



Yorkshire League Champions

At the end of the 1965-66 season, Trinity were crowned the Yorkshire League Champions for the seventh, and last time. They had won twenty two of their twenty eight games against Yorkshire opposition, drawing one and losing five. The photo above sees Wilf Spaven (Chairman of the Rugby League Council) presenting the trophy to captain, Neil Fox. The Trinity players are, from left to right, Don Metcalfe, Don Fox, George Shepherd, Ray Owen, Derek Plumstead, John Bath, Derek Turner, Bob Haigh, Neil Fox, Berwyn Jones, Harold Poynton, Willis Rushton and Gert Coetzer. The suited gentlemen are Stanley Milner (Trinity Chairman, far left), Alderman Frank West (Trinity President, behind trophy) and Mr Spaven

An unbeaten run of fourteen games between September 11th and December 11th had taken Trinity to second place in the league table by the New Year. After the victory at Workington, Trinity defeated Doncaster, 33-5 at home before the winter snows came and two blank weekends. Wigan away was always a tough place to visit and they still boasted internationals, Boston, Ashton and McTigue in their ranks. Wigan ran up a seven point half time lead, but a Neil Fox try and goal in the second half was not enough and they succumbed 5-7 for only their sixth league loss of the season. Five successive league victories followed over Keighley, Dewsbury, St.Helens, York and Workington Town to keep their top four hopes alive, before a disappointing 0-15 home loss to Hull in a re-arranged Monday night game in mid-March.

There then followed four tough, successive away games at Halifax, Bradford, Hunslet and Castleford with great results, winning the first three and a 6-6 draw at Castleford on Good Friday.

The last league game of the season saw a 35-16 victory over Leeds at Belle Vue which clinched the Yorkshire League and fourth place overall, behind St.Helens, Swinton and Wigan.

The play offs, now a Top-16 competition was a big disappointment. A fine 36-6 home win over Hull in the first round brought Hull Kingston Rovers to Belle Vue for the quarter finals. The fact that they lost 9-10 to the twelfth placed side, brought this headline report in the Wakefield Express,

"The blaze of glory that was there for Trinity to enjoy if they had progressed triumphantly to the Rugby League Championship semi final sputtered like a damp candle-wick and left their supporters in an atmosphere of gloom and anger"

It was controversial as a Kellett goal for Rovers appeared to drop under the cross bar but was given. Thus the season finished in frustration and disappointment and they sat back to watch St.Helens win the league and cup double after taking three out of four points from the Saints throughout the season.



The Rest....

St.Helens carried out the 1966 League and cup treble. They finished top of the league table, two points above Swinton, defeated Wigan at Wembley, 21-2 to win the Rugby League Challenge Cup and after Hull KR had knocked Trinity out of the play offs, Saints then defeated Rovers in the semi final, 14-6 and defeated seventh placed, Halifax, 35-12 to win the Championship Trophy. Saints also won the Lancashire League and reached the inaugural BBC2 Floodlit Trophy, losing out 0-4 at Castleford.

Warrington and Bradford Northern had won their respective county cups earlier in the season.

The 1966 Great Britain Tour to Australia & New Zealand

Despite Trinity finishing fourth in the league and top of the Yorkshire League, only one player was selected from the club to tour 'Down Under', Berwyn Jones. Neil Fox was captain in the first French test but was overlooked altogether for tour selection, as were many other stars. When players started to withdraw, Neil was asked but refused, stating 'he did not want to be sixth choice centre'. Bob Haigh had also been overlooked after a strong season, but club physiotherapist, 'Paddy' Armour found himself on the plane.

Although Jones finished top try scorer on the tour, with twenty four tries in his fifteen games, he could not force his way into the test team with Bill Burgess (Barrow), John Stopford (Swinton) and Geoff Wriglesworth (Leeds) occupying the wing births in the five test matches.

His try scoring exploits were often spectacular, though, and he scored four tries twice, against Queensland and Western Division, NSW and further hat tricks against Far North Queensland and the Maoris in New Zealand

Note: the programme to the right is the 2nd Test at Brisbane where the organisers put 'Paddy' Armour's picture on the front cover, by mistake, instead of the tour manager.



Yorkshire Captain

Neil Fox was selected for the White Rose County for the match against Cumberland on 7th September at Workington. He was selected as captain, having also captained his county in 1962 becoming the fourth Trinity player to do so, after Jonathan Parkin, Arthur Fletcher and Keith Holliday. He kicked four goals, including a late drop goal in a 17-17 draw. After a late withdrawal, Don Fox also played at Workington. Ian Brooke partnered Fox in the centres who started his career at Trinity before a three year stint at Bradford, before returning to Belle Vue in 1967.

In the second match of the championship Yorkshire lost 17-22 to Lancashire at Headingley with Neil Fox scoring a try and kicking another four goals. He was replaced as captain, though, in favour of tour captain, Harry Poole of Hull KR.

Belle Vue News 1966 style

These were some of the headlines coming out of Belle Vue in the second half of the year

- Harry Wilkinson retires from club commitments after 36 years service. Debuting in 1930, he retired in 1948 joining the coaching staff, where he stayed until the summer of 1966 --
- After fourteen years, Keith Holliday leaves the club and joins Bramley --
- Another club legend, and future Hall of Famer, Derek Turner retires following injury. His last game was at Castleford on 20th August 1966 --
- In September, Trinity sign a winger from Lockwood ARL in Huddersfield, Michael Hunte. *Twenty three years later, his son, Alan, would also sign, from Eastmoor ARL -*
- In October, Harold Poynton replaced Neil Fox as captain, with Don Fox as vice captain --
- Bob Haigh becomes Trinity's first Great Britain under 24 representative, playing against France, in a 7-4 victory in Bayonne in November --

Trinity v Hunslet

Anyone who was at this league game at Belle Vue on 8th October 1966 will still tell you about it, fifty years on. Trinity's league form had been 'patchy' with recent losses to Swinton, Hull and Huddersfield in the Yorkshire Cup to go alongside wins against Doncaster, Keighley and Dewsbury.

Trinity were still trying to get used to an early Hunslet onslaught when they found themselves 0-17 down at half time.

Ex-Hunslet hooker, Bernard Prior was making his Trinity debut and in the second half Trinity saw more ball and clawed their way back to 16-17 through tries by Harold Poynton, Neil Fox, Bob Haigh and Berwyn Jones, but Neil could only convert two of the tries. In the last seconds a scrum packed down on half way, near the tunnel entrance and from the scrum, Don Fox, who was standing in the stand off position launched the biggest drop goal you would see from his own half and it sailed between the posts for an amazing 18-17 win.

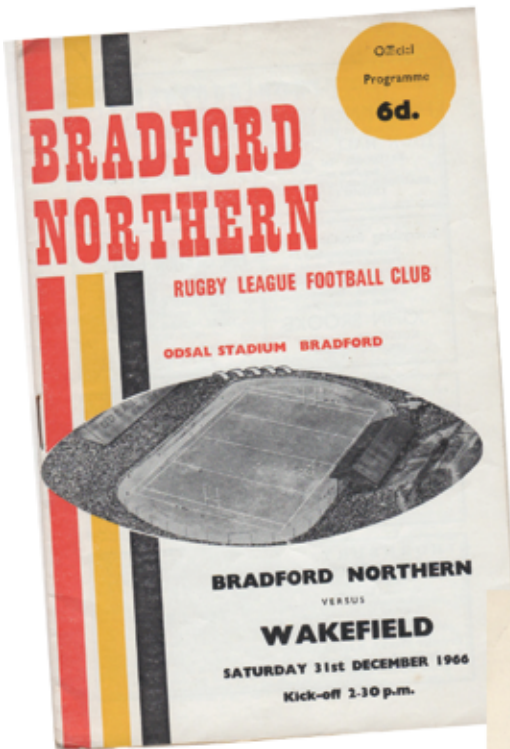
Don Fox would repeat the feat a month later at Wigan when he led a depleted team to a 15-13 victory. This was one of fifteen victories from their twenty two league games in the latter part of 1966 which would see them in sixth position by the New Year. A 28-15 home win over Champions, St.Helens was the 'pick of the bunch' along with a 22-14 win over Hull KR which would end their run of seventeen consecutive victories

Last Game of 1966

The last game of the year was a New Years Eve visit to Odsal, where the match was in doubt right up to the last minute due to the state of the pitch, with mud and straw covering the entire field.

Trinity had defeated Featherstone 27-0 at Belle Vue just four days earlier after a 6-28 Boxing Day defeat at Headingley. Bradford's games had been cancelled due to the weather.

Bradford Northern were well positioned in the top half of the table when Trinity arrived along with the biggest crowd of the day, 9,660. Tony Thomas, in at stand off for the injured Poynton, scored an early try and then Neil Fox scored a fifty yard beauty on fifteen minutes. He missed both goals in the mud but just before the break, Ken Hirst also scored another incredible try, dodging and weaving and leaving Northern forwards lying in the mud, to put Trinity 9-0 up at half time. On the hour Northern had scraped back to 7-9 but Trinity held out with a great defensive last twenty minutes.



COMPLETE RESULTS ...

YORKSHIRE SPORTS
It's all in the PINK!

... FULL REPORTS

BRADFORD NORTHERN
(Red, Amber and Black Hoop)
(Coach - GUS RISMAN)

Goals	6
Tries	1
Points	7

1 ALAN RHODES
2 BRIAN LORD
3 KEN ROBERTS
4 ALAN KELLETT
5 MIKE KELLY
6 DAVE STOCKWELL
7 TOMMY SMALES
8 PETER BIRCHALL
9 PETER MULLINS
10 KEN BOWMAN
11 IAN CRAWSHAW
12 TERRY CLAWSON
13 STAN FEARNLEY
14 MAL BREAKSPEARE
15 PETER GODDARD

Full Back
Right Wing
Right Centre
Left Centre
Left Wing
Stand Off
Scrum Half
Open Prop
Hooker
Min. Prop
Second Row
Second Row
Loose Forward

Substitute Back
Substitute Forward

Referee: F. CLAY (Leeds)
Touch Judges: L. THOMPSON (Red Flag), R. SAVILE (White Flag)

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WAKEFIELD
(Red and Blue)
(Coach - KEN TRAILL)

Goals
Tries	3
Points	9

1 GARY COOPER
2 ~~KEN BAFFY~~ K. HIRST
3 WILLIS RUSHTON
4 NEIL FOX
5 OUPA COETZER
6 HAROLD POYNTON
7 RAY OWEN
8 JOHN BATH
9 BERNARD PRIOR
10 TED CAMPBELL
11 BOB HAIGH
12 GEOFF. CLARKSON
13 DON FOX
14 GEOFF. WRAITH
15 GEOFF. STEELE

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9,660

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In August 1966 all three Fox brothers were in the Trinity ranks. Neil had broken all club records since signing in 1956, Don had signed from Featherstone a year earlier and eldest brother, Peter signed in August 1966 from Hull Kingston Rovers. Unfortunately, they never all played together. Peter debuted at Swinton in a midweek game when Neil and Don missed the trip. This was his only appearance after a broken leg shortened his career

**These are our Boys of 66
who played first team rugby at Wakefield Trinity in the year of 1966**

Tommy Alford : Jack Austin : Edgar Bate : John Bath : Ken Batty : John Bell : Eddie Bowden
 Ted Campbell : Geoff Clarkson : Tony Clough : Gert Coetzer : Brian Cooper : Gary Cooper : Noel Dolton
 Don Fox : Neil Fox : Peter Fox : David Garthwaite : John Godfrey : Tom Gorman : Berwyn Jones
 Bob Haigh : David Hawley : Ken Hirst : Keith Holliday : Terry Hopwood : Michael Hunte
 Don Metcalfe : Ray Owen : Richard Paley : Derek Plumstead : Harold Poynton : Bernard Prior
 Willis Rushton : David Sampson : Malcolm Sampson : Ted Sharpe : George Shepherd
 Geoff Steel : Tony Thomas : Derek Turner : Geoff Wraith

These forty two gentleman were our 'Boys of 66'.

There were seven Great Britain internationals and another two future British test players, five future Trinity coaches and six future Hall of Famers. There had been fourteen debutants, three triallist hookers loaned from other clubs and three sets of brothers.

1966 Debutants & Heritage Numbers

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 715. Eddie Bowden | 722. Ted Sharpe |
| 716. John Bath | 723. Gary Cooper |
| 717. John Godfrey | 724. Peter Fox |
| 718. Tony Clough | 725. Bernard Prior |
| 719. David Hawley | 726. Tommy Alford |
| 720. Michael Hunte | 727. Tom Gorman |
| 721. Richard Paley | 728. Brian Cooper |