



Table of Content

Introduction	Page 1
A Little History of 'Waiorau'	Page 2
Waiorau Changes Ownership	Page 4
Recent History	Page 5
Crown Range Road	Page 6
Snow Farm	Page 6
Snow Park	Page 7
The Autumn Muster	Page 8
The American Sheep Rescue	Page 11
The Merino Muster Ski Race	Page 12
Merino Muster 1995 - 2013	Page 13
Race Distances	Page 14
Cardrona Community	Page 15
Awards	Page 16
The Race Course	Page 17
Merino Muster Trail Map	Page 18
Results Mens	Page 19
Results Womens	Page 20
Race Information	Page 21

Draft copy for the Worldloppet meeting to be completed post the
2014 Merino Muster race.

Merino Muster Cross Country Ski Race

THE FIRST 20 YEARS

The 2014 race is the 20th Merino Muster Cross Country Ski Race in New Zealand. The race is held on 'Waiorau', a sheep farm in the Cardrona Valley in the South Island of New Zealand.



A Little History of 'Waiorau'



Original buildings 1924



House 1928



Today

In the late 1800's early settlers to New Zealand purchased large areas of land which were later divided into 'stations' – large farming properties. After the 1st World War a number of these large 'stations' were divided into 'runs' and offered by ballot to returned servicemen. In 1924 Robert (Bob) Joseph Lee purchased one of these runs in the ballot. Run 625 was 16,000 acres with a mixture of high country land and some lower ground suitable for wintering stock. Bob named the run 'Waiorau', Maori for many waters. He proceeded to fence the property in order that sheep would stay on Waiorau and could be summered on the higher mountain tops and in the winter be brought back to the valley where they could be given feed. Initially there was only a hut to live in, but when Bob married in 1927 a new homestead was built which operates today as a luxury bed and breakfast venue. It has been renovated over the years, but retained its original structure and character.

Conditions for the farmers were fairly bleak in those early days compared to modern New Zealand standards. Medical services in the area were limited so Bob's wife Daisy returned to her parents' home to be near a hospital in Palmerston, a small East Otago village, for the birth of her first four children. Household supplies in those early years were difficult, but Daisy, having come from a dairy farm, was well trained to provide for her hungry family and workers. They were very self-sufficient, using meat from the farm, milk and cream from the cows they milked and fruit and vegetables from their garden. Nearly everything at the homestead was made by Daisy including their daily bread.



Lee Family Car



Waiorau Wool Clip



Butter Churn

In the early days the road from Oamaru to Cardrona was gravelled and now what takes only about three hours used to take them much longer. Rain or snow would often flood rivers and create slips on the road.

Schooling was limited in such an isolated area. Bob didn't want a boarding school education for his boys, so he bought a house in Oamaru, his home town, and that was where Daisy and the boys lived during the school terms. The family returned to the farm for the school holidays, a highlight of the boy's childhood. The wool from the Merino sheep formed the sole income for 'Waiorau' in those early years

‘Waiorau’ Changes Ownership.

In 1965 Bob Lee’s son, John Allandale Lee, purchased ‘Waiorau’ from his father. John was not ‘just’ a sheep farmer – he was an entrepreneur as well!

He met his wife Mary during a social rugby game - the local Wanaka rugby team was playing the Otago Physiotherapy students. Mary played in the position of hooker and ‘hooked’ more than she had intended! They married in February 1969. Mary was an enthusiastic downhill skier and figured that she had exchanged her skiing days for life on a sheep farm. At that time John had a strong dislike of snow as he had experienced the difficulties of rescuing sheep caught in the early snows on what is now the Snow Farm and Pisa Conservation Area.

Snow businesses were to become the focus for the family alongside the existing farming operations. They have three children who have all been involved to some level in the businesses created.

John’s love of wool remains with him, but the decline in the viability of sheep farming and a need for alternative uses of the land changed his focus. Farms were amalgamating and services such as the school bus and rural delivery were becoming non-existent due to depopulation.

John’s wish was to build the population of the Cardrona Valley into an exciting place to live.



Recent History

1970 saw the now famous Cardrona Hotel for sale; John and Mary purchased the hotel to preserve it and then in 1976 sold it to Rosemary and Eddie Jones who lovingly restored it to its present state. It is now one of New Zealand's most visited historic pubs, winning awards for its beer garden.



Cardrona Hotel

Cardrona Ski Area

John and Mary bought Mt Cardrona Station in 1971 on the opposite side of the valley from 'Waiorau'. On this property they developed the Cardrona Alpine Ski Area. John's ultimate dream was to build a Cross Country Ski Area on 'Waiorau', and an Alpine Village in the Valley. Cardrona Alpine ski area was developed first as there was a model for John to follow. The Nordic Area was on Crown Land designated only for farming.



Cardrona Alpine Ski Area



Crown Range Road Today

Crown Range Road

One of stumbling blocks for access to the ski field and Cardrona from Queenstown was the graveled Crown Range road. It is the highest public road in New Zealand. The Queenstown District Lakes Council closed it during most of the winter months because it was often difficult to negotiate in winter conditions. After a long battle and help from the local residents John managed to convince the Council to keep the road open in the winter months. It is now a very busy sealed road connecting Queenstown and Wanaka and bringing the Queenstown International Airport within easy distance of Cardrona.

Snow Farm

Groomed nordic trails were unknown in New Zealand until the Snow Farm opened in 1990. The Snow Farm is the name given to the 365 hectares of land, associated with Waiorau and its sheep, on which the ski trails are formed and in 1998 the Snow Farm Lodge was built. As mentioned Merino sheep grazed the ski area from 1865 to 1991. Merinos still graze on the lower regions of the original Lee farm. John and Mary's daughter Joanna has a business interest in 'Cardrona Valley Farms' so the Lee family is still associated with 'Waiorau'. The Snow Farm was sold to a Trust in 2012. Queenstown Lakes District Council own the land and nordic skiing is administered by the Pisa Alpine Charitable Trust. The area is in the process of becoming a reserve, preserving it for recreation for future generations.



Snow Farm Lodge

Consent to develop the Nordic Area was applied for in 1984, after multiple hearings as to why the area shouldn't be developed, permission was granted late in 1989. The Snow Farm was officially opened in 1990. Thanks to the Minister of Lands Peter Tapsell and the employees of the Department of Conservation, Mike Claire and Landcorp's Ken Taylor who understood the ultimate goals.

Simultaneously the Proving ground (Automotive Testing Ground) developed on the area adjacent to the Nordic trails. It became a profitable business and the saviour for Nordic Skiing supporting the essential infrastructure with road access and trail development. In 2005 the Proving Ground was sold to secure a safe retirement for the great friends and partners who financially supported John through all trials and tribulations creating his entrepreneurial developments.

Snow Park

Snow Park developed by Sam Lee emerged in 2002. It became a world renowned icon for snow boarding and freeskiing. The latest world recession hindered further development of an alpine ski area with gondola access adjacent to the Snow Park in the ski subzone. The local environmental society chairman said while opposing John- 'I am not opposed to his developments, he is just before his time'. 2013 Snow Park was sold to the Southern Hemisphere Proving Ground.



The Autumn Muster

The autumn muster was a very special muster, particularly for 'Waiorau', with eighty percent of its country above fourteen hundred metres. This land was often snow bound for four or five months. Sheep if left out on the broad flattish top of 'Waiorau' would not have survived in winter conditions so a major mustering effort had to be made to bring the sheep to lower ground before the snow arrived in the fall.

The muster was done in a variety of ways over the years. In the early years it was common to leave from the homestead on horses or foot very early in the morning. To cover the area in one day it took a team of eight musterers. The day began with a 4.30 am breakfast, before moving to the farmyard to saddle the horses in the dark. Dogs were everywhere, as each musterer needed four or five dogs. The mustering party then set off with frisky and excited dogs,



HEADING FOR THE SUMMER COUNTRY, CADRONA, CENTRAL OTAGO

1975

1965-66

PHON



in much the same way as the competitors of the Merino Muster Cross Country Ski Race do today. The dogs knew their masters could barely see them in the early morning light and they took every opportunity to settle old scores with other musterer's dogs – adding to the noise and mayhem. The team headed up the old farm tracks, but would rest half way to the top. When there was fog the musterers would have to sit and wait for a couple of hours for it to clear before the muster could begin. The task was to bring the sheep down to a holding paddock at the old musters hut called the Meg Hut beside the Meg River. On occasions the musterers would spend the night at the hut before taking the sheep down into the homestead paddocks. Imagine the stories that would have been told!



Meg Hut



Muster



Straggle Muster

Once these sheep were sorted onto the lower blocks the 'straggle muster' would take place because there were always some missing sheep to be accounted for. Some would have died, others would need retrieving from neighbour's farms having crossed the fences and there were those that were just too clever and escaped the musterers and their dogs.

The ground was often frozen which meant the musterers needed to walk from the homestead, as it was too dangerous for the horses. In later years better farm tracks were developed and four wheel drive vehicles were used to drop the musterers and dogs to their 'beats' (the area of land each musterer was allocated to clear of sheep). Consequently they didn't have the luxury of their horses to ride home! In more recent times, the helicopter was used on some occasions to drop the musterers out and round up sheep where they could.

Some years it was necessary to 'snow rake'. This was the term used when the snow was so deep that the sheep could not walk through it. The musterers had to pull the sheep out of the snow on to the track they were forming by walking together and stamping the snow. In a really deep snow fall, snow clearing machinery would be required to make a path in the snow.

A few double fleeces would show up when the sheep were sorted i.e. sheep that avoided the previous muster and had consequently grown two years or more of wool. These sheep would have hidden amongst the rocks – there were always a few cunning sheep that outwitted the musterers!



Modern Mustering

The American Skeep Rescue Rescue

'American skiers find missing sheep!'

A good example of the musterers being outwitted by the Merino sheep occurred in 1991. There was a very heavy snowfall in June which incidentally provided a great cover for the skiing! A group of American skiers, including Bill Koch and Justin Wadsworth, were skiing on top of the range in September and found a mob of twenty six sheep snowed in among some rocks. The sheep had had nothing to eat for three months and were light as feathers. A yard of snow was made by the groomer and the sheep mustered into it so they could be caught. Their legs were then tied and they were taken down the road on the back of a truck and put into a low nutrition area of Waiorau to help them adjust to eating again. Nine sheep failed to make the adjustment and died, but seventeen survived and were shorn a month later.



Bill Koch, John Lee, Maggie O'Connor



Justin Wadsworth



Snow Yard



The Merino Muster Ski Race

Prior to the initial Merino Muster there were two races, one in the 1980's held at Cardrona Ski Area prior the opening of the Snow Farm. The other long distance cross country ski race in 1990 at the Snow Farm was a very small race organised by Andreas Hefti whose dream was to create a major international race in New Zealand, but unfortunately he became ill and subsequently passed away. Other trial races were held in 1993 and 1994. The first formal Merino Muster was held in 1995, sponsored by CSL Ltd animal health division. CSL staff had been instrumental in the development of cross country skiing in Australia and John Burrridge a CSL manager had become an enthusiastic supporter of Snow Farm. He wanted to sponsor a race for farmers



John Lee Geoff Hunt



First Race winners



CSL team: John Burrridge



Andreas Hefti & Winner

Merino Muster 1995 – 2013

The first Merino Muster Cross Country Race was held in September 1995. From 1995 to 1997 the race distances were: 21 km for the Merino Muster, 10 km for the Snow Rake and 5 km for the Straggle Muster.

The Merino Muster has always aspired to be a truly international event with winners coming from Slovenia, Japan, Finland, Russia, Norway, Australia, Great Britain and the USA. The international character of the Merino Muster has been sustained as it takes place one week before the Kangaroo Hoppet that is a World Loppet event and Snow farm is an international training ground. Initially the race was held a week after the Australian Kangaroo Hoppet to attract skiers to stay and train in the southern hemisphere. Snow conditions the week prior to the Hoppet are usually, dry winter snow, which makes for better racing and grooming conditions. The numbers in the event has between 100–200 each year. In 1998 the event was marketed to a supporters rugby players with rugby games were played in the snow following the race.

The promotion attracted 400 competitors, most of whom were rugby enthusiasts and their goal was to get the other end regardless of technique.



First Poster Drawn by Sally Norman

Race Distances

Until 1998 the longest distance was 21 km but the improving skiing ability of New Zealanders demanded a longer race. The next year the race distances increased, the Merino Muster to 42 km, the Snow Rake to 21 km, and the Straggle Muster to 7 km, to match the Kangaroo Hoppet distances. The marathon distance covers much of the Snow Farm and has resulted in steadily increasing numbers. In 2012 one hundred and forty five competitors enjoyed great conditions in a year that was labeled as a poor snow year in the Southern Lakes District of New Zealand. The race is well supported by high profile international skiers, many of whom train with their national teams at Snow Farm.



Brian McKeever



Start 1998



Worldloppet Skiers

Cardrona Community Support

The race is supported by the Local communities.

After CSL's sponsorship, the Infinity Group of Wanaka sponsored the race for three years and this year 2014, the Queenstown lakes District Council has awarded the Merino Muster a sports grant to build a permanent finish tower and increase our signage in the district.

The Cardrona Hotel have built a facade of the hotel to use at the drink station and plan a spit roast at the end of the race for 2014.

The Cardrona Community have embraced the event by taking on the responsibility for the race packs and greeting the racers when they come to pick up their packs. The Cardrona valley residents are planning to make the hall more informative with local displays and local produce for sale.

The wider community are very generous in supplying prizes for the event.



Cardrona Hotel Drink Station

Awards

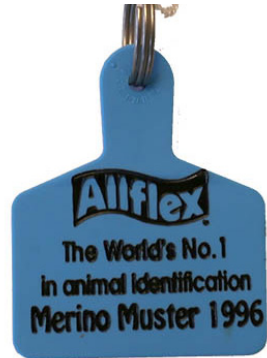
In the nineteen years of the race it has never had to be cancelled, but the course has had to be altered on occasions to accommodate the weather conditions. The very first race contended with a massive storm just prior to the start, but the race went ahead after a short delay. The conditions on that first occasion just cemented the determination that has been handed down from the old mustering traditions.

'Bringing the sheep down from the snow was a tough experience, and regardless of conditions on race day the race takes place in honour of those fine individuals who developed our nation.'

It has been a long term goal of the Merino Muster to join the Worldloppet Family of races.



Year Pin



The First Medal - Cattle Ear Tag



Today's Medal

The Race Course

The race is achievable for all levels of skiers, even first time skiers have completed the Straggle Muster. All skiers are awarded a medal at the finish and in subsequent years a 'year pin'. All races start 200m to the east of the lodge. The Straggle Muster is in Merino Glen close to the Snow Farm Lodge and doesn't present any technical difficulties.

The competitors in the Snow Rake after completing the Straggle Muster, ski through the picturesque Meg River valley to the Meadow Hut. The Meg Hut drink station crew headed by Linzi are always good for a chat. They stay overnight ready for the onslaught of skiers in the morning. There is a gentle climb to the top of the Loop and then its back to the Lodge stadium to Finish with a stop at the Loop drink station.



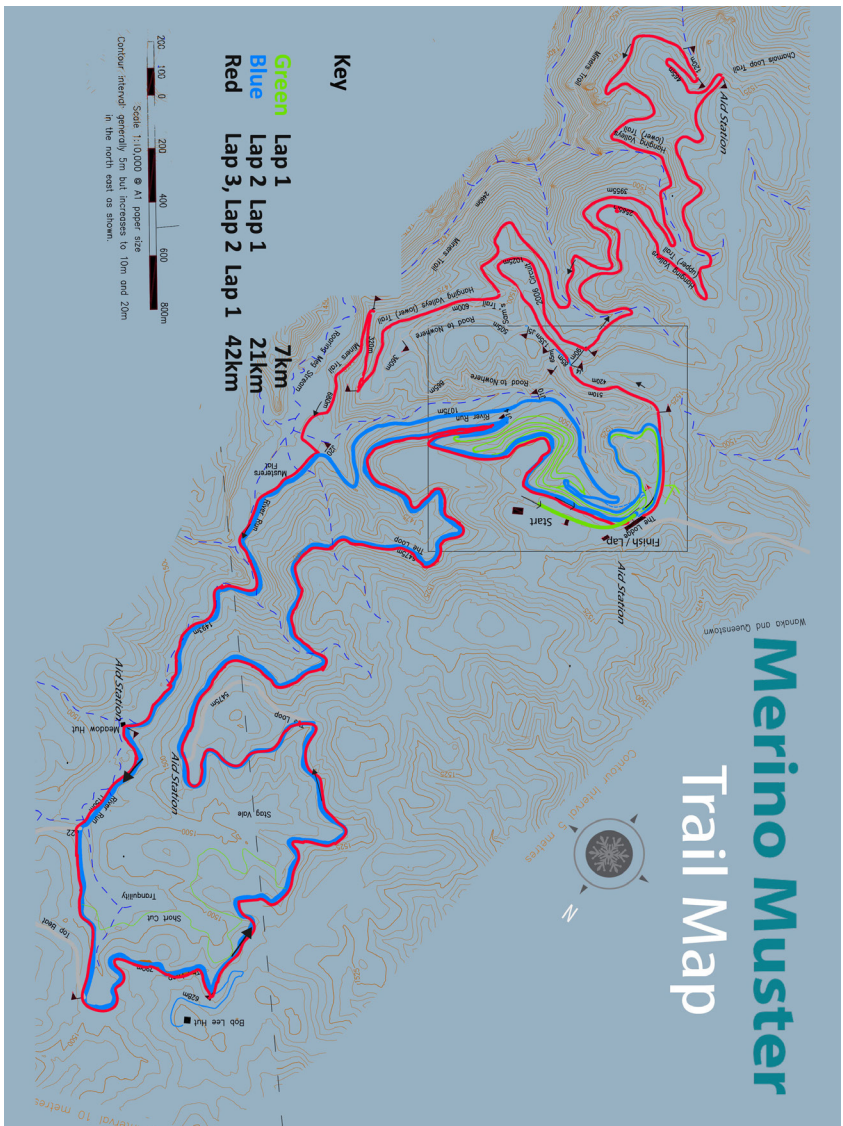
River Trail & Meg Hut



Merino Glen and the Lodge

The Merino Muster skiers go to the south after completing the Snow Rake. The views of the rocks, above the Meg river where the sheep hid from the musterers, are spectacular. The Remarkables mountain range dominates the backdrop at the south end of the course. The final kilometres cross Musterers flat, revisit the Meadow Hut crew, back along the top to the Finish Stadium to be presented with a Merino Muster medal. The course skis well and is without sharp corners. A long straight flat track to ski out on is at the bottom of the short steep downhills.

Merino Muster Trail Map



Results from 1995 to 2013

Men:

1995 21km 1st Scott Gilliam

1996 21km 1st Gaber Lah 2nd Janez Krsinar 3rd Koji Yamaki

1st Kiwi Sam Lee 9th

1997 21km 1st Takehiko Shmada 2nd Bjorn Lans 3rd Norio Odaira

1st Kiwi Chris Rolph 6th

1998 42km 1st Daniel Kuzmina 2nd Peter Moysey 3rd Dean Rayner

1st Kiwi Peter Moysey 2nd

1999 42km 1st Robert Curtis 2nd Sam Lee 3rd Craig Collins

1st Kiwi Sam Lee 2nd

2000 42km 1st Wade Karanaugh 2nd Odd Lirhus 3rd Brian Pinkerton

1st Kiwi Ces Driver 6th

2001 42km 1st Alexander Os 2nd Jimmy Donaldson 3rd Hiroshi Denda

1st Kiwi Jimmy Donaldson

2002 42km 1st Simon Heard 2nd Jimmy Donaldson 3rd James Ballard

1st Kiwi Jimmy Donaldson

2003 42km 1st Kris Freeman 2nd Andrew Johnson 3rd Justin Freeman

1st Kiwi Bryce Roche 8th

2004 42km 1st Andrew Johnson Adam Kates George Grey 1st Kiwi

Donald Harris 19=

2005 42km 1st Kris Freeman Donald Harris Andrew Johnson

1st Kiwi Donald Harris 1st

2006 42km 1st Kanamaru, Tomio 2nd Nat Anglem,

1st Kiwi Nat Anglem

2007 42km 1st Leif Zimmerman 2nd Robin McKeever 3rd Gordon Jewett

1st Kiwi Nat Anglem 5th

2008 42km 1st Robin McKeever Ben Falconer Andy Phol

1st Kiwi Ben Falconer

2009 42km 1st Ian Daffern Ron Carmichael Gena

1st kiwi Alastair Smail

2010 42km 1st Brian McKeever, Ben Koons, Andy Pohl,

1st Kiwi Ben Koons 3rd

2011 42km 1st Brian McKeever, Erik Carleton, Andy Pohl

1st Kiwi Andy Phol 3rd

2012 42km 1st Maciej Kreczmer, Smolyanin Andzey Brian McKeever

1st Kiwi Andy Phol 4th

2013 42km 1st Maciej Kreczmer, Nicolas Avrillon, Erik Carleton 1st

Kiwi Andy Pohl 5th

Women:

1995 21km

1996 21km 1st Salla Juntunen 2nd Sally Jones 3rd Keri McArthur

1st Kiwi Sally Jones

1997 21km 1st Sally Jones 2nd Annika Johnson 3rd Keri McArthur

1st Kiwi Sally Jones

1998 42km 1st Ann Smaill

1st Kiwi Ann Smaill

1999 42km 1st Jannique Oeyan 2nd Katrin Schirmer 3rd Katie Mathews

1st Kiwi Ann Smaill (5th)

2000 42km 1st Jannique Oeyan 2nd Katie Mathews 3rd Katrin Schirmer

1st Kiwi Sue Wales (4th)

2001 42km 1st Hiromi Koizumi 2nd Katrin Schirmer 3rd Keri McArthur

1st Kiwi Keri McArthur

2002 42km 1st Camille Melvey 2nd Sue Wales 3rd Ann Smaill

1st Kiwi Sue Wales

2003 42km 1st Sue Wales 2nd Ann Smaill 3rd Marie-Claire Dreyfuss

1st Kiwi Sue Wales

2004 42km 1st Mary Eloranta 2nd Marie- Claire Dreyfuss 3rd Sue Wales

1st Kiwi Sue Wales 3rd

2005 42km 1st Rachel Barton 2nd Simone Hudson 3rd Ann Smaill

1st Kiwi Rachel Barton

2006 42km 1st Simone Hudson, 2nd Sue Wales 3rd Joan Chen

1st Kiwi Simone Hudson

2007 42km 1st Milaine Theriault 2nd Samantha Bondarenko 3rd Satu Salokannel

1st Kiwi Samantha Bonarenko

2008 42km 1st Anna Hogg 2nd RaeAnne Kuruez 3rd Ann Smail

1st Kiwi Anna Hogg

2009 42km 1st Samantha Bondarenko 2nd Sue Donoghoe 3rd Jo Haines

1st Sam Bonarenko 1st

2010 42km 1st Hannah Dreissigacker 2nd Sam Bondarenko 3rd Zoe Acher,

1st Kiwi Sam Bonarenko 1st

2011 42km 1st Justina Kovalchuk 2nd Natalia Korosteleva 3rd Anastasiya Kuzmina

1st Kiwi Jo Haines 6th

2012 42km 1st Justina Kowalczyk 2nd Anastasiya Kuzmina 3rd Shoko Ota

1st Kiwi Jo Haines 6th

2013 42km 1st Justina Kowalczyk 2nd Sarah Murphy 3rd Kamila Borutova

1st Kiwi Sarah Murphy 2nd

20th Merino Muster Race Details



Date: 2014 August 16th

Start time: 10 am at Snow Farm

Email: merinomuster@gmail.com

Entries Accommodation & Race updates visit

www.merinomuster.com

Accommodation:

Snow Farm Lodge, Cardrona, Queenstown, and Wanaka

See the website for contacts.



Candidate for Associate Member of Worldloppet 2014