

The Dreadnought



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

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Welcome to the April 2016 edition of the 'Dreadnought'.

With all the hype over tries scored over the Easter period and the exploits of young winger, Tom Johnstone, we thought we would take a look at the try scoring heroes and legends and their exploits over the years ... TRIES! TRIES! TRIES!

We all have our favourite Trinity tries over the years. It could be Ken Rollin's superb individual effort at Wembley in 1960, Andrew Fletcher's match winning effort in the 1979 RL Challenge Cup semi final at Headingley or Francis Stephenson's Grand Final winning try in 1998 that took us into Super League. There are thousands and we all have our favourite but who are our top try scorers, who holds the records and who has the best strike rate ... read on

ALL-TIME TOP TRY SCORERS

	PLAYER	TOTAL TRIES	SEASONS PLAYED
1	Neil Fox	272	1957-69, 70-74
2	David Topliss	195	1968-81, 87-88
3	Fred Smith	188	1955-65
4	Ernest Bennett	184	1899-1914
5	Dennis Boocker	127	1947-54
6	Gert Coetzer	122	1962-68
7	Herbert Goodfellow	116	1933-51
8	David Smith	115	1971-76
9	Arthur Fletcher	114	1944-56
10=	Tommy Poynton	111	1906-15
10=	Andy Mason	111	1987-93
12	Ted Bateson	110	1925-33
13	Ken Hirst	100	1955-68

Note: Only 13 players have scored 100 tries or more



Neil Fox on his way to scoring one of his 272, club record tries at Wembley in 1960

- **Neil Fox** needs no introduction. The Sharlston born, county and international centre holds the club's tries, goals and points scoring records and played for over sixteen years at the club, gaining twelve winners medals, was an inaugural Hall of Famer in 2014 aswell as RL Hall of Famer
- **David Topliss** is also a club legend and Hall of Famer. Normanton born, he represented the club for fourteen years, won county and international caps, the 1979 Lance Todd Trophy, toured with the 1979 GB Lions and coached the club to the 1992 Yorkshire Cup Final
- **Fred Smith** earned eight winners medals in his ten year Trinity career, breaking the club's 'tries-in-a-match' and 'tries-in-a-season' records along the way. He was the club's top try scorer in history until Neil Fox passed it in 1965
- **Ernest Bennett** was one of the club's first legends scoring twice as many tries as the next player in the early part of the century. He won five winners medals in his fifteen year Trinity career. As with many other pre-Great War stars, his try scoring exploits were unknown until recent research
- **Dennis Boocker** was the club's first direct signing from Australia, in 1947, and developed into post-war club hero. A winger with outstanding ability and crowd appeal, he scored the majority of his 127 tries with a 'swan dive' over the line
- **Gert 'Oupa' Coetzer** scored 122 tries in less than two hundred appearances. The South African speedster won five medals, including one of only five players to win the Challenge Cup (1963) and Championship (1967 & 1968)
- **Herbert Goodfellow** became the fourth player from Sharlston to enter the club's Hall of Fame in 2015. The international scrum half lies seventh on the club's all-time appearance list with 434 and is the club's highest try scoring, non-winger
- **David Smith** equaled the 'tries-in-a-season' record when he scored his 38th season try at Warrington in May 1974. The Shaw Cross born wingman also represented Yorkshire and gained an England appearance in 1975
- **Arthur Fletcher** was a top class half back in the early post-war years and when he retired in 1956 he was fourth on this list of the club's top try scorers. He won three Yorkshire Cup winners medals and is one of only twenty one players to play more than three hundred club appearances
- **Tommy Poynton** was a slightly built centre that developed into one of Trinity's top pre-war players. He won four winners medals including the 1909 Challenge Cup aswell as picking up Yorkshire and England honours. Severe injuries in the First World War ended his career
- **Andy Mason** was an ex-rugby union centre who arrived from Leeds in 1987, scoring 111 tries in his seven years at the club, gaining Yorkshire county honours along the way
- **Ted Bateson** was a real all-rounder who played cricket for Lancashire 2nds and football for Blackburn Rovers before scoring 110 tries for Trinity in his eight seasons with the club
- **Ken Hirst** was sixteen years old when he made his Trinity debut against the 1956 Australian tourists. He won RL Challenge Cup (1962) and RL Championship (1967) winners medals over the next thirteen years at the club

MOST TRIES in a SEASON

	PLAYER	TOTAL	SEASON
1=	Fred Smith	38	1959-60
1=	David Smith	38	1973-74
3	Fred Smith	37	1958-59
4	Alan Skene	35	1959-60
5	Billie Simpson	34	1910-11
6=	Dennis Boocker	32	1953-54
6=	Neil Fox	32	1957-58
8	Keith Slater	31	1970-71
9=	Freddie Smart	30	1931-32
9=	Fred Smith	30	1956-57
9=	Neil Fox	30	1959-60
9=	Jan Prinsloo	30	1961-62
13=	Gert Coetzer	29	1963-64
13=	David Topliss	29	1972-73



Fred Smith



David Smith



Alan Skene

BILLIE SIMPSON

Up until 2012, no one had really heard of winger, Billie Simpson and he certainly was not in any Trinity record books. The reason for this is that up until a couple of years ago, Trinity's records only went back to 1912 and Simpson's exploits came a couple of years earlier.

Freddie Smart was always recorded as the first Trinity player to score 30 tries in 1931-32. Twenty two years later, historians noted that **Dennis Boocker** broke this record, scoring 32 in 1953-54. **Neil Fox** then equaled this total in 1957-58, before **Fred Smith** went five better, scoring 37 in in 1958-59.

In fact, improved research records have now found out that **Billie Simpson** actually scored 34 tries in 1910-11, scoring three hat tricks along the way. Thus he held the Trinity 'tries-in-a-season' record for 48 years until **Fred Smith** scored his 37 in 1959. The new records wiped Smart, Boocker and Fox from the record books.

The club signed **William Gordon 'Billie' Simpson** in October 1906, as a young 18 year old wingman from the Gomersal junior club, a town between Birstall and Cleckheaton. He started with the Trinity reserves in the Wakefield & District Junior League making his first appearance in a controversial match with Charlston when a mass brawl ensued after the crowd invaded the field.

His first team appearance came a month later, playing on the wing in a 0-20 home loss to Broughton Rangers on 24th November 1906. The first of his 97 club tries came a month later in a 31-3 beating of York at Belle Vue three days before Christmas. He finished his first season with seventeen appearances and seven tries, which included a fine hat trick, in a 35-6 defeat of Bramley, at Belle Vue, in March 1907.

Niggling injuries kept his appearances to just nine in 1907-08 but he crossed the line another seven times including five in the last three games of the season, and a second club hat trick in the last match of the season at home to Barrow.

After missing the first five games of the following season through injury, having been replaced by new signing, Joseph Woodhall, he soon cemented his place on the left wing in Trinity's greatest season of the Northern Union era. It started with a 20-13 victory over the touring Australian Kangaroos with the legendary Dally Messenger, outstanding, in the tourist's backline and a fourth placed league position by Christmas 1908. A successful cup run saw Simpson on the wing in victories over Bradford, Leigh and Hunslet before an 'against-the-odds' 14-2 semi final victory over Wigan. The last game of the season saw Simpson score the final try in a 17-0 victory over Hull to win the club's first NU Challenge Cup. Four weeks before the final, Billie scored four of Trinity's fourteen tries in a 67-10 victory over Bramley. This equaled the club's 'tries-in-a -match' record.

Another ten tries in thirty eight games followed in 1909-10 before his record breaking 1910-11 season. He won his second medal with the 1909-10 Yorkshire League Championship.



Billie scored eleven tries in the first eight games of the season, including a hat trick against Hull and a try on his hundredth club appearance at home to Bradford. He then scored Trinity's winning try in the 1910 Yorkshire Cup Final, an 8-2 win over Huddersfield at Headingley. By the end of the year he had already scored twenty tries and he beat the previous 'tries-in-a-season' record (Ernest Bennett's 24 in 1903-04 which was equaled by Tommy Poynton in 1909-10) by 4th February. Hat tricks followed at St Helens and Leeds and he continued on his record breaking run, finishing the season on a massive thirty four tries, ten more than the previous record. In all he played in 38 of Trinity's 39 matches throughout the season along with his fourth winners medal, the Yorkshire League Championship for the second successive season. Trinity also reached their second successive RL Championship semi final, losing out at Oldham for the second successive season.

At this time, the 1911 census noted Billie as being a twenty three boot maker, living with his deaf, Scottish mother, Jane and two sisters at 5, Croft Terrace in Gomersal, but within a year he was to marry and move to Wakefield, living in Benjamin Street (a street off Balne Lane behind the prison) and working as a boot repairer at Wakefield Co-op.

The following season, Billie started as he had finished the previous one with a hat trick against Wigan and finished top try scorer, again with twenty four, in forty games. In his last seventy eight games, Billie had scored fifty eight tries; a remarkable record.

Tragedy struck the following season.

Billie suffered a serious injury in the first game of the season at home to Bramley (7th September). In the last few minutes he was injured in a tackle and carried from the field with abdominal injuries. The committee ordered a cab to take him home, but he was later feeling seriously unwell and was admitted to Clayton Hospital with, an initial diagnosis of broken ribs but later found as a ruptured kidney. It was so serious that they thought he was going to die, and his family, as well as the Trinity committee was by his bedside and the chaplain was called. The seriousness of his injuries eased over the next few days, but he remained in hospital for five weeks.

Initial thoughts were that he would not play again but he was sidelined for almost seven months, returning to the first team, at Hunslet, the following March, but he would only play another five further games this season, followed by another two in 1913-14. He caused a stir when he demanded first team money when returning in the reserves but he never fully recovered from his injuries, having to retire in September 1913. The last of his 182 appearances came in the second match of the 1913-14 season, an 11-3 victory over Halifax at Belle Vue on 13th September 1913.

On his retirement, his 182 games saw him seventeenth on the club's all-time appearance list, his 97 tries, including seven hat tricks, saw him second on the all-time try scoring lists and over a hundred years later he lies fourteenth on the club's all-time try scorers lists, and there are still only three players in the club's history to score more tries in a single season. He was awarded a heritage number of 166.

There was a sad postscript to Billie Simpson's life. A year after retiring he volunteered for the army in the First World War, and joined the East Yorkshire Regiment but would die on the battlefields of Flanders on 20th September 1914.

As noted, Billie Simpson's name will live on in the Trinity history books, as his tries-in-a-season record of 34 would remain in the Trinity record books until broken by Fred Smith in 1958-59.

A true class wingman and club hero!

MOST TRIES in a SEASON (Progressive)

TOTAL	PLAYER	SEASON
24	Ernest Bennett	1903-04
24=	Tommy Poynton	1909-10
34	Billie Simpson	1910-11
37	Fred Smith	1958-59
38	Fred Smith	1959-60
38=	David Smith	1973-74

Notes:

Ernest Bennett was the first player to score 20 tries in a season (1903-04)

Billie Simpson was the first player to score 30 tries in a season (1910-11)

MOST TRIES in a GAME

TOTAL	PLAYER	GAME	DATE
7	Fred Smith	v Keighley (H)	25 th April 1959
7	Keith Slater	v Hunslet (H)	6 th February 1971
6	Ted Bateson	v Castleford (H)	3 rd March 1928
6	Neil Fox	v Doncaster (H)	29 th March 1958
6	Jan Prinsloo	v Bradford N (A)	14 th October 1961
5	Stevie Ray	v Bradford N (H) <i>debut</i>	10 th November 1928
5	Len Bratley	v Huddersfield (H)	19 th April 1938
5	Neil Fox	v Workington T (H)	25 th October 1958
5	Gert Coetzer	v Doncaster (H)	31 st March 1964
5	Gert Coetzer	v Batley (A)	15 th April 1964
5	Gert Coetzer	v Castleford (H)	3 rd April 1965
5	Andy Wilson	v Highfield (H) Cup	27 th October 1992
5	Ben Jeffries	v Chorley (A) Cup	27 th February 2004

Note: Five tries, or more, have been scored on twelve occasions in a single game



Gert 'Oupa' Coetzer

Try Scoring feats:

- Trinity's first ever try scorer was **Bill Walton** who scored in Trinity's home game with Wigan on 21st September 1895 (Trinity's third ever RL game)
- The first player to score a hat trick of tries was Welshman, **Horace Price**, away at Manningham on 17th October 1896
- The first player to score 100 tries for the club was winger, **Ernest Bennett**. He achieved this feat with his second try in the home victory over Bramley on 9th March 1907
- The first player to score four tries in a single game was **Tommy Newbould** in the home win over Lancaster on 18th April 1903
- **Ted Bateson** was the first player to score five and six tries in a single game, against Castleford, at Belle Vue, on 3rd March 1928
- **Stevie Ray** recorded the remarkable feat of scoring five tries on his debut on 10th November 1928. He was still on trial from Bath RU as was signed immediately!
- Of the thirteen players in the '100 Club', seven are wingers, three are centres, two are stand off halves and one is a scrum half
- **Neil Fox** is the only player to score more than 200 club tries; he reached this feat on 8th October 1966 in the home tie with Hunslet. He scored his 100th at Belle Vue, the third of his hat trick tries against Bramley on 19th December 1959
- **Len Bratley** is Trinity's top try scoring forward. He scored 94 in his career (1937-49)
- **Len Bratley** is also Trinity's top forward try scorer for tries-in-a-season, scoring 25 in 1945-46
- The first Trinity forward to score a hat trick of tries was **Joe Taylor** against Bramley on 2nd April 1907. The second was **Bill Horton**, at Rochdale on 3rd April 1926
- **Len Bratley** is also the first forward to score four, and five, tries in a game, v Huddersfield on 19th April 1938. In Trinity's history, only two other forwards have scored four tries in a game, both from overseas. **Darren Fritz** (v Highfield, 27th October 1992) and **David Solomona** (v London, 6th June 2004)
- Most tries in a season in the Super League era is **Sid Domic** with 25 in 2004
- Top try scorer in the Super League era is **Ben Jeffries** with 77. Others with 50+ are **Jamie Rooney** (68) and **Jason Demetriou** (51)
- The last player to reach the '100 try' milestone was **Andy Mason**. He reached this at Hull on 7th November 1993
- On the representative scene, **Jonathon Parkin** once scored five tries for Yorkshire, against Cumberland at Halifax on 12th November 1921. Parkin is also the only Trinity player to score a test match hat trick for Great Britain (v New Zealand, 31st July 1920, 1st Test in Auckland)
- **Derek Turner** once scored a Great Britain try hat trick, against Toowoomba whilst on the 1962 Lions Tour in Australia. **Neil Fox** scored four tries, twice, on the same tour (v Northern NSW and NZ Maoris)

TOP STRIKE RATES (Most Tries per Appearances)

TOTAL	Player	Strike Rate	Tries / Appearances	Career
1	Jan Prinsloo	93.75	45 tries in 48 games	1961-62
2	Ken Hirst	70.42	100 tries in 142 games	1955-68
3	Fred Smith	70.41	188 tries in 267 games	1955-65
4	Keith Slater	69.49	82 tries in 118 games	1968-72
5	Damien Blanch	69.23	36 tries in 52 games	2008-10
6	Ronnie Copley	68.65	46 tries in 67 games	1943-46
7	David Smith	67.64	115 tries in 170 games	1971-76
8	Johnny Duggan	64.81	70 tries in 108 games	1948-52
9	Ted Bateson	64.70	110 tries in 170 games	1925-33
10	Sid Domic	64.70	33 tries in 51 games	2004-05
11	Gert Coetzer	63.87	122 tries in 191 games	1962-68
12	John Leighton Davies	63.63	42 games in 66 games	1948-51
13	Fred Perry	63.43	85 tries in 134 games	1943-48
14	Eric Cooper	60.25	94 tries in 156 games	1953-58

Notes:

The above notes the club's greatest try scorers per appearance

Strike rate is tries per hundred games

Minimum of 30 tries



Tom Johnstone v Huddersfield, Good Friday 2016

At the time of writing (April 2016), winger Tom Johnstone has scored 15 tries in 22 games (68.18)
and would lie in 7th place on the above table