

Pierre Le Sueur (1845 - 1853)



**1860's
Lithograph
24 x 39cm**

Next to Perrot is a portrait of another of the Parish's most celebrated Constables Phillippe Le Sueur who was the youngest son of blacksmith Francis Le Sueur and he was first elected as Constable in 1839 at the age of only 28. He was then re-elected in 1842, 1845, 1848 and 1851, before dying in office at the age of only 42.

Such was the respect in which he was held in the town that, despite this being an era of intense party politics, the Laurel Party, which opposed the Rose Party of which Le Sueur was a member, did not put up a candidate against him when he first stood for Constable.

Yet it might have been expected that he would have become a member of the Laurel party, for when he left Le Gros' School at the age of 15, he joined the legal practice of Deputy Viscount Le Gallais and Hugh Godfray which was the headquarters of the Laurel Party.

At the age of 24 he went to Paris to study law under Beaufils, and was appointed one of the Island's six Advocates, returning to Paris to complete his studies before beginning to practice in October 1837.

He and Francois Godfray, pictured to the left, were involved in virtually all the major Court cases of the time and frequently found themselves on opposing sides in the Courtroom. Godfray was a thunderous orator, whereas Le Sueur preferred the course of quiet persuasion, and frequently emerged the victor.

Often he did not have to prove the innocence of a client, but was able to overturn prosecutions by arguing that they had not been brought correctly or under a valid law.

Understandably his services were much in demand and his practice prospered, but he must have had an enormous capacity for work because he decided to stand for Constable when Pierre Perrot was elected Jurat, and was returned unopposed at the age of only 26.

St Helier was then a town with major problems, bursting at the seams during the greatest population boom the island has ever seen, and lacking any proper sanitary facilities.

Despite the considerable reluctance of ratepayers to sanction the significant costs involved, Le Sueur instituted and went on to complete a substantial network of underground sewers. He embarked on a process of widening the town's streets, inaugurated a fire service and prosecuted many landlords whose properties had turned into slums.

For this work he earned the admiration of even his staunchest political opponents. He was in charge of the Chronique de Jersey, the leading Rose newspaper, but even the Jersey Times, on the other side of the political spectrum, was forced to concede in 1849 that *"since the first drain was commenced in 1845, improvement has followed improvement in rapid succession, so that one who had visited these islands in 1843 and now returned among us, would scarcely believe that he was in the same town"*.

As if improvements to the town were not enough, Le Sueur's workload was added to in 1846 when Queen Victoria paid a Royal Visit to the island and he was faced with making arrangements to control the enormous crowds which descended on the capital from all over the island to see the first monarch to pay an official visit to Jersey.