

**THE PIONEER BICYCLE CLUB.**

CHRISTCHURCH, MAORILAND.

**T**HE Pioneer Bicycle Club, now well known all over the 'cycling world, was formed in 1879, with the Hon. E. C. J. Stevens as president, which office he still holds. The receipts for the first year were £15 4s, while for 1888, the year in which Messrs Fred Wood and

by W. D. Bean, and W. H. Langdown. The latter kept on winning much longer than the majority of athletes, and when at his best was unrivalled in the colony. He was the quickest man off the mark ever seen on a Maoriland track; could stay well when in form (which wasn't always), and had a magnificent finish. He won his first race from scratch in 1882, and his last in 1891. During the interval he raced in Maoriland and America with great success.

W. D. Bean was a most popular champion. He was not

Mayes. Whatever doubts may have existed as to the relative merits of Fenlon and Hall, there was little doubt in the minds of 'cyclists that the latter was superior to Mayes at any distance. Hall had been on a bicycle less than six months when he found his way back to the mark; and, until the advent of the pneumatic tyred machines, he held records at all distances, having won many championships, including those of 1890 at all distances. He has never given the pneumatic machine a fair trial, which is to be regretted,



Standish & Preece photo.

Brown visited the club, the receipts amounted to £599 12s, and the credit balance on the year's operations was over £125. At the annual meeting held that year the members presented Mr A. Lowry, who is one of the oldest members of the club, with a handsome gold chronograph, in recognition of his services to the club, and to 'cycling generally. At the race meeting held this season over 6,000 paid for admission to Lancaster Park.

In 1890 Messrs Fenlon and Mayes were the foreign visitors to the Club, and the race meeting promoted this season was the largest ever held in Maoriland. The attendance at Lancaster Park was 14,000, and £300 was the amount of the prize money.

The following year saw T. W. Busst, the best 'cyclist Australia has yet produced, competing at the Pioneer Bicycle Club race meeting. The great gun was, however, in very bad health, and did not show anything of his form. Later on in the same year Wally Ker, most popular of New South Wales riders, paid a visit to the Championship meeting held at Lancaster Park, as a guest of the Pioneer Club, where he met the cracks of the Club amongst others. The track was very heavy, just suiting the plucky little Australian, who won the five, ten, and twenty five mile championships. The receipts of the Club's meeting this year were £425. At the end of the season they had a credit balance of about £200.

1892 saw a very good race meeting, Ker again visiting Christchurch; and Reynolds, of Auckland, also made his debut at the 'cycling metropolis. The Australian won the first-class five miles race, and the Northerler showed that he possessed very fine springing powers. The balance-sheet for this season shows the Club well on the credit side, with assets amounting to about £200, in addition to their balance at bankers.

Riders throughout the colony will bear with regret of the retirement of Mr Frank Cooper, one of the oldest members of the Club, who has acted as handicapper for many years, and whose success in this direction has contributed very materially to the success of the Club's meetings.

The racing members of the Club have been most successful since the initial meetings held in 1879, when Fred Dunford, who is still a member of the Club, came to the front, and kept on in winning vein for several seasons, followed

by the speed of Langdown, or of others that have followed; but he rode with rare judgment, and won many races from scratch which faster men might have lost from want of 'head.'

Nat Hall followed Bean, and though he lost several of the championship and other scratch races, he never met a better

as, judging from the successes of Hayward, Wilmot, and others who have forsaken the ordinary for the 'pony' racer, it is probable Hall would have continued his winning career for some years yet.

H. A. Soares, did not start his racing career until in his twenty sixth year. He at once established himself as a favourite, owing to his gameness, and he has squeezed home after many a punishing finish from sheer pluck. Though he only stayed on the track a couple of years, he won several of the longer championships, and many handicaps from the mark. He also held the fifty miles road record for several years.

With the advent of the pneumatic safety, T. C. M. Ralingshaw came to the front, and in 1891 was the best man out, winning over £50 worth of prizes at the Pioneer Bicycle Club's annual meeting. He soon retired from the track, his retirement being a great loss to racing 'cycling in the colony, as he promised most favourably at all distances.

W. J. S. Hayward, who at present holds all the New Zealand championships, also the Five Miles' Championship of Australia, has proved the most consistent rider since the advent of 'cycling in the colony. He has won races at all distances from the mark, and thereabouts. At the championship meeting, held last February at Dunedin, he succeeded in winning all the championships, except the three miles, in which he rode a dead heat with Ker. Hayward still shows improvement in his riding, and it will probably be many years yet before the retirement of 'Billy' is announced.

Racing members of the Club, who have upheld its prestige, are too numerous to mention in a brief sketch. Among the most successful may be mentioned: Chris Wilson, T. H. North, P. Ledsham, J. Martin, Pither and Preece.

The Pioneer Club has now a comfortable Club Room, well furnished, and provided with papers and periodicals, the walls being decorated with likenesses of many famous 'cyclists of present and bygone seasons.

It may be mentioned that the first exhibition of 'trick' riding given in the colony was a performance by the present 'eccentric' Mayor George, of Christchurch at one of the Pioneer Club's meetings about ten years ago.

The photographs which are here reproduced are from the studio of Standish and Preece, High-street, Christchurch, photographers to the Club. Mr Preece has taken over a thousand photos of 'cyclists and 'cycling groups, and his collection is pronounced by visiting 'cyclists unique in the colonies. Mr Preece was one of the original members of the Club.

The officers and committee for the present year are:— Captain, W. J. S. Hayward; vice-captain, H. Thompson; hon. secretary, Clement G. Moss; hon. treasurer, D. F. Marie; committee, F. R. Dunford, H. J. Moss, M. Brown, C. A. Myhre, G. Rankin, and W. G. Roberts.



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MR W. R. EYRE, CAPTAIN.

man 'on the machine' than himself, with the exception perhaps of Fred Wood. He was an in and out rider, and sometimes met defeat unexpectedly. This was, in some cases, due to insufficient condition, but more often to lack of judgment. He was clearly out-generalled by Fenlon and



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