

**The Invercargill Amateur
Cycling Club—is this . . .**

**"THE GREATEST LITTLE
CLUB IN THE LAND?"**

Asks PETE SMITH



PETER BARTELS (Australia), New Zealand all-comers sprint record-holder, is pictured beating Auckland John Bigwood, 1963 national runner-up, in a sprint at the Invercargill A.C.C.'s Kew Bowl.

MANY sports clubs in New Zealand have built up wonderful names for themselves by adopting the most adventurous policies aimed at promoting their games. The Remuera Lawn Tennis and Squash Rackets Club, with its palatial £67,000 project in Auckland, the Centurions Rugby Football Club, which gathers only the top players for its exhibition games around the country, and the Owairaka Amateur Athletic Club, who turn out world-beating runners—these are only a few of them at random.

But I'm willing to bet that few will name the organisation that to my way of thinking is just the most dynamic sporting club in the land—the Invercargill Amateur Cycling Club.

"Cycling? Invercargill?" you will say. "Never heard of them." But read on, friends, and before long you will realise that if a few more NATIONAL bodies evinced the same enterprise as this little band of enthusiasts from the southernmost city, then our sports would have no worries at all.

Here is a club whose policy is to get only the best possible competitors for their fans and the Invercargill public return the compliment in no uncertain manner by turning up in their hundreds and thousands for three nights a week during the summer.

Britons, Frenchmen, Australians, Kiwis—all the champions are invited to the Invercargill club's home at Kew Bowl, and I would like to know of any other sport that has such a continual influx of the best talent.

Dual world champion Syd Patterson, Cardiff gold medallists Dick Ploog and Ian Browne, Keith Reynolds, 18 times an Australian champion, and many other cycling greats from the last decade. And they're not here today and gone tomorrow like most of our sporting visitors.

That brilliant sprinter and Empire Games time trial champion, Peter Bartels, is virtually a New Zealand citizen after three long annual visits and only two years ago Sydneysider Cliff Burville and Perth Games pursuit victor Max Langshaw stayed for so long that there was even time for Langshaw to fulfil the three months' residential qualification and so win the New Zealand title in his specialty at Cooks Gardens, Wanganui, as a member of the IACC!

Now comes the news that fellow Perth champion (10 miles) Doug Adams likes the southern hospitality so much that he intends to stay right through to '64 in an attempt to wear the silver fern at Tokyo.

As founder club member Maurice Wilson explained to me, "When you see the impressive line-up of stars we have had at Kew, it is not hard to see why cycling has become the number one summer sport in the South."

In fact, it is chasing Rugby hard for all-round popularity. There are even three hundred or so fans watching the midweek club racing and this doubles on Saturday nights, but when the three-nights-a-week summer carnival gets under way



SID PATTERSON, best-known and possibly the greatest post-war Australian cyclist, cash or amateur, who is one of the many overseas cracks to ride at Kew Bowl.

there is a queue at Kew

Some 2300 turned up to see Browne and Bartels at their first appearance in 1959, there was a gate of £362 for the 1950 Empire Games riders and, in fact, whenever overseas stars are on parade the place is packed out.

And what happens to the £.s.d. you ask? Back it goes into getting still more visitors. As a result of an exceptionally good season in 1961-62, the club really splashed this year and consequently probably the greatest galaxy ever was seen at Kew.

There were Australians Adams, Bob Kirk and Keith Bannon; French New Caledonians Georges Gastaldi and Sylvain Bernanos, both island champions, and their compatriot Andre Beyney, who

a few years ago swept all before him on the velodromes of Europe; and from the U.K. came three British champions, Karl Barton, John Clarey and Roger Whitfield, a trio of Perth medallists.

"With four overseas visits, the season was a little costly," says Maurie Wilson, "and it will take the club all its time to come out square on the year's workings." But the I.A.C.C. doesn't care, for it kept faith with the public by a policy which made money and distance no barrier.

The profit and loss account for the year mightn't be too rosy but the balance sheet is pretty healthy. Number 1 asset, and valued by an independent surveying engineer at £22,000, is Kew Bowl itself: in world-traveller Barton's own words to me, "The finest in the Commonwealth."

First opened on February 4, 1949, but relaid generally to Melbourne Olympic velodrome specifications in 1957, the concrete circuit—five laps to a mile—is truly a monument to the club. With 45-degree banking on the curves and a straightways of only 40-odd yards, the track is built for thrills.

A Hollywood visitor could be excused for being homesick for Grauman's famous Chinese restaurant, for like the film stars many of the voluntary workers who constructed the track have their names embedded in concrete too—along the outside perimeter.

It is not the overseas men alone who thrill them at Kew, as all the best New Zealanders migrate south for the summer, too.

"The crowd love to see local riders doing battle with the internationals, and cyclists like Laurie Byers, Ritchie Thomson and Tony Walsh are always popular," says Mr Wilson. "But there is one man for whom the Invercargill

Questions & ANSWERS

● **S. TAUNTON, Wanganui:** Contact American boxers care of RING magazine, Madison Square Garden Arcade, New York City.

● **"ORIGINAL READER," Oamaru:** Peter Snell may be contacted care of the Auckland Centre of the N.Z.A.A.A., P.O. Box 2122, Auckland. It has been reported that he will marry on May 11. He became a champion at 20, when he won the New Zealand 880yds—mile double at Palmerston North. He was born at Opunake.

● **BARRY WILSON, Naenae:** Johnny Henderson defeated Jimmy Fidow on a 10-round points decision at Dunedin on March 4 last. Insufficient space available to publish last year's world title fights. Sports Digest occasionally features a boxing cover; Eddie Cotton, George Mahoni, Tuna Scanlan, Ingemar Johansson and Billy Beazley have appeared on our covers in recent years. Sorry, have not time to compile list of boxers' addresses. Try contacting them care of the respective boxing associations where they reside.

● **"CRICKET FAN," Wellington:** J. B. Hobbs's scores in the first four Tests of the 1928-29 series against Australia were 49 and 11, 40, 20 and 49, 74 and 1. In the last four Tests of the 1930 series, his innings were 1 and 19, 29 and 13, 31, 47 and 9.

public will always reserve a special place—Warwick Dalton.

"Dalton spent two seasons here and filled the park every time we pitted him against a visitor. The reason was that he always rode to win. Without a doubt he did more than any other rider to popularise the sport at Kew. On Dalton's final appearance, more than 2,000 people packed the park on an ordinary club night, cheering him to the echo."

Since then, local Invercargill stars have emerged, too. Bruce Goldsworthy and Tony Ineson are just two who have made big names at the national level and few will forget one of the greatest finishes on the track when Ineson came from the clouds to take Dalton on the line in the last race of the 1960 season—at a time when the pedalling plumber was almost unbeatable.

Len Booth is a junior on the way up and Peter Robinson has made a big name for another of the city's clubs, Waikiwi, who with Glengarry and Murihiku also race at Kew. And only last month the NZACA gave the green light for another southern revolutionary move by sanctioning the formation of the Invercargill Ladies' club, the first of its kind in New Zealand.

With this large group of com-

petitors, non-stop programmes of up to 65 races a night are staged between 7.30 p.m. and 10 p.m., with live-wire officials such as Ollie Henderson, Laurie Tall, Dave Humphries—and Maurie Wilson himself—constantly thinking up ways to increase the spectator appeal.

At next month's annual meeting of the NZACA, the Southlanders will make a move to break with the Otago-Southland centre and form two independent centres, a move that is intended to allow more freedom still, but next year should see the biggest thrill for local fans when the national championships are expected to be held at Kew.

Getting back to the Invercargill club, surely no other has a progressive record to equal it. The major sports cover their expenditures for overseas teams in dozens of centres, but the IACC normally does its importing by itself. Athletics and tennis have their share of top-flight visitors, too, but look at the massive sponsorships that keep them propped up.

No sport will really flourish until its own workers do the job and there is in turn no better reward than that achieved through one's own efforts. Many national bodies could take a leaf from the book of the Invercargill Amateur Cycling Club—perhaps the greatest little club in the land.