



**Comte de Paris Descendants Group Inc.
Quarterly Newsletter Spring 2012**

Comte de Paris Landing day Lunch 19 August 2012

The lunch commemorating the landing of the settlers from the Comte de Paris was held at the Cashmere Club again this year with thirty-five people attending. Both our patrons, Janet Drury and Peter Tremewan were present and we welcomed three new members. Although the weather was cold we did not have the snow as we did in the previous year. The club provided us with a private room, which was very good as it allowed everyone to fraternize comfortably.



View from the door



View towards the door

There were apologies from Peter Brietmeyer, and Bev. Wilson who was unable to come as she was shifting into her new house after many traumatic months of uncertainty since the earthquakes. We were also pleased to hear that Donna Thomsen's house on the Cashmere Hills had been declared "green" so she can now make a move to repair the earthquake damage.

Homebush Canterbury

Annette Bulovic who works on the history of the Deans Estate at Home bush attended the Landing Day lunch. As the Deans were the first permanent European settlers on the Canterbury Plains in 1843 she thought it fitting that her organization and the Comte de Paris group should be in contact. The Deans family and the French had regular contact in those early days. There is still a black poplar on the Homebush estate, which was given to the Deans by the French. It has grown to a great size with a girth of at least eight metres.

October fest St Giles Hall 7 October 2012

The October fest was held in the St Giles Church Hall, Papanui Saturday evening, 7 October and twenty-four members attended. Thanks to Bev Wilson (Breitmeyer) who was the organizer of the venue and menu. Members of the committee provided the food, which was of the usual high standard.



This is a view of the hall with the Comte de Paris Association banner on the wall and a glimpse of the German flag to the right honouring the German settlers who were aboard the ship.

It was a very pleasant social evening with all the members thoroughly enjoying the get together.



A scene from the kitchen with the chief organizer, (Bev) on right, ordering the pesky photographer out. (It is difficult to see, but she is wearing an apron with the passenger list from the Comte de Paris printed down the front. These are available from the French market in Auckland but our committee is prepared to take orders from anyone interested and will purchase them if the demand is sufficient. Linda Sunderland is on the left and Peter Breitmeyer can be seen in the hall completing decorations.



Right: View of the three tables of eight.

Britomart vs L'Aube

This Week in History (Actually three months)
Stanley races Lavaud to Akaroa : August 1840

This could be a possible headline from a tabloid paper if the event was reported today. It is spectacular and untrue. (As is a lot of what has been written about this event.) The supposed "race" to Akaroa in 1840 was to prevent a French colony being established in the South Island (The Middle Island). Everything was to be carried out in secret. The reality was entirely different. There was no race. Governor Hobson RN had been in Russell, New Zealand since February 1840 and had started the process of negotiating the Treaty of Waitangi and having it signed by all the principal chiefs of New Zealand to pass their sovereignty to the British Crown. Captain Owen Stanley RN arrived in the little brig HMS "Britomart" 2 July 1840 and Lavaud arrived in the much larger French frigate L'Aube 11 July 1840. These men met cordially and they soon became acquainted with the local diplomatic situation, the formation of a French colony in Akaroa. They sought a satisfactory solution. They would have been aware of the delicate situation in Europe between the French and British Governments over the "Entente Cordiale" and would have had no desire to upset these important negotiations. New Zealand was a long way away and not of great importance.

Some later accounts of the "Race" are interesting but wildly inaccurate.

One account, recorded years later, reported the meeting in Auckland of Hobson, Lavaud and Stanley. It stated that Stanley deliberately set out to deceive Lavaud by having the ship stripped of most of its rigging with the supposed intention of careening his vessel. As soon as Lavaud left for Akaroa via East Cape Stanley reassembled his ship in 24 hours and set out in pursuit via Cape Reinga. If this was so Stanley was prepared to give Lavaud a start of at least 600 kilometres and 24 hours handicap. Hardly likely! Both ships sailed from the Bay of Islands not Auckland. Stanley did map some of the Waitemata Harbour but at a later date. The names Britomart and Stanley are still part of the nomenclature of Auckland today and are a testament to Stanley's work

In fact "Britomart" left the Bay of Islands 23 July 1840 for Akaroa and the L'Aube on the 31 July 1840 giving Stanley a generous start. Stanley had on board two magistrates and their task was to hold a court in various places they stopped, to indicate to all that the British held sovereignty over both Islands. The "Britomart" arrived in Akaroa 10 August 1840. "L'Aube" sighted Akaroa 11 August but was unable to land until 14 August. "The Comte de Paris" anchored in Akaroa 17 August.

Stanley's report to Hobson infers he was very firm with Lavaud when they met in Akaroa, but this was probably for the official records. When the actual situation is considered Lavaud had a ship with about 50 guns and 200 sailors (if it was frigate). Stanley had a smaller vessel, equipped and manned to carry out surveying, with about 6 smaller guns and 60 sailors. Lavaud could have annihilated Stanley if he had wished and set up a colony as intended. Stanley was in no position to be authoritarian. Lavaud and Stanley probably accepted that British Rule was inevitable so a peaceful solution was best, although many of the settlers thought they were part of a French colony for some time.

The three naval men were very capable. Stanley was an able cartographer and spent much of his Naval career not fighting but mapping and exploring unknown waters.

He was a fine artist, not uncommon in the surveying profession. We are lucky we still have access to his watercolors of the settlement in Akaroa.



A watercolour by Owen Stanley of the tents of the Akaroa settlement 1840, lodged in the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery. (Copies can be purchased, at a price!)

Footnote: This was an interesting article to produce due to all the conflicting stories from different publications. For example some sources reported “L’Aube” as a frigate and others a corvette. A corvette is a smaller vessel with about 26 guns and a smaller crew. Hobson and Stanley’s report stated it was a frigate, which was probably correct. As naval officers they were most likely to have been right as in times of war a correct recognition of an enemy ship would help decide whether to run or fight, live or die. Weather reports from various sources confirm the passage was very stormy but the direction from which the winds came were exceptionally varied. It seems reasonable to assume Stanley sailed into a gale at some stage, probably from a southeasterly quarter. His average speed to Akaroa was equivalent to a slow walking pace, which would rule out favourable winds

Historical Note regarding Owen Stanley

Many may not know that the font in the Christchurch Cathedral designed by Mountfort, is/was a memorial to Owen Stanley, the man who negotiated with the French to ensure the South Island became part of the British Empire. Hopefully the font will be saved from the wreckage.



Wording on the side of the font.



The font in the Christchurch Cathedral (or was in the Cathedral?) was given by the Dean of Westminster, Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, in memory of his brother Owen, who secured the South Island for the British Empire, so the wording states.

Family History Expo 13-14 October

The Comte de Paris Descendants Group had a stall at the Expo. For anyone interested in family history it was well worth a visit with many local and national groups having displays. Our group gained a new member.



Left: Bev Wilson and brother Peter Breitmeyer are doing their stint at looking after the stall on Sunday morning.

Right: Peter Breitmeyer proudly holding the German flag in front of the stall.

The Akaroa Museum also had a stall beside the Comte de Paris. Pat and Cotrina from the museum, are looking after this stall. The museum unfortunately is closed at the moment but they are working hard to get it back in operation as soon as possible.



Sub committee to restore headstones

Many gravestones of the Comte de Paris settlers in the Akaroa cemeteries were damaged during the earthquakes. A sub committee including members has been established to restore these monuments. Fortunately most gravestones only fell over and the larger ones separated into parts but did not break. These will have to be re-assembled using modern methods and materials. Naturally families' wishes will have to be considered. It is estimated the cost could be more than \$1000 a headstone.

The sub-committee members are:

Linda Sunderland, Donna Thomsen, Eileen Woolfe, Bev. Wilson, Bruce Clark, Suky Thompson (Akaroa Walks) and Cotrina McLeod (Akaroa Museum)

The committee asks for donations to fund this venture. A special bank account has been established for this purpose.

Anyone interested please contact Linda Sunderland; e-mail: lindajohn@xtra.co.nz

Notices

1. November Picnic

Cancellation: The planned picnic for 25th November has been cancelled.

2. Comte de Paris aprons

As mentioned in the article on Oktoberfest, the committee is prepared to take orders for these aprons, which have the list of C de P passengers down the front. They would make excellent Christmas gifts for family and have been offered to our members at a discount. They are \$69 from the Auckland French market.

3. Akaroa Heritage Park picnic

January 20th from 11am. Bring your lunch if fine, or if wet we meet at Madeira Hotel.

Contacts

Peter Breitmeyer (Chair) Phone: 03 337 5045

Linda Sunderland (Secretary) Phone: 03 337 5045

Leone Fuller (Libeau family) Phone: 03 327 2829

Val Allen (de Malmanche) Phone: 03 385 8418

Eileen Woolf (Le Lievre family) Phone: 03 3086 094

Or write to Comte de Paris Association

13 Kiteroa Place,

Christchurch

Or e-mail Val Allen: rogval@clear.net.nz

201 Gayhurst Road

Christchurch 8061

Comte de Paris Website 2012

The Comte de Paris website can be accessed by using the following:

Name: member 2012 (not your own name) Password: 2wsdfghu8

You'll find a very nice French meatloaf recipe from Linda on the website!

Cut.....

Apron order: Please send cheque to Val Allen 201 Gayhurst Road Christchurch 8061

..... aprons @ \$ 58 each. Order by 14 November 2012