

## **THE BRETONS AND JERSEY – THE BOLEAT FAMILY**

### **PRESENTATION BY MARK BOLEAT TO CHANNEL ISLANDS FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY**

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In the 1870s two brothers, Yves Boleat, my great grandfather, and Joseph Boleat, moved from their villages in Brittany to work in Jersey. They were not alone; many thousands of Bretons and Normans did the same, providing essential labour for the Jersey economy, in particular the new potato industry.

This paper traces the origins of the Boleat family in Brittany and then explains the migration from Brittany to Jersey. It is therefore both a family history and an economic history. It is important to know not just that people migrated from one area to another but also why they did so. Where large numbers move this is for one or both of two reasons – to avoid conflict and to increase living standards.

I would like to be able to say that the Boleat family is littered with the rich and famous. Sadly, for the first 400 or so years for which we have records almost every Boleat was an agricultural worker in a very poor part of France.

I should add that there was a second Boleat family, wholly unconnected with the first, in and around Bourg-en-Bresse in the Rhône Alpes in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. This was a far more distinguished family including an advocate who held office in the Duchy of Savoy and the keeper of the royal prison in Bourg-en-Bresse. The last Boleat from this family died in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century.

#### **The name and the family**

The name Boleat means “ringer of bells”, deriving from the Breton word Bole – a bell. The records show occasional alternative versions of the name - Bolleat or Le Boleat.

Boleat is a very uncommon name. Only about 600 Boleats have been born. Today, there are about 300 people born with the name Boleat, and in all probability all are descended from one man, Yvon Boleat, born in Plufur in 1656. Over half of them live in Brittany, about 30% in the rest of France, 15% in Jersey and a few in the UK, Australia and other countries. In France, Boleat is the 54,395<sup>th</sup> most common name.

#### **A brief history of Brittany**

A little understanding of the history of Brittany is needed to understand the environment in which the Boleat family lived between the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. For much of its history Brittany was in a permanent state of war with France, which contributed to its poverty. From 1589 to 1598 Brittany suffered from the consequences of the Wars of Religion that dominated France in the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. This brought terrible suffering to the land and to ordinary people. Both the Spanish and the English invaded in this period.

The reign of Louis XIV (1654–1715) exacerbated the struggle between Brittany and France, the King continually demanding more and more money. In 1675 there was a major revolt against the French.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century Nantes flourished as a port, partly through the slave trade. Brest developed as a military port from 1680. The tobacco trade developed around Morlaix.

Inland, wealthy farmers gained land at the expense of peasants, who largely lived under the feudal system.

In 1789 the French Government abolished the Breton Parliament and established five departments including Côtes-du-Nord and Finistère. Following the Revolution, Napoleon became ruler of France. Brittany was treated like other French regions. Its culture and language were under threat and economic hardship was rife in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. From 1793 to 1815 the English were at war with the French and the blockade of Breton ports had a severe economic effect. In passing, Jersey benefited substantially from the conflict. As a "garrison town" it enjoyed an influx of British Government money and resources, and its privateering industry flourished.

The winter of 1847/48 saw terrible famine in Brittany in which thousands of people died. The oat and potato harvests both failed. From 1850 the railways and canals opened up communications with the rest of France. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century the population of the countryside fell while that of the towns increased. Traditional Breton industries declined.

So for the first three hundred or so years for which we have records of the Boleats, the place in which they lived was poor and subject to regular conflict not only from foreign countries but from France itself. And within Brittany, the Boleat family had the misfortune to live not in the coastal areas which, relatively speaking at least, were the growth areas, but rather in the much poorer interior.

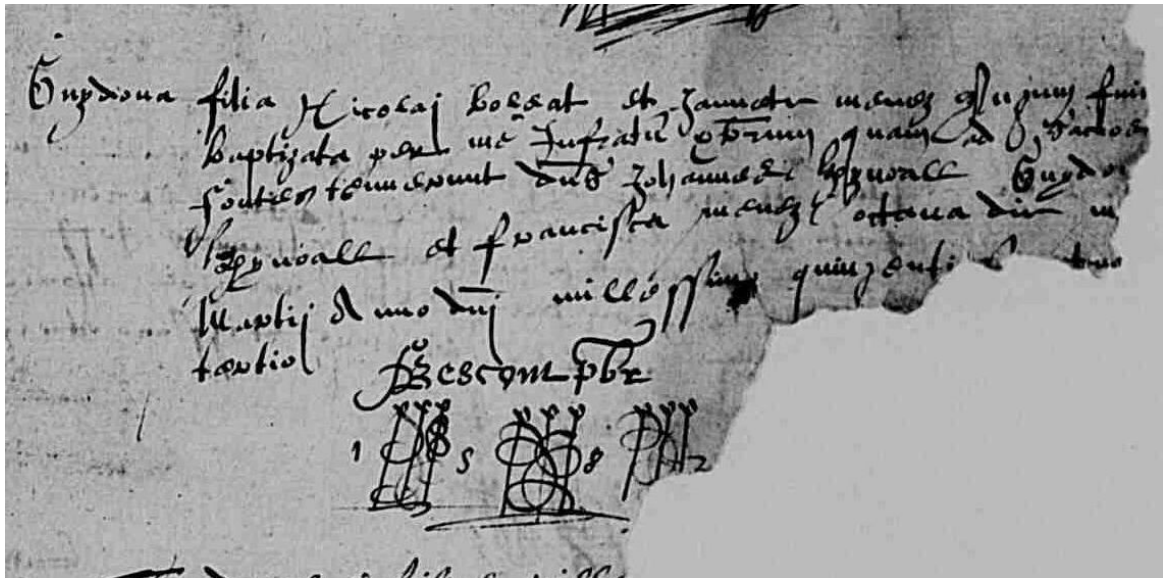
### **Where to the Boleats come from**

While the first church records date back to the late 16<sup>th</sup> century and firmly place Brittany as the home of the Boleat family, this is not the beginning. A DNA study suggests that the Boleats belong to a genetic group known as Cultivators, or more technically haplogroup J. This group is about 20,000 years old and originated in what is the area that is now Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Iraq. It is most likely that the Boleats belong to a subgroup of the Cultivators, J2, associated with Anatolia, the eastern part of modern day Turkey. While some members of the J2 haplogroup remained in Anatolia, about 5,000 years ago others migrated into Europe. It is conceivable that the ancestors of today's Boleats moved to Brittany from the south west of England in or around the 5<sup>th</sup> century as a consequence of either the Roman occupation or Germanic settlers, but more likely that there was a gradual move across Europe.

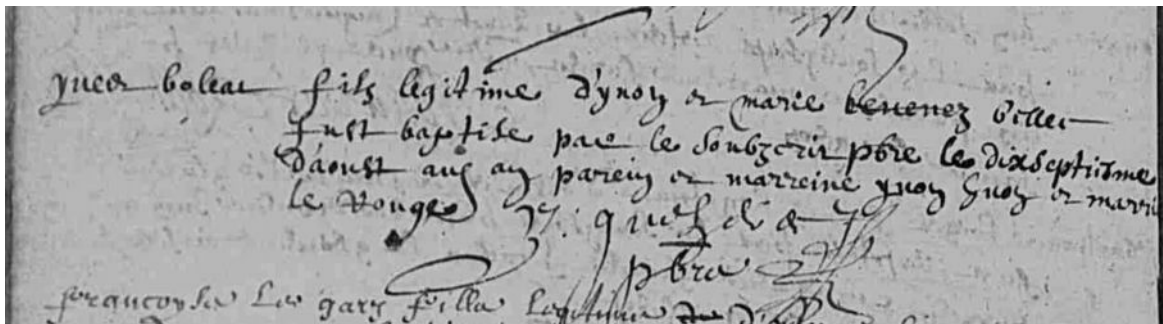
Within Brittany the home of the Boleat family is the small village of Plufur, midway between Lannion and Morlaix. This was, and indeed largely remains, one of the poorer parts of Brittany, well inland from the more prosperous coastal areas. Plufur has suffered the fate of many similar villages in France and elsewhere, that is a steady decline in the population as the young people move in search of better employment opportunities. In 1901 the population was 1,562; by 1962 it had fallen to just 744 and by 2007 to 544.

Registration of births, marriages and deaths became compulsory in France in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century. They were immaculately kept and today are readily available online on the websites of the genealogical associations of the Côtes du Nord and Finistère. The first official record of any Boleat in Brittany is of Guidona, born in Plouaret, near Plufur, in 1583 to Nicolas Boleat (probably born around 1560) and Jeanne Menez, who married in Plouaret in 1580. There are then a number of other records with no clear links between them.

Yvon Boleat, born in Plufur 1656, is probably the direct ancestor of all today's Boleats. He was the son of an Yvon Boleat and his second wife Marie Bellec but nothing is known for certain about the elder Yvon. He may well have been a descendant of Nicolas. Yvon married Jeanne Le Geuziec and they had five children.



**Birth record of Guidona Boleat, 1583**



**Birth record of Yvon Boleat, 1656**

Francois Boleat, Yvon's eldest son, was born in Plufur in 1691. He married Louise Thos and died in Plufur in 1742. Francois and Louise had nine children between 1729 and 1741. Five died before their sixth birthdays and another one died at the age of 17.

Their third child, Francois, was born in 1732. He made the short move across the valley to Lanvellec, marrying Vincente Tudoret there in 1758. Between 1759 and 1781 they had ten children, four dying in childhood. Francois's eighth son, Jean was born in 1774 and married Marie Louise Le Piolot, Le Piolot being one of the larger families in the area.

Jean's fifth son, Yves Marie, was born in 1818, still in Plufur. Yves was a little more adventurous than his ancestors. He moved all the way to Plouaret, three kilometres, where he married Jeanne Auffret in 1844. Sadly, nothing is known about the origins of Jeanne, although the name Auffret was fairly common in the area. Yves Marie and Jeanne had at least five children –

- Francois Marie born in Plouaret in 1845
- Jean born in Ploumilliau in 1849
- Guillaume born in Ploumilliau in 1851
- Yves Marie born in Trégrom in 1857
- Joseph born in Plouzélambre in 1865.

While the elder Yves Marie may have seemed to be something of a traveller, in fact these villages are all within a 6km radius of Lanvellec.

In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century there is therefore little to say about the Boleat family. They were poor agricultural workers in a poor part of France. They lived within a few kilometres of where they were born, married local girls, often at a very young age, and had a lot of children, many of whom did not survive childhood. However, the records show that when the ancestors of today's Boleats were born, their fathers were in their late 30s or early 40s, perhaps suggesting some missing generations.

Only in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century did the family begin to spread. Between 1875 and 1880 two of the sons of Yves Marie and Jean Auffret, Yves, born in 1857, and Joseph, born in 1865, moved to Jersey.

### **French farm workers in Jersey**

We now need to move from family history to economic history. Why did Yves and Joseph move to Jersey? There were both "pull" and "push" factors, that is demand for labour in Jersey and a ready supply in Brittany. The pull factor needs to be considered first.

In the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Jersey had enjoyed a massive economic boom, largely on the back of the Atlantic cod fishing business, and aided by Jersey's favourable tax status. The boom required more labour than Jersey could supply and there was large scale immigration, predominantly from within the British Isles. The population increased by 150% from 22,855 in 1806 to 57,020 in 1851. Booms are followed by busts. Between 1851 and 1901 Jersey suffered a significant economic downturn following the collapse of the cod fishing and related shipping industries. The population fell by 4,500. However, over the same period the number of people recorded in the censuses who were born in France increased by over 4,000 from 2,017 to 6,011. As a consequence, the proportion of the population born in France in the censuses rose from 3.5% to 11.4%. Almost certainly the census figures understate the true position, in particular by excluding seasonal workers. In addition, as the 1891 and 1901 censuses show, many of the French immigrants settled in Jersey and had children who, although Jersey-born, were part of the French community. In 1901, 31% of children born in Jersey had fathers who were French.

The French migrants were predominantly agricultural workers working in the rapidly growing agricultural sector; they were not replacing British migrants, who had largely been working in construction, shipping and oyster farming. Also, unlike previous immigrants they lived in the country parishes rather than St Helier.

French migration to Jersey between 1850 and 1950 has been the subject of a detailed study by a French academic Michel Monteil (*L'émigration française vers Jersey, 1850-1950*, l'Université de Provence, 2005).

Monteil analyses both the economy of Jersey and its need for migrant labour, and the economic situation in Brittany and Normandy that led to emigration in search of work. Monteil contrasts the economic or voluntary migration in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the previous migration of refugees.

Monteil noted the growth of the new potato industry, exports increasing from 1,400 tonnes in 1810 to 17,670 tonnes in 1840, and in particular being able to get to the British market before competitors therefore commanding a premium price. The new potato season lasted just six weeks. Monteil commented –

“Jersey ne possédant pas de réserve de mains-d’œuvre suffisante pour l’arrachage des pommes de terres primeurs, la seule régulation de la population existant depuis toujours sur l’île étant l’émigration il était donc nécessaire de faire appel à une force temporaire de travail venue de l’extérieur. Ce que firent en effet les agriculteurs de Jersey en faisant venir des travailleurs agricoles français.”

In short, Jersey did not have a supply of workers able to harvest the new potato crop so French agricultural workers had to be imported.

Monteil notes that Jersey was British, and analyses why workers were sought from France rather than England. One answer was that French workers were cheaper.

So this was the “pull” factor; what about the “push” factor.

Migration depends on conditions in both the host and the home state. Monteil explains the severe economic conditions in Brittany in particular in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Between 1866 and 1946 more than 115,000 people left the Department of Côtes du Nord (now the Côtes d’Armor), emigration being particularly strong in 1872 and between 1911 and 1921. Economic migrants from the Côtes du Nord went either to Jersey, the French colonies, Canada or Paris.

Monteil notes that agriculture was backward in the Côtes du Nord, and he mentions the famine in 1847 when 20,000 people died. Pay rates in the Côtes d’Armor on average were half those in France generally.

An additional factor at this time was the wish to avoid conscription.

The Department of Manche, including the Cotentin Peninsula, was in a similar position. Manche lost 155,000 inhabitants through emigration between the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The push and pull factors were both there. Jersey farmers needed farm workers, and French farm workers were willing to be recruited. It seems that the recruitment extended to Jersey farmers physically going to France to recruit the workers they needed, and no doubt family and other networks played a part in this process.

Most of the French migrants from Brittany travelled to Jersey from the port of St Brieuc, and predominantly were from the nearby inland villages, in particular Ploeuc-sur-Lie, 20 kilometres south of St Brieuc. Similarly, those who came from Normandy were largely from inland communes in a 15 kilometre strip between Carteret and Lessay, Carteret being the port of embarkation.

So back to the Boleats who came to Jersey. They were certainly part of the wave of economic migrants, seeking to escape poverty and perhaps conscription in Brittany. However, they were not from the main areas that provided migrant workers, Plouaret being 55km from St Brieuc. Whether they took the initiative to get to Jersey or whether some farmers from Jersey recruited further inland is not known. However, it is almost certainly the case that Yves came to Jersey first, in 1875, with Joseph following a few years later.

## The Boleats in Jersey

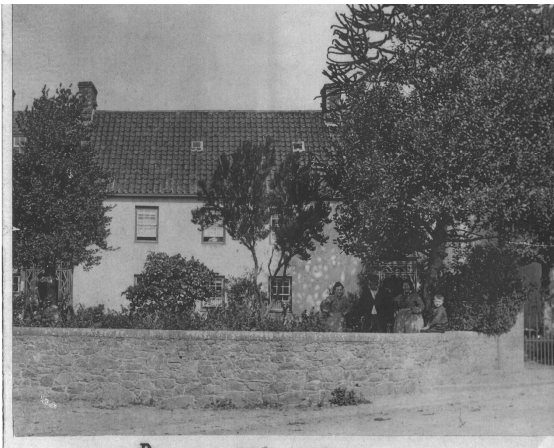
Yves Boleat was recorded in the 1881 Census as a farm servant, working for Nicolas Arthur, a publican and farmer whose address was the New Pontac Hotel. Also at that address was



Alice Marett, a waitress, but there is no evidence that they shared anything more than the same address. In 1883 Yves married Augustine L'Hermitte, born in 1862, either in St Sauveur le Vicomte in Normandy, or in Jersey shortly after her parents arrived in the Island from that village. The marriage itself was significant, Yves marrying someone from France with a similar background to him. He was not alone in this.

**Yves Boleat and his mother-in-law Augustine La Hougue**

However, Yves was also upwardly mobile. By 1891 he was a farmer with an address of Pied de la Rue, St Clement. In addition to three children the family also had two servants, Pierre



Moal, an agricultural labourer and Joanne Moal, a domestic servant. It is assumed that they were brother and sister or husband and wife. Neither was mentioned in the 1901 census, probably because they had returned to France. By 1901, still at Pied de la Rue, Yves and Augustine had five children and two general servants, Marie Heveron from Brigard (probably Bégard) and Louis L'Amy from Barneville in Normandy. Again, neither appeared in the following census in 1911. By 1911 Yves had three staff all from France, Emile Ropers, a horseman, Louis Laintillan, a cowboy, and Joseph Gorves, a labourer. His two sons, Emile and Jean, were also recorded as working on the farm.

**Pied de la Rue**

Yves and Augustine had five children -

- Marie, born in 1885 (the first Boleat to be born outside France) who married George Brown. They had four children.
- Yves, born in 1888 who emigrated to Australia.
- Charles, born in 1889, who died at the age of 40 in Jersey. He married Lily Evan. They had no children.
- Emile, born in 1893, who died in Jersey in 1970. Emile married Cecile Samson; they had seven children. One daughter moved to England but the other children remained in Jersey as do most of their children.
- John, born in 1895. He married Lizzie Tolcher (known as Emmie); they had one daughter.

The Boleat family was following a typical pattern, initially marrying their compatriots from France but with later generations marrying partners with a Jersey or British background. Emile, born in 1893, married Cecile Samson from the well known ironmonger family. But the Samsons were a mixed breed. Cecile's ancestors included Peter Novert, a French shoe maker who came to Jersey in the 1830s, and the long-established Du Feu and Amy families from Jersey. And the Samsons themselves first moved from France to Jersey in the 1830s.

In 1904 Yves Boleat petitioned the States to become naturalised. He was supported by the establishment of St Clement, including the Seigneur of Samarés, the Constable and the Centenier, the Deputy, the Procureur du Bien Public, the rector, C W Balleine, and some 50 others. It is assumed he was successful.



**Emile, Yves and John Boleat**

By 1911 one son, Yves Charles, had had enough of Jersey. After spending two years in the British army, in 1909 he emigrated to Australia arriving in Brisbane in January 1910. He had his way to Sydney where he found employment as a tram conductor. On 30 June 1916, Yves enlisted in Sydney as a private in the 1st Battalion of the Australian Imperial Force. He was back in England in 1916 and saw active service in France, probably in the Battle of Bullecourt or the Battle of Lagnicourt in April 1917. He was wounded, or perhaps gassed, invalided out of the army after which he returned to settle in Coonabarraban in Australia.

So perhaps we have the model immigrant in Yves Boleat. In 30 years he had transformed himself from an agricultural worker from a foreign land to a farmer, employer and pillar of the community in St Clement, with five children for whom Jersey was the only home they had ever known. However, Yves-Marie may have had a little secret from his family and friends in Jersey. He may have married a second time, to Marie Le Boulanger, in Cavan near his original home in 1885, the same year in which his first child was born in Jersey. This all remains a bit of a mystery at present.

Yves's young brother, Joseph, followed a similar pattern. He arrived in Jersey before his 16<sup>th</sup> birthday, perhaps recruited by elder brother Yves. In the 1881 census he was described as a farm servant at the Marsh Farm, Grouville working for Philip Bree. Joseph does not seem to have been as upwardly mobile as his elder brother, being recorded as a general labourer in the 1901 and 1911 census. Joseph married Augustine Guyamard, like him a migrant from France. They had three children –

- Josephine, born in 1886 who married Arthur Brown.
- Louise, born in 1889 who married George Le Cornu.
- Joseph, born in 1893, who married Augustine Le Mouton.

### **The 1906 report on immigration**

As this paper has made clear the Boleat brothers were part of a wave on French immigrants to Jersey; there was little to distinguish them from the many thousands of other immigrants. But the wave of French immigration became a subject of significant political concern in Jersey, much more so than previous and larger waves of English-speaking immigrants. This

was primarily because the French immigrants did not assimilate as much as their British counterparts. They had a different culture, tended to marry fellow immigrants rather than locals, had a different religion, lived in the countryside rather than the towns and spoke a different language.

These concerns led to the establishment of a States Committee in 1905, charged with considering the “whole question of immigration in this Island”. Its report, published in 1906, makes fascinating reading and perhaps also indicates that there is little new in the current debate on immigration. The report summarised the concerns. It noted that in the past immigrants have been assimilated into the island but that “the island is beginning to be swamped, and assimilation is becoming more and more difficult.” This was largely attributed to

“the ever growing number of immigrants of both sexes and the larger number of married couples of the same foreign nationality have made them more independent, more inclined to be self-sufficient, and less obliged to mix with their purely Jersey neighbours; above all since the establishment of schools run by foreign priests, who maintain foreign traditions and make it more difficult if not impossible to assimilate the children of foreigners.”

But the report also noted that –

“emigration is carrying off a large part of the best of our young people from the island, whether they are of Jersey, English or foreign origin, and that the place of these emigrants is being taken here by foreign immigrants who come here above all for the needs of our farming”.

The report did actually recognise the necessity of immigration -

“We must have no hesitation in recognising foreign immigration as an inevitable element of our social and political existence. Our population will be more and more recruited from foreign immigrants and their descendants, and we will have to ensure that we absorb them, if possible, without altering the British character of our population.”

## **Recent history**

What about the last 100 years? The experience of the Boleat family is little different from that of many other families in Jersey. Increasingly, marriages of those who have stayed in Jersey have been not to people born in Jersey but rather to partners born in the UK or elsewhere. And around half of the Boleats born in Jersey since the War have left the Island for higher education, some returning and some not. At least two have returned to the Island after long and successful careers in the wider world, one after more than 50 years, again part of a wider trend of Jersey émigrés returning home in retirement or for a final career move.

And in France the family has moved away from the Plufur area with the main concentration now being in the Brest area, followed by the Paris region.

## **Some side shows**

### **1. Rhône Alpes**

It has been noted that there was another Boleat family, hundreds of kilometres from Brittany in the Rhône-Alpes. The first ever recorded Boleat, Antoine, was probably born in the 1530s



or 1540s, and he also seems to have been the most distinguished. The municipal register of Bourg-en-Bresse, has the following entry for 10 February 1565 –

“Le Conseil a délibéré que l’on mandera M. l’avocat Bolléat vers Son Altesse le plus tost que fère se porra, avec bonnes mémoires et articles qui seront couchiez par M. le syndic Chanal, puis seront monstrées au Conseil avant qu’il les montres à autres personnes. Après estre venues au dict Conseil, l’on les porra montrer au seigneur de Montdragon at à M. le lieutenant et juge mage de Bresse, et non oublier de y metre comme les souldaz ont rompu les caves et greniers de la ville et prins bled et vins sans qu’ilz l’ayent payez aux bourgeois, ains (bien que) qu’ilz ayent esté payez et satisfaitz des deniers de S.A.

A esté délibéré que les mémoires seront dressés par les dicts sieurs advocate Chanal et Boléat, avec lettres et mysives à Son Altesse, à Madame la comtesse de Montrevel, Madame la comtesse de Pontcallier, à M. de Montfort at autres que l’on verra estre nécessaire.”

It will be noted that Antoine’s name is spelt both Bolléat and Boléat. In short, Antoine was being asked to obtain some information and prepare a report.

At this time Bourg-en-Bresse was the capital of the independent Duchy of Savoy. Subsequently, Antoine, a Doctor of Law, was appointed to the position of Avocat Fiscal, presumably with responsibility for taxation or public finances. Antoine’s death is duly recorded on the 11<sup>th</sup> of March 1583.

The *Archives Departementale de L’ain* show in a register of audiences in 1638–39: “entre Jean-Felix Boleat, sergent royal a Bourg, et Cinude Baudey, les modernes syndics de Sermoyer”. The same Archives show in a register “entre les religieuses clarisses de Bourg et Richard Boleat, concierge des prisons royales de Bourg”. They may well be related to Antoine but there is no evidence to prove this.

In 1661 Jeanne Boleat, daughter of Richard Boleat (very likely the Richard recorded above), married Jean-Claude de Vilette in Bourg-en-Bresse.

At the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century Louis XIV needed to raise money to continue the war against William of Orange and the League of Augsburg. He instituted the Amorial Générale to raise money. People were required to buy, or had imposed on them, coats of arms, and were faced with a fee of 20 livres for registering them or a fine if they failed to register them. The Amoriale Générale has no fewer than 110,000 arms.



Jeanne Boleat acquired a coat of arms in 1696. Jeanne was by then the widow of Jean-Claude de Vilette “escuyer, seigneur de la Couz et Chalay”. Escuyer is translated as a gentleman (or esquire). Couz means an old house, although what the whole expression means is not clear. Jeanne is recorded as being in Belley. This is a small village near the Rhône, some 65 kilometres south of Bourg-en-Bresse, and fairly close to Veyrins. But is also the name of the wider district. There is a commune in this district called Chaley at Saint-Rambert-en-Bugey, 35 kilometres south west of Bourg-en-Bresse. The arms themselves are blue with a gold chevron, bordered by red and accompanied by three golden lions.

## 2. The American connection

In the 1860 US Census records for East Deer, Allegheny, Pennsylvania, there is a record of Jacob Bolleat, a shoemaker aged 27 (so born in 1832 or 1833), born in France. He was married to Christiana, aged 24, born in Pennsylvania.

		Fanny Bolinger	51	11					
525	513	Jacob Bolleat	27	M	Shoemaker	50	France		
		Christiana "	24	F	Wife		Pennsylvania		

In 1862 Peter Bolleat from Marion, Hannibal, and Missouri took the oath of allegiance as an employee of the Hannibal and St Joseph Railroad.

The 1900 US census records a Jacob and Charlotte Boleat in Buffalo, New York State. The birthplace of both is given as Germany. Jacob is recorded as being 61, and his year of birth as 1838. Charlotte was 64, her year of birth being 1835. They had been married for 29 years, so the year of marriage was 1871. Their year of arrival in the US was given as 1881. Charlotte is recorded as being the mother of three children, although none living at the time (it is not sure if this means not alive or not living at that address).

The extract from the census record is shown below.

		Jacob	61	M	Shoemaker	50	Germany	Canada
187	187	Charlotte	64	F	Wife	50	Germany	Germany
		William	10	M	Son	10	Germany	Canada
		Elizabeth	10	F	Daughter	10	Germany	France

The name Boleat is clear although the first name could well be something other Jacob. Not too much should be read into the birthplace being recorded as Germany – people may deliberately fill in a census form incorrectly to conceal their origins.

The two Jacobs are the most interesting. They appear to be two different people but the name and approximate dates of birth are a strong coincidence. At first sight neither of these Jacobs has anything to do with the Boleat family. However, one member of the family recalls being told that one of his uncles had gone to Jersey and another to Canada, never to be heard of again. Checking the birth and marriage dates against the database of Boleats suggests no one who could be either "Jacob". For the time being this must remain a mystery.

## 3. The Garlan Boleats

The parish records show a Boleat family originating in Garlan in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century. Garlan is just outside Morlaix and fairly close to Plufur, but there is nothing to link this family with the Plufur family. The Boleats from this branch have died out, but they were more distinguished than their Plufur cousins.

Gabriel-Marguerite Boleat, born in 1827, was Pasteur at Faou in 1852, St Saveur Brest (1853-54), Huelgoat and Plounevezal, all small towns south of Morlaix. He died in Kerneval in 1888. His brother, Claude, born in 1835, was Vicaire du Bourg-Blanc, 13 kilometres north of Brest, between 1859 and 1871.

Another brother, Jean Pierre Marie Boleat, had a distinguished military record. He was awarded the Military Medal for service in Mexico in 1862.

*La Semaine religieuse du diocese de Quimper et de Léon*, published in 1929, has an obituary for Jules Boleat, born in Quimperlé in 1865. It is likely that Jules is a nephew of the three brothers and possibly the son of one of them. The obituary, reproduced in the box, shows that Jules was Professor in the Petit-Séminaire Pont-Croix, at Cap-Sizun to the west of Quimper. The seminary was forcibly closed in 1907 as part of the separation of the church and the state. He then became Chaplain in a home for the sick and elderly in Quimperlé.

The seminary re-opened in 1919 before being finally closed in 1973. It was badly damaged by fire a few years ago.

**Nécrologie.** — M. BOLÉAT JULES. — Né à Quimperlé, le 9 Juin 1865, M. J. Boléat a été victime des rigueurs de cet hiver, exceptionnellement dur pour nos régions. Une congestion pulmonaire l'a emporté en quelques jours, malgré les soins dévoués qui se sont prodigués à son chevet. C'était probablement le genre de mort qu'il prévoyait le moins. Si sa santé lui donnait des inquiétudes, ce n'est pas de l'état de sa poitrine qu'elles lui venaient, Il va deux ans il avait du recourir à une intervention chirurgicale qui avait bien réussi et qui, moyennant des précautions et des ménagements, lui permettait de longues espérances. Très dévot à la Sainte Vierge qu'il avait intéressée à sa guérison, il avait fait à Lourdes un pèlerinage de reconnaissance. Il n'avait obtenu qu'un répit, et la mort, un moment écartée, vient de le reprendre par surprise.

La carrière sacerdotale de M. Boléat s'est déroulée toute entière sans bruit, sans autre événement notable que l'expulsion de Pont-Croix en 1907 qui en a changé le cours dans une atmosphère toute calme de régularité de piété et de dévouement. Elève, séminariste, professeur et aumônier, il n'eut jamais qu'à adapter son action aux obligations d'un règlement préétabli. Soit tempérament, soit entraînement, il était la ponctualité même, mais la ponctualité toujours souriante et empressée. Rien, du reste, dans sa personne plus que dans son action, qui trahit la négligence ou le laisser-aller: toujours de la correction, de la distinction même dans sa mise, dans sa démarche, dans ses paroles dans ses relations. Très bon et très simple en même temps causeur spirituel et agréable, ami fidèle et délicat, il eut toujours la confiance de ses élèves, la sympathie de ses confrères, l'affection de ses malades et l'estime du personnel administratif avec lequel il collaborait à Quimperle.

Aussitôt après son ordination en 1889, il était nommé professeur dans ce collège de Pont-Croix dont il avait été un brillant élève. Il y était encore en 1907 quand survint l'expulsion, incertain peut-être de savoir s'il continuerait dans l'enseignement, qui lui plaisait, ou s'il assumerait les charges d'un ministère pastoral dont, maniant mal le Breton, il craignait certaines fonctions, notamment la prédication. L'expulsion puis la vacance du poste d'aumônier à l'hospice de Quimperle lui offrirent la solution qui lui convenait. Cette nomination allait à ses goûts et, en le ramenant près de son foyer natal, comblait les sentiments d'affection qui l'unissaient étroitement à sa famille et particulièrement à sa vénérable mère dont il était l'appui et la joie. Elle a fait aussi le bonheur des malades et des vieillards dont il s'était fait une seconde famille. En ville même, ses compatriotes l'entouraient de respect et s'honoraient de son amitié et plusieurs qui, sur leur lit de mort, auraient repoussé tout autre prêtre, se laissèrent facilement réconcilier par lui avec le Juge suprême qu'ils avaient oublié. Il y a plus de joie au Ciel, nous dit l'Evangile, pour un pécheur qui se convertit que pour dix justes qui persévèrent. Ce sera pour M. Boléat un titre à ajouter aux autres pour une prompt admission dans le séjour des Bienheureux.

Constance Boleat, also from the Garlan family, met an unfortunate death. A newspaper reports that in 1811 in Morlaix the body of Constance ("in rags") was found in a well. Yves, her uncle, and Marie Louise, her sister, took delivery of the body.

Constance's husband, Hervé Noury (also spelt Nourry), made his own bit of history. He was captured by the British in the Napoleonic Wars and imprisoned in Dartmoor Prison in Devon, England. Dartmoor was built between 1806 and 1809 specifically to hold French prisoners of war. The first prisoners arrived in 1809 and repatriation began in 1815. Hervé was in Dartmoor when his wife died so he probably spent at least four years there.

## Concluding thoughts

The Boleat family provide a good case study of a number of significant economic and social trends over the last 450 years –

- A poor family in a poor part of France staying very close to home until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.
- Economic migrants from Brittany to Jersey, but quickly becoming a Jersey family.
- Within France migration from the interior of Brittany to Brest and to the Paris region.

In the last 100 years the family has expanded geographically and developed economically. The roots may be firmly in Brittany but the branches run throughout France, are strong in Jersey and have extended to Australia, Portugal, Switzerland and perhaps also the USA. And the Boleats have developed a long way from their agricultural worker origin, the family including prominent businessmen, sportsmen, scientists, a film producer, lawyers, accountants and even a leader body builder.

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