

Dandy - a Clitheroe Story

Notes on the sculpture in the context of the history of
the Pendle Witches

By the artist, Marjan Wouda

When, in the year 1612, James Device was interrogated by the local magistrate, he confessed to having a “familiar spirit” whom he named “Dandy”. In fact, he said it was the dog who appeared to him, instructed him and bade him ‘ever after’ to call it “Dandy”. It was believed in those days that witches and cunning folk were assisted by a spirit in the form of an animal or human being. James, who grew up in the household of his grandmother Elizabeth Southern, spoke of a black dog that offered him a means of revenge when he felt wronged.

I set out to tell Lancashire’s most compelling story by creating this familiar spirit; imagining what this dog, that could speak to us and magically come to our aid when we needed it, might look like. It had to be larger than life; a potentially dangerous friend – as indeed it turned out to be for our James.

This portrayal of a familiar connects Clitheroe to its landscape setting in the shadow of Pendle Hill. Clitheroe Castle itself is very likely to have played a part in the story as a stop-over for those on their way to Lancaster Gaol. Margaret Pearson, one of the 12 accused in 1612, who is also referred to as the Padiham Witch, was sentenced for bewitching a horse, and made to stand upon the pillory in Clitheroe on 4 successive market days.

LANCASHIRE

Lancashire, with its unique landscape, story-lore and history, has been a source of inspiration ever since I moved here in the year 2000. It is so 'other' than the Netherlands – the country of my birth. Not only has the industrial revolution left its mark indelibly on land and townscapes, but also the wilder spaces resonate with story. Dig a little and you will find rich characters such as the Dun Cow of Parlick Fell, the Milk-white Doe over near Burnley, and Boggarts – a very Lancashire word – shapeshifting into animals such as hares and dogs near Chipping and across Morecambe Bay.

