

The Dreadnought



The Dreadnought
is the official newsletter of
'Trinity Heritage' ...
... all things Wakefield
Trinity history

Year 4, Volume 6 ... June 2016

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

Since we started 'Trinity Heritage' we have come across various unusual notes, stories and characters over the years, especially pre-war eras, so this newsletters shares some of those unusual 'finds' in the first twenty years of rugby league life up until the First World War (1895-1915)

After the 1895 split, our first representative player was a gentleman called **William 'Bill' Walton**. He was a rugby union international and debuted in a 0-6 defeat to Scotland at Raeburn Place in Edinburgh in March 1894. His heritage number is 271 in the England RU ranks (there are almost 1,400 now). He played for Castleford RU at the time and also represented Yorkshire RU. When he signed for Trinity he debuted in the second game of the season at Huddersfield (14th September 1895) and went down in Trinity history as the club's first rugby league try scorer against Wigan a week later. He gained Yorkshire trial appearances (a big rep honour in the 1890s), followed by twelve Yorkshire appearances between 1895 and 1899, playing in the first ten successive Northern Union county matches. Bill has a Trinity heritage number of 20, played 195 first team games between 1895 and 1907 but he also had four seasons playing for Pontefract in between 1901 and 1905.



'Fast-forward' one hundred and ten years and his great-great grandson signed and played for Trinity. He was Kyle Trout (heritage no. 1,315) who signed from Stanley Rangers in 2012 playing 25 first team games before moving to Dewsbury in 2015

Suspended for Swearing

If we think the decisions of the disciplinary board are a little unjust these days, an incident in 1901 would have sent the forums into overdrive (if they had them a hundred years ago). Winger, **Horace Price**, who was the equivalent of Tom Johnstone a hundred years ago with his pace and try scoring skills, was injured and sitting in the stand. He was caught swearing whilst sitting in the stands, and suspended for two weeks!

In April 1903, Trinity played Stockport away, losing 2-3 but they blamed it on the fact that they had to walk from the train station to the ground. Trinity appealed to the Northern Union as Stockport should have provided a wagonette for their travel. Trinity won the appeal and Stockport were fined £1!

Consecutive Appearances

Harry Wilkinson holds the club record for consecutive appearances with 96 between 1939 and 1942, but the first player to fifty consecutive appearances was Tommy Howell (55, 1896-98).

These were increased by:
64: Joe Taylor (1909-11)
70: Harry Field (1933-35)
78: Sam Lee (1937-39)

Early historical attendance records are always difficult to find as no official figures were kept, apart from Challenge Cup games. In the early 1900s newspaper reporters looked around the ground and decided on the figure between them, then decided attendance figures. For a visit of Leeds in October 1904, the Wakefield reporters 'guessed' at 6,000, the Leeds reporters guessed at 10,000 ... so they agreed on 7,500!

Fined

In October 1904, the train to Wigan was late so Trinity arrived at the ground late with a subsequent late kick off. The Northern Union still fined Trinity twenty shillings for arriving late!

Before 'The Dreadnoughts' nickname, Trinity were nicknamed "The Old Brigade"

On Strike

In the summer of 1905 the whole Trinity backline went on strike over pay. When the season started four still had not signed on and the club sent the reserve team 'backline' to Hull KR, with two debutants. They lost 5-17 and the pay issues were sorted in a couple of days. The following week they all returned and lost 0-16 at Leeds so the club put some reserves back in, a week later (2-2 draw with Bradford)

Trinity's first 'star centre', Tommy Howell (heritage number 3) was suspended for an entire season in 1905-06, for signing for too many teams. Although he had left Trinity in 1900 he was on Eastmoor's books but 'secretly' signed for Pontefract, then Castleford, then Outwood ... but was suspended when 'found out'

Reserves Withdraw from the League

In 1905 Trinity's reserves were playing in the Wakefield & District League but withdrew after two incidents in successive weeks. In October, winger Al Ward was heading for the line to score at Castleford Parish Church when a spectator chased him and tackled him.

A week later there was a mass brawl at Sharlston when spectators entered the field and attacked the players, who were subsequently injured

1906 was the first reported Wakefield & District Cup Final at Belle Vue when Sharlston Rovers defeated Castleford Half Acre, 8-5. Two years later Felkirk won the trophy, defeating Half Acres and the game saw eight sent off, five from the Castleford team

Nine Men at Keighley

The Trinity records of 1907-08 showed that Trinity played Keighley, away on 11th January 1908 with only nine men. The story went that there were severe snowstorms in Wakefield and the Trinity players 'presumed' the game was off, but no one checked with Keighley where it had stopped snowing hours earlier. Thus star men, Jimmy Metcalfe, Ernest Bennett, Billie Lynch and George Taylor went home. Eleven players still decided to travel on the train and when they arrived were advised the game was still on! Then two further players, Tommy Newbould and Herbert Kershaw decided playing with eleven men was 'ridiculous' and refused to play! Thus, Trinity entered the field with nine men, playing with three forwards ... and only lost 10-33

In 1908 Trinity were asked to 'spread the word' of rugby league in London and played Warrington in a friendly at the Memorial Grounds in West Ham, winning 11-6. This was the home to 'The Hammers' before they moved to Upton Park in 1904



A 1908 press photo of captain, Harry Slater playing at Hull in a 1908 Challenge Cup tie

1909 Challenge Cup semi final

In 1909 Trinity reached the Challenge Cup semi final against Wigan and were due to play on a Saturday afternoon in April. But, in controversial scenes the Northern Union made them play their league game at Salford the night before. They sent their full team who 'hardly made a tackle all night' in a 0-53 loss.

They then returned home on the train, were back on the train in the morning to Broughton near Manchester and had the 'last laugh' beating the 'invincible' Wigan, 14-2 and won the cup a fortnight later.

(Note: Wigan were also made to play St Helens on the Friday night, too, losing 5-8)

WAKEFIELD TRINITY.		
	Height. ft. in.	Weight. st. lbs.
Full-back.		
J. Metcalfe	5-2½	13-11
Three-quarters.		
E. W. Bennett	5-7	11
W. Lynch	5-10	13
E. Sidwell	5-7	10-8
W. G. Simpson	5-5½	10
D. Holmes	5-8	11-7
Half-backs.		
H. Slater (captain)	5-5½	10-4
T. H. Newbould	5-8	12
Forwards.		
A. K. Croesland	5-8½	14-7
J. Auton	5-6½	11-12
G. Taylor	5-9	13-12
J. Walton	5-8	13
H. Kershaw	5-8	12
H. Beaumont	5-10	13-7
J. Taylor	5-10	11-7
P. Ensworth	6-0	14

The playing statistics of the 1909 Trinity cup final squad

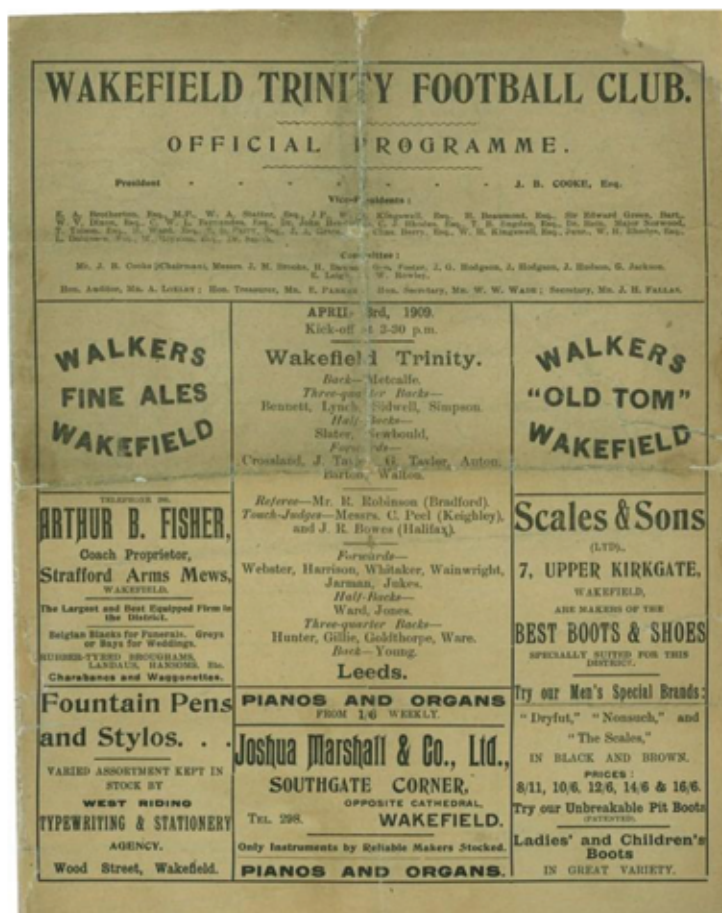
In 1909 Trinity's Reserves were playing in the Wakefield, Dewsbury and District League alongside Outwood Church, Normanton, Castleford, Horbury Parish Church, Dewsbury Reserves, Streethouse Red Rose, Kinsley, Felkirk, Netherton United and Normanton St Johns

Harry Beaumont

Harry 'Dickie' Beaumont was a popular forward in the early 1900s having signed from Featherstone in 1901. Over the next eight years he played 203 first team games and gained a reputation of being a 'hardman' in the hooking role; but after a game at Halifax in November 1909 he returned home unwell.

He missed a couple of training sessions and was admitted to hospital.

No one at Trinity worried too much but within a month he had passed away in Featherstone with influenza. He was 30 years old and another sad part to the story was that his wife had died a short time earlier and three young children were left orphaned.



One of the earliest Trinity programmes I have come across
Trinity v Leeds, April 1909 (won 15-12)

Although Trinity were going well in the league in 1911 an injury crisis loomed at Christmas after games with Bradford (23rd Dec) and Dewsbury (Christmas Day) and numerous changes were made for the Boxing Day trip to Huddersfield, with Jack Wild (second row) on the wing and Arthur Burton (second row) at stand off. Added to this, internationals, Tommy Newbould and Herbert Kershaw refused to play games on two successive days. At the last minute a further player pulled out and loose forward, Harry Smailes was rushed across to Fartown to make his debut, after playing in the reserves against Huddersfield, in the morning. Trinity lost 5-6!

After this, Newbould and Kershaw went 'on strike' as they wanted thirty shillings like everyone else, as they were in the squad for the Huddersfield game, despite not playing. This was refused, they went on strike and then the club suspended them. I bet there was more to this story!