parishioners who had the misfortune to touch him; a third was horrifically shrivelled up 'like a drawn purse'. On the same day, the same hound appeared in the nearby church at Blythburgh, seven miles away, killing another three people. The burn marks of his flaming claws are still to be seen on the church door to this day.

Clearly Black Shuck is not a dog to be trifled with and as this particular hellhound still seems to be active in the more isolated parts of the British countryside, we would advise you to take all precautions. So if you should happen to be out late one night and come across a huge black dog, with glowing eyes and a sinister appearance, do not attempt to touch it. And should you happen to hear padding footsteps and a panting hound close behind, bear in mind the words of Samuel Taylor Coleridge: 'Like one that on a lonesome road, Doth walk in fear and dread, And having once turned round walks on, And turns no more his head, Because he knows a frightful fiend, Doth close behind him tread.'



Photograph by Dan Prince. See more on danprince.co.uk

Coyote Story #19 : Molly

Chris Burden. Topanga, California

Six months after we obtained Sampson, we got one of his sisters, Molly, who was the tenth dog from a litter of ten puppies. She was small, black, lean and very shy. However, when I started to play my harmonica, she was the first to accompany me with her howling. We found out from her former owners, that when the children sat down to piano lessons, Molly would howl along. We call her Musical Molly. One night, long after midnight, a pack of coyotes was down in the streambed below our house, frenetically yipping and howling. Molly jumped out of the bedroom window onto the top of the doghouse and started howling the most beautiful long pure silver notes that I had ever heard. I was amazed to hear that after several long notes by Molly, the coyotes ceased their yipping and howling. Apparently, Molly had out sung the coyotes.

Clergy Article For the parishes of Blanchland with Hunstanworth, Edmundbyers with Muggleswick & Waskerley, Healey, Slaley and Whittonstall by David Irvine

Junior Column

Hello again,
I expect most of you will have heard about the Ten Commandments but do we all know what they are?! The Ten Commandments can be found in the Old Testament of the Bible in the chapter called Exodus. Jews and Christians believe they were given by God to Moses, who was an important Jewish leader. Moses led the Israelites thousands of years ago as they travelled from Egypt, where they had been slaves, to a land where they could be free. The Commandments are rules about how to live, and both Jews and Christians believe that they are very important.

We can try and look at some of the Commandments this month. The Ten Commandments are divided into two groups. The first group of rules is about how God expects people to behave towards him. The second group is about how God expects people to behave towards each other. In the Bible, the Ten Commandments have explanations attached to them but the most important parts can be summed up like this:

1. I am the Lord your God. You must not have any gods but me.

2. You must not make any sort of idol to worship. These two go together. At the time of Moses, most people worshipped many gods. There were gods of nature and the world around them. The people made statues, called idols, of the gods and worshipped them. Everyone believed that these gods were real. These two commandments show that God expects a different relationship from people who worship him: he is to be the only God, and no others are to be permitted.

3. You must not use God's name carelessly.

This means that people must respect God and take care how they speak about him (like not using God's name as a swear word).

4. Remember to keep the Sabbath day as a day of rest.

From the beginning of Christianity, Christians took Sunday (rather than the Jewish Saturday) as being their day of worship, because they believed it was the day when Jesus rose from the dead. The most important regular church services are held on a Sunday, and Christians believe that it is a day that should be different from other days. Some Christians are more strict about this than others. Be good, be kind and keep feeding the birds! Bye for now!

Senior Column

Dear Friends,
There is no doubt that Spring is on its way! Each evening sees a little more light before the gentle darkness descends and somehow we know that however strongly the wind howls or the rains lash the windows, the good things that Spring holds for us will not be long in coming. In the meantime we must make the most of the beauty that Winter has to offer: the wonderful low sun sets, those special days when early morning sharp frosts give way to brilliant sunshine and clear blue skies or even those days when everything takes on a mantle of grey. These are the days for the creature comforts of a warm room, perhaps an open fire, and listening to some good music or reading a good book. The Seasons can be what we make of them and each holds its own delights.

Last month I reintroduced myself and gave some details of the parishes within my care, their needs and their challenges for the future. This month I will try to explain a little of how our churches work within the wider set-up of deanery and diocese.

Each of our parish churches has a parochial church council (PCC). The PCC will contain one or two church wardens whose prime responsibility is the care of their church building and they do this on behalf of the Bishop for the Diocese. Their duties will entail keeping an eye out for such things as loose tiles, pointing that needs doing, dampness appearing, drains that need clearing, the right level of warmth in the building etc. The church wardens will generally be at Sunday services and may help get the church ready before the service begins, such as preparing the altar table for Communion, lighting candles etc. and generally being ready to carry out any tasks that help the priest to carry out a service. In the event of the parish being without a parish priest (called an interregnum) church wardens are also responsible for making provision for a visiting priest for Sunday services and being the first point of contact for those wishing marriage, baptism etc.

Apart from church wardens there will be one or two deanery representatives who will attend periodic meetings (called deanery synods) within the deanery and relay the information they receive back to their PCCs. They will also take any decisions made by their PCCs to the deanery synod in the event of a vote. Our group of churches lies within the Corbridge Deanery and other parishes within this Deanery

are Corbridge, Riding Mill, Stocksfield, Prudhoe, Heddon-on-the-Wall, Ovingham, Wylam and Stamfordham with Matfen. These meetings are chaired by the Area Dean and sometimes there will be a visiting speaker and almost certainly there will be discussion on the current financial position within the Deanery! The Area Dean for Corbridge is Canon Michael Nelson of Ovingham St. Mary's. The Deanery Synod is made up of both lay representatives nominated by their PCCs and the clergy who serve within that deanery. Decisions carried by Deanery Synod can be taken to Diocesan Synod. Some deanery synod representatives may also be members of the Diocesan Synod. Again, the Diocesan Synod has both lay and clergy representatives but not all Deanery Clergy will be members and not all PCCs will have a lay representative on the Diocesan Synod. Some members may be ex-officio, such as the Bishop, the Archdeacons etc. Lay members elected to Diocesan Synod are automatically ex-officio members of Deanery Synod.

Some members of Diocesan Synod may in turn be elected to the General Synod of the Anglican Church in England. These representatives will advocate on behalf of their Diocese and will carry the decisions of their Diocese to General Synod meetings.

So far I have described those members of PCC who are ex-officio i.e. they are members by right of the position they hold. Other members of PCC are elected at the Annual Meeting by those who are on the Church's Electoral Roll. Elected will be a treasurer, either a Minutes Secretary or a full PCC Secretary, and possibly four or more other members. The PCC must meet at least four times a year (some meet monthly) and will discuss all matters relating to the church. The incumbent will chair the PCC meeting and has a right to chair all sub-committees of the PCC. In some large churches there might be such subcommittees as a property committee, a fund-raising committee, a restoration committee, a social committee, a charity committee, etc. etc. In our group the PCCs are generally quite small and all members will generally be engaged in all facets of the church's life from fund-raising to churchyard maintenance.

Those eligible for membership of the church Electoral Roll are anyone from the parish (with certain restrictions) or anyone who habitually worships at that church and who engages in the life and work of that church. In turn these members are all eligible for election to the PCC for that church.

So there you have it, a potted account of the way the church works with some additional information relating directly to this area. The work of our PCCs is important and without people willing to give of their time and offer their skills, our churches would simply not survive. But as explained in last month's article, our rural church congregations are small and they are not exceptional in

having a predominantly older membership. This fact needs to be acknowledged by those in the wider parish. The wider parish may see the Church as an ever-present fixture within the community, ever open, there for marriages, baptisms and funerals, providing services at Easter and especially at Christmas. And our Churches very much want to keep being part of the community and able to serve their parishes in this way. But those keeping our rural churches alive need more help (and those within our churches need to accept any help offered).

I would liken our small congregations to the plight of sparrows in Britain. Sparrows work in flocks and they need a certain steady number to survive. When numbers are too low, as has been found in many parts of the country, the flocks simply disappear. Such is our case, our churches are in dire need of more sparrows! If you would like to help our churches in any way either financially or by offering your skills, I would be very pleased to hear from you.

Anglican Church Services for the rest of February

Sunday, 19th February - 2nd Sunday before Lent p446

Slaley	8.45 am	Holy Communion
Whittonstall	9.00 am	Holy Communion
Blanchland	10.30 am	Holy Communion
Healey	10.30 am	Holy Communion
Edmundbyers	6.00 pm	Evensong

Sunday, 26th February - 1st Sunday before Lent p449

Slaley	8.45 am	Holy Communion
Healey	9.00 am	Holy Communion
Edmundbyers	10.30 am	Holy Communion
Hunstanworth	6.00 pm	Evensong

Wednesday, 1st March - Ash Wednesday p451

Slaley	7.30 pm	Holy Communion
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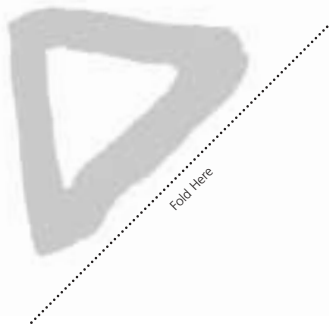
Sunday, 5th March - 1st Sunday of Lent p458

Blanchland	10.30 am	Holy Communion
Slaley	6.00 pm	Evening Service
Whittonstall	6.00 pm	Evensong

Baptism, Marriage, Pastoral Visits

To have a chat about any of the above matters please contact:

The Revd. David Irvine (Priest-in-Charge) at Slaley Vicarage Tel. 01434 673609 or The Revd. Jim Lynch (Assist. Priest) at Blanchland Vicarage Tel. 01434 675141



A short history of dog ears by Matt Ridley

Last year a Boxer called Tasha became the first dog to have its DNA deciphered. Tasha's genome is now the 'reference' for all dog genes – the ideal dog, compared with which all others could be defined as mutants.

That comparison is going to be truly fascinating, because dog genes offer a way to understand human behaviour. Every breed of dog behaves in a characteristic way and by comparing its genes to Tasha's you should eventually be able to find out which genes make a Doberman vicious, a spaniel affectionate or a terrier pleased with itself. Then all you have to do is fish out the same genes in people and study how they differ between individuals.

After all, we now know – as we did not ten years ago – that dogs, people, mice and whales all use roughly the same kit of 25,000 genes. They just switch them on in different patterns to build different bodies or express different behaviours, just as a novelist uses different patterns of the same words to make different stories. So the chances are that the gene responsible for cockiness in Jack Russells might also be the gene responsible for cockiness in Tony Blair.

There are some intriguing hints already. Have you ever noticed how friendly dogs have floppy ears while fierce dogs have stick-up ears? Spaniels and Labradors versus Alsatians and Dobermans. In-between dogs, like collie sheepdogs or Jack Russells, have half-cocked ears. (Something similar happens in pigs, which have floppier ears than wild boar.) According to Professor Ray Coppinger's theory, that's because all dogs are just wolves frozen at immature stages, and some are frozen at more immature stages than others.

A wolf pup is born with floppy ears, but gradually as it grows its ears become half-cocked and then fully cocked. The snout lengthens, too. Its behaviour meanwhile, goes through several, predictable stages. First it picks things up and plays with them, like a Labrador. Then it starts stalking things, like a collie. Finally, it begins to hunt and attack for real, like an Alsatian.

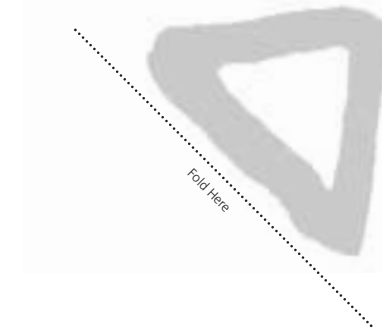
The suggestion is that by picking out dogs that were docile, our ancestors accidentally picked out dogs that were stuck in the early stage of development, with snub noses and floppy ears. By picking dogs that herded sheep without killing them or that

killed rabbits but still played with children, they wanted half-mature behaviour and so accidentally selected half-cocked ears. The same genetic programmes that arrested the development of the ears also arrested the development of the behaviour.

A nice piece of evidence comes from Novosibirsk in Siberia where a man named Dmitri Belyaev started a silver fox fur farm in the 1950s. He decided to breed from the tamest foxes – the ones that showed least fear or aggression as pups. That was his sole criterion for choosing breeding stock. Within 25 generations he had bred a kind of fox that, far from running away, actually seeks human company (so much so that Belyaev's successors are now considering marketing fox pets). But bizarrely he now had a fox that looked very different from wild foxes. It was snub-nosed, short-tailed, floppy-eared, immature, and often had a white patch on the forehead. Many domesticated animals have this white 'star' on the head – from cattle to horses. It seems to be an accidental genetic byproduct of arrested development.

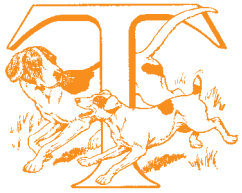
Belyaev's approach is probably much the same as the one used by our ancestors to domesticate wolves into dogs. Genetic evidence proves that dog domestication happened first in east Asia, probably in China, and probably about 15,000 years ago. It may not have been deliberate. Some wolves would have learnt to scavenge from human feeding sites and settlements. They were chased off. But the least scared wolf, last to leave and first to return, got more to eat so had more pups. The tamest was the least grown-up and soon some mutant animal appeared that never grew up properly and could be even tamer. Gradually these half tame wolves came to hang around human settlements so permanently that people adopted them as pets, used them on hunts or tied them to sledges.

Only then did we start deliberately selecting dog breeds for different behaviours and appearance, using as our raw material the hidden reservoir of recessive mutations carried by wild wolves. All dogs, from pugs to Great Danes, are not only the same species; they apparently descend from just five female wolves.



Mr Stirling expounds on hounds.

Charles Stirling was once master of two hunts at different ends of the country at the same time. He knows about dogs.



There is an uncanny fascination in time spent with 'man's best friend'. Some people have the knack of controlling them as if with a golden thread. With others, any amount

of shouting and attempting to preserve authority only makes the dog wilder. It was only recently that I discovered that my own Grandmother had left London to live in Ireland during the blitz, not because she was frightened for herself and her children but because the noise and sirens had such an appalling effect on the eight or so dogs that lived with her. In London I had little opportunity to develop the love of dogs, and especially hounds, that lay latent in me. Indeed my Mother's dachshund disappeared shortly after my parents' marriage in 1939 having been inadvertently shut in a door by my Father. This was not, it was always explained, because the dog was called 'Fritz' but because my Father was short-sighted. So, apart from my Aunt's Labrador when we visited her, my sister and I were brought up in a dog-less household. It was not until later that the tradition of the Eton Beagles became an obsession to the extent that my tutor described my academic achievements as literally having 'gone to the dogs'!

Hence from about the age of fifteen or so, I learned the art of being able to take up to sixty or so hounds for a walk without recourse to leads. One of my earlier recollections is of a fine looking male beagle whose owners had become disenchanted with the manner in which he dealt with their chintz curtains and so had lent him to the Beagles to 'get some proper exercise'. The look of pure amazement on the poor fellow's face when he was released onto Thames Big Field with his new friends haunts me still.

Many stories have been told about the amazing homing sense of dogs. I have one about a hound in our area of whom I was especially fond. I had brought him back from the South Notts to run with the Haydon and had taken him out near the viaduct above Haltwhistle. He clearly disliked his new colleagues and disappeared to the extent that, although he was sighted from time to time feeding on a tip, all that I saw of him was the odd footprint. This was in spite of my spending a great deal of time in the area, especially in the early mornings which is usually the best time to catch a 'dog on the run'. Then one morning he just turned up in our yard at home, bright as a bee, very friendly and in excellent condition. How can one account for that?

CAKES AND PUDDINGS OUT OF THIN AIR



DRINK A GLASS OF WHITE WINE and push your nose (gently) into the fur of a clean, young pug. Inhale. You will smell freshly baked Dundee Cake.

REPEAT THE SNIFFING action after drinking a glass of red wine. Your nostrils will fill with the fragrance of a warm Christmas Pudding.

A Christmas celebration of Orchid, now a much-mourned pug, by Amynta and Jamie Warde-Aldam.

Fig. 1, Sir Edwin Landseer, Attachment (1829), Private Collection

Fig. 2, William Hogarth, Self-Portrait with Pug, (1745). Tate Britain, London



A dog of a picture?



A picture of a dog.

Dogs in Western Art: Hogarth's Self-Portrait with Pug by Bill and Anne Monroe

Since the Renaissance, and the new interest artists now took in portraying the world around them - whether it be landscape, portraits, still life or sporting art - 'man's best friend' has proved a popular inclusion in fashionable portraiture. Often, as in Van Eyck's famous *The Arnolfini Marriage* in the National Gallery, London, dogs represent the quality they are supposed to - and indeed do! - excel in, fidelity, although it is only fair to add that many dogs in 16th and 17th century portraits by, for example, Titian, or Sir Anthony Van Dyck, represent instead decorative accessories to their fashionable owners. Lapdogs such as pugs or King Charles

spaniels often offset their decorative mistresses in their silks and satins, adding a welcome note of informality to the trappings of wealth, subtly allowing their mistresses an extra few inches of height in contrast with their diminutive size, and allowing the artist to show off his mastery of fur and sinew.

By the eighteenth century, British artists such as George Stubbs had brought animals, notably dogs and horses, to the forefront of portraiture, and many British landowners of the time relished commissioning portraits of their wives, children, horses and dogs - not necessarily in that order! Meanwhile, in sporting art in France and England (also painted for the landowning classes, who were often deeply involved in hunting or the chase), dogs such as greyhounds or wolfhounds became the subjects of what were perceived as 'heroic' fights against the forces of 'untamed' nature represented by stags, wild boar or foxes - a perception that would be notably different today. It was left to Landseer, in the second half of the nineteenth century, to paint 'man's best friend' in a new and somewhat sentimental role - canine loyalty to man even in the face of death. Just as Greyfriars' Bobby sat by his master's grave until his own demise many years later, so Landseer's dogs are seen to watch over their dead or dying masters. In *Attachment* (1829), fig. 1, which illustrates Sir Walter Scott's poem, *Helvellyn*, a terrier keeps watch (for three months) by his dead master, who had perished in a climbing accident.

The 'dog' portrait we have chosen to highlight this month is, however, perhaps more moving than Landseer's sentimental tragedies. In this wonderful *Self-Portrait* (fig.2), painted in 1745, Hogarth has chosen to portray himself with his pug, in a painting which, surely more than almost any other, gives equal weight to the human being and to his dog.

The portrait, much popularised through its reproduction in engravings, to the extent that it is one of the most familiar paintings in British art, represents almost a definitive statement of Hogarth's artistic creed - and he uses his dog to explain this to his viewers! Like his younger contemporary, Dr. Samuel Johnson of 'Dictionary' fame, Hogarth believed in direct, 'no-nonsense' painting, and this *Self-Portrait* is something of a parody of those earlier portraits, described above, in which ladies in their finery were accompanied by their lapdogs. Instead, Hogarth's painting almost exactly parallels Dr. Johnson's dictat: 'I would rather see the portrait of a dog that I know, than all the allegorical paintings they can shew me in the world'. While Hogarth shows the artist himself set back from the picture plane within a feigned oval, offset by the kind of draped curtain that had been a staple ingredient of fashionable British portraits for well over a hundred years, his dog sits patiently, perhaps even resignedly, outside the oval, in 'real' space, and is afforded no such artistic 'treatment'; instead, it is simply itself, much more 'real', therefore, than the painter himself in his framed oval. Hogarth fought a life-long, and by no means altogether successful, battle to introduce his British audience to a 'truthful', down-to-earth form of painting not based on continental artistic fashions. It is rather touching that, in this masterpiece of British portraiture, he used his pug to highlight what he was trying to achieve in his paintings.

Poor Jack is dead Geoffrey Wheatcroft reflects on the loss of a beloved dog.



Somebody once said that the English don't really like animals, they just dislike children. It was a good line, better than Cyril Connolly's characteristically over-elaborate 'Animal-love is the honey of the misanthrope': our attitude to animals is illogical, deeply hypocritical and too often emotionally false. We ban (or they do) the hunting of wild foxes, while we breed 20 million pheasants artificially every year to be shot, and inevitably sometimes winged and left to die. We pass laws (or they do) making cruelty to goldfish a criminal offence, while the loathsomeness of fish farming is added to the horrors of factory farming.

And with our pet animals we do something else: we sentimentalise them, we anthropomorphise them, we project our own feelings onto them, we think we love them, and we expect them to love us.

Recently I've had time to ponder that. As it happens this has been a sad year of bereavement for us, with the loss of too many family and friends, and by comparison with those it might seem frivolous or even immoral to fret over the death of a pet but we do. I've been thinking about that, and about the dogs I have known.

When I was a young boy we had a Border Terrier called Tigger, but long and peripatetic bachelor years were spent without animal companionship, and there was no other dog in my life until 1989, when I had occasion to meet Fanny. She was living in Camberwell, a shaggy black mongrel whose origins were lost in the mists of Battersea Dogs Home. At first she greeted me with suspicion, and I wasn't at all sure how much she wanted me as part of her own life until the choice was made for her. Reader, I married her, or at any rate her owner, and Fanny and I had to make friends as best we could.

She was a dog of very distinctive character, intermittently delightful and disgraceful, greedy and engaging. Although not particularly big, for a dog of her size she had a preternatural ability to reach high shelves and we lost count of the cakes and especially cheeses she devoured in our kitchen and other people's. Besides that she could be surly, baring her fangs at children and altogether politically incorrect to a degree which shocked even me. In fact, she was a Thatcherite dog. Early one morning on Primrose Hill (near where we were then living) and elderly tramp, infirm in mind as well as body and

YOU'VE GONE ASTRAY

By
HONOR CROOME

*Come home again, come home again
My own true love, come home again!
You've gone astray out of your way,
My own true love, come home again!*



LONDON
CHRISTOPHERS
22 BERNERS STREET, W.1

CAPE TOWN : MELBOURNE : SYDNEY : WELLINGTON : TORONTO

very likely a victim of Care in the Community, had just fished a fragment of mouldering pork pie from a rubbish bin to serve as his humble breakfast. Seeing this figure, Fanny bounded over, leapt up and, to his astonishment, snatched the pie from his palsied grasp. There is no such thing as society. When we settled in Bath she showed that she wasn't a complete townie, frolicking in fields and snuffling through copses, but she slowly began to weaken and she died peacefully eight years ago, at Mouth Mill in Clovelly, where she is buried and I still mean to put up a small stone with her name on it.

By now we had young children who loved dogs (even those that sometimes bared their fangs), and Sally, my wife, travelled to Carmarthenshire to acquire a replacement. Dorothy is a Dalmatian of fine conformation and mixed temper. As the Dalmatian pundits Trevor and Valerie Grove warned us, she needed a great deal of exercise but that's no bad thing for us who have to take her out. Apparently she is imperfect by Cruft's standards, as can be seen (one is told) from her almost entirely black ears. But she is very pretty, very small -she was taken for a puppy for years- and very affectionate, at least part of the time, jumping on top of us if we are lying in bed, or on me if I am reading on a sofa.

Then in the spring of last year Sally said a little sheepishly that we had been asked to look after a dog found by friends of hers on a skip. I frowned and said that one at a time was enough, but after a frank exchange of views with the children I knew when I was beaten. Jack arrived, for the time being, and then just to stay. He was a fascinating dog, a greyhound with a touch of lurcher, aged probably about three, strikingly beautiful- Dorothy adored him: as Sally said, she couldn't believe this gorgeous Brad Pitt had come into her life- but also terribly highly strung and jumpy at first. Having very likely been ill-treated by whoever abandoned him. This meant that he was barely housetrained. Until gently dissuaded, he did what I had never seen a dog do before, and stood in the drawing room while he quietly peed down the side of his own leg. His illicit appetite surpassed Fanny's, made worse by his height. He would put his paws on my shoulders, as he would do to embrace me, and no food was safe from him: he would devour a pot of stew as it was cooking on top of the stove.

When the subject of pets turned theological, WH Auden would end the argument by slamming the saying 'I know my cat has a soul.'

I don't know whether Jack had a soul, but he certainly had a personality. He was quizzical and good natured, fantastically energetic and lightning-fast over short stretches. He loved to chase rabbits, or pretend to. When he met one face to face he was downright cowardly, and in general he was terrified of most other animals: he would turn tail and run if he saw cattle two fields away.

After he settled down, Jack seemed healthy as well as happy until earlier last year when he began alarmingly to splay his legs and collapse on the floor. If a large quantity of gin had been poured into his food there might have been an explanation. As it was we were both baffled until the vet said that he had a heart condition and needed to be examined by a specialist, who confirmed that one of Jack's heart valves was defective and that he might not have long to live. So Sally told me on her return from the consultation, adding with a faraway look that an artificial valve might be fitted for no more than £2,500. At that point, I remembered Jimmy Durante's 'Your money or your life routine: 'I'm thinking, I'm thinking', but I managed to stifle any untoward reply.

Before anything could be done the decision was taken out of our hands. I went to stay with Philip and Rosalind Watson for the York May meeting and when I returned Sally greeted me at the front door in tears. Jack was lying on a sofa, beautiful as ever but quite still. She had found him in the morning, after he had died peacefully in his sleep. We held his funeral on the Saturday, burying him under a newly planted tree in the garden, with the children holding candles, my daughter Abigail's friend Nelly reading a poem and myself giving a short address apt for the occasion. He had been with us for only a year.



*W.H. Auden in Hexham Labour Club,
thinking about pets and their souls.*

Since then I have wondered why I, an averagely cynical late middle-aged journalist, appropriately hard bitten and sometimes hard-hearted, have missed him so much. As I say, to compare the deprivation of an animal's company with a human loss is trivial and unseemly. Of all the terrifying sottisier of nonsense after the death of Diana, the most shocking of all was a man saying on the radio that he had grieved more for her than he had when his own wife died, and I do not want to feel more sorrow when a dog dies than when a man or woman I had loved dies.

And yet, and yet... Jack's death affected us more than we had expected: me perhaps more than it should have done. My friend Clare Boylan, the Irish novelist, is disdainful about the way pet animals treat us: 'They engage our affections and then they go and die and upset us.' We don't even know quite how or where they stand in our emotional and moral compass. Animals aren't human: not even

higher primates are our equals in ethical terms and I am convinced that the animal rights movement is wrong: animals have no rights, although we owe them obligations.

Maybe part of the answer to my puzzle was CS Lewis's when he said that dogs have three legs in the animal kingdom and one in the human. They don't think as we do or feel as we do, but they are capable of emotion and affection without the depths of human friendship or sexual love, but also without the problems. In Auden's lines about the creatures in his garden, 'Not one of them was capable of lying, / There was not one of them that knew it was dying.' Maybe the real answer is that we don't so much love our animals as envy them.

This article first appeared in The Spectator and is used with the writer's permission.



Pliny more monsters where these came from... Dog-Heads at the World's End by Adam Douglas

Imagine a world without television or radio, without the internet, without printed books or public libraries, a world where news takes months to travel across country, carried only by private letter or word of mouth.

Imagine knowledge passed on in handwritten form, cobbled together from ancient fragments, the texts subject to multiple copying errors. Imagine intelligent people wholly occupied by poring over religious texts.

Imagine that the only things really worth knowing have been written down in just two defunct languages, and that all knowledge of one of these has been lost.

Welcome to the European Middle Ages.

In this bleak landscape, any book containing even a few shreds of useful information held enormous authority, deservedly or not. The voluminous Natural History of the first-century writer Pliny the Elder was one. Pliny was certainly inquisitive – he died observing the eruption of Vesuvius just that little bit too closely – but hardly a scientist. He simply copied his material from other books, now lost. But his compendium was virtually all they had.

Pliny described teeming life in places medieval men could only dream of exploring for themselves. He described races of monsters, some huge like the Giants, some tiny like the Pygmies, others deformed, like the Himantopodes with feet like skis, the elephant-eared Panoti or the Amyctyrae with grossly distended lips. Stranger still were the Astomi who had no mouths and lived on the smell of apples, or the Anthropophagi who ate human flesh. He told of Amazons, fierce female warriors who cut off one breast to make drawing a bow easier, and mute Troglodytes creeping underground in the deserts of Ethiopia. He drew a vivid picture of Sciopods lying on their backs and shielding themselves from the sun's glare with their single monstrous foot, and the burly Blemmyae, "whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders"; as Othello put it.

And of course Pliny described the Cynocephali, or Dog-Heads. Fierce creatures combining the attributes of man and beast, they lived in the mountain caves of India, he reported, where they barked, wore animal skins and hunted with swords, bows and javelins. Other accounts credited them with enormous teeth and fiery breath.

Just the sort of challenge to test the mettle of an ambitious missionary.

The Acts of the Apostles told how the gift of speaking the tongues of "every nation under heaven" had descended on the apostles. If Christianity's claim to be a universal religion was to have any force, "every nation under heaven" must include all the weirder ones. The medieval world maps, or mappae mundi, pictured these outlandish creatures round their rims, and it was there that missionaries must go.

They understood that the monstrous races were likely to be hostile. Some, noting the Twenty-Second Psalm's verses about dogs encircling the

crucified Messiah, identified the Dog-Heads with the Jews, who had "barked" against the new doctrines of Jesus. Painters depicted Muslims who resisted the Crusader claims to the Holy Land as Dog-Heads in Islamic dress.

According to a manuscript known as the Contendings of the Apostles, two apostles, Andrew and Bartholomew, set out to take the Pentecostal message to the Parthians in modern-day Iran, sufficiently far from Jerusalem to qualify as the ends of the earth. Just as Pliny predicted, Andrew and Bartholomew soon ran into a Dog-Head. "Four cubits in height, and his face was like unto the face of a great dog, and his eyes were like unto lamps of fire which burnt brightly, and his teeth were like unto the tusks of a wild boar, or the teeth of a lion, and the nails of his hands were like unto curved reaping hooks, and the nails of his toes were like unto the claws of a lion, and the hair of his head came down over his arms like unto the mane of a lion, and his whole appearance was awful and terrifying". His name was Abominable.

As good luck would have it, Abominable had just been having a chat with an angel, who told him that he would be granted human nature if he accepted Christian teaching. Andrew and Bartholomew made their pitch, Abominable immediately signed up, and the relieved apostles renamed their dog-headed convert Christianus.

In the Middle Ages no story was ever told the same way twice. In other versions, particularly those in the Orthodox and Irish traditions, this Dog-Head is called Reprobis. And when he is converted, he takes the name Christopher.

We are more familiar with another version, how a gentle giant carried an unknown infant across a swollen river and was renamed Christopher, meaning Christ-carrier.

Our version of the legend of one of the best known saints in the calendar has had the dog edited out of it. But to the medieval mind a Giant was just as much a monster as a Dog-Head.

Adam Douglas is the author of "The Beast Within - Man, Myths and Werewolves" [1992] Orion Books Ltd, London. There's a copy of it in Forum Books in Corbridge. Somebody buy it immediately!

In the Kitchen. With Dickie Umfraville, Gastronome Prince-Elect.



Thanks to Matthew Rice for the Badger.

TO THE VEXED QUESTION OF WHAT A MAN SHOULD FEED HIS DOG. Some of my greatest chums have been of the canine persuasion. Indeed, at one stage in my youth, I considered that what was good enough for my innards was adequate and appropriate for theirs. It wasn't long, however, before I was horridly disabused of this notion. Having nurtured Bassington, my large variety brown poodle, on meat pies and dark ales as a pup, I extended the education of his palette to the finer points of claret, best burgundy and quality cuts. He grew into a sleek, middle-aged hound who most days accompanied me in a proper luncheon at my club. Ah, Sweet memory! For this most agreeable state of affairs was not to last. Matters became tragically unstuck when, overcome by a surge of one-ness and love for my loyal companion, I rashly disgorged half a bottle of yellow Chartreuse into his drinking bowl before consuming the remainder myself, like a deranged humming-bird at the nectar.

Many years on, I still wince at my folly. As does the aforementioned establishment, through whose portals neither the unfortunate Bassie nor your cookery correspondent will ever pass again, although for obvious, different reasons.

Far better, I suggest, to take a leaf from the book of that master of invention Mr SC of Tipperary, who has had the novel idea of preparing a form of foodstuff palatable and safe to both species. I can vouch for this preparation (cleverly named Man And Dog) personally. Sadly, I can only express my disappointment that, like Messrs Coca and Cola, he refuses to divulge the recipe. Here, reconstructed through sensitivities and analytical properties available to a Gastronome Prince-Elect, is an approximation of that most sumptuous and satisfying treat.

Man and Dog

(for a one week supply to satisfy one medium-sized mutt and a hungry man).

INGREDIENTS: 10 lbs of chopped rump steak, 4 large onions, a dozen eggs, 4lbs digestive biscuit, 1 bottle Hine, 3 bottles E. Guigal Cotes de Rhone, a pinch of turmeric, 6 bay leaves, 1 lb potatoes. 4 lbs gelatin.

DIRECTIONS: Sweat onions and place in warm dish. Fry the steak until medium rare, leave to cool, then mince. Wrap biscuits in tea towel and assault with large hammer until crushed. Boil and mash potatoes Place everything in a large pot and add wine, bay leaves and gelatin. Stir and simmer until a good

nose of mulled alcohol starts to come off it. Take off the stove and leave to set under a clean cloth in a cool place. Warm the brandy over a low flame. When this is done, pour over the jelly and ignite. Leave to burn until the spirit has disappeared and the jelly at the top has developed a charred crust. Divide into 14 portions and serve hot or cold throughout the week. Humans may accompany this with potatoes and a green vegetable of some sort. You may wish to garnish your dog's portion with a helping of charcoal biscuits.

Bon Appetit, mes Puppy-Dogs!