

An Oamaru Footballer in England

The latest recruit of the Wigan Rugby Football Club (says the local *Examiner* of December 31) is Mr. William Curran, who hails from the far-away Dominion of New Zealand, so that the Central Park team will increase its representation in the matter of Colonial exponents.

For some time past the man in the street had freely noised it about that another player, whose destination was Wigan, was on the high seas, and even his name was known to the general public; the only doubt which appeared to exist on the matter of his ultimately wearing the 'Cherry and White' colors being in regard to the question of the transfer.

The Wigan officials had been fully assured as to Curran's abilities as a footballer; they had presumably been in communication with the famous Colonial, George Gillett, whilst Curran was not unknown, from a playing standpoint, to at least one of the present members of the Wigan thirteen. The fact that he had participated in representative games was in itself an excellent credential.

Being, however, without knowledge as to whether Curran was in possession of his transfer papers, the Wigan committee were evidently anxious to keep Curran's advent as secret as possible. That anxiety may or may not have been well-founded, though apart from the fear that the representatives of other big Northern Union clubs might obtain news of Curran's coming, there seems to have been an undue endeavor to maintain a policy of silence. The New Zealander had left his home in the distant Dominion with the direct intention of throwing in his lot with the Wiganers; and whether he could have been influenced to join some other organisation he himself probably alone knows.

It is stated that the Wigan officials were determined they should not be forestalled by other agents, and every precaution was taken to receive Curran immediately he landed on these shores. On Wednesday afternoon the Central Park Club's representatives left home for the south; they were evidently bent on filling a similar position to the early bird which caught the worm, for events proved that the New Zealander did not touch land until Friday evening. It is true that the vessel by which he travelled should have put in at Plymouth, and this would have enabled him to meet his new colleagues without delay, but apparently the boat arrangements were interfered with by the weather conditions, as the journey was continued to the Thames. When the landing was effected the Wigan officials soon ascertained that Curran was eligible for enlistment, as he had received a free transfer from the New Zealand League, and that therefore there could be no objection to his registration.

Curran remained in London during Friday night and was brought north on Saturday morning, reaching Wigan about half-past two in the afternoon. He was driven to Central Park, where he had the first opportunity of witnessing a 'rugger' game in this country. As he was escorted to the grand stand he was recognised by a section of the crowd and was given an encouraging cheer. The new-comer appeared greatly interested in the struggle between the men of Wigan and Leigh, whilst he in turn was the object of much attraction. The New Zealander bears a somewhat striking resemblance to Syd Deane, the former Oldham exponent. He is sturdily built and is said to be twenty-two years of age. Reports state that he took part in all the representative games with Australia this year, and that he had as an opponent Syd Deane himself, the story being related that Curran had so much the better of the argument that the ex-Oldhamer presented him with his jersey, with the remark that he had earned it.

After the match with Leigh the members of the Wigan committee held a meeting, at which terms were arranged, and the proceedings were of rather a protracted character. Ultimately, however, matters were adjusted, and we are informed that Curran agreed to remain at Wigan until April, 1916, having signed for a period of three and a half seasons. Curran was born

at Oamaru, and the club which included him amongst its players was styled the Newtown Rangers. He only commenced operating in the N.U. code at the commencement of last season, but must have rapidly earned distinction. His customary position is at centre three-quarter, but it is said he is an exceptionally clever back and stand-off half, so would prove a really valuable acquisition to the Wigan Club.

Wigan second met Pemberton on the afternoon of New Year's Day at Central Park (says the *Wigan Observer*). A large crowd of spectators was seen, the largest at any A team match for a long time. There would be nearly ten thousand people present. The main cause of this extra interest was the first appearance of W. Curran, the new Colonial player. At first he played at full back, and he changed to centre three-quarter in the last quarter of an hour. The Colonial was obviously undergoing a severe ordeal. He had not been long off board ship, and he had the eyes of the spectators fixed upon him. But he bore himself well, the mistakes he made being comparatively trivial. The defence he offered was a sturdy one, his tackling being sound. But it was pretty apparent from his way of making combination and dashing through his opponents that the three-quarter game was more his vogue. The moment he joined the three-quarter line—an event hailed with applause by the crowd—he showed himself an adept as a centre. The game was at once enlivened by his sparkling play, the vigor of his rushes, and the accuracy of his passes. The crowd became highly enthusiastic, and came away with the highest opinion of the new player.

[Mr. Curran is an ex-pupil of Mr. P. J. Duggan, of Oamaru.]

Greymouth

The St. Cecilia's Ladies' Club, Greymouth, held their first meeting of the season on Tuesday evening, March 18, when there was a large attendance of members. The president, Miss A. Crowley, stated that the club's first year's transactions had been most satisfactory and had quite justified its existence. There were now, she stated, 50 financial members, and it was certain that this year would show a large increase in membership. The syllabus for the present year, providing many evenings of instructive entertainment, was drawn up and approved. The election of officers for the ensuing year resulted as follows:—President, Miss A. Crowley (re-elected); vice-presidents, Misses Dillon and K. Deere; secretary and treasurer, Miss Kennedy (re-elected); vice-secretary, Miss J. Greaney; committee, Misses J. Heffernan, E. Furlong, J. Crowley, E. Crowley, M. O'Donnell, L. Flaherty, M. Minehan, and M. Sampson. Votes of thanks to the president and officers for their strenuous and successful efforts in the interests of the society were carried unanimously.

The official opening of the New Norcia Boys' College, took place recently, his Excellency Sir Gerald Strickland performing the ceremony. There was an immense assemblage of visitors. Prior to the opening the visitors were entertained at a banquet in the dining-hall of the college, at which the Right Rev. Dr. Fulgentius Torres, O.S.B. (founder of the college), presided. The new building is a very handsome one, under the direction of the Marist Brothers, and already sixty pupils have been enrolled. The director is Brother Stanislaus, formerly principal at St. Joseph's College, Hunter's Hill. One of the features of the new institution will be the offering of special facilities to students who desire a training in practical agriculture.

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