



Jack Arneil

Elected in 1913

Jack Arneil was elected a Life member in 1913, although the move could have been made any time in the previous ten years or so. One of the most famous early Ponsonby players, Arneil held the club record for Senior appearances (78) until his mark was topped by Albert Braund in the late 1890s. Arneil captained Auckland in a number of his representative appearances but retired before the 1888 British team played here; he would have led the team in those contests had he been available.

He became a figure of significant backroom influence at club, provincial and national level; he was the earliest of Ponsonby's traditional line of 'Elder Statesmen on the side' and acted as auditor for many years. He was President of Auckland RFU between 1916 and 1934, Vice-Patron until his death in 1938, and President of the NZRFU in 1914. His service to Ponsonby covered almost all the club's first 60 years.

His Life Membership was awarded in 1913, the same year he was elected Vice-President of the New Zealand Union. Clearly he was going to be occupied in Wellington over the next couple of years and the club perhaps thought he would step aside; his long-time partner Charles Jackson was similarly honoured at the same meeting. However the pair stayed on past the War, providing stability at a very trying time for every club, and any back-room workers of long standing and proven record were worth their weight in ... one was tempted to say gold, but football jerseys in good repair would perhaps have been more welcome.

Jack Arneil was also a very useful cricketer, representing Auckland, and remains one of the very few players to have taken all ten wickets in an innings of an Auckland Senior match, performing the feat against Gordon in November 1886.

Arneil was one of six early Life Members whose election was not noted on the Honours Board when it was commissioned in the mid-1960s. All six had long been away from the club; five had died many years earlier and the sixth (Joe O'Leary) had lived in Masterton for nearly 50 years before his death in 1963. Modern internet access and the Papers Past website led to early records being more accessible (remember, too, that the two fires in the 1920s had destroyed all paper records), and these early elections came to light. Arneil's election was notified and recognized at the 2019 AGM.

