



## *Christmas Greetings 2011*

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## *La Gazette*

Issue # 30

December 2011

## *President's Greetings*

**Joyeux Noel et Bon Annee !**

**Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year !**

Bonjour la famille,

As the year draws to a close it is time to reflect on the highlights of the last 3 months before the Christmas festivities are in full flight!

It has been a hectic 3 months! I have written a brief summary of the activities and news that will be of interest.

More detail of each item follows in the newsletter- rather larger this time!

Thank you to those who have contributed and have been involved in new research- also remember to check the website!!

Planning for the Libeau Family Reunion at Wainui and Akaroa came to fruition and the weekend passed all too quickly. It was a wonderful time and great to meet up with South Islanders, the North Island members and Barbara Glavish who travelled from America. It was exciting to have so many of the family together.

Unfortunately several folk were unable to attend because of ill health. To those folk who could not come and sent their Best Wishes for a successful weekend 'Thank you'. My sincere thanks to the members of the committee who were involved in the organization, your efforts were appreciated.

The French Fest at Akaroa followed on 28-30 October. This was an exciting time commencing with the Street Party, included the Re-enactment, Market, Fest Ball in the Gaiety Hall and concluded with a French Cricket Tournament. The NZ Army Band and stunning weather made the weekend a real success.

**The next one is 2013. Be there!**

A Libeau Family calendar has been published by Kevin Clark. Those who attended the Reunion have a copy but there are more available. Thank you, Kevin, it is a fantastic way to present some of the research you have been collating for your publication of the Libeau Family in narrative format. See inside for more information.

Onto the reprint of the 'The Libeau Family of Banks Peninsula.'! Alison Honeyfield has posted out a draft of the updated edition to me. This includes the updated biographical notes from the research forms sent out for inclusion in the new edition. There has been a lull in the returning of these so PLEASE follow up with family over the Christmas Holidays as there are still many omissions, errors and non-return of these. A decision has been made to extend the closure of returns until 31 January. Check your family line is updated please by making contact with your family over Christmas to check they are included. Remember it is 16 years since the last edition and we have a new generation to include.

Congratulations to the new arrivals and condolences to those families who are grieving the loss of a loved one.

I wish you all the joys of Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year!

Patricia

## *Births, Passings, Marriages and New Members*

### **BIRTHS:**

Heather Libeau-Dow is the proud grandmother of two more grandchildren.

Saffon Clemence Parsonson, born 7 March 2011. Daughter of Cameron & Heidi .



Jessie Bradley Clifford, born 18 June 2011. Son to Sarah



Katrina Donnelly's daughter Melissa and son in law Craig have a little boy, Hayden James Winter born 18/7/2011- a brother for Olivia.

### **NEW MEMBERS:**

Heather Smith, NSW

John M Shrimpton, Hamilton

## Tributes

Madelaine Morisset (as written by Peter Tremewan and printed in the "Akaroa Mail".)

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Madelaine (foreground with the green and black bags) and French and New Zealand descendants of the *Comte de Paris* settlers beside Emilie Libeau's tomb in 2008.

### Obituary - Madeleine Morisset

A crucial link has been broken between the New Zealand descendants of the French settlers who came to Akaroa on the *Comte de Paris* in 1840 and their cousins back in France.

Born in France in the village of La Grève on 12 October 1918, Madeleine Morisset died in La Rochelle on June 21 2011 at the age of 92.

Back in the 1980s when I was researching my book on the French attempt to colonise the South Island of New Zealand, I wrote to the officials of the various villages where I thought the passengers on the *Comte de Paris* were born, asking for birth certificates.

This is how I first made contact with Madeleine Morisset, who discovered that I was interested in her ancestors.

In her retirement, Madeleine lived in the little village of Cram, not far from Rochefort, the port from which the *Comte de Paris* had sailed.

Her grandmother, Emilie, was born in Akaroa in 1856, one of the seventeen children of Joseph Libeau.

Her childless godparents, Jacques and Louise Bancit, became very attached to her

and, when they decided in 1864 to sell up their Akaroa farm and house and retire to Jacques's home town of La Grève, she went with them.

There Emilie eventually married and had four children, including Madeleine's mother.

Emilie died in 1938 when Madeleine was nineteen.

Madeleine invited my family and me to stay with her and we duly turned up to a very warm welcome in 1987.

She showed us some Maori cloaks that Emilie had brought back to France with her, as well as a stuffed seal and various documents and photos.

I was able to put Madeleine back in contact with her New Zealand family and, when the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the *Comte de Paris* was celebrated in Akaroa in 1990, she decided to come out and join in, along with two other French descendants of Emilie — Monique and Chantal — and a teenage girl, Florence, who was more distantly related.

Madeleine came back to New Zealand for a second visit in 1997, along with Florence's parents, Michel and Michèle Libaud.

By this time she was 78 but still very alert and active. She

brought with her Emilie's Maori cloaks, which she donated to the Akaroa Museum.

The kaumatua from Onuku, George Robinsor, was very moved at the handing-over ceremony, and so was Madeleine.

Other descendants of Emilie came out to New Zealand in her wake, including Alain Boussiron, Francis Fournat and Gilles Fournat. Many New Zealand relations made the voyage to France to meet up with their cousins there.

Madeleine's parents and brother all died of TB when she was quite young and she caught it too, but survived.

She led a tough life, but one devoted to helping others.

After training as a home help, she spent her life looking after children and expectant mothers and working with handicapped people in many different parts of France.

She belonged to a Catholic women's organisation, the Filles d'Ivry, and in her will she left all her possessions to the Catholic charity, Emmaus.

My memories of her include her habit of eating a couple of

raw oysters for breakfast every morning.

She would then leap on her bike and go off to tend the little gardens that she cultivated in the nearby countryside and bring back a selection for dinner.

As well as all the usual vegetables, like potatoes, tomatoes and beans, she also loved experimenting: I can remember her Turkish turban gords and her spaghetti marrows.

She returned from her trips to New Zealand with seeds and cuttings and successfully grew a kowhai and a cabbage tree in her garden, as well as roses from a cutting that Jessie Mould sent her from Akaroa.

Madeleine took an interest in everything and everybody and loved discussing ideas.

She listened carefully to people who had all sorts of opinions and lifestyles.

After her retirement in 1984 she travelled widely, going to places like Venezuela as well as New Zealand.

Her relatives and friends around the world will sorely miss her.

Peter Tremewan

## *2012 Libeau Family Calendars*

Kevin Clark has produced a magnificent 2012 Libeau Family French calendar. The calendar contains early photos with accompanying historical commentary written by Kevin. Kevin is currently writing a book documenting the Libeau Family.

These calendars would make an ideal Xmas present. A copy was presented to participants of the reunion as part of their attendees pack and several have requested additional copies to send on.

A copy of the order form is enclosed.

## *Reunion*

The reunion went ahead at Akaroa/Wainui as planned despite the reduced numbers and lack of French Family attendance. The ramifications of the earthquakes affected us greatly. I am sure those from outside of the Canterbury area appreciated the several earthquakes which we conjured (a couple of goods one centred close by) up for them just prior to the rugby starting and the one during the games. There were some wide eyes from the uninitiated.

Around 45 members attended the Friday dinner at Bully Hayes with guests being Mrs & Mrs Matheson who own one of the original family cottages in Rue Grehan and Peter and Christine Tremewan, longtime supporters of the society. It was pleasing to meet up with those members from the USA and the North island who attended. Faces can now be attached to names.

The “information swap room” for family information/photo records was well attended and most helpful.

## *A little bit of France comes home*

Part 1 of 2 provided by Frances Harrison of her French excursion.

June 18, 2011 is the day I spent exploring the birthplace of Joseph Libeau and the neighbouring countryside. It's also the day I spent with my two cousins Alain and Gilles along with Peter Tremewen, the New Zealand author of an authoritative book on *French Akaroa*. What an amazing serendipity that we would all end up in the area on the same weekend.

I've been living in France since September 2010 and have finally realised my dream of visiting the cradle of my French family. For the past month I've been corresponding with a French cousin, Alain Boussiron. He organised that I meet up with another of our mutual cousins Gilles and also Michele, yet another cousin living in the Charente area.

The story of my family and the establishment of New Zealand's only French settlement begins in 1840 on the banks of the Charente River, Rochefort, France.



Joseph and Madeleine Libeau and their children would have stood on the deck of the Comte de Paris watching the preparations for casting off. They would have seen the old naval buildings and the Corderie Royale and hoped the voyage of at least 3 months wouldn't be a nightmare. As you know, things didn't turn out quite as they had expected.

Joseph had two wives: his French one (who died as a result of a later childbirth) and then an English one who ended up in a mental institution. Oddly enough I am descended from both wives: Julie from his first wife was my maternal grandmother's grandmother and Josephine from his second wife was my maternal grandfather's grandmother



June 18 is the day I spent exploring the birthplace of Joseph Libeau and the neighbouring countryside. It's also the day I spent with my two cousins Alain and Gilles along with Peter Tremewen, the New Zealand author of a well-published authoritative book on the French at Akaroa. What an amazing serendipity that we would all end up in the area on the same weekend.

In a two-car convoy we travelled north towards Nantes: my friend Jean-Claude and I with Alain and Annick, Gilles and his wife Micheline with Peter Tremewen and his wife Christine. The countryside changed to viticulture (Muscadet) as we approached the tiny village of L'Elaudiere-birthplace of Joseph Libeau. We had no idea which ramshackle building he lived in as a child, maybe his home is just a pile of rubble or maybe it's one of those still standing. We looked through the gate at the only mansion and large garden in the village. Perhaps he tended the garden there? The main thing I noted was the excitement we three cousins felt to be together...there. My cousins are descended from one of Joseph's daughters, Emilie, who returned with another French couple to France. She stayed in France and it is through her that I am related to these cousins. I feel very proud of my very direct lineage to one of the founding families of Akaroa, a settlement which was established ten years before the English established Christchurch.

Part 2 will follow in our next newsletter.

## *Cycling in France*

### Part 2 of Morgan Libeau's trip

Most days we cycled in 30 degree temperatures stopping at local cafes in the early afternoon to quench our thirsts with huge glasses of Pression Blanche with lemon. We did wine tastings in Gigondas and Chateau-Neuf- Du- Pape heading off lightheaded and happy with several bottles stowed in the paniers for consuming with dinner.

Our hotels were all charming and often 16<sup>th</sup> century inns and chateaux. Most had added pools that were a welcome relief to our hot bodies, tired legs and bums. My favourite was the Chateau Mazan which dated from 1720 and had once belonged to the family of the Marquis de Sade. There was nothing sadistic about this place however with its dazzling setting and quintessential French décor enveloping me in pure bliss. We dined here on Fois Gras and Demi Pigeon.

Over the seven days we all got to know each other. We shared aspects of ourselves and our lives while pedalling amiably along amidst the fields and furrows of the countryside. We ended each day fresh from swims or le douche, changed into frocks and sandals and drank aperitifs in some gorgeous le jardin de l'hotel while anticipating the gourmet delights for dinner ahead.

There was laughter (lots) friendship, support, advice and sharing. Kiwis have an amazingly adventurous spirit and on this trip like the last there was an abundance of camaraderie. Our guide kept us safe, translating, offering arnica, advice and superb leadership. Over our time on the road we cycled around 250 kilometres. We averaged 35 k a day (some days more or less) and apart from the breath-taking countryside and villages we had magnificent views of Mount Ventoux and the mountain range of Dentelles de Montmiral (Lace points).

I can still recall the thrill (and terror) of a freewheel, the taste of Fois Gras, the bliss of that early afternoon beer and the feel of crisp white cotton sheets in a 16<sup>th</sup> century Chateau bed. There were times when the sense of freedom, the beauty and magic of it all- bought tears to my eyes and I thought my heart would burst with joy.

My little French soul was well fed. I adored every moment of it. I wrote poems as a journal and took many photos. There is a part of my brain where les 'image de Provence are stored. Thick and juicy images -- that leak and seep into my bloodstream, embedding themselves in my psyche. These Images continue to sustain me.

The tour finally finished in Orange and on our last morning together we poked around the marvellous market buying linen sun frocks and juicy olives. We said our goodbyes to each other and our trusty steeds (amazing how one can become so attached to a bike).

My travelling companion and I headed to the medieval town of Uzes. This time we walked around turrets and towers, walled gardens, white stone buildings, fabulous markets and art. If you are ever around this area of Provence then Uzes is not to be missed. It is a delight. After some time with friends near the coast in Auriole and a week in Spain we headed back to Paris for 10 days. Ahhh Paris, (I will write about that another time) but have included here a poem.

So.....Take a risk-

Have an adventure on a bike in France (I can send you the details)

It will fill you up and satisfy your yearnings for French soil. And yes you can look good in cycle pants (some did) Even with varicose veins, knobbly knees, Cellulite, and sunspots.

But you know in the end we didn't care

We were all beautiful and carefree, brave and adventurous

In France, on a bike, doing it

On Y Va

Tres tres magnifique

Morgan Libeau

### *Libeau family book-reminder*

Anyone with updated information for the new Libeau Family Book to be printed PLEASE contact the publisher Alison Honeyfield, – if she does not already have your name and address.

**THE CUT OFF DATE FOR INFORMATION TO BE INCLUDED IS 31st January 2012.**

EVAGEAN PUBLISHING 28 Wyborn Rd RD2 Te Aroha 3392 NZ or <a href="mailto:Alison.honeyfield@xtra.co.nz">Alison.honeyfield@xtra.co.nz</a>
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### *Subscriptions*

As previously, subscriptions continue to arrive but now at a greatly reduced rate. To date we have only received slightly more than 80% of dues from those members still remaining on our list. If you are one of the outstanding and wish to still receive your newsletter, please send your remittance to Bruce Fuller at 25 Hamel Lane, Kaiapoi 7630 or make payment direct to our bank account: BNZ 020842 0171869 00. Don't forget, if you are paying direct put your name and if possible society number with your payment.

Last year your committee decided to cease sending “La Gazette” and cancel website accessibility to non financial members. Ensure you don’t lose contact with the society by paying your subs now.

## *Social Function*

It is intended to hold a social function with a French theme on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> February It will be held at the Co-operating Parish Hall, corner of Fuller and Peraki Streets, Kaiapoi from 7.00pm.

Entry will be \$5 per head.

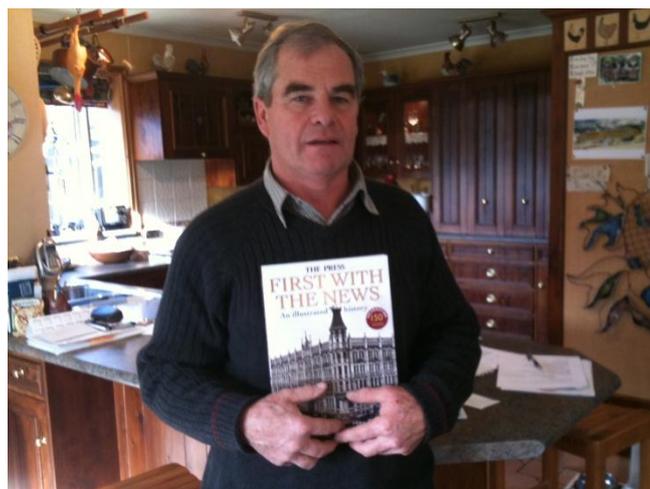
Please also bring a plate. Drinks will be BYO but tea and coffee will be provided.

We are hoping for a good turnout so put it on your “to-do” list!!

## *Presentation*

In recognition for the many years that Richard Clark has put into the society, as a photographer, video producer, editor of La Gazette and committee member, your committee presented Richard with a memento book of the Christchurch earthquake.

Richard was one of the original committee participating in the planning and running of the 1990 re-union.



## Message from our Webmaster

Richard Warlow who is our industrious webmaster (and family member) advises that around 50 members get e-mail communications that includes website updates and other late notices. If you are not getting these, please advise Richard (and our secretary) of your current e-mail address. Contact addresses are at the end of this newsletter.

## Committee Reminder

Hey !!!

Thanks for those gazette contributions that we have received. The editors would still love to hear from you with interesting little tidbits for our readers' enjoyment.

I.e. Family histories/anecdotes, travel (especially in France), photos. Etc.

See what you can come up with!

## Committee Contacts

Chairperson	Patricia Stoneman Ph (03) 355 7151 22a Searells Road Christchurch 8053 <a href="mailto:cdpstoneman@xtra.co.nz">cdpstoneman@xtra.co.nz</a>	Secretary	Leone Fuller Ph (03) 327 2829 25 Hamel Lane Kaiapoi 7630 <a href="mailto:leonef@ihug.co.nz">leonef@ihug.co.nz</a>
Minutes Secretary	Bruce Clark Ph (03) 942 1702 7 Mahars Road Christchurch 8013 <a href="mailto:Diana-bruceclark@paradise.net.nz">Diana-bruceclark@paradise.net.nz</a>	Treasurer	Bruce Fuller Ph (03) 327 2829 25 Hamel Lane Kaiapoi 7630 <a href="mailto:brucef@ihug.co.nz">brucef@ihug.co.nz</a>
Northern North Island	Bethel Clark Ph 027 282 0765 <a href="mailto:Bethel@xtra.co.nz">Bethel@xtra.co.nz</a>	South Canterbury Rep	Desiree McKenzie Ph (03)689 8872 <a href="mailto:deay@xtra.co.nz">deay@xtra.co.nz</a>
Central North Island	Jocelyn Benefield Ph (06) 765 5900 <a href="mailto:Jocelyn.ian@xtra.co.nz">Jocelyn.ian@xtra.co.nz</a>	Webmaster	Richard Warlow <a href="mailto:webmaster@libeau-family.org">webmaster@libeau-family.org</a>
Southern North Island	Kevin Clark Ph (04) 3892706 <a href="mailto:kevin_clark@xtra.co.nz">kevin_clark@xtra.co.nz</a>	France	<a href="mailto:alain.boussiron@orange.fr">alain.boussiron@orange.fr</a> (contains underscore after Kevin)

## NOW AVAILABLE: 2012 Libeau Family Calendar



Family gathering 1907

Each month features Libeau family members from the first 2-3 generations after arrival in New Zealand in 1840, including photographs and brief biographical notes.

Copies can be obtained from the address below.  
Cost: \$10 in NZ, \$15 overseas.



Joseph Libeau 1807-1883

Complete the form below and post to: Libeau Publications  
P.O. Box 14203, Kilbirnie, Wellington 6241, New Zealand  
or scan and email to: [libeapublications@gmail.com](mailto:libeapublications@gmail.com)



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