

Swiss connection at Mt Ruapehu Ski Club

Autor(en): **Heiniger, Maja**

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Swiss Connection At Mt Ruapehu Ski Club

I don't know how many Swiss in New Zealand follow the ski racing, or enjoy skiing as a recreational sport. As a member of the Ruapehu Ski Club we have enjoyed some exciting winter seasons in the snow and I thought some of you would be interested to hear about some Swiss connections at Mt Ruapehu.

Ruapehu Ski Club (RSC) has a close relationship to Davos, which goes way back to the ski boom in the 1950s. A Swiss ski instructor and entrepreneur, Walter Haensli, came to New Zealand and saw the potential at Whakapapa Skifields. He wanted young racers to try and match themselves against skiers of a higher standard. An arrangement was made from thereon to host a ski instructor from Davos at the Ruapehu Ski Club every winter season - and what wonderful friendships have been built from that! We have already had a second generation ski instructor stay with us last year - an inspiration for all club members, young and old.

Walter Haensli is also recognised as the driving force (with other RSC members) in obtaining finance and permits from the NZ Government, which was needed for the three chairlifts and the new T-Bar which made skiing so much more enjoyable (this was in 1950). His name is mentioned at the National Park HQ at Whakapapa with pictures and his involvement with RAL.

I believe it was in 1951 that the "Haensli Cup" was first contested at Mt Ruapehu.

Walter Haensli arranged to have two pewter trophies of special design made in Switzerland, and donated to the RSC as the prestigious awards at the "Haensli Cup Race". Over many years, Haensli Cup was run as a two-run giant slalom by RSC and usually saw a strong turnout of Ruapehu skiers.

As this became one of the premier events of the North Island ski circuit races, Ruapehu Alpine Lifts (RAL) took on the job to organise the race from 1979 onwards, and in the 1990s, Haensli Cup was designated a FIS race, the "first ever" in the North Island! Sadly, with the difficult seasons from the mid-

1990s (with volcano eruption and lack of snow) the race was not contested in these past few years.

We have just set the date for our next Haensli Cup at Mt Ruapehu. Mark your calendar - August 2, 2003. It almost coincides with the Swiss National Day.

Have a look at our website www.rsc.org.nz - it's the best webcam of the mountain - better than your weather forecast.

Give us a "Jodel" next time you pass the RSC Lodge at the top of the Rockgarden Chairlift. You may well get one back in reply!

Maja Heiniger

Opportunity for Sponsorship

As a Ski Club, we are freely giving time and support, but need financial assistance, mainly to cover cost of piste preparation.

There is an opportunity to have a 'collective Swiss companies' sponsorship - you may want to call it a 'Swiss Syndicate' - the perfect window to showcase a few Swiss Products or Services at Mt Ruapehu.

If there are companies or individuals interested, give me a call. Phone 09 534 8211 or email: maja.heiniger@xtra.co.nz

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Just Wishing

How I wish I was a sheep
I'd wear my woollies while I sleep.
Why is it then I need a rest
I always have to get undressed?
The sheep she lies her body down
With her wool all wrapped around
She doesn't have to hang her fleece
On a hanger so it won't crease.

In the morning when she wakes
Up she gets and off she takes,
She doesn't have to make her bed
Or need a pillow for her head.
As for me there's all the fuss
The dear Lord didn't put clothes on us.
I'm taking clothes off every night
Without them I do look a sight.

In the morning when I wake
I have to dress, for goodness sake
And so it goes on every day
I guess it will always be this way.
I have clothes for underneath

Shapely bras and lacy briefs
Then there's clothes that go on top
You should see the clothes I've got.

A fleece I'd lose at shearing time
But even that I wouldn't mind
For when the sunshine turns to rain
My fleece it will have grown again.
How much more simple life would be
If a woolly fleece was right for me.
There wouldn't be the need to say
"I wonder what I'll wear today?"

