



La Gazette

March 2024 #68



President's Message

Not Paris but Sydney! (insert photo).

It was lovely to receive New Year Greetings from the French cousins- thankyou.... And just like that it is now March and definitely feeling autumnal.

After a quiet summer at home I took off to Sydney for five days for a cultural fill up- three operas at the Sydney opera house; art galleries, museums, a little shopping and delicious French food. Now back into a busy term teaching and staying on top of everything else.

We have a German mum in the Bnb with her delightful 7 year old daughter who is studying at the French immersion school nearby for three months so I am brushing up on my French conversation.

The Libeau Descendant's Society AGM is confirmed for May 19 @ 2pm Alliance Francaise rooms 275 Cashel St

- plenty of parking.

The guest speaker is Suzanne Wilson who has updated her Le Lievre family genealogy; after sharing her trials at our last AGM she has now published and launched the book last month in Akaroa. We are really looking forward to hearing her story. Please save this date and bring family as well as a plate for shared afternoon tea.

Inside this edition:

- President's Report
- Sale of 60 rue Grehan
- French Beans
- Christmas Luncheon
- Messages from France
- Emails between us and Akaroa Mail
- French recipe
- Births & Deaths
- Libeau-related photos
- Committee details

The committee focus is finalising the process for updating our family records and this will be shared at the AGM.

Our meetings each term meetings are productive and fun with good coffee and nibbles. Contact me before the AGM if you would like to join us!

Grosses bises

Heather

Website: libeau-family.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/Libeau.Family

Contributions for La Gazette: fharrison55@hotmail.com

A Libeau cottage in Akaroa recently for sale—Frances



One of our historic Libeau cottages came up for sale at the end of last year. I was determined to have a look though I didn't have the money to buy it.

When I came back to NZ from France I did consider moving to Akaroa but properties are very expensive there, there is almost no serviced land to build a new home nearby and the one subdivision on the scraped top of the hills above Duvauchelles had amazing views with incredible winds sweeping across the harbour and no flat land for gardening. And then there's the 'hill'; a major impediment if you need anything that tiny Akaroa cannot supply, especially a fully equipped hospital. So, no. It's too isolated for many older folks who may at some point lose their licenses.



This former workers' cottage built by Joseph Libeau Snr is steeped in our history and it looks lovely from the outside. The garden is charming but as I wandered around with a practised eye I noticed that the paintwork in most areas was poor quality and literally seemed to be painted over the defects. There were cracks and pieces of trim missing, with no attempt to fix things up for the open homes. Lights not working, some furnishings were threadbare. We were told not to take photos but when the agent's back



was turned I just had to take some for this article. I have included a link to a short real estate video on this property and am unsure how long it will remain online. **Following this article I've popped a few photos up of how it looked at its previous sale so you can see how the latest owners had made some character improvements.**



The owners had made a pleasing effort with the garden layout and maintenance. I noticed some crockery embedded in concrete beside the garden. I was informed that they were the remains of plates unearthed when improvements were made to the heating of the house. A nice touch, I thought, that a bit of our history is visible every day in the garden.



The kitchen seemed typically old French style prevalent even today, hard to work in with almost no cupboards. It did seem to be in a reasonable state though I don't know if it has enough power points and lights. Lots of interesting clutter. Generally the presentation was patchy at best, rather too jumbly though mostly clean but they may have been better to have staged the lounge area instead of the old 'tatty stuff' that degraded it all. If I had had the money I would have liked to have bought it as a holiday home and improved the interior but not at the prices expected. This property has been sold every few years, owners don't stay. One

of the previous owners was nosing around the day I was 'nosing' too. It is not the most 'upmarket' of the Libeau cottages still existing. Section 501sqm, house 100sqm, 3 bedrooms and one bathroom. Improvements have added a lot of charm and it looks good in the photos but up close there's clearly better upkeep to be done.



60 Rue Grehan is listed Historic Place category 2 number 7354 as of 12th December 1996

Lot 1 DP 55440 (RT CB33F/498) \$760 000 was the previous selling price and the current owners wanted significantly more in the \$800,000s. The sale price was \$810,000 November 2023.

Watch a short video on the cottage still online <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5iXQ4xmvhnc>



2019



French Beans from Heather



Koanga Institute Gardens in Wairoa is a trust dedicated to saving our heritage seeds using sustainable organic growing methods. Their mission statement is "From our Past- for our Future".

Emery de Malmanche was a French settler from the Comte de Paris who grew vegetables at French Farm, supplying the navy and pioneer families.

When Linda Sunderland told me that his seeds had been saved by the Henry Harrington Heritage collection in Southland, and available from Koanga we ordered the beans and grew them this summer. Rob has saved the seed which will be available for you at the upcoming AGM!



Libeau Christmas Lunch December 2024



Maison de Crepes has been our end-of year lunch venue for several years now and sadly this became a Covid Casualty and closed down early in the year.

Earlier the Comte de Paris held a very successful Landing Day Lunch in August at the Abode restaurant in the Russley Village, so we booked

this for our celebration and enjoyed a delicious Christmas-themed lunch in relaxing surroundings. The committee voted to rebook this for December 2024.



Meilleurs vœux from Alain and Annick



La tradition se perpetue et c'est bien ainsi ;cela permet de consolider .Nous voilà déjà en 2024....c'est bizarre cette accélération du temps en vieillissant !!

Alain se joint à moi pour vous souhaiter une année paisible, chaleureuse, avec plein de projets et une belle harmonie familiale.

Continuons à entretenir notre corps et notre esprit. Espérons également que le genre humain prenne enfin conscience de la brièveté de la vie et abandonne son instinct primaire violent et égoïste...

Belle et bonne année à chacun d'entre vous et au plaisir de se revoir vite .

Best wishes from Alain and Annick

Tradition perpetuates itself and that's good. It helps consolidate things. Here we are, already in 2024 ... it's weird this acceleration of time as we get older!!

Alain joins me in wishing you a peaceful year, warm with plenty of things to do and a lovely family harmony. Let's keep looking after our bodies and spirit. Let's hope too that human beings finally realise how brief life is and abandon their primary instincts of violence and egotism.

A wonderful year to each of you and hope to see you again soon. (Translation Frances)

How to pay your outstanding Libeau subscriptions in France

Cheques don't exist in New Zealand and overseas ones cost more to process than the original sum. Some folks don't use PayPal so we suggest doing a bank transfer into the French account of one of your committee members to make things easy and smooth and avoid fees. Please pay the equivalent of NZ\$45 into the following French bank Account.

MADAME MCNABB SUZANNE

CR CHARENTE PERIGORD
AUBETERRE SAINT SEVERIN

Tel: 0969320036

Code établissement	Code guichet	Numéro de compte	Clé RIB
12406	00123	80024403037	90

IBAN (International Bank Account Number)

FR76 1240 6001 2380 0244 0303 790

Messages from our French cousins

Dear cousins,

Bonne année à vous deux et surtout bonne santé. Nous allons bien et nous avons projeté un voyage en République Tchèque et à Prague en mai.

The Covid pandemic has slowed down the meetings of our association "Libeau-Rochefort-Akaroa" and we remain a few aging people.

We have good news of Andrée who still lives in Strasbourg. We still meet Alain and Annick Boussiron and Jeanne and Baudouin. As for the Libaud Michèle and Michel they cannot travel any more.

About the last Gazette we noticed that things are worsening : we agree with Frances to protest against the new way of organizing the "French Fest". We'll talk about this new way of the French-Kiwi relations in our next meeting with the French cousins.

Grosses bises.

Micheline et Gilles

Hope you have had a very nice Christmas with yours. As usual, we got together with Fabienne and Florence and boys Hugo and Enzo on Christmas Eve.

A year again, a little difficult to manage Michel's illness.

We have a lot of floods in France, cold weather for next week-end. It's winter and we don't choice. Last Summer, we have had white agapanthus in our garden which were beautiful and we always remember those all along the Christchurch river!

Love to you all ... Michèle and Michel



Follow-up attitude of Akaroa Mail's Editor—Frances

Last La Gazette we highlighted the serious issues at play with FrenchFest and the French 'ambiance' of the town. I am sorry to report that local media there have been spreading misinformation and insults about our French ancestors and they are utterly unrepentant about it. One could say, with confidence, that they seem to be 'in bed' with the perpetrators of last year's deplorable re-enactment and the disappointing deterioration of French Akaroa.

The Presidents of both the Libeau Descendants and the Comte de Paris groups asked me to write to the Editor as a result of 'whitewash' articles he had printed in the Akaroa Mail following up on the Festivities of FrenchFest. We are horrified by the attitude of this mediaman but it just reinforces why we are so upset. There is little we can do about this and many of us will never again take part in The Landings play.

If you haven't been to Akaroa in recent times I suggest you plan to do so as soon as possible before every shred of what made it special (apart from the scenery) is trampled under the feet of *Ignorance* and *Indifference*. For me personally now, it remains a sad little echo of something that had significance for so many people for nearly 190 years and in just a few years has been ruined. Each time I visit Akaroa it hurts now and I thank goodness that my true heart is in France and not there.

Following is a chronological record of the email exchanges between me and Editor of the Akaroa Times, Michael Du Hamel.



Hello Michael

I have been asked by the Presidents of both the Libeau Descendants Society and the Comte de Paris Group to send you the enclosed link. <https://francesbigadventure.blogspot.com/2023/10/dont-call-it-frenchfest.html>

It concerns my first-hand impressions of participating in our recent FrenchFest weekend.

The descendants feel that stories so far published have rather 'white-washed' things. I'm also informed that a recent TV broadcast where one of the organisers was interviewed may have spread distressing mis-information. Those who have moved into Akaroa in recent years are not always au fait with the real history and recent disappointments concerning FrenchFest re-enactments.

We would like you to consider the full content of this blogpost and print something that highlights areas to be addressed in future and to put the record right.

I think Akaroa itself needs to be more aware that its Frenchness is merely a patina now and that it risks losing what has made it an amazing place by cheapening things even further. I personally would like to see more effort by shops and restaurants to at least say *Bonjour* to customers and play genuine French music in the background, have more products to see that speak to the French nature of Akaroa (if that really still exists). I brought a French national to Akaroa last week and he was quite disappointed beyond the pretty scenery.

Born and bred in Christchurch, I have always been aware that I was descended from Joseph Libeau and both of his wives. My Grandfather grew up at 6 Church St - what is now Fire and Ice. I am also a French citizen, having lived in France for some years so I have a unique interest, knowledge and appreciation for Akaroa's French history.

We await, with interest, your response



The Editor replies...

Many thanks... intriguing... as you possibly know there is a review being done of the 'French Festival' and what it is trying to achieve and how...

The 're-enactment' thing was an idea, I think of Bob Parker's, when he arranged for the City Council to put it into its 'events' programme. His background was entertainment television, and he wanted a show which would be entertaining to the masses, and give an opportunity for any descendants interested to become involved. There was a city budget to employ key actors etc, and there being none locally they were brought in from elsewhere. Since then there has been no city funding, and the event has continued using local resources, as an occasion to bring visitors and friends to Akaroa, and to provide a vehicle to build social cohesion in the community. The local resources available have in recent years included people who work behind the scenes in the theatre and film worlds, and have friends who are actors, and some of these have been happy to come to Akaroa to help out in return for accommodation and a good dinner.

The 'script' for the Landings show has been developed over time to be more inclusive of and reflect the views of tangata whenua, and of women. It has tended to place less emphasis on the French and German settlers I think because their actual influence on the town and its development was relatively small. It was French naval sailors who did most of the back-breaking work building roads and buildings and growing crops, and settlers who came earlier and later who fleshed out what was a very small number of adult French and German settlers. (Did a dozen actually stay on?)... The success of the Landings show can be measured by the 800 or so people who turned out to watch early on a chill morning.

Nowadays the 'French Festival' is actually much more a good excuse for a 2-3 day party atmosphere in the town, rather like the Blossom Festival in Alexandra or the Steam Punk one in Oamaru. It is not designed or organised as a reunion-type event for the Libeau Descendants Society or the Comte de Paris Group - which have their own occasions and events. Historical accuracy? If that was the aim then Lavaud and Robinson should perhaps have held a Masonic Lodge meeting, and the French settlers should have been pretty sozzled - Lavaud's reports constantly complain about drunkenness among the settlers!

Cheerful noises!

Michael de Hamel
The Akaroa Mail
Freephone 0508 252 762



Frances replies...

Hi Michael

Thanks for your speedy reply. It was my ancestors (who were professional gardeners) who grew the crops to feed the population and the sailors. If my ancestor, who was known to like a drink, was drunk all the time he would not have been so successful in his multiple businesses.

Perhaps you are not aware that the two main descendants groups' ancestors (especially mine) were responsible for starting the enactments and they organised them for 13 years. To my knowledge they were not started by Bob Parker though he may well have jumped on board to support it, eventually.

As I said in my blogpost, which I hope you read, eventually it got too big for the families to manage alone and we asked for help. Hollywood jumped in and took over completely. I think you will find that the imported actors were actually paid. Their food and beverage may not necessarily have been provided free to them. I'm not clear on this.

If you think the hard efforts of the original settlers was just a small blip on the history of Akaroa that would be disappointing. It is equally disappointing that key points in my blogpost (so much tangata whenua and hardly any French settler content in the landings, obscenities, appalling attitudes to those of us who know costumes and histories) simply aren't worth considering I guess it would be fair to say that French Akaroa really has died from a hundred cuts, there is no community spirit just commercial interest.



The Old French Cemetery graves on L'Aube Hill, bulldozed to resemble some Eastern Bloc monument back in the 20th century by the Council, seems now terribly symbolic of the loss of values, culture and French history. Dead indeed!

AGNEAU AU MIEL ET AU ROMARIN

4 - 6 personnes

Ingrédients:

1,5 kg d'épaule d'agneau coupée en morceaux
1 carotte coupée en rondelles
1 branche de céleri coupée en morceaux
1 oignon émincé
2 gousses d'ail écrasées
3 cuillères à soupe de miel
2 cuillères à soupe d'huile d'olive
1 feuille de laurier
2 brins de romarin
1 zeste d'orange
un peu de muscade
150 ml de vin rouge
sel, poivre.

Recette:

- ❖ Faire dorer dans une cocotte la viande avec de l'huile d'olive
- ❖ Ajouter tous les ingrédients cités et mélanger.
- ❖ Couvrir et mettre au four préchauffé à 180°C environ 1h30.

Conseil: Servir avec des pommes de terre vapeur.

LAMB WITH HONEY AND ROSEMARY

Serves 4 - 6

Ingredients:

1.5 kg lamb diced
1 carrot sliced
1 stick of celery cut
1 onion chopped
2 cloves of garlic crushed
3 tablespoons honey
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 bay leaf
2 sprigs of rosemary
grated rind of 1 orange
1 pinch of nutmeg
150 ml red wine
salt, pepper.

Method:

- ❖ In a stew pot, brown the meat in olive oil.
- ❖ Add all of the ingredients and stir.
- ❖ Cover and bake in a preheated oven at 180°C about 90 minutes.

Tip: Serve with steamed potatoes.

Births and Deaths

Judith Anne Adams (nee Davies)

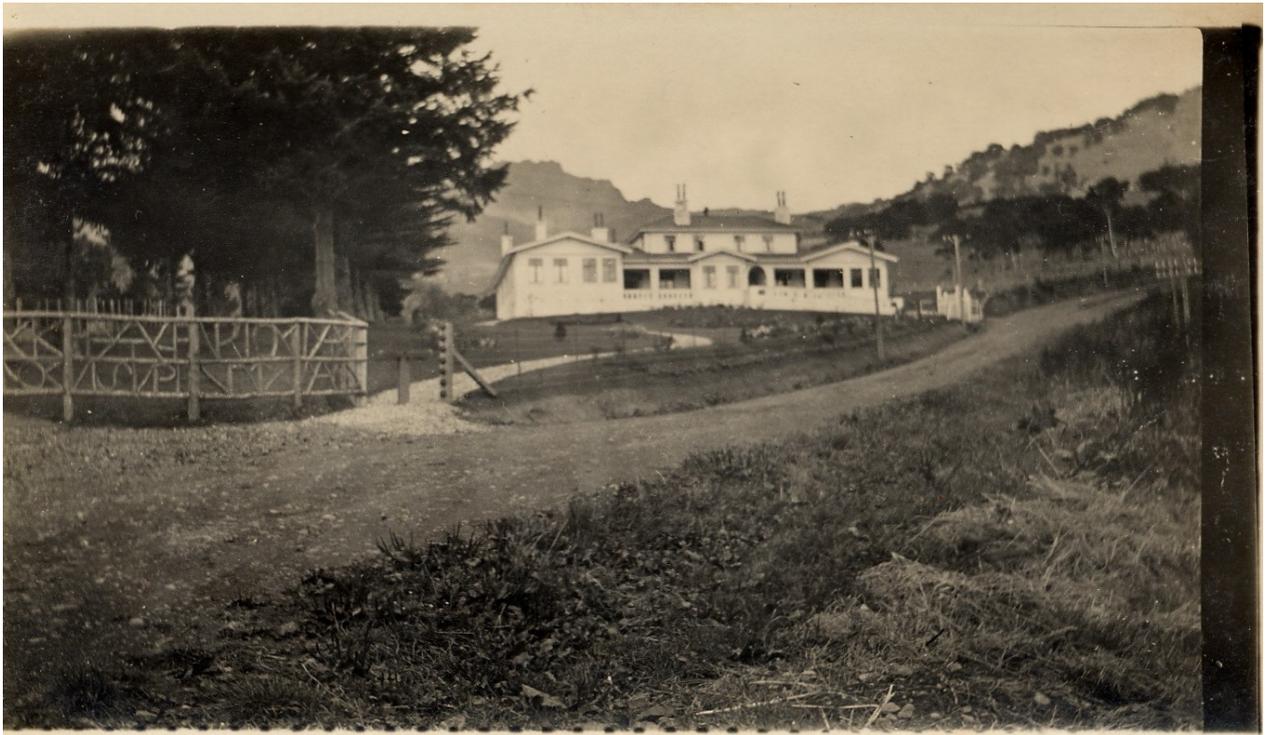
Wife of Alistair Leslie Adams (down the line of Marie Magdaline Dick-Clark. Page 107 in the Family book). Passed away on 6 Mar 24.

Reminder of our AGM

Please come along. There's parking, great speakers. There may be one of you who would like to be part of the decisions your committee arrives at? Got a pet project? Simply want to feel part of things for a short time?

May 19 @ 2pm Alliance Francaise rooms 275 Cashel St, Christchurch





Akaroa hospital 1940s

At right—1920s flood along rue Lavaud near rue Grehan

Libeau Subscriptions in NZ

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. Membership requests for payment for 2024 \$15.00 You now have the option to pay by bank transfer

BNZ 02 08420171869000

Contact, our Treasurer, Alistair

kiwitechie54@gmail.com

If you live in France see RIB earlier in this edition.



Committee Contacts

President	Heather Libeau-Dow Ph 03 351 9006 or 021 351919	heatherlibeaudow@xtra.co.nz
Secretary	Desiree McKenzie Ph 03 689 8872	deay@xtra.co.nz
Treasurer	Alistair McGowan	kiwitechie54@gmail.com
La Gazette Editor & membership communications	Frances Harrison Ph 021 08677582	fharrison55@hotmail.com
Web Masters & IT	Cameron Parsonson Richard Clark	camparsonson@gmail.com webmaster@libeau-family.org
Minutes secretary	Bruce Clark 03 942 1705	dianabruce1970@gmail.com
Other committee members:	Mary-Ann Jenkins 021 588 063 Suzanne McNabb Matt McNabb	maryann.jenkinsnz@gmail.com suzannemcnabb@gmail.com mcnabb.nz.genealogy@gmail.com
Zone co-ordinators Southern North Is	Alison Hannah Desiree McKenzie Ph 03 689 8872	alisonhannah@icloud.com deay@xtra.co.nz
FRANCE rep	Alain Boussiron	alain.boussiron@orange.fr