

Welcome to the August 2016 edition of the 'Dreadnought'. This newsletter is to remember and celebrate Trinity's history and heritage in the form of articles, photos, stories and memorabilia.

The Boys of '66'

Over the last month there have been various celebrations looking back fifty years and the success of the England football World Cup side, winning the 1966 World Cup.

Others have looked at other sports so this month's newsletter looks back at our 'Boys of 1966' and what life was like at Belle Vue fifty years ago



-- The Home Programme Cover at the turn of 1966 --

As the New Year started in 1966, Trinity were positioned in second place in the league table just behind St.Helens having won fourteen of their twenty league games so far. In a period of change at Belle Vue, with the early 'Glory Years' just behind them, Trinity had already used thirty four players in their twenty two league and cup games as they started to rebuild. Eleven of these players had only played three games or less with three loanees amongst the nine debutants as they covered for vital injuries to Gerry Round, Fred Smith and Gert Coetzer. Amongst these debutants was future Hall of Famer, Don Fox who signed from Featherstone Rovers in September (1965).

Ken Trill was starting his eighth year as first team coach with Neil Fox his club captain.
Neil was also starting his Benefit Year, this year, after ten years at the club.

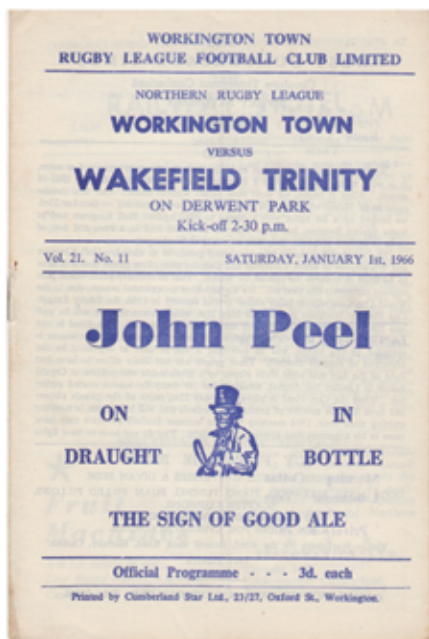
First Game of 1966

Trinity's first game of 1966 came on New Years Day when they made the Bank Holiday trip to Workington. On a cold and blustery Saturday afternoon, it was an early start but a successful afternoon in the Lake District region.

Trinity had only ever met Workington, in Cumberland, on six previous occasions but had been successful on all but one of those. Town had led the league in mid-October after being unbeaten in their first nine league games but a bad run in the autumn months saw them drop down the league. They had Great Britain internationals, Ike Southward and Brian Edgar in their ranks as well as future GB full back, Paul Charlton and a young 22 year old, second rower, Bill Kirkbride who would coach Trinity to Wembley thirteen years later. Trinity had just had a tough Christmas period with a 9-11 Boxing Day loss at Leeds and a 27-7 victory over Featherstone the next day. From the first team squad, Harold Poynton and prop, Edgar Bate, pulled out injured.

Thus, the fact that Trinity returned home, triumphant after a tremendous 12-5 win

was a testament to the players on their long journey. Neil Fox and George Shepherd scored the decisive tries with Fox kicking three goals.



Great Britain Test Duty

It was always an honour to be selected for your country, but up until the mid-1960s, only two Trinity players had captained their Great Britain, Jonathan Parkin (1921-29) and Derek Turner (1962). In 1966 Neil Fox became the third Trinity player to earn that recognition. He was selected for the British team, alongside Berwyn Jones for the first test with France in Perpignan, on 16th January.

In a major shock, the British team lost 13-18 in France despite a Jones try and a couple of Fox goals. The scores were locked at 7-7 at half time with Alex Murphy scoring Britain's try after four minutes and were leading, and in control with eleven minutes remaining. Jones scored an early second half try following a Murphy break and kick (10-7) and after the French replied, Murphy again made a blind side scrum break putting Swinton centre, John Stopford, over in the corner. At 13-12, Britain were in control, but they, then, gave away three penalties, all converted and France won 18-13 to France.

Surprisingly, for the return at Wigan six weeks later, Fox was left out of the team altogether. Jones was selected but injured his knee in the cup game against St.Helens and withdrew. Britain still lost, 4-8.



Trinity v St.Helens

The visit of the Saints is always a welcome sight at Belle Vue and in February 1966 they visited twice in eight days. St.Helens were still leading the league table when the RL Challenge Cup draw gave them a visit to Trinity on Saturday 26th February, but there was also the league game a week earlier.

When they arrived on Saturday 19th they had only lost one league game all season (7-8 at home to Swinton) and the two sides had drawn 9-9 at Knowsley Road the previous November. The 'heavens opened' an hour before kick off but it did not stop Trinity playing some scintillating rugby and tries to Poynton, Hopwood and Bate along with three Fox goals put Trinity into a 15-7 lead, the Saints try coming from Alex Murphy and two Len Killeen goals. St.Helens fought back with a Tom van Vollenhoven try but Trinity sealed the win with a Gert Coetzer try, to win 20-12.

9,606 attended.

In an era when Challenge Cup rugby league meant something, a phenomenal 20,317 turned up a week later. The cup tie, in front of the BBC cameras, was a tight affair with the scores locked at 0-0 at half time but two second half tries to Tommy Bishop and Tom van Vollenhoven saw the Saints through to the second round of the cup.

Picture to right: Coetzer & Turner in the thick of the action in the cup tie



Belle Vue News 1966 style

These were some of the headlines coming out of Belle Vue in the first couple of months of the year

-- Neil Fox is selected as Great Britain captain for the forthcoming French tests --

-- Berwyn Jones is also selected for the 1st Test in Perpignan --

-- A "Big Night Out" at the Unity Hall is the first event for the Neil Fox Benefit Fund --

-- Trinity win the Mackeson Award (Third Period) for scoring the most points in a two month period (Dec & Jan), scoring 144 at an average of 20.44 per game --

-- Berwyn Jones is selected for the Great Britain tour 'Down Under' to Australia and New Zealand --

-- Trinity's Intermediate team (under 19s) win the Yorkshire Cup for the second year in succession, defeating Leeds Intermediates, 7-4 at Doncaster --

Trinity, Yorkshire & England Under 19s

Trinity Juniors, John Godfrey and Brian Cooper are selected for the Yorkshire Under 19s side to play Cumberland at Belle Vue. A third member of the Trinity Intermediate side, David Hawley, is named as reserve. This was then followed by Godfrey and Cooper being selected for England under 19s against France ending up on the losing side, 7-8, in Avignon.

Cooper was selected as England's vice captain in France

Trinity 'A' team

Trinity's 'A' team reached the Yorkshire Senior Challenge Cup Final in May 1966. After defeating Huddersfield 'A', 33-6, at Belle Vue in the semi final, they travelled to the Boulevard for the final against Hull 'A'. All fifteen of Trinity's reserve team, that night, went onto play first team rugby league at Trinity, with young substitute, Mick Morgan earning England representative honours nine years later.

The newspaper headlines stated it was 'A Tough Affair' with Trinity suffering an unfortunate casualty list. David Sampson suffered a broken jaw, both Terry Hopwood and Jim Randall suffered broken noses, Eddie Bowden was taken to hospital with bruised ribs and Mick Morgan was carried off with a leg injury. Trinity, finishing with eleven men, eventually lost 6-13 with three Ivan Spawforth penalties with David Hawley noted as outstanding.



Don Metcalfe Player of the Year 1965-66

Don Metcalfe was Trinity's popular full back of the late 1950s and 1960s who won the 1965-66 Supporters Player of the Year, his second win in three years.



He signed from Featherstone Rovers in 1957 for a record £3,000 fee where he had captained Yorkshire and played 147 times after signing from Sandal RUFC in 1951. In his first season at Post Office Road he would play at Wembley as Rovers lost 10-18 to Workington and he also picked up England u21 honours.

In Trinity's colours he would win two Yorkshire Cups (1960 & 1964) and three Yorkshire League Championships (1959, 1960 & 1966), but missed out on the Wembley triumphs as Gerry Round wore the full back's shirt. He left to coach Keighley in 1967 after 212 appearances, scoring 33 tries.

Don was also a member of a great 'Trinity family tree'. His two grandfathers were Trinity legends. One was the great full back and record goal kicker of the early 1900s, Jimmy Metcalfe and his other was Ernest Bennett, the try scoring superstar of the same era. Bennett's father Thomas Oliver Bennett also played for Trinity in their first ever game back in 1873. Jimmy's son, Joseph, also played for Trinity between 1928 and 1931 and two of Jimmy's daughters married county centre George Whitaker (Featherstone) and international winger, Stanley Smith (Wakefield & Leeds) who were Don's uncles.