



La Gazette

Christmas Edition 2019 #55



President's Greeting

2019 is rapidly drawing to a close and the build up to Christmas Day has begun. With less than four weeks to go, I spent the afternoon decorating the Christmas trees and creating memories with my two youngest grandchildren Saffron and Jesse. As my birthday is on Christmas Day it is a very special celebration indeed!

As we take a moment to reflect on the year ; recalling devastating events in Christchurch and Paris and countless other challenges we all encounter (rugby games...) - let's celebrate our strong family ties and the ongoing sense of connection this brings. The family publication "To the Wilderness" has completely sold out and the stories are being shared with the younger generations.

The committee has been busy with events and on-going commitment to the goals of the society. Petanque mornings at Hagley Park have improved our game considerably. The new French ambassador has done her research on the Akaroa history and was very gracious to us during the recent French Fest event. We have frequent communication with the Comte de Paris committee; Landing Day dinner; French Fest parade and now major planning for the 2020 reunion - 180 years celebration of the families arriving in Akaroa in 1840. Keep your eye on La Gazette for details of this event.

Christmas blessings – Joyeux Noel and relaxing holidays! - Heather



New La Gazette Editor—Frances Harrison

Our grateful thanks to Bruce Clark for shepherding our family newsletter through the years. It does take a fair amount of time to put it all together and send it out. Somehow he seems to have twisted my arm to take on this key communications role but I'm happy to do so and become more involved in helping our members stay in touch and contribute to our family activities.

I'm a direct descendant of Joseph Libeau Senior and both of his wives. I Lived in France 2010-2017, became a naturalised citizen and recently spent 3 months there, brushing up my love of France and the French language.

Inside this edition:

- President's message
- New La Gazette Editor
- FrenchFest Review
- Alliance Française
- Comte de Paris and 180 year celebrations
- Committee details
- Subscriptions
- Historic photos

I've published a book on my dream of living and working in France and regularly blog on life, France and the universe.

Don't hesitate to email me any news, stories, photos or other contributions to share in our family newsletter in either English or French. Je vous souhaite une bonne nouvelle année.

Want to keep in touch? Easy...

Website: libeau-family.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/Libeau.Family

Contributions for La Gazette: fharrison55@hotmail.com



FrenchFest Akaroa takes place every two years these days. It has grown to the point of being very structured, regulated and injected with money (though never enough). Involved in the 3 day event every second October are a number of community groups, businesses, tourism promoters, the acting fraternity and paid professionals. This has changed since the days of enthusiastic and passionate amateurs so I was curious to see how things were now done, and to participate.

The most elaborate event is the Landing re-enactment of 1840 when the French and a few German settlers disembarked on the shore of Akaroa after months of travelling on the Comte de Paris from Rochefort, France. They were expecting to start a French colony, supported by the French navy and government. As we all know, it was ill-fated, as the British took hold of all NZ while the colonists were on route.

Our descendants, Joseph and Madeleine Libeau and their son were part of that disembarkation. I'm fiercely proud of my ancestors who, through hard work and courage, made a new and more comfortable life for themselves, and by doing so stepped into history.

I wasn't able to have a speaking role because rehearsals took place only in Akaroa and I was in France at the time, but I was keen to pop on a costume and get out on the water to re-enact the landing part, the final part, of this wonderful family history.



FrenchFest is growing. This year we had the professional services of Director Michael Hurst and his partner Jennifer Ward-Lealand to whip our spectacle into shape after preliminary work by Lesley and John Harding. Community groups did a great job adding colour. The only thing lacking really was decent weather.



Saturday dawned freezing cold and wet. Costume call was at 6.45. Our costumes were checked by costume director Lesley and we walked to the beach to await the beginning of The Show. The tiny number of true descendants who were not required for much of the performance were given a short cruise on Captain Ray's sailing boat, but the weather was too rough to go very far.

Still, it gave us a bit of a feel for what it must have been like 179 years ago in cold and unpleasant weather. We then transferred to cutters and were rowed to a section of the harbour, just off the beach, waiting for the call to row ashore. I was on the tiller of my boat enjoying the experience.



Once ashore the programme was complete and unfortunately many spectators had dispersed as the parade didn't start for another 30 minutes. By the time that started the audience lining Rue Lavaud was thinner than expected. We marched behind the brass band to the recreation ground where a large marquee and stalls were all set up.

Both the Libeau Descendants and the Comte de Paris groups had info displays inside the grand marquee. Throughout the day there were speech-

es and entertainment. A local fashion show and cancan girls did their thing. Of strange interest was the cock-crowing contest which had a children's section. Some kids have the confidence to get on stage in front of a lot of adults and perform like a cock. Amazing, if not very convincing. The adults didn't want to be outdone. It was nuts!

The evening was devoted to a cabaret with various acts and then bands to dance to. That was great and everyone enjoyed themselves. Sunday had a couple of small activities one could do, such as cemetery tours, but I decided go home and thaw out a bit.



Bruce Clark, Frances Harrison, Heather Libeau-Dow, Ambassador Sylvaine Carta-Le-Vert

Akaroa profits from its French history but in reality there is very little Frenchness there. Most inhabitants haven't a word of French and you'd be hard pressed to find much in shops of a truly French nature. I searched in vain for something to enhance my little French house. Despite that, Akaroa uses its history to good effect in its marketing and is very popular with cruise ship passengers, though many decide to just pass through the town on their way to Christchurch or elsewhere.

While manning the Libeau stand we had the good fortune to meet the French Ambassador to NZ, Ms Sylvaine Carta-Le Vert, who was down from Wellington to taste the event. She has promised to come back and spend a longer time at the festival in future.



FrenchFest is a good occasion to meet French speakers, discuss family genealogy and revel in the French culture more cheaply than going to France. Unfortunately for me, it reminded me of what I deeply miss – living in France, so it was with mixed sentiments that I drove back over the hill to

Rolleston. [Frances Harrison]

Check out photos and videos at https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=frenchfest-akaroa%2011-13%20october%202019&epa=SEARCH_BOX



TERM 1 FRENCH CLASSES

3rd February - 9 April

Alliance Française Update

Start the year on a French foot with one of our Summer Intensive courses or refresher classes! We've got loads of brand new courses for all levels. Whether you're re-enrolling, or fulfilling a New Year's resolution - there's something for everyone in our first session of 10-week or 5-week courses!

We will be also be running classes in January for anyone who would like to refresh and/or learn French and not commit to a full term of classes. Contact: Tel: (03) 365 8370, email enquiries@afchristchurch.org.nz

For those who live outside of Canterbury visit the website www.afchristchurch.org.nz for info on a centre near you. Alliance Française have branches in other parts of NZ.

The French Film Festival dates have been announced - 13-29th March in Christchurch. The main venue will be the wonderful Lumière cinema in town. The Opening night and other big events will be set at the Christchurch Art Gallery. More info here: <https://frenchfilmfestival.co.nz/about/>

Of course, in 2020, we will have the regular events coming back in 2020 - Cine-Club, French Breakfasts, Book clubs, French Guests, Scrabble, etc. 47 regular events were organised in 2019 and 17 special events (FFF, Fête de la musique, Bastille day screening, Beaujolais nouveau, etc.)

Comte de Paris Group Members Picnic

Next year the picnic held annually at Heritage Park (just before you arrive in Akaroa) will be held 02 February 2020.

Customised Family Badges

If you would like to create a badge in your name you can contact:

Precision Badges

PO Box 7610

Sydenham

Christchurch

Ph: 03 322 4058

christchurch@precisionbadges.co.nz



180 Year Celebrations in Akaroa

The Comte de Paris Descendants Group (Libeau Society and other Comte de Paris Family Groups) are organising an event to celebrate 180 years since the arrival of our ancestors in Akaroa on the Comte de Paris in 1840. We are thinking of the last weekend in October to more likely get sunshine and fine days – 30, 31st October and 1st November 2020.

The celebrations will be centred on the newly refurbished **Gaiety Hall**, which was damaged during the 2011 earthquake. The planned programme is:

Friday night

7-11pm Conversation with Cocktail food provided.

Saturday Morning

Possible unveiling of the Memorial Entrance. 10am. This will depend on the Council Consents being issues and building completed. Most senior descendant to cut the ribbon with most junior or closest generation to the settlers.

Self-guided Walks – routes provided. Comte de Paris Walk, General History Walk, Libeau Walk, Le-lievre Walk, Cemetery Walk.

Saturday Afternoon 1 – 5.00pm

Self-guided Walks – routes provided. Comte de Paris Walk, General History Walk, Libeau Walk, Le-lievre Walk, Cemetery Walk.

Cutting of Cake, 'Drop In' centre, displays, photographs, tea/coffee, photocopying facility, Information sharing. Photographs.

Merchandise table

Guest Speaker

Saturday Evening 7 - 12.00 pm

Buffet dinner—Tables labelled with less well-known Comte de Paris settlers – Dulac, Benoit, Jouy, Hahn, Waeckerle, Michel, Fleuret, Francois, David, Rousselot, Eteveneaux, etc. Spot prizes.

Sunday

Church services available.

Self-guided Walks

Shared lunch on the St Patricks Lawn

Farewell.

Cost. The cost of the celebrations will be costed separately between the Registration, the Friday night and the Saturday night events. We appreciate that members may not be able to attend all events planned.

Expression of Interest Form

For those members who may wish to attend this event please fill in the form at the back of this La Gazette and return it to Linda Sutherland as indicated on the form, if possible by the end of January 2020. This is not a commitment, but will give us an indication of numbers for our initial planning.

Please also pass this form on to anyone else, who may not be a member, if they also express an interest in attending.



180 years

**“Celebrating the Arrival of the
Comte de Paris Settlers 1840”**

When: 30 October - 1st November 2020

Where: Akaroa, Banks Peninsula.

Register your interest:

Email: lindasunderland07@gmail.com

Ph: 03 337 5045/027 4100921

Expression of Interest Form – 180 year celebrations

The Comte de Paris Descendants Group and the Libeau Family are planning a weekend of activities for all descendants to mix, mingle, share stories and thoroughly enjoy the experience of celebrating 180 years since the arrival of our hardy and very courageous forebears.

The weekend will run from Friday evening 30th October through to Sunday afternoon and will include several opportunities to gather, chat, reconnect and make new connections.

DETAILS

Registration: \$30/person – includes a 'Welcome Pack'.

Friday evening 7-11pm: Conversation - \$25/person. Complimentary drink. Cash bar.

Saturday afternoon: 1-5pm - displays, 'Open House', Walks, photographs, tea/coffee – no cost.

Saturday Dinner and Dance: 7pm -12mn - \$65/person. Buffet dinner, band, staff and complimentary drink included. Cash bar.

Total for the weekend: \$120.00/ person.

The subcommittee are working hard with the planning and mindful of costs however we hope the above will be affordable for most. There will be a range of merchandise for sale.

To register your interest please complete the details below:

Name:

Address:

Email:

Phone:

Ancestor Family:

Numbers attending:

Forward this information to:

Linda Sunderland
Secretary, Comte de Paris descendants Group Inc.
13 Kiteroa Place
Cashmere
Christchurch 8022
Email: lindasunderland07@gmail.com

Please come and join us and make this a most memorable occasion.

Committee Contacts

President	Heather Libeau-Dow Ph 03 351 9006 or 021 351919	Secretary	Desiree McKenzie Ph 03 689 8872
heather.libeau-dow@libeau-family.org		deay@xtra.co.nz	
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mlibeau@xtra.co.nz		deay@xtra.co.nz	
Central North Island	Jocelyn Benefield Ph 06 765 5900	Bay of Plenty	To be advised
jocelynianbenefield@gmail.com		kmdonnelly@xtra.co.nz	
Southern North Island	Cherie Cliff Ph 06 3559171	Southern North Is- land	Anne West Ph 06 3575716
cherie.cliff@libeau-family.org		d.m.west@xtra.co.nz	

Subscriptions

Have you paid your [subscription](#) yet? It's only \$15 per year to keep in touch with other members via newsletters, have activities organised by your committee and learn about your personal history. **Some Members have yet to pay their 2018/19/20 year subscriptions. These will show on their Accounts.**

Thankyou to those who are maintaining their subscriptions.



Jan Shuttleworth - Photo of Rue Grehan circa 1890