

TULLE

Volume 26, No 3, August 2008



The Journal of the Australian Society of the Lacemakers of Calais

Meeting Times & Place:

ASLC meets at Don Bank Cottage, 6 Napier Street, North Sydney, NSW, on the third Saturday in February (AGM), May, August and November each year. Our annual general meeting is held each February. Meetings commence at 1.00pm. Please bring a plate for afternoon tea.

Future Meetings:

Saturday, 15 November 2008
AGM Saturday, 21 February 2009
Saturday, 16 May 2009
Saturday, 15 August 2009

Find Us the Internet:

www.angelfire.com/al/aslc

Want to Join?**Membership Subscription Due?**

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The Editor reserves the right to include or omit, edit &/or to place photographs, comments, footnotes or illustrations within any text or other material submitted without reference to the contributor.

Cover Illustration

This is the 100th edition of Tulle. The background is a piece of black Nottingham lace worn by Mary Ann Lander, wife of Edward Lander.

This Coming Meeting:

16 August 2008

The Guest Speakers at our August 2008 meeting will be Jacqueline & Frank Rice, both members of the Newcastle FHS. They are the authors of "Not Just a Stone Frigate", the history of HMAS Maitland which was a RAN Shore Establishment in Newcastle during WWII.



Tulle

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President's Report

What wonderful news, in June, as the Queen's Birthday Honours List was announced, to see in print, the name of our very own Gillian Kelly to be honoured & awarded Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for her service to the community in the area of local & social history & genealogy. Gill's tireless & sterling efforts for our Society, her unstinting contribution to family history, in particular our Lacemaker's history, here, in the UK & France, is undoubtedly well deserved of this great honour.

Gill, our Lacemaker's "family" congratulate, applaud & salute you. How fortunate we were to hear, at our May meeting, an absolutely superb address, with wonderful pictures & illustrations, from Robin Wines who spoke about Maria, her "Little Irish Orphan Girl" who came to Australia in 1848. It was most interesting to listen to the story of Maria & her life in Australia, as she grew, developed & thrived in what must have been a very strange new land, almost in parallel, I thought, as I heard her story, with some of our lacemakers of the same age, many of whom also thrived, grew & prospered in and around the same area of the Hunter Valley as Maria's life took her.

Our August meeting will welcome, as guest speakers, Jacqueline & Frank Rice who will address us about hitherto unknown history from the Royal Australian Navy during World War 11 in Newcastle, NSW from 1940 to 1946.

"Not Just a Stone Frigate" is their account of a previously unknown & certainly not researched training "arm" of the RAN. Jacquie & Frank will speak about their involvement & research of this interesting part of RAN history. They have lists of the Navy people who were training there, those who were posted from there or even just "passing through", coming or going to other postings. Which, who... of any group of family history researchers can ever resist

peering & scanning any list of names? Not many, is my guess & certainly I will raise my hand to say I for one just love lists of names, anywhere, anytime.

Winter has taken it's time arriving this year. I, as a golfer in Newcastle, have much appreciated the mild weather we've been experiencing until yesterday. As I write, it is the 2nd of July & I must say that although slow in arriving, good old winter has hit with a vengeance, as if the "Man in Charge of Seasons" waited until July was upon us to make sure we knew winter was here. Strong winds – gale force & becoming stronger, so said the ABC weather report & cold, followed by yet more cold. Let's hope that all our lacemaker families repel all winter ills, sniffs, coughs & colds. We hope to see as many as possible at Don Bank for our August meeting, to catch up with all the news that usually buzzes around when we meet & to welcome & hear our interesting guest speakers.

I must make mention of "the birth" of his first edition of *Tulle* from the desk of our new Editor, Richard Lander. *Tulle* Volume 26 No 2 May 2008 was safely delivered, via our trusty posties, well before the May Lacemaker's meeting. 36 pages brimming full of great stories & pictures – loads of interesting "tid-bits" & snippets from great sources & a look at a little of *Tulle* from earlier issues. I repeat Richard's request from that edition of *Tulle* that he is eagerly looking to our members for some stories we should share with other lacemakers – anything, no matter how small – large also – Richard would be delighted to have to turn a good long story into a serial. Photos, too, any photos are likewise most welcome. Thank you Richard, we look forward to reading your August *Tulle* edition.

Robin Gordon
President

FROM THE SECRETARY

I think the greatest and most unbelievable surprise of my life was the arrival in early June of a very important looking envelope complete with the Governor General's seal.

The announcement that I had been awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for service to the community in the area of local and social history and genealogy through the Australian Society of the Lacemakers of Calais still has my head in a spin. I am quite overwhelmed at being so honoured and so very, very touched by the belief of those who worked to make this momentous thing happen! I have had some very exciting and interesting responses to this award that I must share with you.

There is a growing recognition of the place of social and local history, and genealogy in the continued writing of the history of this country. The Royal Australian Historical Society and the University of New England¹ have written, sharing my excitement and being equally delighted that the importance of the preservation and promotion of Australian history and heritage is being recognised.

Two phone calls have put the icing on the cake! I have a new neighbour of six months. Her excitement at an article in the local paper was palpable! The minute she read *Agincourt* 1848 she knew! Rhonda is a descendant of Frederick Archer through Kate who was barely a year old when she arrived and Rhonda had no knowledge at all of this magic story.

The second was even more surprising. I have known Sam for thirty years through teaching and his coaching our boys on the Union field. His wife plays bowls with my husband. This couple also picked up on *Agincourt* and 1848 – and Sam is a descendant of Lucy Smith who was born in Calais in 1844 and arrived with her parents Hannah and William Smith. He too had no idea of the history.

This local paper has a small circulation and yet it found two more descendants so close to my life! How many more are still out there, interested in their histories (as both these families were) but not making the connection to one of the country's most intriguing immigrations?

Gillian Kelly OAM

¹ I studied Local and Applied History at the University of New England, and in fact, my major assignment in this course was my first effort at recording the history of my William Branson, Lacemaker of Calais.

From the Editor

As I get older I find I have more and more things and people to be thankful for. I am thankful to my great-great-grandfather, Edward Lander, for having the courage and foresight to uproot his family and to bring them to Australia where my family and I live a wonderful life in one of the healthiest and most privileged nations on earth. I am thankful to my parents for providing me with a stable upbringing, a great education, some social graces and sufficient height to see over the shoulders of most others at the football, theatre and at weddings. I am thankful for my ever supportive wife, Lyndall in a myriad of ways each day and for my wonderful extended family with whom I share so many precious moments.

I am thankful for beautiful music, comfortable chairs, temperate days, cool breezes, good books, air-conditioning, clothes that fit, poetry and comfortable shoes. I am thankful for crème brûlée, chocolates, excellent restaurants, ice-cream and fine wine and whisky. I could not live without fresh ideas, stimulating conversation and great friends; hugs and kisses, warm showers and the smell of a Sunday roast. What would life be like without the colours of autumn, sunsets, or rainbows? Can you imagine life without dishwashers, ice-cubes or holding hands?

I am thankful that I live in an age when computers and the Internet can help provide much of the information we can now enjoy in journals such as *Tulle*. I am thankful to many members of ASLC for the insights into their own families which they have generously shared through our meetings and in the pages of this quarterly. I am thankful for those wonderful people who have so generously given of their time, wisdom and experience as our Guest Speakers & our executive over the years. And I am thankful for the generous help given by Marilyn Morris in typing up some of the stories I have chosen for inclusion in *Tulle*.

This is the one-hundredth edition of *Tulle* so I am also particularly thankful to Gillian and Claire for their hard work in producing most of the issues which have preceded it. I am grateful that Gillian's tireless efforts on behalf of our Society have been recognised in this year's Queens Birthday awards. Congratulations Gillian on your well-deserved Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM). How appropriate it is that I can report your award in this 100th edition!



I hope you all enjoy your centenary edition of *Tulle* and I remain grateful for your contributions.

Richard Lander

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August 2008

Maria Maher – an Irish Orphan Immigrant

Robin Wines



At the May meeting of ASLC guest speaker Robin Wines (shown below with our President) told an appreciative audience of her quest to discover the story of her great great grandmother, Maria Maher (left). From her arrival to her death, Robin has been able to trace Maria's Australian story:

The *Thomas Arbuthnot* left Plymouth 28 October 1849 and reached Botany Bay February 3, 1850. She carried a full complement of orphaned Irish girls who were victims of the famine and amongst them was Maria Maher, aged 14. The Arbuthnot girls were

first housed at the Hyde Park Barracks in Macquarie St, Sydney. Maria was there for eleven days until she was hired as a house servant in Sussex Street.



In 1855, Maria married William Kennedy at the Scots Church. The service was conducted by Rev. Dunmore Lang – this is a curiosity because Maria was Catholic. William acquired property on the Bomaderry side of the Shoalhaven River near

Nowra. Twelve children followed in fairly rapid succession and as Maria had been educated under the Irish National system, she taught her own children.

The neighbouring farmers wanted their children educated too and in 1867 Maria established a barn school on Alexander Berry's property. As well as the 3Rs she taught thoroughness, truth and punctuality and used materials from the Irish National Education system. With the establishment of state education system in NSW, Maria's school became the first State school in Bombaderry and she is still recognised as its founder.

William did well – he dairy farmed, distributed the mail between Bombaderry and Broughton and became an alderman for the Bombaderry & Berry Municipality. From 1890 to 1893 he was Mayor. In 1894 William stood for parliament but was closely defeated and the family moved in 1895 to *Leconfield House* at Branxton in the Hunter district. William died not long after the move but Maria continued to live with her two unmarried daughters, moving from *Leconfield House* to Toronto and back to Nowra where she died in 1921.



The Kennedy children at *Leconfield House*, c 1895

Robin knew Maria's parents were James Maher and Margaret Sullivan and that she was born about 1836 at Lorrha in Tipperary. Two brothers, Pat and Michael, followed and then a sister Bridget was born near Slieve Bloom. Margaret Sullivan was from Portumna in Galway and it was from a work house here that Maria came to Australia in 1850.

By the 1840s much of Ireland was dependant on potatoes as the food staple. In the harvest of 1845 between one-third and half of the potato crop was destroyed by potato blight. It was not possible to eat the blighted potatoes, and the rest of 1845 was a period of hardship, although not starvation, for those who depended on it. 1846 was worse with almost the entire crop being wiped out causing widespread famine.

In 1847, the harvest improved somewhat and the potato crop was partially successful. However, there was a relapse in 1848 and 1849 causing a second period of famine. In this period, disease was spreading which, in the end, killed more people than starvation did.

The worst period of disease was 1849 when cholera struck. It was in this period that Maria's parents, and probably her brothers, died leaving the girls orphaned. Many of the English who controlled the Irish lands considered the only way to overcome the problems of Ireland was to get the Irish off the land and so as well as the horrific tolls of the famine and disease, there followed a period of cruel evictions and mass migrations to America and the colonies. In this period Australia was desperate for labour and was suffering an imbalance of male: female citizens. It was Caroline Chisholm who orchestrated the migration of some 4000 Irish female orphans to Australia and Maria Maher was just one of them.

Robin's visits to Ireland have uncovered Margaret Sullivan's home place as Portumna², Galway. Here she visited a convent and became aware that one of the older members of the community was vehemently opposed to her assertion that James Maher came from Portumna. She fiercely told Robin in her lovely brogue that 'the Maher's dinna come

² Portumna in Irish means 'the landing place of the oak'

from Portumna' – and they didn't – they came from down the road, and across the River Shannon – Northern Tipperary – but from where the ladies were talking, you could literally see the bridge that divided! James and Margaret married at Lorrha Monastery in Tipperary

Like the Lacemakers, the Irish female orphans were part of a migration where all the immigrants came from a single source. Like the Lacemakers, the Irish female orphans were victims of a political system over which they had no input. The Lacemakers, in their quest to escape poverty, were supported by the Calaisiennes, by the British Government and by the people of England. They came in family groups and friends. Maria Maher was escaping famine, disease, evictions and true misery. Her only support was a small Irish woman – Caroline Chisholm.

The Lacemakers and Maria arrived the same way – on an immigrant ship. They were employed the same way – by waiting in Immigrant Barracks until they caught the eye of a prospective employer. At this point Maria's life and the life of many of the young Lacemaker women began parallel paths³, and in the long run, regardless of background, there was no difference between them. It is no wonder Australia became known as the land of opportunity.

From Robin Wines' address to ASLC, May 2008

Background notes, Gillian Kelly

³ Employed as housemaids in Sydney, 1848 – Lucy Stubbs, Fanny Stubbs, Mary Elliott, Louisa Elliott, Julia Elliott. Most of the young females who went to Maitland and Bathurst were employed as housemaids.

Probate Records in Nottingham

Nottinghamshire Archives holds probate records from the 16th century until the mid-20th century. The term probate means 'approval by a competent court'. This means that the will and testament of a deceased person are lawful and that the will has been proved. The executors are then able to carry out the terms of the will.

- Before 1858 the granting of probate was performed by ecclesiastical or church courts.
- In Nottinghamshire the usual court was the Nottingham Archdeaconry Court. Many people who had lived in Nottinghamshire would have their wills proved in this court.
- The wills of this court are divided into four deaneries, based at Nottingham, Bingham, Newark and Retford.
- In Nottinghamshire there were a number of small courts which were independent of the Archdeaconry Court. They were called **peculiars**, and were able to prove the wills of people who had lived in parishes under their jurisdiction. The largest was the Peculiar Court of Southwell.
- Wealthier people, and those who had land in more than one archdeaconry or diocese, could have their wills proved at the Prerogative Court of York, which was more prestigious than the local Archdeaconry Court.
- A few wills of the very wealthy were proved at the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, which was the most prestigious court.
- After 1858 the granting of probate became a civil matter.

<http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/home/leisure/archives/archivescollections/archivesprobaterecords.htm>

Genealogists never die, they just lose their census.

Genealogy is not fatal, but it is a grave disease.

Genealogy is like potato salad - when you share it with others, it's a picnic!

Sydney Morning Herald Shipping News
Tuesday, 8 August 1848
Volume XXIV, No. 3501

Shipping Intelligence - Arrivals

Aug 7 Fairlie, barque, 755 tons, Captain Davis, from London 22nd and Plymouth 30th April, with immigrants, passengers Dr. Wilkinson surgeon-superintendent.

The *Fairlie*. This vessel has made a quick passage of 98 days from Plymouth, and brings to the colony two hundred and ninety six immigrants, namely forty eight married couples, sixty single women, seventy single men and seventy children under fourteen years of age. Eight births and four deaths of infants occurred on the voyage. The immigrants are principally English, and of a superior class. With this ship it is again our pleasing duty to notice the cleanly, wholesome and orderly state in which she has been kept, for which too much credit cannot be awarded to the surgeon-superintendent, captain and officers. Her cargo consists only of forty cases of geneva⁴ and ten loads sawn deals.

⁴ Gin - The dry Gin that London distillers eventually developed is very different from the Holland or Geneva Gin still made by the Dutch, which is heavy-bodied and strongly flavored with a pronounced malty taste and aroma. It is Geneva which British soldiers nicknamed "Dutch Courage".

Sydney Morning Herald Shipping News
Tuesday, 8 August 1848
Volume XXIV, No. 3501
Immigrants per Fairlie

From the supplement of yesterday's Government Gazette.

Colonial Secretary's Office, Sydney, 7th August, 1848. His Excellency the Governor has directed it to be notified, for general information, that the ship *Fairlie*, with 296 immigrants, arrived this day in Port Jackson.

The callings of the adult immigrants and the number of each calling are as follows:

<u>Males</u>	<u>Married</u>	<u>Unmarried</u>
Smiths	6	3
Agricultural labourers	35	52
Shepherds	2	4
Carpenters	4	4
Wheelwrights	0	2
Bricklayers	0	2
Sawyers	1	1
Gardeners	0	2
 <u>Females</u>		
Housemaids		1
General house servants		58
Dairywoman		1

On Thursday, 10th instant, persons desiring to obtain female servants from this shi will be admitted on board between 10am and 4pm, but it is to be understood that on that day the hiring will be restricted to the unmarried females. On Friday, 11th instant, and the following days, between the hours of 10am and 4pm, the remainder of the immigrants will be proceeded with.

Sydney Morning Herald
Tuesday, 8 August 1848
Volume XXIV, No. 3501
The English Workman in Calais

A few days since a meeting was held at Nottingham, to consider an application to render assistance to 378 workmen belonging to Nottingham, but now at Calais, to enable them to emigrate to one of the colonies. The Mayor presided; Mr. H. Smith, banker; Mr. J.C. Wright, banker; Mr. R. Morley; Mr. S. Haly, of the London Committee; Mr. W. Enfield; Mr. G. Rawson; the Rev. Butler; the Rev. J. M'All; the Rev. J. Edwards; several members of the corporation; and the principal tradesmen of the town were present. The Mayor stated that he had received a letter from Lord Ashley, from which it appeared that the English operatives at Calais had forwarded a memorial to government, praying for assistance to enable them to emigrate to Australia. The London Committee considered the best thing to be done would be to grant the prayer of the memorial. The total number of the distressed families of English operatives at Calais was 800, of whom 378 belonged to Nottingham and the neighbourhood. The expenses of emigrating might be, including outfit (which the greater part would find themselves) £10 or £12 per head. A proposition for a subscription was then made by Mr. J.C. Wright, and, after a long discussion, a resolution was adopted, expressive of the sympathy of the meeting with the distressed artisans, natives of Nottingham, and pledged itself to co-operate with the Government and the London Society in promoting a local subscription towards carrying into effect the desire of the memorialists to emigrate. The following subscriptions have been received: - Mr. H. Smith £50; Mr. J.C. Wright £ 50; Mr. T. Moore £50; Mr. F. Robinson £20; Mr. J. Head £15; and Mr. W. Enfield £15.

To succeed in life, you need three things: a wishbone, a backbone and a funnybone.

Reba McEntire

Emigrants on their way to the place of embarkation 21 December 1844

This article was copied in its entirety from
The Illustrated London News, Shipping & Emigration Extracts, 1848.

It is an interesting article (in my opinion) in that it gives an indication of the attitude to the public's view of migration at the time our folk travelled to Australia which can be summarized as follows:-

- *Migration may merely relocate the problem, not solve it.*
- *Migrants would remain English to the bootstraps till the end of their life and beyond.*
- *Not all migrants were paupers. Many just wanted a chance to better their position.*
- *Migration was good for the communities from which the emigrants came. It perhaps got rid of some of the deadwood.*
- *Good luck to those who wanted to take the risks.*

Since April this year, emigration has been progressively going on, not only to the South Seas, but also to the Canadas, and vast numbers of persons have availed themselves of the Government grant to quit their native shores for the purpose of seeking a better subsistence in the land of the stranger; and when we look at the existing condition of a considerable portion of our agricultural and manufacturing population, it excites but little wonder that a feverish restlessness should arise for change, though, unfortunately, it but too frequently happens, that a removal from one locality causes very trifling improvement, if any at all, in another. Like disease, we may change the place of our abode, but still keep the pain.

By a vote of the House of Commons a large sum was appropriated to enable families, and single men and women, to emigrate, free of expense — the men to consist of agricultural labourers, shepherds, bricklayers, and masons, wheelwrights, smiths, carpenters, &c.; and the single women and single men not to be less than eighteen years of age, and under thirty. A form of application is sent up to the agents, stating the place to which the applicant wishes to emigrate, their name written by themselves (if they can write), whether in the receipt of parish relief, and if so, for how long, their present place of residence, and other minor particulars, together with the trade or calling of each, age at the last birthday, and certificate of baptism. The applicants are likewise required to make a declaration that they have read the regulations for the selection of emigrants; have neither by

themselves nor any other person paid, or authorised to be paid, any sum of money beyond the Government bounty, excepting £1 for bedding, box, and utensils, and they must pledge themselves to conform to the rules for the management and welfare of all on board, and not leave the ship until she reaches her destination. With these documents must be forwarded certificates, signed by two respectable householders, not being publicans or dealers in beer or spirits (why this latter exclusion should be made, we really cannot see), that they have known the applicants (for the time mentioned), working at their occupation, and that they believe them to be honest, industrious, sober, of general good character, and not likely to become a burden to the Colony. The next requisites are the certificates of a physician or a surgeon as to bodily health; of a magistrate, Protestant Clergyman, or Catholic Priest, that the signatures to the other certificates are genuine. These forms are invariably used in cases of unmarried men and women, and those for married people with families are much the same, except that the plural is used instead of the singular.

It has been generally supposed that the free emigrants are all paupers, glad to escape from the thralldom and confinement of a union workhouse; but this is a great mistake. There may be, and no doubt are, many of this character, but the chief portion are cottagers, most of whom have never received parish relief—families struggling with numerous difficulties to gain a precarious livelihood, and enduring severe privations and hardships in the inclement season of winter; and some few are persons who have been better off in the world, but, reduced by unforeseen events, are desirous of speculating with their little remnant of property, under a hope of retrieving their circumstances, and amongst these may be found individuals whose wounded pride cannot bear the thoughts of their old associates and friends witnessing their descent to poverty.

The general age of married men and women who wish to take advantage of the grant must be under forty at the time of embarkation, and parents who are still hale and capable of work, between forty and fifty years old, with grown-up children, are taken, provided some of the latter are above ten years of age, according to the following proportions:

If the age of the father or mother, or both, be above 40 and under 42 they must have 1 child above 10;

Between the age of 42 and 44	2 children above 10 years
Between the age of 44 and 46	3 children above 10 years
Between the age of 46 and 48	4 children above 10 years
Between the age of 48 and 50	5 children above 10 years

..and there have been, even at this latter period of life, many who have braved the perils of the ocean—“Hope and enterprise filling the sails with their eager breath” in order to locate themselves in an Eldorado of the imagination—unmindful of “Home, sweet Home,” amidst the soil that is sanctified by the ashes of their forefathers; and, let the descendants be in what part of the habitable globe they may, they will still look towards England, and give no other place the name of Home. It is no difficult matter to quit the land of our nativity; but whilst the pulses of existence continue to throb in the human frame, the link, which binds us to the spot where our eyes first opened to the light of Heaven, as we hung upon the bosom of a mother, can never be broken. We have known settlers in various parts of the world who have been residents there thirty, ay, even forty years, and though on the verge of eternity, still their hearts best, dearest affections have been bound up with England, Ireland, or Scotland, and they have longed to lay their perishing remains by the side of kindred dust.

Beside the free emigrants are what are denominated steerage passengers — that is,



those who pay for their voyage out according to a fixed scale, and generally consist of young men willing to push their fortunes, or having colonial appointments—eccentric talent and genius, longing to rifle the treasures of a new world—cautious speculators in human wants and human miseries—debtors who have lived too freely in England, and consequently wish to cut the acquaintance of their creditors wish a long list of etceteras. Some have prospered exceedingly; more have returned

back, much worse than they set out, whilst in numerical superiority the greater part lie buried in the silent grave.

Yet all this is going on apparently without exciting the slightest observation from those who remain behind. Thousands quit the rural villages of this country to embark for far distant lands, and yet but little notice is taken of it. The political quack doctors of the times assert, that as phlebotomy is necessary to allow of an unrestrained action of the heart, so is running off the blood of kindred requisite to preserve a healthy state of society otherwise, as the veins get clogged with the over-flux of the stream of life, so is a superabundant population calculated to produce an unnatural and diseased condition amongst the community in general. It, perhaps, would be well if these empirics, with those who manufacture the nostrums, were shipped in bulk to experience the effects of their own prescriptions.

It has hitherto proved manifest that emigrants have not been lacking. Hundreds go out every month, and, from what we have seen of the men, women, and children, they are certainly some of the finest specimens of the sons and daughters of Old England. We had frequently remarked this on former occasions, whilst witnessing their embarkation, and last week we had an opportunity of seeing an intermediate stage, between their acceptance as emigrants and departure from the endearing haunts of childhood, and the arrival at the depot near the Royal Dockyard at Deptford—which, to do the agents justice, is fitted up very comfortably for their reception. There were two covered or tilted farmer's hay-wagons—one from a parish in Buckinghamshire, and the other (we believe) from the neighbourhood of Northampton; they had joined company on the road. The women and children, with but few exceptions, occupied the conveyances, which were loaded with packages, bundles, and boxes; a few of the more elderly females walked on the pathway by the side of their husbands and sons; the younger men trudging it with seeming glee, and carrying various articles we conjecture for immediate use. It was indeed a most picturesque spectacle, and well worthy the pencil of the artist. The leafless trees and hedges—the miry road, with long serpentine wheel tracks; the yellow wagons, with their inanimate and living freight, covered with light canvas; the women habited in blue or red cloaks; the men in their frocks blending in colour with the many hues of the bundles; and, above all, the object of their journey was well calculated to excite human sympathy. Yet no one appeared sad or sorrowful—on the contrary, all seemed to be cheerful; and their clean and decent appearance bore witness to the propriety of their general habits: the whole looked remarkably healthy, especially the children. By this time they are on their way to other regions: may prosperity and happiness attend them.

Who knows what Columbus would have discovered if America hadn't got in the way. - Stanislaw J. Lec, poet and aphorist (1909-1966)

Book Review: *Man is Never Free*⁵ (Claire Loneragan)

Staying with the rural setting (established in my last review) for the time being, let's move forward to the 1830's in Dorset. Here a group of farm labourers were about to change the world for ever. They were ordinary family men who worked out of the little village of Tolpuddle, earning meagre livings as agricultural workers. They unwittingly and unintentionally became the subjects of national interest of a government terrified of the recent events of the French Revolution, a government who was prepared to use any means available to stop their voices being heard or their example being followed.

One, George Loveless, was in fact a man of learning, respected by his community and a lay preacher in the Methodist chapel each Sunday. He had studied theology and the social conditions and economics of his time. He was aware of, and angered by, the downward spiral of wages and conditions forced upon agricultural workers at the hands of agents of absentee land owners. Men, women and children had died of exposure and starvation and men had been hung or transported for stealing to feed their families as a result of wages that could not sustain life.

Tom Mead, a journalist with 50 years experience, author and politician, has written *Man is Never Free*, an enthralling historical account of the group of men called *The Tolpuddle Martyrs*, the first acknowledged



The Tolpuddle Martyrs

trade unionists who suffered for their association and determination to improve their lot. It is a story of one of the most outrageous cases of legal injustice in Britain's history, and considering Britain's legal dealings in Ireland, Scotland and Wales, and their colonies around the world, that is saying something. The Irish had long suffered terribly at the hands of the totally immoral legal system, greedy landlords and grafting agents who would stop at nothing to ingratiate themselves with landowners. It will also interest readers that one Daniel O'Connell, the Irish patriot was in parliament at this time and argued passionately for the cause of the

⁵ Mead, Thomas: *Man is Never Free: The Story of the Tolpuddle Martyrs*, Dolphin Books, Sydney, 1946

Tolpuddle Martyrs, and that there were references made to the Luddites in the north who were breaking knitting frames in opposition to declining wages and living standards. Mead follows the events that began with the meeting of the workers and concludes with reversal of the charge of treason and the return to Britain of the six men transported to Van Dieman's Land. He intersperses the historical events with more intimate descriptions and dialogue, and endeavours to get inside the mind of George Loveless as he tries to come to terms with man's inhumanity to his fellow man. This produces a very readable account of events that leave the mind boggling and engenders anger against injustice in the most conservative among us.

At the initial meeting to discuss possible action that could be taken to prevent further loss of wages, an agreement was made to present a petition to the local magistrate, who it was thought had the power to fix wages, asking him to advise the group of the most appropriate cause of action. This petition was unsuccessful. It was followed by a second meeting of workers where the Tolpuddle Friendly Society of Agricultural Labourers was formed and a pledge of loyalty was taken. They had become members of a union. This action became their crime. From that moment their awful fate was sealed, cemented at the hands of one James Frampton, local Justice of the Peace, who was frightened, very aware of his social status and keen to advance his position by providing advice to his superiors. He proceeded to perjure himself and provide at best biased information, at worst blatant lies to Viscount, Lord Melbourne in the hope of providing a case for conviction of the group. In Melbourne he found a willing master.

Loveless and five members were arrested, charged with treason for illegally taking an oath, summarily tried and sent to hulks to await transportation to Van Dieman's Land for a term not less than seven years. Remember this was the sentence for taking an oath. The sentence for taking a life was two months imprisonment!

There were, of course, events and reports in and around this sequence, but by and large, the outcome was the same. The case drew attention of journalists and, through the burgeoning union movement, the working classes. The result was popular uproar. Thousands marched through London. They began petitioning the parliament, leading to even more fear and determination to keep the working classes in their places. For five years the arguments raged before finally justice prevailed and the sentences were repealed. The cause of working wages had become public knowledge and the lower classes had found their voice. The Tolpuddle labourers who had suffered at the hands of colonial gaolers were pardoned and returned to Britain as heroes. Interestingly, several refused to live in their homeland, preferring to migrate to either Canada or back to Australia.

The Gentleman's Magazine 1862 – Obituaries

TAt the Shardlow Union-House aged 74, Mr William Mee, formerly of Kegworth. 'The deceased', says the "Nottingham Review", was, for many years, a correspondent to this paper. He was born at Kegworth and on attaining his majority received a good fortune in hard cash. He, soon afterwards went to London where he resided for some years.

About 1820, he returned to Kegworth but being somewhat eccentric could never betakehimself to steady occupation. He was the author of the song 'Alice Gray' which, being set to music with his concurrence became so great a favourite with the public.

He frequently, about this time wrote poetry, which appeared in several periodicals under the assumed name of Richard Sparkle. 'Winter', 'The Rose Bud', 'Flaccus' and other pieces were thus brought out. His besetting sin however was a love of strong ale. Of which in the days of his affluence allowed himself, to use his own words, 'six tankards a day, seven on Sunday'.

One of his best odes, 'The Goblet' being written in its praise. For many years he presented a not very comfortable appearance for some time before entering the workhouse.

He was letter-writer in ordinary to the parish, for a long time correspondent to the 'Nottingham Review', painter of public signboards and, we believe, something of a legal adviser! (From Gillian Kelly)



Editor's Note: Lyndall Lander's, i.e. my wife's great-great-grandfather, William Sawyer, and his son, William Jnr. were undertakers in Bathurst from 1886 until 1922 when their funeral & mourning coaches (pictured above) were listed for sale. Perhaps they "were of service" to some lacemakers or their descendants living in Bathurst. It is a small world!

From a Famine Journal⁶

I

A list of exports leaving Cork harbour
On the 14th November 1848

147 bales of bacon
120 casks of pork
135 barrels of pork
149 casks of miscellaneous provisions
1,996 casks of oats
950 barrels of oats
300 bags of flour
300 head of cattle
239 sheep
5 casks of ham
9, 398 firkins of butter
542 boxes of eggs

We watched it sail into a hungry wind.

⁶ The poem which follows has been published in Tulle with the kind, personal permission of the Irish poet, Tony Curtis. It is contained in a book of his fine poetry called The Well in the Rain. I have used Tony's format including what poets refer to as "white space" as closely as I could. I think you will agree with my assessment that the poem is very apposite, particular following Robin Wines address on "My Irish Orphan Girls" at our May 2008 meeting.

II FIRST IMPRESSION

1845

In her parlour, by a window that frames
The picture of a grey sky, Mrs. Elizabeth Wyatt
is polishing off an entry in her journal:
I've never seen Dublin so prosperous,
nor its fashions so exquisite.
Its straw bonnets are the best in Europe.
There's surely less misery than ever before.
And Mrs. Weaver's daughters, is there
anything so beautiful as delicate white hands?
We ate raised pies and ham, and apple tarts
with cream. Drank China tea all evening
from Mrs. White's white China cups.
This potato famine is greatly exaggerated.
In Dublin the Polka is all the rage.

III PASSING THROUGH

1846

Today I travelled the whole estate
and saw little or no distress, just
two dead and a few cases of struggling.
The Irish are idle, impudent louts.
Dependent on those whom they so badly
Abuse. No name seems too harsh for them.
So we have begun feeding our workmen,
thirty-two at present; half one day,
half the next. Charles killed a cow.
And the servants make a large pot of soup
which we serve each day at one.
Yesterday, I thought it such a pretty sight
to see everyone eating in the kitchen.

IV WASTED MISERY

1847

Beyond the estate is a waste of misery.
There aren't the living to bury the dead.
I have watched them die in the ditches.
Seen them kneel down to curse their God.
No man, no woman, no priest, not even I
have the loaves and fishes to feed them.
And worse, the rags they ware barely
cover their decency. Even yesterday
when I called to see young Peggy Dodson,
whose husband and children have died,
she herself was almost naked and made no move
to cover her shame. I sleep badly these nights;
often after undressing, I sit by the fire
reading or knitting petticoats for the wretched.

V TERRIBLE DEAD

1847

Today I walked the back road home over the hill,
past farms that hadn't a hoof on their land.
Strange to say I saw no children in the lanes.
Some have been taken to relations in Dublin.
Four sheep and five cattle have been taken
from our land in the past month.
Having seen how some of the people die,
I hardly blame the wretches who steal.
But Charles is as mad as the Irish
and has employed three men from Dublin
to walk the fields at night with sticks and dogs.
I'm only surprised that such a superstitious race
aren't afraid to venture into darkness.
Even I wouldn't be found in the fields at night,
not with the ghosts of the terrible dead lurking.

VI WRETCHED CARGO

1848

This morning they sent thirty or forty
more convicts to the penal colonies.
Amongst them I saw, ironed and handcuffed,
the two Maguires whose mother I know well.
She has worked in the kitchen and was a
wet nurse when each of my children was born.
So I am ashamed to say she wasn't allowed
say goodbye to her sons, or even to touch
their hands, their faces, one last time.
The families of this wretched cargo
lined the road, their wives wailing.
And yet miserable as these men looked,
I felt they were still better off
than the starved wretches waiting to hang.

VII RUINED CHRISTMAS

1848

My husband says, "If this is the line
The Government and the Lords are taking
it would be better if they hanged them all
as most are so weak they'll not make it so far."
The vicar says, "The Maguire boys were drinking,
shouting for all who wanted to hear that
the new Commission was no better than if
the devil himself were trying to starve us."
Surely they should be forgiven such ignorance,
flayed even, or put to work on the roads,
not sent from the land like criminals.
I must send Mrs. Maguire the side of lamb.
All this misery has again ruined Christmas
for everyone. I pray for a brighter new year.

VIII BIG HOUSES

1849

Many of the big houses and their estates
have come to the end of their lives.
The Barclays and the Hamiltons have fled.
Even lady Dodd who had so much is leaving.
Bankruptcy, it seems, is overtaking us all.
Once the gates of an estate are closed
the house is gutted of its life. Everything
of value is stolen, and sold for passage to America.
They're saying they have found gold in California.
That a man can earn forty pounds a day.
Here the wages, for those who can find work,
are three pence a day. But the good news is
we had new potatoes at dinner, floury and dry.

IX VICTORIA VISITS

1849

Though there is cholera in Dublin I steeled myself
and went to see the young Queen promenade.
For many the day was spoilt by torrential rain,
but I was more distressed to see her grown so fat.
Her dress was far too plain, her skin almost dark.
Though the papers have her down as beautiful.
I suspect that some poor man is bound to lose his job
for the terrible misprint in the second column:
"The Queen pissed over the bridge". I am ashamed
to say I held my breasts and rudely laughed.
On the way home we passed a family of five
dead in a ditch. It seems the cholera is spreading
towards the mountains. But worse news was awaiting
our arrival, the blight has appeared on our potatoes.

1850

We docked last week in Sydney after eight months
at sea and left a ship I had grown to abhor.
I doubt I will ever get over the shame of undressing
and washing in front of other women. But worse,
what youth I had left in Ireland ravaged by
famine, cholera and five wretched years of misery.
Sadly, we buried Lady Hutton and Mr. Vicars at sea.
Though I doubt they would have liked it here.
There is a nearness in the sun's heat.
I was saddened to hear that convicts and soldiers
and farmers are still clearing the land of natives.
After a life of such worry, it's a great relief to be opening
a hotel in the city for respectable ladies and gents
or as Charles says, "The New Australians like ourselves"

⁷ Tony Curtis was born in Dublin in 1955. In 2003 he was the recipient of the Varuna House Exchange Fellowship to Australia. He has been awarded the Irish National Poetry Prize and is a member of Aosdána, the Irish academy of the arts. Tony has toured Australia four times and has been writer-in-residence at the University of Western Australia and writer fellow in the Blue Mountains. He loves Australia and Australian literature. He especially likes Judith Wright, Gwen Harwood and the unfortunate Eve Langley. In the past few months he has had four Australian writers to stay - it really is a very small world.

The English Guild Calais. Ardres Ascension Day



I have had interesting correspondence with Peter Barsby whose ancestors were also English lacemakers in Calais. His lot did not come to Australia but he believes that his St Pierre Barsbys would have known or at least been acquainted with many of the Australian migrants.

Peter has provided me with a copy of the wonderful photograph reproduced above. It is endorsed "The English Guild, Calais" and elsewhere "Ardres, Ascension Day". Unfortunately neither Peter nor I have been able to find any information on the English Guild. Ascension Day, however, is the fortieth day after Easter Sunday so this photograph was probably taken in April or May.

Peter's great-great-grandfather, Thomas Barsby and his wife Ann were both born in Barrow on Soar in Leicestershire in the heart of FWK country in the first decade of the 19th century. Thomas's father was a publican but had been an FWK as was his elder brother Henry. Lace-making was probably a move upmarket from stockings and following their marriage Thomas and Ann moved north to the Nottingham area where they had two children and we can assume that Thomas began working in lace. The expansion of the machine-made lace business in the Calais and Lille areas after the end of the Napoleonic wars created a demand for workers who were familiar with machines. Notts and Leics men knew FWK

machines and many were already working in the Nottingham machine lace trade. Like thousands of others, Thomas and Ann migrated to St Pierre lès Calais ("*St Pierre next to Calais*") in about 1834. There they had more children, all of whom grew up to work in lace or to marry men who did.

When the slump following the 1848 revolution arrived, as has always been the case, the first to the wall were the immigrants and any work that was going was given to French workers and French owned lace factories. English workers were suffering badly and that is when the idea of migrating to Australia was first raised and supported by the British Consul, much to his credit. The migration scheme eventually went ahead and, as you know, some 700 lace-makers eventually reached Australia.

Many other English laceworkers returned to the UK but there were also many, including Peter's family, who stuck it out through the ups and downs of the next 50 years. At times there was plenty of work and lacemaking was a good trade to be in. Their children learned the language, married 'out', took on French nationality, organised a union and even purchased rather than rented their own houses. Then came the great lace strike of 1900/1901. Factory owners tried to force down wages and tighten up on working conditions. The lace-makers, French and English went on strike.

It was a long and bitter affair despite support from fellow union men in Nottingham. Eventually the strike collapsed but when it came to taking the workers back into the factories, the owners took the opportunity to weed out the socialists and union activists where they could. Peter's great-grandfather and his family were among those who decided to return to England which they did in 1901. He and one of his sons worked in the Nottingham lace trade for the rest of their lives. Meanwhile Peter's great-uncles and their families remained in France and as result he has many more second, third and fourth cousins there than he has in the UK.

Despite the passing of the years, the English lace-makers have left their influence in this north-western corner of France not only in their bloodline but also in the fact that in Calais you can eat welsh rarebit in cafés and families who may not know anything at all about their English forebears still eat Christmas Pudding on Christmas Day. The machine-made lace industry is now only a shadow of its former self, with just a few hi-tech factories scattered across northern France. Even so, as Peter and his wife I explored the old streets of St Pierre a couple of years ago they were delighted to hear the rolling click-clack of a ageing lace machine coming from a turn of the century building. So lace is still being made in St Pierre.

Credit Selection of Land South Australia

Maureen M Leadbeater

(Maureen has generously allowed our Society to reprint this article in *Tulle* and for this I thank her profusely on your behalf)

During the first thirty years of white settlement, the South Australian Government sold Crown Lands only for cash with prepayment. Vast tracts of Crown Lands were leased by pastoralists to run their sheep. Small farmers could not support a family by growing crops on the standard 80 acre [32 hectare] sections which were too small to allow crop rotation to rest the soil. With high prices and the prepayment condition they were unable to compete with the pastoralists in land purchases. In the late 1860s when Victoria opened up the Wimmera district and brought in more liberal purchase conditions, many farmers left South Australia.

Strangways Act

A number of proposals had been made to reform land purchases. After Henry Strangways was elected premier in November 1868, his proposal that land for agricultural purposes be sold on credit was debated in parliament. The *Waste Lands Amendment Act* (sometimes known as the Strangways Act) was passed in January 1869.

While the new Act continued the principle of gradual survey, Crown Lands could now be sold for cash or on credit. The credit terms were 20% deposit with the balance payable at the end of four years. No selector could purchase more than 640 acres (1 square mile) on credit. Selectors had to be over 21 years. Women could only be selectors if they were single or those married had obtained a judicial separation.

Particular areas were declared Agricultural Areas (AAs) in the Mid North, South East and on Yorke Peninsula. AAs could only be sold on credit. The land was surveyed into sections up to 320 acres. The land due to be released was announced in the SA Government Gazettes. The price was set equal to the value of the best land in the Hundred or AA. The price of unsold sections was gradually reduced at regular intervals until the minimum price of £1 an acre was reached. Application was made in writing. Selectors were required to reside on their land. They also had to cultivate their land and to make specified improvements.

Pastoralists

The pastoralists who had been leasing the land for their sheep runs on easy terms for many years, were given six months notice of the resumption of their leases. Some pastoralists attempted to purchase large areas of land by the practise of "dummying" where family members or dummy selectors were the nominal selectors. When the leases were terminated, huts, fences and waterholes remained. Payment of the newly opened lands often included an additional price paid for these improvements to the land. These varied from £1 to over £2000.

The following valuations have been noted:

Shepherd's hut	£10
Shepherd's hut & drafting yards	£60
Shepherd's hut of 2 rooms, wire yard and well	£130
Hut (sheoak slabs with thatch roof)	£6
Slab hut (paling roof)	£3
370 rods of fencing, gum straining posts, wires & stakes	£55/10/-
Fence (pine posts and 5 wires)	£42
Fence (pine posts and 5 wires)	£14
Well	£30

Farmers

The farmers rushed to purchase land. The response caused new counties and hundreds⁸ to be surveyed across South Australia and opened for selection. The hundred was approximately 100 square miles and one town was surveyed in each hundred. In the first three years over a million acres were sold in the colony, 60% of these on credit.

Over the next few years a number of changes were made to the conditions. The credit term was extended to five years. The deposit was reduced to 10% on purchase with a further instalment of 10% due after three years. The selector had to cultivate at least one-fifth of the land each year. The substituted residence clause permitted a selector to apply to place his son, son-in-law or male relative or man servant on his land. Many selectors surrendered their original agreements and took out new agreements under the new conditions.

⁸ Further information on hundreds in South Australia can be found at <http://www.adelaidecoop.familyhistorysa.info/hundreds.html>

Goyder's Line

George Goyder, the [South Australian] Surveyor-General, following his many years travelling across SA, had advised that cereal crops could not be grown north of a line that became known as "Goyder's Line of Rainfall". This line indicated the southern limit of the 1865 northern drought. Beyond this limit of reliable rainfall was saltbush country where Goyder declared the land was only suitable for pastoral uses. The newly released lands had been within Goyder's Line and suitable for cereal growing. Prices soared. One selector in 1874 paid almost £8 an acre for 389 acres.

The first years were successful with good rains. Record harvests led to a demand for more land to be released for agriculture. The eager settlers disregarded warnings of drought. No account was taken of the soil fertility or rainfall variability and Goyder's Line was ridiculed. Theories abounded that "rain follows the plough" and "the far north was dry because no trees grew there". Scarce lands, good seasons and the income from sales persuaded the government in 1874 to open to selectors the whole colony as far as the Northern Territory border.

In 1877 all previous Land Acts were repealed and a new Act, the Crown Lands Consolidation Act, was passed. The maximum area of a selection was now 1000 acres. The payments were spread over nine years. Residents could purchase after five years if required improvements had been made. These included a dwelling house, farm buildings, fences, wells, dams and the clearing of land.

Setbacks in the north

In 1880-1883 drought struck. In the north poor rains, attacks of the fungus red rust and locusts ruined the wheat crops. Winds blew away the cultivated soil. Many selectors had not yet harvested a paying crop. Farmers in the north of the colony reaped so little grain that they had no seed wheat for the next year. An experimental farm set up at Manna Hill was eventually abandoned. As the poor seasons continued, Goyder's Line was accepted - the lands beyond being best for pastoralists grazing sheep. While some farmers walked off their land, others under new regulations were able to revoke their agreements and reselect in more suitable areas. Dotted across the northern lands are the ruins of abandoned stone huts and rusting implements - memorials to pioneers who were defeated.

In the South East, lack of drainage on the water-logged land, the long distance to markets and the dummyming by selectors caused the system to fail. However, selectors within Goyder's Line, including those on Yorke Peninsula, were generally successful. Some selectors were new farmers, some were younger sons taking the opportunity to work their own land, and others left their farms in the inner districts to purchase larger farms.

A time of growth

Despite drought and other set-backs, the twenty years after the introduction of the Strangways Act was a time of growth in the colony. The opening of new land resulted in the extension of railways and tramways to transport the grain to the ports on Spencer and St Vincent Gulfs where new wharves and jetties were needed. Towns flourished with flour mills, schools, churches and local newspapers being established.

New varieties of wheat, new methods of cultivation and the introduction of superphosphate fertilizer were all results of the spread of agriculture across South Australia. The experimental farm set up at Roseworthy developed into an agricultural college. The stump jump plough was invented to deal with the mallee lands of Yorke Peninsula. On each selection, a hut or house was built, fences erected, dams and wells sunk. There was work for carters, lumpers, labourers, seamen and all the businesses in the country towns.

The introduction of land sales on credit opened up the colony, provided new facilities and gave the small farmer, the agriculturalist, the opportunity to own his own land and to provide for his family.

Credit selectors

The names of successful selectors⁹ were published in the SA Parliamentary Papers and the SA Government Gazettes.

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⁹ Search the database of these credit selectors of land in the period 1869-1890 at <http://www.adelaideco-op.familyhistorysa.info/landselectors.html>

The Nottingham Lace Trade in Calais Help Needed in a Local History Project

By Nan Keightley

The following article appeared in a recent edition of the Nottingham FHS journal and was drawn to my attention by member Judy Gifford. It has been reprinted with the kind permission of its author, Nan Keightley. Nan has an MA in English Local History from Leicester University. She is descended from William Choulerton, brother of Miriam Branson. Nan says that the response she has had from her NFHS article has been quite astonishing. Each new post seems to bring her news of yet another family who were in Calais and returned to Nottingham. This project is getting bigger every day.

Her aim is to look at what happened to those families who returned to the East Midlands, in terms not only of family stories and survival, but also to look at the impact the return of so many people in such a short period of time had on the local social and economic structure. She anticipate that it will take her another 5 years or so to put it all together. She has told me she was inspired by Gillian's book, Well Suited to the Colony, which is now getting dog-eared through overuse. "Gillian has covered so well the stories of those who set off for Australia". Nan Keightley feels it is time that the returnees also had their stories told. (Ed.) Her article reads as follows:-

Phil Hand's article from the Times about the Nottingham Lace Trade in Calais (July 2007) was very timely, as it echoed the aims of my long term research project on East Midlands lace workers in Calais. Do any of you have any family stories of Nottingham lace workers in France in the early 1800s? Is there a family legend that some of your family were French, or lived in France? Do you have any letters or other memorabilia from that time?

If you do I would love to hear from you. You can contact me by email at nankeightley@hotmail.com or by phone in Nottingham on 01483 768711.

It all started when I was researching my own family history, and had drawn a complete blank with the Choulerton branch of my tree. This was at a time when the 1841 census was not available online, which is why I took an unusual route to find what I needed.

My grandfather, Archibald William Wallis, was the only son of Augustus Wallis. Augustus had been born in 1862 to Hugh Wallis and his wife, Ann Choulerton.

When the 1851 census was released on Ancestry, I found Hugh, with his parents William and Hannah, in Stapleford. I also found Ann with her parents William and Ellen Choulerton in Stapleford, but I was intrigued to see that her younger brother and sister, Isaac and Harriet, had both been born in France.

What on earth were they doing in France? As I could not get to Nottingham at the time I decided to look at other ways to find out about the family. If Choulerton was a French name it might be worth looking on the internet to see if there were any Choulertons in France. I googled Choulerton on a world wide search and struck gold.

<http://www.angelfire.com/al/aslc/Sag1.html> was what I found. It was the site of the Australian Society of the Lace Makers of Calais (ASLC). The site told the story of a group of lacemakers, mostly from the East Midlands, who had gone to Australia from Calais. By 1848 there were around 3000 English lacemakers living and working in a British enclave which came to a very dramatic end in 1848. After two years of poor harvests, food in France was expensive, trade had collapsed, and there was rebellion in the air. In early 1848 the rebellion was short and devastating.

The whole country was in turmoil. Trade had collapsed completely, and the people were going hungry. The English in Calais had worked hard over many years to overcome French enmity and distrust, and in the aftermath of the rebellion this hard work bore fruit. The Calaisiennes could not help them, as they could barely help themselves, but they did not want to harm them. In other lacemaking towns British lacemakers had been attacked and run out of town, but not in Calais. They may have been safe, but they were destitute. They had no food or clothes to keep them going. The problem was that things in Nottingham were no better. They were caught between a rock and a hard place. They could stay in Calais and starve or go home to Nottingham and fare no better.

The situation in the textile industry in England was so bad that in 1845 a Select Committee inquiry had been set up to look at the causes and possible solutions to the problem in the industry. It looked at the conditions of trade and the lives of the workers in London and the East Midlands. Their findings were shocking.

The owners of the lace machines were letting them out at high rents, but there was not enough work to keep them going. The people renting them still had to pay even when there was no work. The owners had no incentive to lower the rates because they made more money from rent than from lace. The workers were suffering as a result. The working life of the average lacemaker ended at around the age of 40, when their health gave in from years of poverty and overwork. They

sold everything they had to pay for food. Many had only the clothes on their backs. They had no beds. Families were taking their best clothes out of pawn on a Saturday and putting them straight back in on a Monday, so that they could eat. The children did not go to school. One man reported that he did not go to church because he was ashamed to be seen there in his working clothes. The Poor Law Unions could not keep up with the demand for relief, and were close to bankruptcy.

Laudanum was being sold in increasing quantities. Laudanum is an opium derivative, like heroin, but in the 19th century it could be bought legally over the counter in a pharmacy. Some was taken by the workers, but liquid laudanum was given to children as young as two weeks old. The aim was to keep them quiet while the mother worked. Children and adults were dying of laudanum overdoses. Life expectancy was low, because of the effects of poverty, exhaustion and laudanum.

This was what the Nottingham lacemakers in Calais had to look forward to if they came home. The Calais lacemakers approached the government with a novel plan. Rather than return them to the workhouse and destitution in Nottingham, why not pay for them to go to Australia where they needed workers? The government could be reimbursed once the migrants had jobs, and the Poor Law Unions would be relieved of a huge influx of 2000 people in need of relief.

The government took some persuading, but at last agreed that around 700 people could go. There is an excellent book on this subject by Gillian Kelly, "Well Suited to the Colony" which is available from the ASLC. The book tells the story of life in Calais and what happened to the families once they arrived in Australia. One of the migrants was a lady called Miriam Branson, who had gone to Australia with her husband, William. Miriam was Ann Choulerton's aunt.

On a complete whim I emailed the society to ask for more information. What I got was more than I could ever have bargained for. I had an email back from Gillian Kelly, who had written the book. She is a descendant of Miriam Choulerton. More than that, she had transcripts of some letters that had been written to Miriam by her niece, Ann, my GG grandmother, telling her the family news from Stapleford. Over the next few weeks she sent me these transcripts, and my family history came alive in Ann's own words.

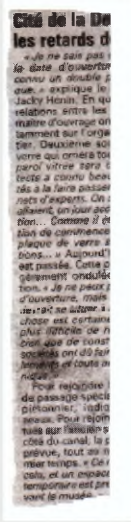
These letters, owned then by Doug Webster, who has since died, started in 1878, when the families were put back in touch after a gap of 30 years. The Stapleford accent runs through them all. Ann had been in France with her family. She remembered life there, and her father had remembered waving Miriam off from

Calais docks, before he returned to Stapleford. There were stories about Ann's family, and about how life was in Stapleford and Long Eaton.

I was overcome, but I realised that my family was only one of many who were caught up in this traumatic time, and that their stories deserved to be told. I decided to try and identify families which had been in France, and see what happened to them after they returned home. This is the basis of my research, and I would be very grateful for any information that members might be able to provide.



The [Calais] Lace Project: Building Works Behind Schedule



“I don’t know when the opening date will be decided. We’ve experienced a two-fold technical difficulty” explained the Mayor of Calais, Jacky Hénin. In short, relations between the company and the head of works have been difficult, particularly concerning the organization of the building site.

The second problem concerns the design of the glass which will adorn the whole façade.

“The glass panel will be unique. The architect has experienced a lot of trouble having anyone experienced to take it on. It was doubted whether it might even be installed so it was out of the question so it was out of the question to start manufacturing the plate of glass without approval”. Today, approval has been granted.

The plate of gently undulating glass is being manufactured.

“I can’t confirm the opening date but work should be completed towards the end of October. One thing is certain – it is much more difficult to renovate than to start from scratch. The construction companies involved have had to confront cave-ins and all sorts of technical problems”.

To link up with the city centre, there is no dedicated access-way, just a sign-posted pedestrian thoroughfare. To link up with the parking areas at the old Thélou site, on the other side of the canal, there has been no provision made for a footbridge, at least in the immediate future.

“It is not all that far away and a temporary parking area in front of the museum has been provided for buses”.

My thanks to Anne Fewkes in Nottingham for mailing this newspaper cutting to me, and to my wife, Lyndall, for carrying out the translation - Ed.

Invented in 1848

- ❖ The gutta-percha golf ball was invented in 1848 by Rev. Adam Paterson, a Scottish golfing enthusiast from St Andrews. His ball replaced the earlier golf balls which had been made from this leather bags stuffed with feathers. It was replaced by the Haskell ball in 1903.
- ❖ The pedal cycle
- ❖ The “baby buggy” was invented in New York by Charles Burton.
- ❖ The Absolute Temperature Scale or Kelvin Scale was proposed by Sir William Thomson (Lord Kelvin) in 1848. Absolute zero (0 Kelvin) was set at -273°C .
- ❖ The pin- tumbler lock invented in 1848 by Linus Yale
- ❖ The drum-recorder with its rotating cylinder used in fax machines was invented in 1848 by Frederick Bakewell in London.
- ❖ Reinforced concrete – by J Lambot.
- ❖ The glass marble
- ❖ Tabasco sauce
- ❖ The temple toggle harpoon. This innovation sports a swivelling barb to fix the harpoon’s hook in the whale’s body and prevent its escape. It is still used.
- ❖ The conical steel spring buffer for railway wagons was invented in 1848 by Sir John Brown.
- ❖ The suction tractor or ventouse, a device he intended to replace the use of forceps in assisted childbirth, was invented in 1848 by James Young Simpson, a Scottish doctor.
- ❖ Socialism
- ❖ The spoon fishing lure
- ❖ The peas whistle
- ❖ Black jeans
- ❖ Icecream
- ❖ The first commercial chewing gum was invented in 1848 in Bangor, Maine, USA.

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The Australian Society of the Lacemakers of Calais (ASLC)

The ASLC was formed in 1982 when a small group of people came to the realisation that they shared a common interest in a special group of English machine lacemakers. The Lacemakers in whom they shared an interest were principally those who were originally from Nottingham and who were involved in two mass migrations in the space of little more than a decade.

The Lacemakers' first migration was to escape the poverty, unemployment, misery, disease and discomfort of overcrowded industrial Nottingham. Their migration was to the shores of France - especially to Calais - where their skills as lace artisans were initially treasured and where their employment and well-being seemed assured. During the 1848 Revolution in France, the political and social upheaval left most of them jobless again. Their future in France seemed uncertain. Most decided that making a fresh life in a new land was preferable to returning to England where it was likely they would remain destitute and a burden on their Parishes. Their second migration was to various parts of Australia.

The Lacemaker emigrants of particular interest to members of ASLC sailed to Australian ports in one of three sailing vessels, viz. the "Fairlie" (destination Sydney), the "Harpley" (destination Adelaide) and the "Agincourt" (destination also Sydney). These three vessels carried the bulk of the Lacemaker emigrants. Other Lacemaker emigrants came in smaller groups on other vessels including the Canton, Castle Eden, Emperor, General Hewitt, Bermondsy, Walmer Castle, Charlotte Jane, Steadfast, Andromachie, Baboo, Harbinger, Navarino and Nelson. Descendants of these lacemakers are also valued members of ASLC.