

## Attendances

The 1960s were great years for big crowds at Belle Vue with regular five figure crowds and a total of seven 20,000+ attendances crammed into the ground.

The pre-war record, and present crowd record was 37,906 when Leeds and Huddersfield played the RL Challenge Cup semi final in April 1936. The record for a Trinity home game was the 1921 visit of Huddersfield when 30,676 saw the Challenge Cup first round tie. These were two of four 30,000+ Belle Vue attendances and there were another eleven 20,000+ pre-war attendances.

In the post-war period there were six 20,000+ attendances in both the 1940s and 1950s, all but two being big cup games, and by the time the 1960s came round there had been twenty six attendances of 20,000 or more in Belle Vue's history.

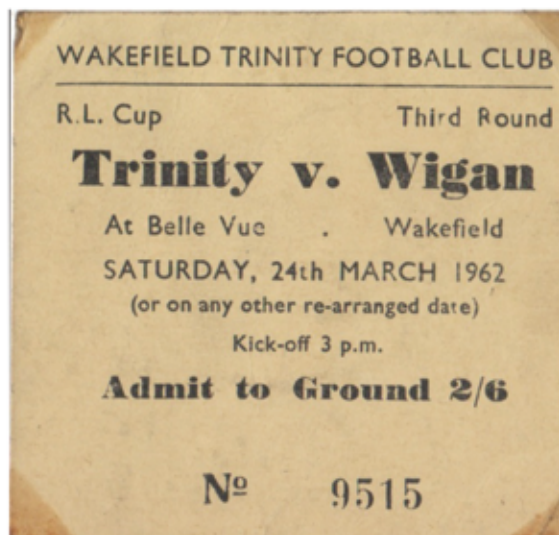
The increased attendances were certainly helped by the quality of play on the field and the attendances started to flock back to Belle Vue as the victories and trophies increased. Plus, many Yorkshire sporting fans had watched football through the 1950s but with Leeds United FC being relegated in 1960 and playing poor football until promotion in 1964, many local fans travelled down to Belle Vue again.

Others factors included regular Saturday 3pm kick offs, no, or limited, television, regular buses and train services and the weather. Average entrance fees were 2/6 ground entrance (approximately 12p in modern day money), 5/0 in the Main Stand (approx. 25p), 4/6 in the East Stand (centre) and 3/6 in the East Stand (ends). This was when the average wage for local industry was £4 per week.

Before Christmas 1959, the season's largest attendance was 18,789 when St Helens visited in a top of the table clash in September, which remained the top in the season. Challenge Cup games always brought record attendances but, although Trinity won the cup in 1960, all their games were played away from Belle Vue with record crowds at St Helens (30,000), Widnes (18,000) and Whitehaven (18,600). Over 18,000 attended the home games against Australia, Featherstone and Hull (play offs).

The following season saw an all-ticket 26,000 attend the Wigan cup game, which Trinity lost 0-2 and seven months later, 21,362 attended the league game with Leeds in September 1961. 1961-62 was the 'boom' season in the 1960s for attendances with 11,633 (York), 10,942 (Bradford), 13,278 (Hull), 12,167 (York, cup), 16,558 (New Zealand), 11,904 (Swinton) and 12,696 (St.Helens) all big pre-Christmas crowds. Trinity were hoping for a home cup draw to keep the average up and the first round draw brought Warrington to Belle Vue and a 19,330 crowd, the season's best.

When Wigan came to Belle Vue for the March league game the two teams were the top two in the league ... and a phenomenal 27,614 turned up! New turnstiles were open on the Doncaster Road end this was a new post-war ground record. As luck would have it, four away games followed and then Wigan were drawn at home in the cup quarter final and the record was smashed again when 28,254 turned up in all-ticket game. The total receipts of £4,918-7-6 were also a club record.



### 20,000+ attendances at Belle Vue in the 1960s

1	28,736	Castleford v Widnes	RLCC SF, replay	22nd April 1964
2	28,254	Trinity v Wigan	RLCC Rd3 (QF)	23rd April 1962
3	27,614	Trinity v Wigan	League Game	24th February 1962
4	26,000	Trinity v Wigan	RLCC Rd2	25th February 1961
5	21,362	Trinity v Leeds	League Game	23rd September 1961
6	20,820	Trinity v Hunslet	RLCC Rd1, replay	12th February 1964
7	20,317	Trinity v St.Helens	RL Challenge Cup Rd1	26th February 1966

In 1962-63 there were five, five-figure attendances with 18,718 for the visit of York in the 1963 Cup quarter final replay just topping the 17,995 visit of Leeds although it was a bad winter, weather-wise, with Trinity often playing three games a week in the last two months of the season, which stretched to June.

As the 1960s progressed, crowds in general started to decrease and there were only four, five-figure attendances in 1963-64. 15,821 attended the Kangaroo tour match and this was topped by another Challenge Cup replay when 20,820 saw Hunslet defeat Trinity 14-7. The Challenge Cup then brought Belle Vue's new post-war attendance record when Castleford played Widnes in a semi final replay in March 1964. The attendance was 28,736 with receipts of £5,309 also a new record, Trinity being granted 10% of the takings by the RFL.

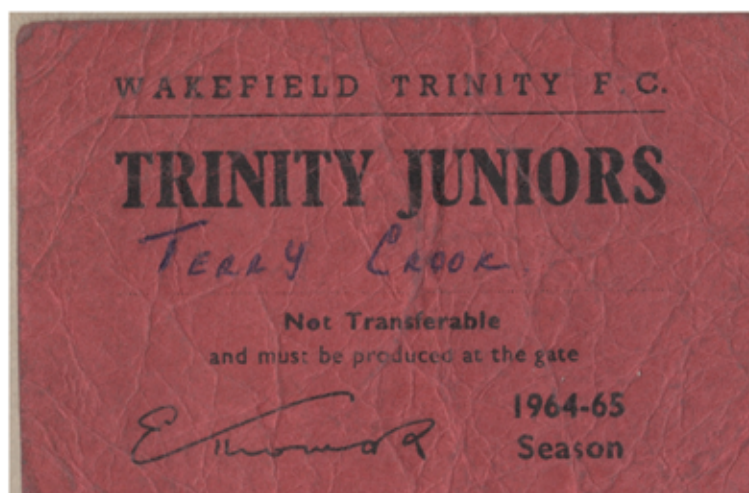
A season later, 1964-65, and 12,986 (Blackpool, cup) and 15,314 for the visit of Castleford were the only five figure crowds.

The 20,317 that attended the cup first round clash with St Helens in February 1966 was the last ever 20,000+ attendance at Belle Vue and it is highly unlikely that it will ever be repeated again.

Despite Trinity being Champions in 1967 and 1968, attendances were falling and 12,735 (Leeds in March 1967) and 19,115 (Castleford in cup quarter final in March 1968) were the season's best. Even the 1968 Championship semi final against Wigan, only attracted 10,896 and the decade finished with 11,721 for the Bradford cup replay in February 1969.

### 1960s Season-by-Season Attendance Records

Season	Attendance	Opposition	Competition	Date
1960-61	26,000	Wigan	RLCC Rd2	25th February 1961
1961-62	28,254	Wigan	RLCC Rd3	24th March 1962
1962-63	18,718	York	RLCC Rd3 replay	8th April 1963
1963-64	20,820	Hunslet	RLCC Rd1 replay	12th February 1964
1964-65	15,314	Castleford	League	3rd April 1965
1965-66	20,317	St.Helens	RLCC Rd1	26th February 1966
1966-67	12,735	Leeds	League	27th March 1967
1967-68	19,115	Castleford	RLCC Rd3	16th March 1968
1968-69	11,721	Bradford Northern	RLCC Rd2 replay	23rd February 1969



Trinity Junior Season ticket 1964-65  
 (Courtesy of Terry Crook)



**Trinity 'A' team 1960-61**

Back Row: Frank Moore, Albert Nunn, Eric Payne, Geoff Steel, David Blakeley, Des McKeown, Don Metcalfe, Maurice Sudell  
 Front Row: Stan Smith, Eric Lockwood, Roy Hawksley, Tony Thomas, Ken Hirst

In 1960-61 season the Trinity 'A' team won the League Championship and League (league leaders) double.  
 The above team was the team that defeated Halifax 'A' in the  
 Yorkshire Senior Competition Championship Final (Top Four Play Offs)

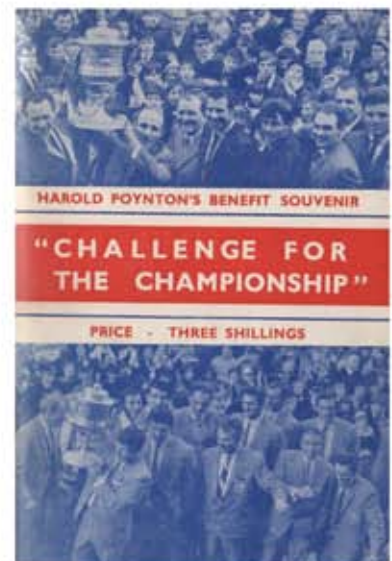
**Testimonials & Benefits**



**Keith Holliday  
1952-62**



**Neil Fox  
1956-66**



**Harold Poynton  
1958-68**

## Geoff Oakes ... 1960s Unsung Hero

Geoff Oakes earned two Challenge Cup winners medals in his time in the Trinity front row, which saw him amass 193 first team appearances in his eight years at Belle Vue. A tall, rangy hooker he also caught the initial eye of the international selectors in his time at Trinity.

Geoff was brought up in the Belle Vue area of Wakefield and often watched the team in the 1940s when Teall, Perry, Rylance, Goodfellow and Bratley wore the red and blue jersey. Soccer was Geoff's initial pastime and he did not start playing rugby league until he was aged sixteen.

His introduction to the game came when he ventured to Belle Vue to train with the juniors when he had nothing else to do one day. He did not play a great deal initially as he did not know what the positions were, but then one weekend the hooker 'cried off' and Geoff was given the hookers jersey at Featherstone. He then knew why the hooker had 'cried off' when Featherstone 'gave them what-for' for an hour! That's how he became a hooker!

So Geoff became a Trinity Junior and over the next few years played in the under 18s, gaining a couple of Yorkshire Junior caps against Lancashire and Cumberland (at Featherstone) in 1955. He signed professional forms in 1956 and playing for a couple of years in the reserves before making his first team debut in February 1958.

Geoff's debut was against St.Helens at Belle Vue on 1<sup>st</sup> February 1958; just five weeks after the Saints had humiliated Trinity at Knowsley Road 52-5 with Tom van Vollenhoven crossing for six tries. It also saw the debut of young stand off, Harold Poynton aswell as tough Cumbrian and international forward, Reg Parker. The young Trinity team totally outplayed the Saints who were in the top four at the time, winning 17-12.

Geoff replaced John 'Joby' Shaw in the front row and played the next twelve matches. This included Wigan in only his fourth first team game when 28,000 flocked into Belle Vue for a Challenge Cup third round game. He finished his first season with thirteen first team appearances.

Over the next couple of years, Geoff more than held his own in the hooking role, playing almost seventy games. 'Joby' Shaw started the 1958-59 season at hooker, but after a home defeat against Leeds in October, Geoff was given the hookers jersey again which also coincided with Don Vines' debut. 'Joby' returned for four games, which included the Yorkshire Cup Final defeat to Leeds, but then was sold to Halifax which gave Geoff the hookers role again and apart from five games missed, played the rest of the season. Two of these included tough cup games against Hull when Geoff suffered a serious nose injury in the Belle Vue replay watched by 22,000. 1958-59 also saw Geoff pick up his first winners medal when Trinity topped the Yorkshire League Championship.

The following season, Geoff continued with his fine form, which saw him finish with another two winners medals. He scored his first ever Trinity try against Bramley in December 1959 (in his 60<sup>th</sup> game) aswell as being selected for the Great Britain squad for the French tests. He was hooker in the 'shadow squad', which meant he did not travel with the squad, but awaited any injuries; but Geoff had to stay at home whilst Hull's Tommy Harris played injured! To finish 1959 on a high, Geoff out-hooked Kangaroo great, Ian Walsh, when Australia were defeated 20-10 at Belle Vue in the Kangaroo tour game.

The great cup run of 1960 saw Geoff play at St.Helens (in front of 30,000) and Widnes but missed the Whitehaven quarter final with a sprained ankle, but he was back for the semi final against Featherstone in front of another massive crowd of over 55,000. He tasted Wembley victory with a fine display in Trinity's 38-5 victory over Hull but tasted defeat the following week in Trinity's very first RL Championship Final, over 80,000 seeing Wigan take the trophy at Odsal. The Yorkshire League Championship Trophy was also secured again.

Success followed in 1960-61 with Geoff's first County Cup winners medal after Huddersfield were defeated 16-10 in the Yorkshire Cup Final. He was an ever present until rested for a midweek Doncaster game in January 1961, which gave Roy Hawksley his debut and there was cup disappointment at the second round when 26,000 saw Wigan knock Trinity out of the cup, 2-0.

The following season was a successful one for Trinity with three trophies being won, but in the off-season, Milan Kosanovic was signed from Bradford which reduced Geoff's first team appearances to fourteen, but included a home win over Wigan with 27,614 in attendance (still the biggest ever league attendance at Belle Vue) and the Wembley cup final win over Huddersfield (12-6). He scored his only season try in a 36-10 home win over Swinton. Despite his reduced appearances throughout the season, his name was still mentioned when the Great Britain tour squad was being selected but he lost out to Bill Sayer (Wigan) and 'Joby' Shaw.



Sixteen games followed for Geoff in 1962-63, which saw Trinity win the Challenge Cup for the third time in four seasons, Geoff missing the final; and seventeen games the year after (1963-64) before a neck injury forced him on the sidelines for many months. His last Trinity game in his first spell was a home, 20-10 victory over Widnes on 29<sup>th</sup> April 1964.



A Trinity team picture from an away match at Hunslet on 7<sup>th</sup> September 1963

Back Row: Geoff Oakes, Jack Wilkinson,  
Bob Haigh, Eric Payne, David Sampson,  
Keith Holliday, Gerry Round  
Front Row: Gert Coetzer, Don Vines, Derek Turner,  
Ian Brooke, Ken Hirst, Colin Greenwood

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This was a Yorkshire Cup tie, won 9-4 at Parkside with Hirst scoring a try and Payne kicking three goals. Neil Fox, Harold Poynton and Brian Briggs were all missing from the team on the day

Geoff contemplated retirement in the summer of 1964. He initially talked to Featherstone Rovers, but could not agree terms, so instead moved across the Pennines and signed for Warrington in November 1964, making his debut at Blackpool Borough on 21<sup>st</sup> November and was in the 'Wire' front row that came to Belle Vue two months later and lost 0-2. Warrington finished fifth in the final league table before bowing out of the play offs with an 8-17 defeat at Trinity, although Geoff did not play here. Warrington also had a good cup run in 1965 but went agonisingly close to the semi finals until Swinton won 11-10 at Wilderspool in the quarter finals, in front of almost 20,000, with Geoff scoring his only try for the club in the first half.

The following season, Geoff was in the front row, alongside giant props, Bill Payne and Charlie Winslade as Warrington beat Rochdale Hornets, 16-5, in the 1965 Lancashire Cup Final, at St.Helens' Knowsley Road. Geoff played a total of forty eight games (one try) at Warrington, playing his last game on 28<sup>th</sup> September 1966, at Wigan in an 7-16 loss

Geoff returned to Belle Vue for the 1967-68 season, making his 'second debut' at Hull KR on 29<sup>th</sup> September (lost 7-25). He shared the hooking role with George Shepherd and Bernard Prior throughout the season and still managed twenty seven appearances, but a broken leg in the home game against St.Helens finished his season, and his career, at Belle Vue (seen on the right, being carried off by Ken Traill and Paddy Armour). This meant his Trinity debut and finale were both against the Saints.

The Trinity team on Geoff's 193<sup>rd</sup>, and final, Trinity first team appearance, in a 23-3 win, was:  
Gary Cooper, David Garthwaite, Gert Coetzer, Neil Fox, Ken Batty,  
Richard Paley, Joe Bonnar, David Jeanes, Geoff Oakes,  
Ted Campbell, Matt McLeod, Bob Haigh, Gerry Round,  
Subs: Eddie McDonagh and George Shepherd.

His injury forced him to miss the two end of season finals ('Watersplash' Challenge Cup Final and RL Championship Final victory), although he received his medals as part of the squads.

Despite an offer to join Don Fox at Batley, Geoff decided to retire at the end of the 1967-68 season, seven appearances short of two hundred for the club.

It is interesting to note, that Geoff was injured so much in the 1960s, that he married his hospital physiotherapist Margaret Wainwright!

