

TULLE

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The Journal of Australian Society of the Lacemakers of Calais Inc.

Australian Society of the Lacemakers of Calais Inc.

Meeting Times & Place:

ASLC meets at Don Bank Cottage, 6 Napier Street, North Sydney, NSW, on the third Saturday in February (AGM), May, August & November each year. All meetings commence at 1.00pm. You are invited to bring a plate to share with other members at afternoon tea and fellowship which follows.

Future Meetings: **AGM** Saturday, 17 February 2018
Saturday, 19 May 2018
Saturday, 18 August 2018
Saturday, 17 November 2018

Find Us on the Internet: <https://www.lacemakersofcalais.com.au>

Want to Join or Membership Subscription Due? Contact The Hon. Secretary
Mrs Carolyn Broadhead
Contact : **email** beachous279@gmail.com
: **post** PO Box 293, GALSTON NSW 2159

Contributions to Tulle : **email** meganlucas@bigpond.com
: **post** Mrs Megan Fox
4 Brake Place, CALWELL ACT 2905
meganlucas@bigpond.com

Cover : Boulevard Lafayette in Calais – showing the Debray lace factory (see page 15 of this issue). The Brochot lace factory in Saint-Pierre (also referred to on page 15) is shown on the rear cover of this issue.

This Meeting: This edition of *Tulle* has been produced and distributed after the November meeting.

Guest Speaker: Our Society was awarded a Certificate of Recognition by the London Society of Genealogists ‘for providing a forum for researching the migration and genealogy’ of our ancestors by Martyn Killion, President of S.A.G.



TULLE

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I am disappointed to report to you that our editor, Jim Longmire, has made the decision to resign, with our previous edition of *Tulle* being his last. I would like to express my thanks to Jim for providing us with interesting articles on our Lacemaker heritage and developing the new look and feel for *Tulle* over the past two years. Being awarded a Nick Vine Hall Award during his editorship is an achievement to be proud of.

While we begin the search for our next editor, Richard Lander and Gillian Kelly have generously offered to dust off their editorial hats and share the role, as caretakers for the 2018 editions and to mentor our incoming editor. Thank you! Richard has also delivered above and beyond expectation by working with Lyndall to produce this belated November edition of *Tulle*. I apologise for the delay and hope you enjoy reading the translation of this interesting piece on Lacemaking in Calais. The role of the editor is very important in our Society. *Tulle* has been our core communication with our members over the past 35 years and has enabled us all to learn more about and share the stories of our Calais Lacemaker heritage. If you'd like to play a part in continuing to tell our stories through *Tulle*, please contact me for information about the role.

Late in 2017 you received a draft of our revised constitution, which Stephen Black has been working on for us. As an incorporated association, it is important that regular reviews of our constitution take place to ensure it meets legislative requirements and the needs of you, our members. I encourage you to read through the document and the summary of changes. If you have any questions, concerns or comments, please direct these to Stephen using the contact details supplied with the draft. We will conduct the vote to accept the revised constitution at the Annual General Meeting in February 2018.

As another year has come to an end, I thank you for your continued support for our Society. I wish you and your family all the best for 2018.

Megan Fox
President

SECRETARY'S REPORT

We had a very lively meeting in August 2017. There was the announcement that our Society had been awarded a Certificate of Recognition by the London Society of Genealogists 'for providing a forum for researching the migration and genealogy of the Australian Lacemakers from Nottingham and Calais.' This award will be presented at the November meeting by Martyn Killion, President of Society of Australian Genealogists. We have to thank Kingsley Ireland and Gillian Kelly for initiating this.

Not only did we receive this award but also at the National Family History Month launch at the State Archives, our journal *Tulle* Volume 34 No. 4 2016 was chosen as the runner up for the Nick Vine Hall Award. This also came with a \$100 award to our Society. Jim Longmire graciously thanked the committee and accepted the award not only for his work but that of the editors who had preceded him.

General Business saw discussion around the purchase of display materials to be used at conferences. Gillian Kelly is having these printed for use at the Annual Conference of the NSW/ACT FHS Inc. at Orange in September.

Preservation of our collective history was again the topic of wide ranging views. The executive are currently working on how best to do this via the website.

The current Constitution is being revised due to the changes to reflect modern technology suggested by NSW Fair Trading.

Carolyn Broadhead
Secretary

EDITOR'S COMMENT

This edition of *Tulle* is the first of three I have agreed to prepare in the temporary absence of a regular Editor.

It is an unusual edition in that it contains just one long article, the longest and most difficult which I have ever prepared in my times as Editor. It was difficult because most of the material on which it is based was written in French and was about a reasonably technical subject. The material thus presented additional challenges in translation and comprehension. I thank Lyndall for all her hard work in this respect. She, as always, has been a marvellous help.

The story is largely about that area of Saint Pierre-les-Calais in which our ancestors lived. It has been brilliantly researched by the two authors, one a long-time friend of our Society. In many ways it has changed my impression of Saint-Pierre as it existed in the 1830s and 1840s. I could recall that Gillian Kelly had once translated a portion of a book by a French author called Albert Vion. After an extensive search I eventually found Gillian's article titled "St. Pierre de Calais as the Lacemakers Knew It". It can be found in *Tulle*, Issue 34, November 1991. I strongly recommend that you seek this edition out on our website and read it in conjunction with the material I have included in this special edition. It adds additional layers of detail to the story so brilliantly researched and written by Christian Borde and Xavier Morillion.

When our ancestors lived in Saint-Pierre it was not only a haphazardly planned town "without order or unity of style", "it was muddy or dusty depending on the season", it was unsewered, poorly drained, and there was no running water to the homes. Life was simple and work was fairly constant.

My previous impression had been that Saint-Pierre was a noisy place with lace machines operating night and day even in the residential areas. After reading and digesting the wonderful work by Borde and Morillion my overriding impression now is that it was a very, very smelly place.

Richard Jander,
Stand-In Editor

JUST A LITTLE *Reminder*

Membership subscriptions (\$38.00) were due 31 December 2017

If you are yet to pay please do so without further delay. Do so by:

- Cheque made payable to Australian Society of the Lacemakers of Calais – send to Honorary Treasurer ASLC, Stephen Black, 43 Tindale Rd, Artarmon NSW 2064, Email: agincourt111@gmail.com;
- Electronic transfer to the Society's account: BSB 032-089, Account No. 227653; Reference: *Subs18+Initial+Surname*;
- Direct deposit at any Westpac Branch. Ensure that a reference to yourself is submitted with it and that you post or email a completed Membership Renewal Form detailing when and where the direct deposit was made to the Honorary Treasurer immediately so he knows who made the deposit. One has been mailed or emailed to you earlier. It is also available on our FaceBook site.



Gillian Kelly being presented with the award by Mr Martyn Killion.



The Certificate of Recognition awarded to ASLC by Society of Genealogists

REVISION OF THE CONSTITUTION FOR AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY OF THE LACEMAKERS OF CALAIS

ASLC is an Incorporated Association in NSW. On 1 September 2016, the model constitution in the Associations Incorporation Regulation 2010 was replaced. New or amended provisions were made to 15 of the 48 clauses. Eight of these relate to modernising and improving the efficiency of communicating with members and maintaining Society records, through specific references to electronic communication methods (email, electronic files, virtual meeting technology). The remaining changes clarify or add specific provisions to ensure associations have good governance protocols in place.

As it has been five years since our current constitution was passed and recognising that the majority of our members do not regularly attend our quarterly meetings at Don Bank Cottage, the committee felt it was important to take this opportunity to update our constitution. If passed, we will be able to explore new ways to reach out to Lacemaker descendants and ensure all members have the opportunity to engage in Society activities.

In addition to the changes identified in the model constitution, the Committee has included an amendment to the structure of our Executive Committee and its method of formation. We propose that we continue to elect our President, Secretary and Treasurer at our Annual General Meeting each year. We further propose that both our Editor and Researcher should be members of our Executive Committee, but rather than be elected every year, these roles would be appointed by the Executive Committee as the need arises. We expect that members who may accept the role of Editor or Researcher would do so with the expectation to remain in those roles for several years.

I ask that you review the draft Constitution and support the motion to adopt it at the Annual General Meeting on Saturday 17 February 2018. (MF)

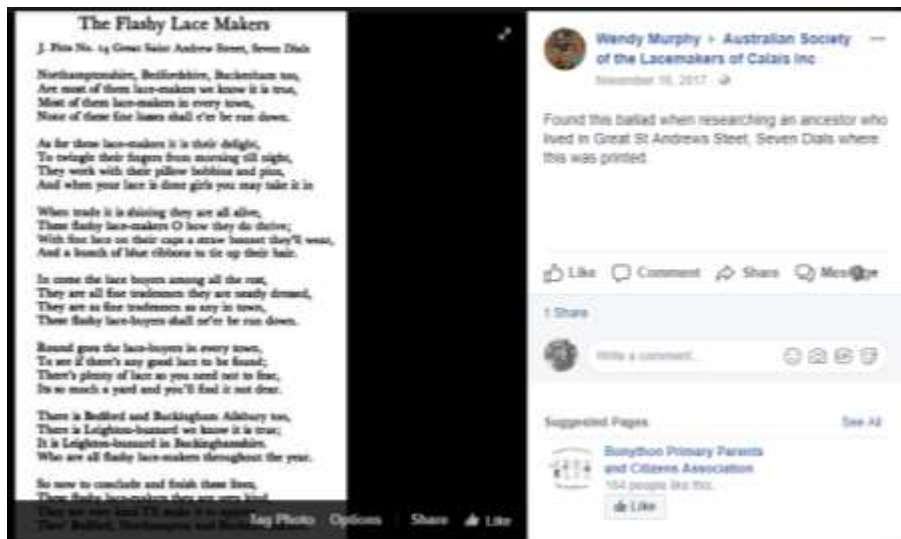
REACHING OUT TO LACEMAKERS AROUND THE WORLD - FACEBOOK

During 2017 we've seen continued growth on our Facebook page. It provides us with a dynamic method of communicating with our Lacemaker family and friends, sharing news and information on a regular basis.

We had messages and comments on our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/ASLC) from members of the following Lacemaker families: ROGERS, STUBBS, PEAT, WELLS, HOLMES, POTTER, DEWEY, GOLDFINCH, HARRISON, BROWNLOW, REID, CLARKE, PLUMMER, BARTON, MATHER and SAYWELL.



Here is one of our most popular posts ... (MF)



WEBSITE <https://www.lacemakersofcalais.com.au>

The transition of information across to our revamped website has continued throughout 2017. In the last 3 months of 2017, we had 823 visits to the website. The most popular pages visited were:

1. Home page (469)
2. Maps and Calais Censuses (281)
3. The Passengers (252)
4. Tulle (153)
5. About Us (149)

We have received 18 requests for information directly from the website and five new memberships. These have come from the following Lacemaker families: WEBSTER, DUCK, REID, WOODFORTH, FOSTER, ARCHER, ROE, RICHMOND, STUBBS, SUMNER and KEMSHALL.

The members only section of the website is currently under construction. Gillian is reviewing her resources and hard to find Society holdings are being digitised and loaded to this section. Exclusive Society records, including transcriptions of abandoned graves in Calais and an index of Methodist Baptisms in St Pierre are currently being added and tested before we launch this great feature in 2018. (MF)



THE GREAT LACE FACTORY

Calais lies on the Opal Coast in France. The Cote d'Opale was so called by French writer and painter, Édouard François LÉVÊQUE. In February 1911 he wrote: *"Is there anything in nature that has this ever-changing colour diversity? Yes, there is opal, that precious stone with milky tones, which casts in turn a series of green and red splinters"*. The Cote d'Opale, like the precious gem after which it is named, is therefore famous for the opalescence, fluorescence and iridescence of its soft light which is created by the reflection of sunlight off its nearby chalk cliffs and sand dunes.

Those who have been to Calais will undoubtedly agree with LÉVÊQUE. The light in Calais has many moods and colours during the course of each day. However, equally whenever Calais is mentioned, it is likely that the word "lace" or the French words "tulle" or "dentelle" will also immediately come to mind.

A good friend of Gillian KELLY and myself and also of our Society as a whole, Christian BORDE, has co-authored a book titled *"La Grande Usine à tulle – Histoire de l'usine Boulart, site de la Cite Internationale de la Dentelle et de la Mode a Calais"*. A reasonable translation is *"The Great Tulle Factory - History of the Boulart factory, site of the International Lace and Fashion Museum in Calais"*.

Christian BORDE is a Senior Lecturer at the University of the Littoral-Côte d'Opale. His co-author is Xavier MORILLION, Honorary Notary in Calais. Their book was released on 1 October 2014 and was published under the aegis of TRAME-Dentelle (*Technique-Recherche-Assistance au Musée Européen de la Dentelle*) – an industry body which seeks to promote the development of lace; to contribute to the development of the links between the lace museum and lace manufacturers; to work towards the enrichment and preservation of

the museums lace and lace machinery collections; and to promote the museum both nationally and internationally.

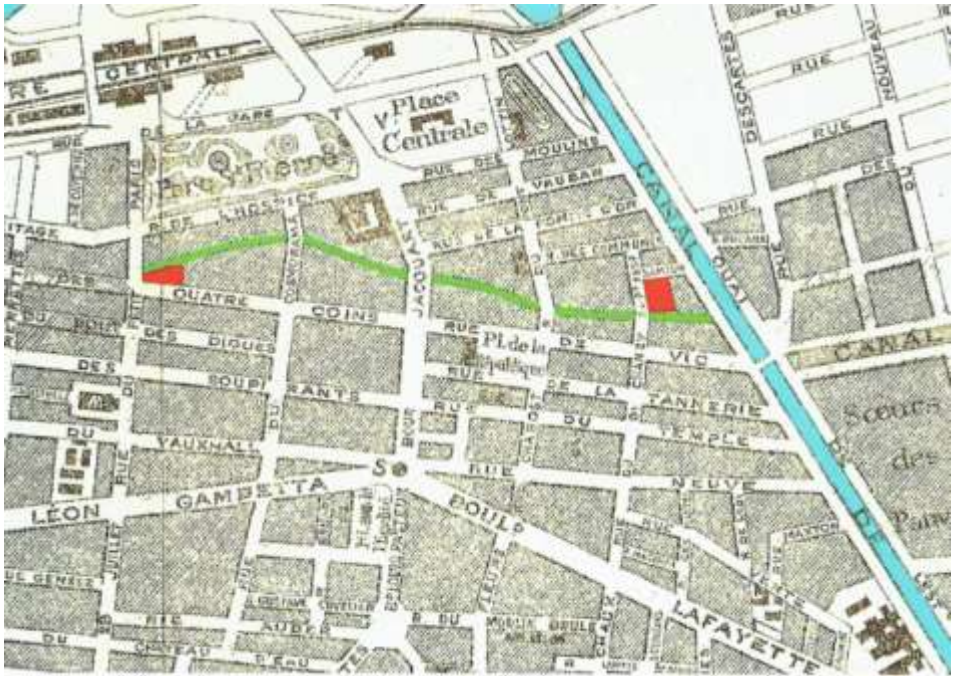
Christian BORDE kindly and generously gifted me a copy of his book at the time it was published and from time to time I have taken it from my crowded bookshelves to admire the illustrations and photographs within it. However, it is written in French and simply too large (115 pages) to ever expect my Francophile wife, Lyndall, to translate it in its entirety. However, with Google Translate and help from Lyndall, I have now managed to get more than a good idea of the wonderful material which lies within its pages and the aim of this article is to bring some of these revelations to you, dear reader.

The book is a real treasure and despite being in French I hope this special coverage will inspire many members to purchase a copy of it for their own library. It is available from the gift shop at the International Lace and Fashion Museum in Calais and at the time of writing one used copy was also available (unfortunately at significant cost) from AbeBooks (<https://www.abebooks.com>). It is something well worth purchasing if you are going to be visiting Calais.

In “The Great Tulle Factory”, Christian BORDE and Xavier MORILLION, retrace the history of the Boulart lace factory, now the International Lace and Fashion Museum in Calais, from the second half from the 19th century until the creation of the Museum. They trace the gradual conversion of Saint-Pierre-lès-Calais, from a swampy suburb of Calais growing vegetables and supporting a foul-smelling tannery, to a place making some of the finest machine-made lace in the world – initially with manually operated machines and progressively using steam-engine powered equipment which of course revolutionised the trade.

The tannery did not close its doors until 1861 so our ancestors would have been well aware of this foul-smelling and polluting industry.

My precis of the book, which follows, concentrates on the period up until 1848 for obvious reasons. Where I have used ‘single inverted commas’ I have Anglicised and paraphrased the authors French as best I could.



INTRODUCTION

The first time the great tulle factory of the Boulart Brothers appeared on a map was in 1893. The factory seemed overly large in the context of the city of Saint-Pierre at the time, ‘especially so because it was dominated by a very high red-brick chimney which rained – when the steam engine was running – soot over the entire neighbourhood’. In 1884, the first stage of the Boulart ‘factory’ had been completed. The authors state that in fact the term ‘factory’ was not used in France or England to describe large buildings used to house textile trades until very late in the nineteenth century. In France they tended to be called ‘forges’ while in England they were referred to as ‘mills’ - because

hydraulic energy was the motive force most often used in cotton mills. Sheila MASON¹ has proposed that the term ‘workshop’ be used where no motive power other than manual labour was used for making lace, or where buildings were used for ancillary operations, and the term ‘factory’ where machines were the motivating force – whether these be steam, water or electricity powered.

The authors of “La Grande Usine à tulle” write that in France the term used tended to be size related. The Boulart workshop became the Boulart factory once it had been enlarged. The owners and managers were called “usiniers” (‘machinists’) in the 1840s and it wasn’t until 1896 that they even formed an employer’s group.

Another peculiarity of the lace and tulle industry in Calais lay in the fact that there were numerous companies involved and not all had their own factory as in other textile industries. Instead, they rented small areas in factories from the factory owner who was usually a lace manufacturer himself. The International Lace and Fashion Museum has been established in one of the last collective factories typical of the late nineteenth century in Calais. The production process remained the same for all these small entrepreneurs – ‘it was not a single building which produced independently of the others, but a factory, which constituted itself collectively’ and functioned alone as a ‘city factory’. Space was rented out to a variety of manufacturers who were supplied with machinery driving power (steam), lighting and heating under the terms of a lease.

This type of large collective factory existed from the 1840s up to the beginning of the twentieth century and met a need to pool energy expenses, in particular the investment in a steam engine which would be beyond the means of a sole manufacturer. Each lace maker occupied several levels, each

¹ Mason. S., Nottingham Lace 1760s-1950s, p68

one corresponding to the stages of preparation, production and finishing. The looms were installed on the first and second levels.

In 1902, there were as many as 80 lace looms in this factory. The wood making up the partitions and floors, and the cast iron of the columns supporting the various levels, absorbed the vibration produced by the looms which weighed several tonnes each. The red and yellow brick walls of the building were constructed with a slight outward slope to act as a counter-weight to the considerable load of the machines installed inside.

The inner courtyard offers a clue as to how the factory worked. The two turrets each house a staircase serving the various workshops floors. The openwork iron walkways enabled the workers to reach their workshops without passing through those of the neighbouring competitors. Gone from the courtyard today, the position of the former boiler house and its tall chimney stack is outlined at ground level. A steam engine used to supply drive power to the looms via a system of belts and cam shafts inside the factory. The factory later converted to electric power.

The large windows indicate just how important light was for the work. The bay-windows, now reinterpreted in metal and glass, are evidence of how the looms evolved: they were constantly lengthened to achieve productivity gains, meaning that the workshops also had to be extended.

TULLE AND LACE

In the Picardy-Calaisian dialect, tulle is referred to as 'el teulle' – a term which can mean at least two different things. One is 'net', the base of machine-made lace. In Calais it refers more specifically to machine-made lace itself. Accordingly, the Calais Lace Museum simply defines tulle as 'a generic term which defines lace in Calais'. Originally tulle (*le tulle*) or trellis (*treille*) was made on machines by weaving (on pusher machines) or by knitting (the

French say 'hooking' - on warp machines). Now it is made on Leavers machines, still regarded as the most perfect form of lace weaving.

The book by Christian BORDE and Xavier MORILLION had as its aim to trace almost two centuries of history relating specifically to the site of the Calais Lace Museum. It includes the period preceding its construction. However, their wonderful little book also encompasses the broader issues of the industrialization of the entire city and the planning issues peculiar to this once swampy area and thus to our own ancestors.

The above map is included in their book. The Boulart factory (now the Calais Lace Museum) is the larger of the two red blocks, the one to the north of the Rue de Vic near the Calais Canal. The irregular snake-like feature (in green) running from the factory's southern edge to the triangular red shape on the Rue des Quatre Coins (Hénon's lace factory) is l' Abyme, a river which bordered the plant to the south and the location of which is still visible in the courtyard at the Lace Museum.

The authors state that the Boulart factory is of particular interest when one studies Saint-Pierre-les-Calais, a manufacturing city which was formed in what for all intents and purposes was a kind of large market garden in a rural landscape. This is because within a few decades it had become a large industrial city, completely eclipsing the parent town, Calais, both in size and in economic power.

The name "BOULART" was virtually an unknown one in the history of the manufacture of tulle - this very special textile. A quick look at the nineteenth century trade directories suggested that the Boulart factory might have been built in 1874 or 1876 but nothing specific was known about its origin. There was a complete lack of archival records in the old factory itself. However, the authors soon discovered that the factory had been built in two stages, fifteen years apart.

It is also amazing that it has survived. Most of the plants built or existing in the 1860s have been destroyed over time – either by fires, by bombs dropped on the city during World War II or by ‘the pickaxe and the shovel of the demolisher’. There was equally little by way of archival records to go on until the municipal archives were completely restructured by the last two administrations.

So the Boulart factory, now ‘one of the cultural centres of the city and one of the icons of lace and European fashion, remained barely visible in its urban environment because it was located between two modest streets, a little



distance from its sisters on the grand boulevards’. It was overlooked by the publishers of postcards who preferred to depict lace factories located on the major thoroughfares. For example, the Debray factory (see photo on front cover) which stood on Boulevard Lafayette, the Brochot factory (see photo on the outside rear cover) on the Boulevard Gambetta or the Gaillard factory, whose courtyard opened largely onto a busy street. In the area of the canal it

was the bridges of Saint-Pierre and Vic which caught the postcard publisher's attention.

The Boulart factory, however, is one of the oldest preserved in the entire factory town and it was therefore in a good position on the great monumental plan of Calais published at the beginning of the 20th century. Even if the proportions of the buildings illustrated bear little semblance to reality, it is possible to unearth some details from the plans. For example, from the number of bay windows shown in each window, 'one can estimate very precisely the number of machines in each building. Each window corresponds to a span of about ten metres, sufficient space to house a large Leavers loom and its jacquard attachment side on'.

However, the Boulart factory is missing from a map made by the Calais Chamber of Commerce in 1904. The only factory represented in the area was that of Henri HÉNON, the then president of the Chamber of Commerce. How can one explain this oversight ask the authors? The HÉNON factory is certainly obvious. The name of the proprietor even appears in large black tiles on the immense roof of his building. However, the BOULART factory is not the only one missing from the illustrated map. No other factory is represented in this part of the Quarré de Saint-Pierre!



The Quarré de Saint-Pierre was roughly that area bounded by the Quai du Danube to the north, the Calais Canal to the east, the Boulevard la Fayette to the south and the Boulevard Jacquard to the west, i.e. Section G of the city.

The BOULART factory is also missing from the magnificent fresco which the marine painter, 'Albert SÉBILLE (1874-1953) devoted to the port and the city of Calais in 1911. Faithful to his often very original style, SÉBILLE executed this large painting as if seen from the air. The canal and the factories above the Pont de Vic are well recognized, but little can be seen at the site of the

Boulart factory, which is lost in the mist and fumes which the painter had carefully reproduced.

The Boulart plant, on the other hand, is clearly visible in the distance from aerial photographs taken both in the 1920s and after World War II. One of the most striking observations able to be made from these photographs is the large number of factories and workshops still existing as evidenced in the earlier shots by the number of large chimneys.

In 1817, Englishmen Robert WEBSTER, Richard BONINGTON and James CLARKE rented a small house on Rue Vauban near the Calais Canal. There they set up five tulle looms and, ‘forgetting the episode of Armytage in 1802’, the Calais lace industry was born. In 1857, just forty years later, more than 20 steam engines were installed in Saint-Pierre in a single year, thus making it an industrial city, and in the process of establishing itself as the French capital of ‘mechanical lace’.

The reference to ARMYTAGE was not expanded on by BORDE and MORILLION so I looked for answers in Gillian KELLY’S book, “*Well Suited...*” and in *Tulle*. Gillian helpfully states²:

The Treaty of Amiens signed on 27 March 1802 brought France and England a brief fourteen month’s respite from war. In this time many merchants sought to re-establish trade. Despite the laws forbidding it, others took their skills and machinery with them, only to be imprisoned by Napoleon when war broke out again. Scattered

² Kelly, Gillian, *Well Suited to the Colony*, Australian Society of the Lacemakers of Calais, 1998, page 47f. Further information relating to George Armytage may be found in Gillian’s book as well as in *Tulle*, Issues 24 (February 1989); 27 (November 1989); 39 (May 1993); Dr Christian Borde himself contributed an interesting article on Armytage in *Tulle* Vol 16, No. 2 in May 1997; *Tulle* Vol. 18 No. 4, November 2000 , p.7; *Tulle*, Vol 20 No. 4 November 2002, p.27 & 28; *Tulle*, Vol 24, No.1, Feb 2006, p.30; *Tulle* 111, Vol 29, No.2, May 2011, p.3; *Tulle* 116, Vol 30, No.3, Aug 2012, p17 and possibly elsewhere.

throughout France there were many Englishmen actively employed in the textile trade, with more than a few engaged in the point net trade.

While the renewal of war with England incurred the detention by the French Government of the English in France, it appears that those who were working in the textile trade were allowed continue with restricted movement from their work place. John MOORE and George ARMYTAGE, John COLLIER and Henry MATHER all registered patents in the textile trade in France between 1802 and 1815.

The other references I have given in the footnote above are well worth following up. Not only was George ARMYTAGE one of the first lacemakers in Calais, he was one of the first Englishmen to take out a French patent 'for the perfecting of looms to make lace and stockings' and this was very early in the piece in 1804. On top of everything, our wonderful researcher, Gillian, discovered that George ARMYTAGE arrived in Australia in 1852 as an old and fragile man and died the following year at his son's home in Geelong.

I am now delighted to be able to advise that he was buried in the Geelong Eastern Cemetery, 141 Ormond Rd, Geelong East on 21 December 1853 and his grave can be located at EAS-COE-OLD-A-807-225. Perhaps we have a local member who could provide a photograph of his headstone for *Tulle!*

Now, back to our story! At the beginning of the 19th century, Saint-Pierre prided itself on being the largest and most populous rural commune in the Pas-de-Calais department, with all the advantages of the countryside without any of the inconveniences of a city. In 1814, one hundred and nine heads of households and one hundred and seven gardeners together made up a quarter of the male population aged from 20 to 60. Their market gardens fed Calais and Saint-Pierre and their surrounding populations. It was an extremely rural community but possessed some items which were part of the 'industrial

revolution'. In addition to the watermills and windmills which dotted the landscape, Saint-Pierre was the seat of a small tannery industry. The rest of the male population in 1814 consisted of 75 carpenters, 28 shoemakers, 21 'caulkers' (whose job was presumably waterproofing the inland waterways), and 68 carters. There was no trace of any major textile tradition. The community had only four weavers – and these worked in linen or wool.

The authors repeat the contention that the first attempts to 'make lace the English way' dates from the Treaty of Amiens (1802) and they reiterate that it was George ARMYTAGE who was responsible for doing so. Sadly, the five machines he smuggled into France were quickly seized by Customs officers after he had set them up in the Calais hotel where he was a resident.

It was twelve years later, after peace between France and England had been re-established, when Robert WEBSTER and his wife, Sarah MALTBY, settled in Saint-Pierre near the site of the current Lace Museum, between the Quai du Commerce and Rue Jourdan (today Rue Vauban). Their home was near the northern end of the Calais Canal between the Vic Bridge and the Thierry Bridge. The authors of "La Grande Usine à Tulle" question whether this out of the way spot was the Webster's way of escaping local traders eager to 'break the secrecy' of their patents and the trading channels which they then dominated by smuggling? Or was their location on a flourishing sea port their way of assuring themselves of easy contact with Paris, the large tulle consumer market where Mrs Webster had set up a shop? They also hypothesise that their locale allowed the 'British tullists' to secretly smuggle material from Belgium despite all the efforts made by the local Customs to prevent this activity.

In February 1819, the Websters took over the lease of the 'factory' established in 1817 by their companions, BONINGTON and CLARKE. The latter pair joined with other British workers to settle in Calais North, rue Saint-Denis, probably under the protection of local merchants who also defied the

protectionist laws. A decade after Webster established himself, lace machines were as numerous in Calais as in Saint-Pierre and both areas were becoming industrialised, especially with foundries and timber trade operations. The lace industry was well under way.

At the close of the eighteenth century, Saint-Pierre was largely 'colonized' by entrepreneurs who lived in Calais itself, 'the upper town'. These had risen from working class to be prosperous industrialists in the space of a single generation. The HÉNON, DEZOMBRE and BOULART families were all, to varying degrees, successful owing to industrialisation.



The future site of the Boulart factory was separated from the two major roads which today intersect at the "Quatre Boulevards" (the crossroads of Jacquard, Pasteur, Lafayette and Gambetta Boulevards), but which at the time, formed a countryside surrounded by market gardens like the rest of the commune, and which contained at the site of the municipal theatre, the old cemetery of Calais.

This was the heart of the drainage and transportation network. To drain the water from the Calais polder, the east-west axis of the Abyrne River flowed from its confluence with the Calais Canal and crossed Saint-Pierre to regain the sea by turning northwards. The Abyrne itself was crossed by several small bridges.

For the transport of heavy goods, building materials and coal, the Calais Canal at Saint-Omer (*Canal de Calais à Saint-Omer*) bordered Quarré to the east. At that time, the Vic Bridge did not yet exist and the east bank of the canal was not urbanized. A few dwellings ran along the banks of the Marck Canal, which flowed to the east and which, now filled in, has become Bleriot Avenue. This water network had a double constraint: first, drainage of the polder. The

swampy land in Saint-Pierre needed to be constantly drained and the groundwater evacuated to the sea. Conversely the navigable canals had to maintain water levels sufficiently high for navigation. Reconciling these two contrary imperatives was for a long time a real headache for the municipal administration of Saint-Pierre, torn as it was between the interests of both interest groups. With the first industrialization of the tanneries, followed by that of the finishers and the lace dyers, the available watercourse was required for supplying both these activities but also as a drain for their particularly polluting discharges. If we include the more general concerns of the waste water generated as a result of increasing urbanisation, we can understand the complexity of the problems faced by Saint-Pierre-lès-Calais. Was the Abyrne to be a river, a watercourse or a sewer?

The creation of the Calais canal around 1680 ensured the north-south cohesion of the system, which was to be completed after 1816 by improving the link between the port and the canal to develop maritime and river trade. Before the construction of the Calais Canal, the future Marck Canal and the Abyrne formed a single stream, which was then cut in two by the Calais Canal around 1777. The eastern part was channelled in its turn, while the west side of this stream remained in its natural state, continuing to receive drainage water from land bordering both shores.

There existed a great diversity of expressions to describe the Abyrne, which was basically a water filled ditch 1,100 metres in length. On plans drawn at the end of the 18th century, it was called "river", then more modestly in 1827 as "a small canal which crosses the lower town". However, the idea of it as a natural watercourse had still not been abandoned in 1839, since the Abyrne then became "a river used for domestic purposes and industrial needs requiring the purity of its waters." Finally, the myth began to wither in 1845 when the mayor of Saint-Pierre described the Abyrne as "the main sewer of the streets in sections G and F, the most populated sections of the city".

As you are well aware, Section G was the area of Saint-Pierre where most of our ancestors lived!

It was also a founding industrial axis of activities which the mayor enumerated: "tanneries, laundries, breweries, and starch factories". The conversion of the tulle industry from silk to cotton, by encouraging the development of dyes, rendered even more indispensable its maintenance, which was an obligation resting on local residents according to an ancient custom.

In fact, the gradient necessary to maintain the flow of the waters of the Abyrne disappeared under the effect of pollution deposits of all kinds. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the mill whose lock regulated the flow of water from the outlet of the Abyrne to the west fell into ruins. The Municipal Council of Saint-Pierre considered that this building had never been "of any use," that, on the contrary, "it had always been detrimental to the health of the inhabitants of the hospital and to the different factories of the commune." In fact, the miasma theories of the day also asserted that very serious diseases could also be provided by defects in the flow of waters."

Consequently, the residents of Saint-Pierre did not offer any choice to the miller, Charles-Louis TAFFIN, who, already old, had retired to Ardres: either he kept the valve of his lock open at all times, or else his mill would simply be demolished. A year later, on 14 February 1802 - the same day that the tullist worker George ARMYTAGE landed in Calais - the municipality of Saint-Pierre asked TAFFIN to clear all his rubbish from the river to the level of its original bottom so that the waters could resume their ordinary flow.

However, returning to Calais in 1822, TAFFIN seems to have entrusted his mill to a bleach merchant named Pierre-François BAILLARD-BUTEZ, before eventually selling it. The description of the mill shows that BAILLARD-BUTEZ had been busy milling flour for supply to the city, but also supplying ceramic powder to the pottery trade in Saint-Pierre. This had been created in 1807,

closed in 1818 and reopened by three Englishmen in 1822-1823. The mill was also known for the manufacture of a very fine cement which was very appreciated by the local construction industry.

Taffin's mill was working overtime and undoubtedly an unreasonable percentage of his output was finding its way into the Abyrne! The western flow of the river was being blocked by his pollution as well as the pollution emanating from a nearby piggery. Even if it had been possible to ensure the flow to the west, it would have been necessary to continue to maintain the course of the Abyrne by regularly dredging it or otherwise cleaning it effectively. The bridges which crossed the Abyrne every few metres also constituted a brake on the good circulation of fluids in what was now effectively becoming a sewer.

After the outbreak of cholera in 1832, regular attempts at cleaning the stream were again resumed. To fight against 'mephitic exhalations', even a 'medical file of the inhabitants of the Hospice' was conducted on 5 April 1835, and during the summer of 1836 the municipality had a course profile constructed to measure the amount of debris in the river.

This river, like all the rivers in the locality, fell under the protection of "*du garde des eaux et des digues et dunes du Calais*" which roughly translates as The Warden of the Waters, Dykes and Dunes of Calais. He was very conscious of the dangers run by the population and didn't hesitate to sound a warning to the council administration in the winter of 1838.

"Saturday, February 24, 1838, Mayor, I think it is my duty, in the interest of the health of the commune, to inform you that the water in the canal is very high and the upper basin is empty. Thus it is necessary to close the valve of the Abyrne immediately while opening the sluice gate until the river completely drains. Then we will open the valve of the Abyrne and leave them both open today or tomorrow.

Seven years later - having made a few corrections in spelling - his description of the manoeuvre became a little more detailed:

" We close the lock of the Crucifix, and that of L 'Abyrne. We then open the locks to the sea and the sluice gate, so at low tide the ditches in the city and the river both become dry. In this case, there is 1m 50cm of water in the navigation channel, and at the river the Abyrne lock is opened, so that the change of water is done quickly and the unhealthy waters are washed out to sea. It is to be observed that to reap all the advantages that these provisions provide, it is necessary that the river is maintained in perfect condition.

Perhaps the Warden's advice went unheeded. Perhaps it had its faults and didn't work as expected. In 1868, the municipal administration realised that a radical solution to the problem of pollution in l' Abyrne was necessary and they moved to make it a permanent, covered sewer. However, bureaucracy obviously prevailed and even this project was not completed until 1925.

THE SAINT-OMER CANAL - AND THE FIRST STEAM FACTORIES:

The Calais Saint-Omer Canal, which lies immediately to the east of the Lace Museum, was a vital artery for the first machine lace developments both in Calais and Saint-Pierre. In the 19th century, it was only 16 metres wide, just 2 metres deep, and emptied into the sea at the Crucifix lock. Saint- Pierre developed almost entirely on its left bank. The Calais Saint-Omer Canal joined the canal network of the Nord department of Calais at the Hénuin lock.

The canal commenced its journey to the sea near Watten, a small French town 36 kilometres to the south-east of Calais, where it splits from the curiously named Aa River.

The canal was enormously important to the development of Calais because it enabled the importation, at great expense but in good condition, of Belgian coal at a time when coal wasn't yet available from the Pas-de-Calais basin. Coal was, of course, necessary to fire the steam-engines which began being

imported from England and installed in Calais from 1818. The canal also enabled building stone to be carted from the quarries of Ferques and Landrethun to Calais; and English coal and timber to be carted in the reverse direction from Calais to the north of France and beyond.

The first steam engine imported from England was installed in a populated area of Calais in the mill belonging to MICHAUD, then RENARD. This 12 horse-power machine produced flour and rapeseed oil 'even in the absence of wind' for the first time. The mill also made bread and soap, but also tulle – because seven looms were housed in it at an unknown date. The main brake on the use of steam in Calais was in fact the very high price of Belgian coal which was even more expensive in Calais-Nord than in Saint-Pierre 'because of the city taxes'.

The second steam engine was installed in 1835, this time near the Saint-Pierre bridge, in a less populated area and away from the village of Saint-Pierre itself. The Saint-Pierre bridge (du pont Saint-Pierre) is where the Boulevard Lafayette crosses the canal, 750 metres to the south-east of the Lace Museum. It can be seen at the bottom right-hand corner of the map on page 13 of this issue. But the proximity of the canal undoubtedly played a more fundamental role in this location. The steam engine operated a mechanical sawmill for Dupont, Fougère and Company, which together with a foundry also became a spinner of flax and the manufacturer of tulle - one of the keys to the fortune of the VALDELIÈVRE family, one of the most prosperous in Calais in the late nineteenth century.

Because of possible crises in living conditions, the production at the Renard Mill was closely balanced between the production of bread and the production from its tulle workshops. In the midst of a food crisis in 1855, four of the Saint-Pierre mills, viz. those of VALDELIÈVRE, BÉNARD, HERMAND and MUILIÉ, each operated a flour mill with their steam engines in order to obtain a 10-centime discount on flour prices. In the middle of winter, the price of a four-kilogram sack of flour reached 2.50 francs, a sum close to the 3 francs

which constituted the average salary of a male labourer at the time. However, the city of Calais managed to maintain it at 2.10 francs during December that year.

Information regarding the installation of steam engines destined to power lace machines is known to us thanks to the requests for authorization which were sent by the manufacturers of the machines to the prefecture in Calais. Before 1850, the first applications concerned low-pressure boilers, intended to power old activities such as the Moleux-Devot sugar refinery located near the Saint-Pierre bridge, in the premises of the former English pottery factory, the timber sawmill and the Turner Foundry.

The following nine applications, in which we start to find high-pressure boilers being used, relate exclusively to tulle plant steam engine equipment 'serving as engines for various trades'. When it was a question of a smaller sized tulle machine it was sufficient to use steam-engines of low power: 3, 6 or 12 horse-power, whereas in the big factories of Calais at the end of the 20th century one could find machines of 200 horse-power intended to produce motive power and electricity for very large businesses.

The stationary steam engines replaced human power of the tullist who operated the first machines with his arms and feet, then that of the "turners", nicknamed "Slavs", who operated the circular warp machines. These unskilled workers do not appear in any of the official statistics, so no doubt they were very young and made up some of the unemployed who were counted in 1848. Historian Sheila MASON points out that the shift to steam was much more complicated and came later for the Leavers lace machines than for ordinary net machines, because of the huge variety of machines used in the former. The move to steam occurred in small steps between 1824 and the 1840s and 1850s.

I thought that it might be interesting to record just what Sheila MASON has

written about the introduction of steam to lace factories. The following are some excerpts:

- “To be worked by power, either steam or water, lace machines needed the addition of rotary action, and this HEATHCOAT had achieved by 1816 when the machines he used at Tiverton were worked by water power.”³
- “Some circular machines in the East Midlands were worked by steam from 1820.”⁴
- “DAWSON applied rotary motion to the warp frame in 1791 and many warp machines were operated in this way before 1830. But in twist net making, with its plethora of different machines, the general application of rotary motion took longer, for ideas were only gradually disseminated throughout the trade.”⁵
- “During the changeover from hand-operated net frames to steam-powered lace machines the multitude of improvements continued unabated – even though about nine-tenths were useless.... One reason for the slowness was that the jacquard could not be applied easily to all types of lace machinery. It must, logically, have appeared that the jacquard could best be attached to the most technically advanced machine – the steam-powered double tier circular – and although this was tried in the 1850s, this machine proved impossible to adapt commercially for all but the most simple patterning.”⁶
- “The two hundred years taken to convert hand-operated frames into the 16 to 20 ton machines of the twentieth century saw neither steady nor orderly progress. During the first one hundred years in the East Midlands a wide variety of mostly hand-operated machines were introduced, loosely based on either the knitting or the twist

³ MASON. S., *Ibid*, p.23

⁴ *Op cit*, p.24

⁵ *Op cit*, p.32

⁶ *Op cit*, p.34

principles, many of them confined to only one lace maker, and a large percentage soon obsolete. From the middle of the nineteenth century machines became more standardised and steam powered. Lace making divided into three sections based on the twist net principle – plain net, Levers and curtain lace – and these sections, together with warp lace making, divided and shaped the lace trade for the next one hundred years, into the 1950s and the introduction of the multi-bar raschel machine.”⁷

- “At first only twist net machines with a double tier of bobbins and carriages could be worked by (steam) power, but the majority of machines worked in the East Midlands had only a single tier of bobbins and carriages. The East Midlands did not gain overall supremacy until its machinery was converted to patterning and steam-powered operation during the 1840s and 1850s.”⁸
- “HEATHCOAT, and the other ten makers who followed him to the West of England, erected large factories of powered machinery, while twist lace machinery in the East Midlands remained mainly hand-operated into the 1840s and was housed in either small workshops or lace makers homes. By 1829 Tiverton, Barnstable, Chard and Taunton contained ten factories equipped with 544 powered machines, but in the East Midlands there were only two factories equipped with circular machines, a small one in Nottingham and a large one in Derby owned by Heathcoat’s former partner, John BODEN.”⁹
- In the 1850s, “Nottingham now became fully established as the pivot around which machine-made lace production revolved Sneinton, which had concentrated on traverse warp and pusher machines, neither of which was easily converted to either patterning or power, was already in decline by 1841, and by 1877 not a single lace maker was listed there.” “Lace making on the peripheries of the previously

⁷ Op cit, p. 44

⁸ Op cit, p.84

⁹ Op cit, p.85

broad swath stretching from Chesterfield and Newark through Leicester to Hinkley also largely ceased.... There are no records of net making after the 1850s in many villages and towns, such as Wymeswold, Shepshed and Mansfield..”¹⁰



Returning to Christian BORDE’S and Xavier MORILLION’S story....

The first steam-powered factories in Saint-Pierre were built for the most part in Quarré, since it was there that the largest labour force was concentrated. These were those of WEBSTER and PEARSON in 1840 (on the rue Charost and rue Neuve and described by Louis-Michel GOHEL and three others in 1845); of Baker Bridge (on the rue du Moulin-Brulé – just south of the Boulevard de la Fayette); of the Farrands Brothers (on the rue du Pont-Lottin); and of Champailier’s eldest son (on rue de la Tannerie - at the present site of the College of the Republic).

It was not until 1853 that the resumption of business provoked a new development in the transformation towards steam as a driving force. The Capelle-Delplace plant, James SMITH (rue Lafayette) and Eugene BIMONT (rue des Communes), sprang up opposite the future Boulart site. 1857 saw the commissioning of twenty-two boilers in both old and new factories. It was not until this record year that one of the boilers reached 14 horse-power – the one installed in the tulle factory of Pierre-André and Antoine LHEUREUX, on the road to Boulogne.

Since 1817, it had been common for many private individuals to rent space in their buildings for other machines. However, from that time on the machines were installed in dedicated factories. A manufacturer called Baker Bridge, no doubt affected by the industrial crisis which led to the 1848 Revolution, was one of the first to seek a site lease endorsement. In January 1847, he sought

¹⁰ Op cit, p.101

“an establishment suitable for manufacturing tulle, furnished with dryers, a furnace, a steam boiler, starching equipment etc.”. He offered for rent “motor-powered sites for tulle looms” for an annual rent of 500 francs.”

THE TANNER’S CYCLE AND THE MARGETSON CASE (1809-1861)

‘In describing the Quarré de Saint-Pierre, we have seen that this almost idyllic setting, enough to arouse the talent of watercolour painters, was crossed by an open sewer, which was one of the factors associated with the general environmental pollution. In this marshy suburb, cows and pigs still grazed and these, combined with the local tannery, all considerably aggravated the ‘olfactory pollution’. This took on industrial proportions with the construction, on the site of the future Boulart factory, of a particularly polluting tannery’.

Like many people at the time, both in the city and in the countryside, Nicolas SERGEANT, the first known owner of the block of land, did not just have a single profession. When he sold the property, which was later to form the bulk of the land on which the future Boulart factory was built, he declared that he was a "master mason and other things". The purchaser of the land was Joseph DEBETTE, who, said he only practiced one profession, that of tanner. On 6 December 1809, Debette and his wife, Marie-Noëlle WAVRANT, paid 5050 francs, for the land. If we look at the numbered plots in the Napoleonic cadastre 156, 157 and 157A, we can calculate that the area was about 1,283 square metres, so the price represented was about four francs per square metre. It should be noted that the measurements given by the act do not agree with this estimate. The notary speaks of 23 ares 60 centiares, or 2,360 square metres. The price per square metre would then be 2 francs, which was probably more affordable for these members of the "township".

In fact, DEBETTE’S house, which was perhaps built sometime later, was not intended for the couple but rather for his father-in-law, Jean-Marie WAVRANT, who was called a "gardener", that is to say a “market gardener” in

the context of the time. The house was first occupied by a carpenter called Pierre LEGRAND and was laconically but precisely described as a: "House consisting of a small room, latrine, cowshed, pigsty and vegetable garden". To describe the location of the land, the notary used, as he always did, the neighbouring area. The watercourse of the Abye which crosses Saint-Pierre is defined in a new manner: "The small river which leads to the water mill of Mr TAFFIN". We, of course, already know of him. Near its site will be built, sixty years later, another tulle factory, on the western side of the DEZOMBRE factory.

To the west of the Debette property is the future rue du Pont-Neuf, which the notary describes as "a second street leading to the said river". We know from the cadastral plan that the house that was built there did not respect the alignment of this still anonymous street, which was rather commonplace at the time since it is a street planned well after the construction of the houses and other buildings. The small "new bridge", which will give its name to this path, didn't exist at the time.

At some time which is difficult to determine, DEBETTE built on the banks of the Abye, a small tannery building equipped with four pits. It was still in place when the new MARGETSON tannery was built in 1845. In 1843, business was bad and following some repossessions, Louis DEBETTE-WAVRANT and his wife were forced to sell their property to a young Emma LEBLOND. By force of circumstances, the DEBETTES became renters of their former property, which was now presented as: "Five pits, two stables, a shop, a laundry, gardens and outbuildings, all on 19 ares and 5 centiares (1,905 square metres)". In 1844, Emma LEBLOND resold the former tannery together with the house occupied by Louis Debette and his wife, to two Englishmen, William and Paul MARGETSON, who had probably formed their company in London before being allowed to open their tannery in Saint-Pierre by a prefectural decree dated 28 January 1846. Their aim was to treat sheep skins imported from England. It is this small, very modern building which they had

built as a tannery, which, transformed over time into a tulle workshop, and which in 1884 became the western part of the future Boulart factory.

By 1845, it seems that the MARGETSONS had built their tannery without prior authorisation, doubtlessly ignorant of the French legislation covering 'inappropriate and health threatening establishments'. However, the construction authorization application file included a detailed perspective view of the building. In fact, it is the illustration of one of the first factories in Saint-Pierre (following that of the sawmill of DUPONT and FOUGÈRE), and was added to the plan without any legal obligation by VILAIN, the municipal architect of Saint-Pierre. The file also includes a "plan and longitudinal section" of the tannery building belonging to the MARGETSONS.

The two-storey building, 33 metres long by seven metres wide, was oriented north-south. After entering the factory by a porte-cochere off the Rue de la Rivière, one found a small building attached to the northern wall, and there was also a basement boiler room which opened onto the courtyard and in which there was a six horsepower steam engine. The building itself was divided into three rooms which were connected by two adjoining doors. The first contained "mechanisms for splitting the leathers". In the second were installed vats in which the leather was soaked. In the last room, near the Abyme, was another boiler, which supplied the hot water to the vats of the preceding room. On the east and west sides of the walls there were shutters open to the prevailing coastal breezes. These ensured the skins dried, but one can only imagine the intolerable stench which must have emerged from this room.

The nearest neighbour to the west, Benoit BRUITTE, was the more directly exposed to this 'olfactory pollution'. In addition to the exhalations, solid discharges were produced by this business including sumac residues which were collected in barrels.

The economist Charles VINCENT recalled at the time that "the leather

industry gives rise to a special and extensive trade for all the products of the goat, the leather craftsman, the tanner, the "chamoiseur" and the dealer in imitation leather goods . He also explained that on the one hand there was the tanning of large skins which was done "in the pit" - as at DEBETTE'S at Saint-Pierre - and, on the other hand, "the flotation method" was practiced in the MARGETSON factory. The establishment thus appeared innovative in the context of Saint-Pierre, typical of this non-industrial revolution which still tried to perfect the old techniques. It is undoubtedly the very modern aspect of the factory which provoked, in addition to the existence of a steam engine, the interest of the municipal architect, who took the trouble to provide the complete description and the plan.

The MARGETSON tannery produced morocco leather and sumac-tanned goat's skins about which Charles VINCENT noted that "the English leatherworkers succeed admirably in reds, garnets, yellows and some greys". Sheepskin leather was used for shoes; "*la basane*" was a sheep skin tanned using bark", and the so-called "white skin" produced was used for lining the shoes. This trade was a boon to the commission merchants of the port of Calais who took charge of it, but whose identity is still unknown. By representing British merchants absent from French soil, they could also, "besides the skins they receive on commission and as mere intermediaries, [make] purchases and sales at their own risk and peril". Once more, but in an episodic manner, the English innovations created for Calais a "special and extensive" leather trade, where, in at least 1845, came the skins of beavers, calves and "sea cows". Would the residents of Saint-Pierre pay dearly for this highly polluting industry?

MARGETSON POLLUTION CONTROL:

The local residents did not take long to object to 'the annoyances' caused by this plant in the heart of their neighbourhood. The construction of the tannery was a real show of strength, since it was only visited on 19 October 1845 by the mayor of Saint-Pierre himself after it had been completed

without prior authorization. The investigation from 5 to 15 October that mobilized one hundred and thirty-six statements revealed thirty-eight adverse complaints. The mayor, however, found the place "as it may be desired by an establishment of this kind". He called on a "local doctor," who noted that "no odour can be smelled outside."

In the face of so much bad faith, thirty-one owners and launderers (bleachers?) bordering the Abyrne sent a petition to the Sub-Prefect of Boulogne-sur-Mer on 2 September 1846. After unsuccessfully trying to have it ratified by the Commissioner of Police from Saint-Pierre, they denounced the wanton dumping of the raw materials used by the tannery, the ineffectiveness of the system intended to filter the polluting discharges which poured into the "Abyrne" after having rotted and fermented [...], which dye the water black and which infect the waters left behind with a tainted sediment". The waters of the Abyrne had of course become unfit for human consumption or for washing either tulle or lace.

The petitioners were represented by lawyer, Ernest LEBEAU, a future mayor of Calais under the second Republic. The mayor of Saint-Pierre was finally repudiated, since the prefectural decree of 28 January 1846, taking into account the claims of the people of Saint-Pierre, reaffirmed the draconian conditions of the polluting tannery. But in August 1847, a new petition renewed the terms of the first and emphasized that "this tannery which employs particular processes, spreads mephitic vapours which, invade the houses, inconvenience and compromise the health of the inhabitants". MARGETSON'S lawyer then informed the mayor that, despite the common sense arguments of his 'uncomfortable neighbours', he was very clearly questioning the nature of the Abyrne, which, according to him, could not be considered a public waterway. The threat followed the legal argument very closely: "If the demands of some of its neighbours were to triumph, all that would be left to do was to close down his establishment." And finally the foolishness of his argument was revealed. MARGETSON claimed he used his riparian right to return to the river, the waters which he had initially taken for

the needs of his business, as did all the other residents. It was in this ruling climate of suspicion that the second great cholera epidemic hit Europe in the nineteenth century in 1848-49, that the controversy again resumed with the English manager of the tannery, a certain Mr JACKSON.

The new Mayor of Saint-Pierre, Henri LEBLOND, tried to calm things down by getting the contractor responsible for removing the sludge and rubbish of the city, to remove the residues dumped in the river for almost no cost. The Prefect reminded the Mayor that it was necessary to favour industry, but only in so far as they respected the law.

The health commission which existed at that time did so in a very particular manner, wondering whether the appalling olfactory pollution and that of the waters of the Abye were likely to promote cholera. Above all, it seemed conscious of not upsetting the English merchants, who were supplying jobs at Saint-Pierre and volume traffic at the port of Calais. Hygienists also wanted to demonstrate their great concern for health issues by taking up the nuances of "sporadic or epidemic cholera". With the seriousness of Molière's doctors, the commission thus examined the modes of transporting the skins from London to Saint-Pierre, and the methods used to manufacture them in Saint-Pierre. It was delighted by two facts which seemed to it to be very positive. Firstly, it noted first that the skins coming from London "were transported in barrels containing a chalk bath, which guaranteed that there was no putrefaction". Secondly, it safe-guarded the interests of the tannery itself for the owner to refuse to use putrefying skins.

The commission dealt with the question of whether 'sporadic or epidemic diseases' had specifically infected the workers at the Margetson factory. Notably, they found that no employee of the establishment had been affected by the epidemic which had been raging in Saint-Pierre-les-Calais for almost a year. As the workers had to wash their hands after their very dirty work, it is certain that, without knowing it, they had escaped the cholera contagion which was spread by perspiration and soiled clothing.

Because of the odours emanating from the tannery, Benoît BRUITTE, the "down-wind" neighbour of the MARGETSONS, first saw his tenants leave, and then had to consider leaving the house himself. His home had become uninhabitable. The solution that was proposed to him then was rather simplistic because it was simply "to raise the wall which separates the property of Mr BRUITTE from the factory of Monsieurs MARGETSON and Company by two metres and to extend it to the main building used as a dwelling by the above, in order to remove as much of his property away from the foul emanations exhaling from the tannery as was possible".

As for the discharges, what we might now call "the right to pollute" was advocated: the residues could "be dumped without inconvenience in the sewer called river Abyrne, but only if he took the precaution of disinfecting them with charcoal or by any other means".

The tannery, which lasted until 1861, was still active when imports of English skins to Calais began to decline. After many set-backs, the MARGETSONS finally decided to sell their land. It was the new owner of the plot who, after having bought it for 20,000 francs payable over ten years, who intended to transform the disused tulle factory building which also contained a boiler. The old building was repurposed, as was often the case at the time, as the annex of a brand new factory. The pollution of the Abyrne was not over yet. In 1862, in a field north of BRUITTE'S property, between the Quai du Commerce and the Abyrne, there was a small artisan complex including a dwelling, a workshop and a tank. These formed an L-shape around a garden and it was here that the dyer Samuel TAYLOR shamelessly dumped his manufacturing residues. ■

VALE: Marilyn (Helen Marilyn) MORRIS, former ASLC member (SHAW family), at Cabrini Care, Westmead on 20 September 2017, after a ten year battle with dementia. Marilyn, formerly of North Epping, was 65. ■

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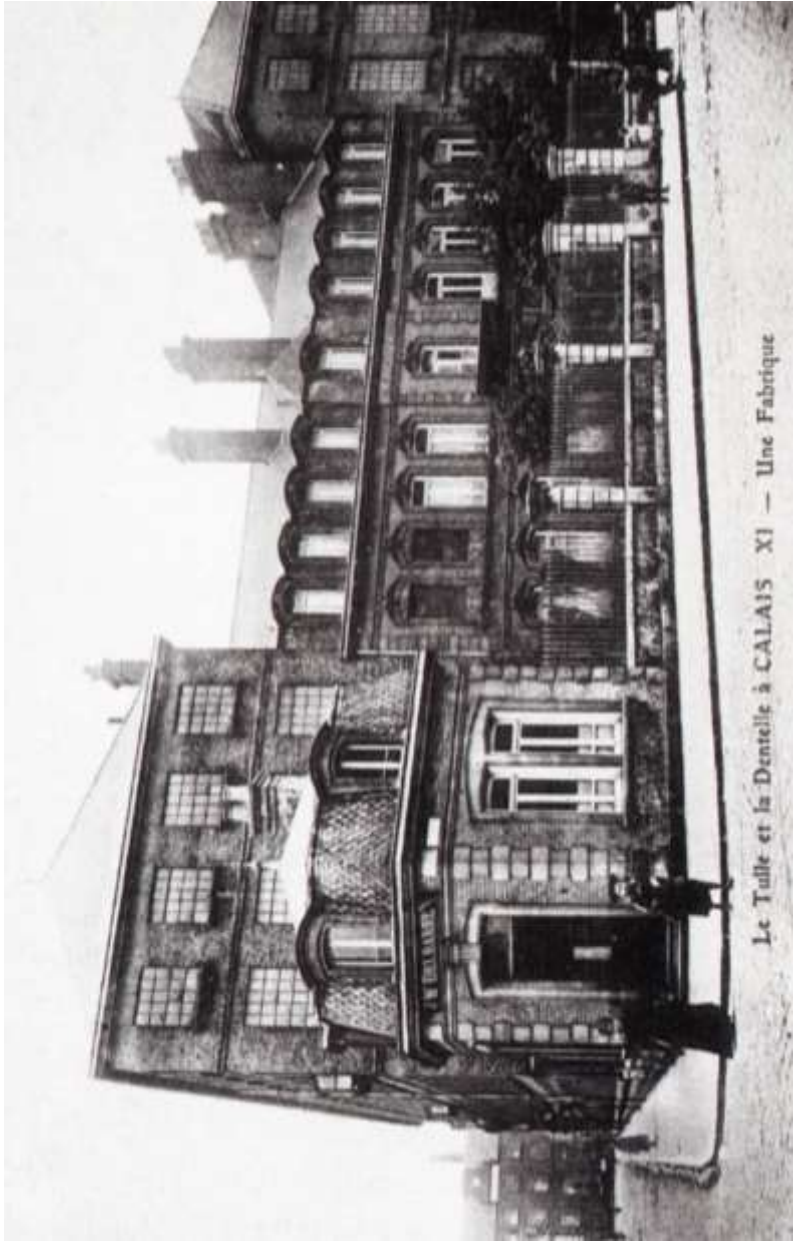
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The Brochot lace factory in Saint-Pierre, Calais. It was one of the largest in Saint-Pierre and was located on the Boulevard Gambetta. (See page 12 of this issue).