



La Gazette

July 2023 #66

President's Report from AGM



Over the past year 2022/23 Covid has continued to impact our lives with restrictions, anxiety and wide-spread ill health. This year hopefully some normality is returning with more confidence to plan and attend events. International travel has opened up; I have just returned from Hawaii which was notably mask-free and the compulsory vaccine pass has been removed.

After a hiatus of two years the Akaroa French Fest is confirmed for October 6-8 and judging by their Facebook page, plans are well underway.

The committee will promote the opportunity for a mini-reunion dinner French Fest weekend for Libeau Descendants attending the festival to continue making connections.

The festival heritage tent will be manned by committee with posters/books of interest displayed. This will be an opportunity to display WW1 medals (Alfred Libeau) and honour the memory of Libeau soldiers. The stall provides a marketing opportunity and we often assist new relatives in their genealogy journey.

Information on participating in the re-enactment on Saturday morning was included in the recent La Gazette. You are also encouraged to dress up and join the parade behind the band to the cricket grounds for the opening ceremony. We have the pattern for traditional bonnets worn by Charente women in the 1840's and period costumes can be borrowed from C de P wardrobe.

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The Libeau Descendants website and Facebook page have been generating interest from new members. After responding to a query late last year, I have had a flurry of emails from Catherine Huon. Cousin of Michel Libaud, she is from Mathurin Libaud - Joseph's brother who stayed behind and their family florist shop is still standing today. She had assisted Kevin Clark in his research and, now retired, has the leisure to pursue her family tree. It's interesting to note the name is spelt Li-baud. Her profile and stories are published later in this newsletter.

The Libeau Family book is a valuable record of our genealogy, and last October we presented the Akaroa Museum with a copy for their use as they respond to frequent queries from relatives.

Website: libeau-family.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/Libeau.Family

Contributions for La Gazette: fharrison55@hotmail.com

They also stock our walking trail pamphlet. The Libeau Family of Akaroa – Banks Peninsula Discovery Trail of historical sites from a founding colonial family; and have requested more copies to replenish their stand.

The Story Began

In 1838 Jean François Langlois, Captain of a French whaling boat, the Cachelot, bought land on Banks Peninsula from local Maori.

An engaging account of the Libeau and associated families can be read in Kevin Clark and Angela Pyke's book *To The Wilderness*, published in 2017.

Further information on the history of French settlement in Akaroa and Banks Peninsula can be read in Peter Tremewan's book *French Akaroa: an attempt to colonise southern New Zealand...* updated second edition 2018.

Libeau Stables and Kiln.

This QR code takes you directly to our website.

Further Contacts of Interest

Comte de Paris Descendants group represents all the families that arrived on the Comte de Paris ship.
www.comtedeparisdescendants.org.nz

Akaroa Museum
www.akaroamuseum.org.nz

The map in this brochure shows places of interest relating to the Libeau family. Further information relating to these sites can be found on the Libeau Descendants Society website.

Information on joining the Libeau Descendants Society can be obtained from the Libeau Website link here: www.libeau-family.org

The Libeau Family of Akaroa Banks Peninsula Discovery Trail

Take a walk around urban Akaroa and view sites of historical interest from a founding colonial family, it's only 75 minutes.

Joseph Libeau, his wife Magdelaine (née Chauvet) and two children Mélanie and Joseph Lucien left Rochefort, France in March 1840 on the Comte de Paris along with 51 other colonists. They arrived in Akaroa in August 1840. Among the colonists were other families that were later connected to the Libeau family through marriage: Eteveneaux, Gendrot and Benoit.

In 1852 Magdelaine died after the birth of her twelfth child. Joseph married an English immigrant, Mary Ann Hedgman and had eight more children.

McNabb/Brocher wedding 1909

www.libeau-family.org

As you know, the committee is prioritising the update of the 2012 version of our family genealogy book. After battling with the Evagean publishers who have now closed down, we secured a one-sided unbound copy of this document which is being scanned for the database. The sub - committee is resolving technical issues to provide an accessible template for the reprint.

Kevin Clark and Angela Pyke have accepted Honorary Membership for their meticulously researched book "Into the Wilderness". This sold out very quickly and is in demand still. Permission has been given to the Libeau committee to investigate the possibility of reprinting the book with requisite corrections.

La Gazette Editor Frances Harrison continues to share her expertise with this quarterly publication which includes a wide variety of interesting articles, photos and family information. Please feel free to send her family letters, photos and stories that celebrate our ancestors.

We sadly fare-welled Tricia Stoneman last September- she has been actively involved in the Libeau Descendants Society Committee since its inception in 1989 ; including roles of Secretary, President up until early last year. She was passionate about her Libeau heritage and her archives are being safely stored. It was wonderful to meet her daughters at the Christmas function and share family connections with them.

The Annual landing day dinner hosted by the Comte de Paris was also well attended and is always a great opportunity to socialise with the wider community of French settlers. At the AGM we voted to donate \$500 to the Akaroa Cemeteries Fund, which has been sent tagged for a Libeau-Hunt headstone restoration.

After years of road blocks and frustrations it is very satisfying to see the completion of the Akaroa cemeteries Memorial Gate. Congratulations to Linda Sunderland and her committee for resilience and persistence; the report follows.

Alliance Française supports us by providing a wide range of opportunities for Francophiles and is functioning well after the challenges of lockdown with an energetic new Director. This role is fully funded by the French government. I attended their AGM yesterday and it is encouraging to learn that class numbers are increasing and breakfasts/ cultural events are well attended. There is a new Ambassador in Wellington; Mme Lawrence Beau who will hopefully attend the French Fest opening. The annual French Film Festival launched on Thursday evening and there is a great line-up of French movies at various theatres-you can be transported to France for a couple of hours and revise your French. Brochures on the table.

I wish to thank each member of the committee for their commitment and unique talents freely given to the family cause. We meet four times a year enjoying a family atmosphere as we work towards fulfilling the original aims of the society; the pandemic has necessitated a shift from event/reunion planning to a concerted focus this year on preserving and updating family records.

You are clearly here today because something in your DNA resonates with the desire to derive meaning and identity from the past. What sparks this... and why does it matter? digging deeper... A genealogical dig has a parallel with a geological dig as we uncover the secrets from our forebears.

Enjoy the journey! Heather Libeau-Dow



Report from the Comte de Paris Group—Linda Sunderland

Akaroa Cemeteries Improvement Project – the Memorial Entrance is finally a fact. As the costs escalated generous donations also came through allowing this project to finally reach reality. The Group remains very grateful to all who have contributed - our membership, our affiliates and the local community including the Akaroa Catholic Parish. Acknowledgement also needs to go to Kevin Simcock, our structural engineer who donated his time and expertise, and the superb building advice and assistance from Richie O'Malley and his team. This has truly been a descendant and community achievement. At this stage all we need to do is lay the plaque. Once this work is completed all that remains is the on-going restoration of headstones damaged by the 2010 earthquakes. Of course there are always other things happening within the Group.



One is the major work being undertaken by Sue Wilson to update the Le Lièvre family book. Without Sue's enthusiasm and determination this work would not have been done. Our eternal gratitude to Sue as this book will be a very precious piece of family history. Extra photos and details are being added.

Work in the Comte de Paris section of the Akaroa Heritage Park is the dedication of Peter Breitmeyer. Peter's work has enabled the group to acknowledge those whose lives have been important to the group in a truly magic setting. Eventually we hope to install a seat remembering that this area was established by the Comte de Paris Descendants Group.

Another important item this year has been the placement of two pavers at the entrance to the Akaroa Museum – one for Etienne Francois

Le Lièvre and one for Justine Rose Le Lièvre. Now the Le Lièvre name sits proudly beside the de Malmanche, Breitmeyer, Libeau, Comte de Paris Descendants and other settler families at the entrance to the Museum.

The plaque interpreting Joseph de Malmanche's headstone inscription is waiting to be installed – just a matter of 'how' - to make sure we get it right. As time is aging the headstone, and it is the only headstone in the Akaroa cemeteries written in French, the group felt it important to record this inscription for posterity.

Our Comte de Paris Descendants Facebook page and website continue. Facebook has proven a good method for getting notices out to the wider public. The front page of the website is public with general information and upcoming events. However with your subscription comes access to the information on the website that is only available to paid-up members. Coming up soon is the annual Landing Day Luncheon – 20th August.

As this year is the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Comte de Paris Descendants Group a special Descendants Weekend in Akaroa is planned for 25th/26th November. Among the activities will be the Unveiling of the Memorial Entrance, recognizing previously unmarked family graves (many of whom were children), walking heritage tours, a visit to the Comte de Paris section of the Akaroa Heritage Park and other activities yet to be finalised.

Sadly we note the passing of Patrica Stoneman and Val Langley – both committed member's right from the beginning - 2003. Ray Sinclair is resigning from the committee after 20 years – a Life Membership has been granted to Ray in recognition of his enduring commitment and dedication to the group.

Bev Wilson, Averil Carpenter and Helen Stewart are also standing down from the committee but remaining members. Bev has been a committee member since the Group's inception. Bev's significant contribution, along with Eileen Woolf, has been the creation and curating of our costume wardrobe. The committee has benefited hugely from Averil and Helen's work as well particularly with the planning of the '180' weekend. Averil's raffles, attention to detail, and scrupulous family research has been a real benefit to the group. Helen brought along her expertise in sales collating our merchandise for the '180' weekend. Another very important contribution of Helen's is her family research, especially the research into the lesser known settlers. This work was on display at the '180'.

After 20 years as secretary or chairperson I am stepping down from an executive role however I will remain on the committee. We are very fortunate to have some of the next generation coming through to the committee and would very much welcome any descendant who offers to lend a hand. So it is 20 years. A milestone. Please consider celebrating with us at the Descendants Weekend in Akaroa 25/26 November .



Libeau Descendants Society AGM 2023



This year it was held 28 May, commencing at 2pm at the Alliance Française on Cashel St, Christchurch. We thanked Bruce Clark for his many years of service as Secretary and-Treasurer on our committee. He has stepped down from those roles but remains a committee member.

Heather is holding an example of the settler bonnets that can be made from a pattern.



Our newest committee member



Meet Mary-Anne Jenkins

My husband Glenn & I live in Ohoka and we have 4 children. I am a high school teacher, currently enjoying relieving in Christchurch.

I am very proud of my mum Patricia Stoneman and all her hard work over the years helping to establish the Libeau family committee & reunions. Libeau family events have always been a big part of our lives for as long as I can remember.

After Mum's unexpected passing last year I feel a passion to continue Mum's lead and learn more about our family history and make connections. I'm really looking forward to being on the Libeau family committee, helping out & getting to meet everyone.

Baguettes, brasseries, even a boucherie – Akaroa wears its French history on its tricolore sleeve.

Street names begin with “Rue”, the biennial French Festival draws crowds to the picturesque streets, a memorial to its first French settlers stands on the hill above the startling blue waters of the Banks Peninsula harbour.

It is a colourful story of colonial rivalry, an “oft-told history”, wrote a Star reporter in 1919, of a British and a French warship racing down from the Bay of Islands to annex Banks Peninsula for their respective monarchs. But over those frequent retellings, Akaroa Museum director Lynda Wallace says, that story has been embellished.

“Akaroa almost did become a French colony,” she tells Frank Film, “but the popular idea that there was a race for Akaroa is an exaggeration.”

The French chapter of this colonial tale begins in 1838, when French whaler Jean Langlois sails into Lyttelton harbour and negotiates the purchase of most of Banks Peninsula from local Māori for 1000 francs. Langlois doesn't negotiate with anyone else from the region, but to show his commitment he puts down a deposit of 150 francs, paid in goods – “hats, shirts, trousers – and a pistol”, Wallace says.



On returning to France, he ramps up financial support for his colonial venture and draws together a group of 63 settlers, mainly French but with some Germans, willing to establish a far-flung French settlement in Nouvelle-Zélande.

The Comte de Paris sets sail in early March 1840. It is accompanied by a French naval vessel, the Aube, captained by Charles Lavaud, to look after the interests of the settlers and to keep tabs on the French whalers already active on New Zealand shores.

What they don't know, says Wallace, is that, just over a month earlier, the Treaty of Waitangi has been signed, and British sovereignty proclaimed over all of Aotearoa New Zealand. Lavaud has his first inkling of this when he anchors L'Aube in the Bay of Islands and meets Lieutenant-Governor Hobson.

On hearing of Lavaud's colonial aspirations, Hobson decides to send a British naval ship, the Britomart, to Banks Peninsula, to make sure that any foreign national coming into Akaroa Harbour, explains Wallace, would be in no doubt that the British were here first.

“It was this trip from the Bay of Islands to Banks Peninsula that has given rise to the idea or the exaggeration of a race for Akaroa, because these two captains were coming down to Banks Peninsula as quickly as they possibly could.”

The Britomart sailed into Akaroa Harbour on August 10, 1840. Five days later L’Aube sailed into the deep bay then two days after this, on August 17, the Comte de Paris, finally laid anchor. The small group of settlers, mostly poor, with few possessions, had no idea they were arriving in a country they had no hope of colonising, Wallace says.

“As the passengers of the Comte de Paris sailed up the harbour, they must have been so disappointed to find the Union Jack flying from the flag pole.”

But the promised allocation of 5-acre (2-hectare) properties – long thin sections running up the surrounding hills – was upheld and for a few short years the settlers, boosted by crew members from L’Aube, made up the majority population of Akaroa.

British settlers and, later, bach owners soon dominated the town, now with a population of about 750, but the French connection lingers on.

The street names – Rue Jolie, Rue Lavaud, Rue Benoit – are the result of a promotions programme in the 1960s to attract more tourists to the town and “play on its French-ness”, but more authentic details of Akaroa’s French history lie in the 12m width of Rue Lavaud – a convention in France at the time – and the outdoor shutters and hipped roof of the historic Langlois-Eteveneaux Cottage, the last remaining French colonial building, now attached to the Akaroa Museum.

As Wallace says: “The French story is very important to Akaroa still. It’s unique in New Zealand.

“There is no other town in New Zealand where there was an attempt at a French settlement.”



Lynda Wallace outside the Akaroa Museum. This content taken from an article by Sally Blundell for Frank Film, reproduced from Stuff, Jun 26 2023

Sue Wilson reports on her experiences of updating the le Lievre family book

One of the first things I did was I went into Caxton press and checked out their books they had printed on family history to see how they were laid out. I wanted to know what others had done and could it be done better than what was originally done. I came away with a clearer idea and decided that the status quo that was used was actually quite good.

Speaking to the printer very early on I found out the spec and what's required. You will be the same as me, with the book being so large the cheapest way to print is by plates not digital. If you are wanting to put in some colour, they go in blocks of 16 pages. You can't just sprinkle some colour in where you would like which is quite disappointing.

Successes and Challenges

#1 success has been reuniting the family. I started a private FB page and now have over 530 people on there. It has reconnected people that they haven't seen for years. It hasn't worked quite how I would like as in others being forthcoming and posting info but I am surprised at the amount of younger people on there that seem to be interested in their heritage.

I have also located family members that quite clearly from the amount of info no one knew much about and also found members of the family who didn't know they were part of our family. All have been stoked to find out the missing connection.

Facebook has been my friend. I knew no one when I started this. I had to start from pretty much scratch. I have become a prolific stalker but someone did assure me I was researching not stalking. I have also used *Reconnecting me NZ and Australia* for finding people. I have so far found 6 children between 3 graves in the Akaroa Catholic and Anglican cemeteries in unmarked graves.

Challenges there have been a few

Extracting the info.... I'm not sure if you are adding the early generations or just updating with the new but I have been very proactive in trying to add to the earlier generations... as all the people with the knowledge are falling off their perches and taking the info with them.

Some of the keenest about the update have been the worst to get the info out of. A lot are full of promises and no action. I am getting to the point now where I am starting to get ruthless and my patience has run out. Some people have had the info for 6 months and I am still chasing and since I have found them I feel I'm not doing the new book justice by bypassing them.

Another major challenge has been split families... Some have supplied the info but not their Ex partner/spouse. They don't want them included. They don't seem to understand that this book is printed for the future and not necessary the now. Their kids don't have their mother or father in these thru no fault of their own. If I was to start from scratch again I would be writing a list or letter of whys.. and spelling it out in plain English. By the time this book goes thru another 2 generations these kids aren't going to know their grandmother/grandfathers name or birthdate which I think is quite sad and it defeats the purpose The same for the paragraph updates. I don't really need to do that. No one is interested in me. Its not for now....its for 30- 40 years time. I am also surprised at the amount of people that don't know where their siblings are....



Finding photos.... unfortunately, none of the photos in the book are named as to where they came from. I am adding a lot more and also newspaper cuttings with the stories or weddings to add interest and am trying to paint a picture of the way it was back then.

Another really hard thing has been dealing with the older generations not understanding the technology. Sending me photos in pdf files or resolutions of 96 dpi and then I have to go back and ask them if they could rescan in a higher resolution and put it in a jpeg file when you know they have struggled to get you what they have already. Send them to the Warehouse stationary to scan the photo and then the warehouse can email them straight to you.

Keeping on top of it all has also been quite a head-space thing.. If I was to do it again I would appoint a person for each line and get them to do the chasing and feed the completed info back.

Mentally tough... you hear and find out all sorts. and in some ways you end up being a social worker.

Adding a section on our war Veterans.

Adding a section of newspaper articles. Early life on the Peninsula. I have come across many interesting articles when looking for other stories. They cover this like growing grapes, children's fancy dress parties, Welcoming home the war vets, court notices or the floods of 1886. Most of them mention family members.

I have also taken notes on info that can't be added.... Like scandals and personalities. or terrible things that have happened. Some don't do the people any justice - that can't be printed but there would be another few pages there too.

At the start I created forms for the info that were downloadable: one for the family update, one for the paragraphs and one for the vets. That would be where I would put my list of why!

Catherine Huon in France

I am Catherine HUON, the younger daughter of Simonne HUON born LIBAUD (1913-2008). My mother was the elder child of Adolphe-Eugène LIBAUD and Anasthasie CAUVIN, who were also parents of Roger, Marcel, Ferdinand, Henri, Jean.

My mother lived in Rochefort until she married my father (1938) François HUON (a Briton, from BREST) who met the Libaud brothers and the family girl when he was in Rochefort for military service, he fell in love with Simonne. A few years after they met they moved to Brest where their 5 children were born but my brother.

We are Mathurin Libeau descendants whilst you are Joseph Libeau's. I am very interested in genealogy and family stories (Libaud, Huon) and as far as we can look and know backward, Libeau family settled in Nantes and surroundings. They are said first to be gardeners, but a few years later, they became plant propagators and florists as well as well known producers and shop keepers in Rochefort. They sold seeds in France and Europe (end of XIX century).



Grand father Libaud used to attend floral competitions in Nantes, and received prizes and other honorific medals (Mérite agricole). My mother used to work and help in their flower shops, for everyday purpose or weddings or deaths. She got her driver's licence at an early age, and then drove her father to market places which they also attended, or to decorate chateaux for weddings in the surrounding areas. She told me once that she accompanied her father to plant the trees along the entrance path of Aix island (oaks?), she was moved at going back in the island later and to see how tall the trees had become. Unfortunately I think the 1999 hurricane may have felled some of them.

She also used to go with her father in the south east of France (Cote d Azur) for business (buy seeds, plants, see flower furnishers, and so on) and also meet cousins. With them she attended a tennis match with Suzan Lenglen, and she was very excited at thinking of it even years later. As my grand father said on a postcard he took benefit of this trip to give my mother lessons about the flowers and plants that she loved her life long. She died in 2008, and I am happy to share these souvenirs with our NZ cousins.



The 3 survivors of the Libaud brotherhood met in the beginning of the 90's I think, at Marcel's home.

On the left is Marcel Libaud (dead 2010), my mother Simone Libaud-Huon (dead 2008) and on the right Roger Libaud (dead 1994), and myself on the very right beside them. As by that time they had lost all their brothers they used to call them "last mohicans", the only Libaud survivors of this generation.

"My first contact with NZ was reading Elisabeth Goudge's "Green Dolphin Country" when I was a young girl. Then years later I thought of this and of stories of what could have been the first years of NZ settlers!

And then, when I lived in Angoulême for a year, I attended a rugby match with the All Blacks and appreciated (I still do) their winning technique and game! Now we are used to seeing beautiful TV reports about your country."

A further look at founding members of the McNabb family that married into the Libeau family



Many Libeau members are somewhat surprised and intrigued that children from each of Joseph Senior's wives had progeny that eventually through generations, married each other, thus connecting two branches within the same family.

It all started with **Francis McNabb and Catherine Farnam**. Francis died in 1928 aged 87 from chronic nephritis and uremia. Catherine died in 1922 aged 77 from myocarditis. This is their house at 25 Aberdeen Street, Christchurch.

Francis had lived in Drumquin, County Tyrone, Ireland. They sailed to NZ on the *Isles of the South* from Plymouth in 1873. Both are buried in the Linwood Cemetery. They had 10 children—some born in Glasgow (Scotland), some at Maghareny (Ireland) and some at West Eyreton (NZ).





Here we have **Raymond Francis (Sandy) McNabb**, **Francis Joseph McNabb (Frank)**, **Francis McNabb Snr**. We don't know the dog's name.

Francis McNabb Snr with daughter **Madge** 1926.



Next let's look at his third child **Edward (Ted) George McNabb** as this is where things get interesting



Edward (Ted) McNabb marries **Emma Josephine Brocher** (Joseph and Mary-Ann Libeau's granddaughter) in 1905 at Akaroa. First marriage of a McNabb to a 'Libeau'.



Emma and Ted with their family and close relations. **Francis GEORGE Hewitt McNabb** is the baby on Emma's knee. Emma's half-sister 'Tilly' is centre back.



Edward (Ted) McNabb and Emma Josephine with their children. **Francis GEORGE Hewitt McNabb**, now an adult, is on the left. Other children are Arthur (Paddy), Michael (Bob), Edwin, Kathleen.



Francis GEORGE Hewitt McNabb great grandson of Joseph and Mary Ann marries **Louisa Frances Page** (great granddaughter of Joseph and Magdaleine Libeau) 1927 at Lincoln. The second time a McNabb has married a 'Libeau'. The crossover is complete.

Progeny of both of Joseph Snr's wives getting together as a result of their children marrying each other. **Mrs Bunny, Emily Page (nee Libeau, mother of Louisa Frances), Emma Josephine (nee Brocher /Libeau) mother of Francis GEORGE).** It meant that these two branches of the Libeau family intertwined and were close.



Four generations from **Edward (Ted) McNabb** born in Ireland: **his granddaughter Rita McNabb/Free/Jenkins/Libeau** holding Ted's great granddaughter **Frances Free/Celmins/Harrison, Ted and his son GEORGE, 1955.**

Edward (Ted) McNabb in later life. Died 1st Aug 1958 Rangiora

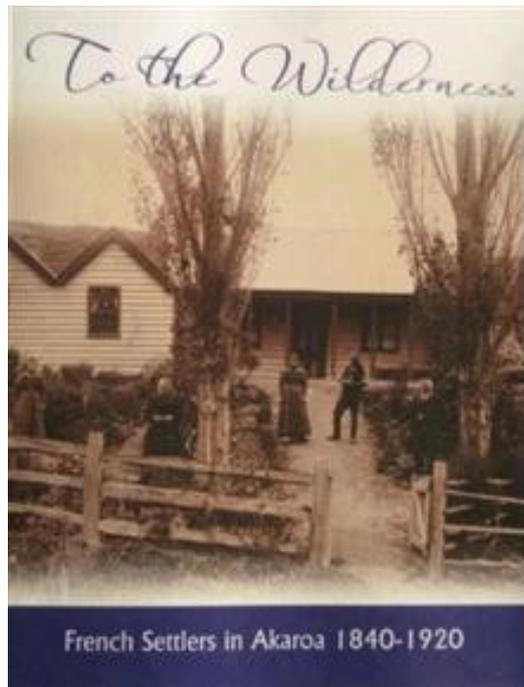
Buried in Rangiora cemetery



With great grand-daughter Frances (4 weeks old) 1955 at his home in Rangiora



Ted and Emma Josephine (Josie) with their children and some of their extended family at 6 Church St, Akaroa



This lovely family book is proving to be a bit of a challenge to find ways to reprint it that would be affordable for members. Printing books is technical as well as literary. Technology makes some things possible but can also be complicated. We continue to look for practical solutions for you.

As you know, we are working on updating our family book covering the genealogy of Libeau descendants. As part of that work we are devising forms to enable you to update information on the newer generations. These should be available later this year.



Here I am with some of our French cousins in Poitou-Charente pouring over the latest edition of our family book in 2012 - Frances



Reminder French Fest in Akaroa 6-8 October 2023



Run over 2-3 days it is an event not to be missed with plenty of activities for family and friends. The re-enactment dress rehearsal happens on the Friday morning, with the enactment itself on the beach and parade down rue Lavaud early on Saturday morning. The re-enactment is once again being directed by Michael Hurst. Costuming by Lesley Burkes-Harding. But bear in mind that the Comte de Paris group can also supply costumes. We are also looking at the possibility of producing some white settler bonnets for sale and use.

Stalls and entertainment can be found in the domain. Saturday night offers entertainment though this year it doesn't seem very 'French'. Sunday has an event too, le Cirque. Some events have entry fees. Many are free. Book and pay for events on **Eventfinder**. Please organise your accommodation NOW as Akaroa is filling fast and it's not the cheapest place these days. There may be a Libeau get-together on

Saturday at Bully Hayes around 5pm but this is yet to be organised.



We will have a modest stand at the event with a few things available for sale. If possible, bring a suitable costume to wear during the weekend. The locals get a kick out of seeing our support for this big event on their calendar. — *Frances*

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