

**Dai Maidment** was a back row forward who stayed six years and gained an international cap in 1928 as well as four Glamorgan & Monmouthshire county appearances between 1927 and 1930. He scored twenty tries in his career including a memorable hat trick at home to Warrington in October 1927. **Jenkyn Waters** was a hooker who debuted alongside **Tom Davies** at home to Bradford Northern in September 1926. He scored six tries in his two years at the club. Davies stayed the longest. He was a strong running centre who scored twenty seven tries in his six years. He developed into a reliable centre before moving to Keighley.

Four of the Welshmen, Davies, Maidment, Waters and Coles played against the 1926 touring Kiwis, Trinity losing 24-29, with Davies scoring a brace of tries, with Jones, Davies and Maidment also playing against the 1929 touring Australian Kangaroos, Trinity winning 14-5. **Tom Coles** was also the only one to pick up a medal at Belle Vue, playing in the second row when Huddersfield defeated Trinity 10-3 in the 1926 Yorkshire Cup Final. Three more Welsh backs were given first team trials in late 1928 but 'James', 'Roberts' and 'Dai Tate' all returned to the Valleys after their one game and were not retained.



Trinity 1927

Tom Coles is front row, far left

In 1928 Trinity gave a trial to a young Welsh winger who was playing with Bath RU. Under the name of 'Day' he scored a phenomenal five tries on his debut 'trial' in the first team game against Bradford Northern in a 68-7 victory. He was signed immediately after the game and **Stevie Ray** went onto score 53 tries in his 93 games before being transferred to Warrington in 1931. Ray led Trinity's tries in a season charts in 1929-30 and 1930-31 seasons.

Two years later, Trinity picked up a winger from Huddersfield who, in the next seven years, would finish six tries short of a century in his Trinity career, the greatest try scoring Welshman in Trinity's history. **Freddie Smart** hailed from South Wales but found himself in Torquay in his youth. He joined Huddersfield in December 1925 from Torquay Athletic RU and arrived at Trinity five years later. His try scoring exploits were second-to-none and he led Trinity's try scoring charts for three years running between 1930 and 1932. In fact, up until recent research his 30 tries in 1930-31 were classed as a Trinity record for over twenty years, but it was recently noted that Billie Simpson had scored 34 in 1910-11 which moved Smart down the record charts. Smart retired in 1937 and joined the coaching staff.

Ray (1930) and Smart (1933) were Trinity's third and fourth Welsh internationals both playing one test against the touring Australian Kangaroos, both games at Wembley Stadium. Thus, Stevie Ray also holds the distinction of being the very first Trinity player to play at Wembley

**Clifford 'CJ' Carter** was the next Welsh signing when the young hooker had a successful trial and signed from Newport Hibernians RU in December 1934. He debuted at home to Leigh and was in the number nine shirt two years later in the 1936 Yorkshire Cup Final, Trinity going down 2-9 to York, as well as playing against the 1937 touring Australians. He totalled 97 appearances before leaving in for Leeds in 1937.

An interesting character was a centre by the name of 'Mackie'. He was on leave from the Welsh Army and given a trial whilst passing through Wakefield. He had a fine game at Hull in December 1934 but when offered a contract, he did not turn up for the next game and disappeared. A couple of months later it was noted that he had been banned by the rugby league for signing for Hull Kingston Rovers and York, as well as Trinity ... all at the same time. Eight months later, when his ban was completed, he re-appeared and stated that he was a Newport RU centre and had not wanted to disclose his name. He subsequently signed for Trinity again, this time under his real name **Tommy Ryan**, but was nicknamed 'Mackie'. He subsequently gave four years good service, scoring 21 tries, kicking 11 goals in his 74 appearances before moving on to the new Newcastle RL club in 1938.

In December 1936, Tommy Davies brought his brother, **Lewis 'Lou' Davies**, to Trinity and he subsequently signed from Aberavon RU. He played 24 games at stand off before leaving for Newcastle with 'Mackie' Ryan. He returned to play a few games as 'Wartime Guest' player in 1943 when he was on Featherstone's books.

### 'Sandy' Orford

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Another interesting character was forward, **Edwin 'Sandy' Orford**. Born in Pontypool he moved north as a youngster and played in the Trinity Intermediates side before being snapped up by Dewsbury in 1929. 106 games later he moved to Bradford Northern (1935) before joining Trinity in 1939.

The war years seriously affected Orford's Trinity career although he represented Wales on four occasions. After 177 appearances he returned to Bradford in 1947 before retiring to become a wrestler. His wrestling career took him all over the world fighting under the names of 'The Black Angel' and 'The Mask'



The final Welsh signing before the Second World War started was **Horace Turner**. He was 25 years old when he signed from Salford in September 1937 and established himself as a popular centre for the next five years. He played in the wartime 1940 Yorkshire Cup Final before retiring after cup defeat to Leeds in May 1942 with a total of 156 appearances behind him

The war years saw players swap clubs and play as guest players on a regular basis and two legendary Welsh backs played a couple of games for Trinity in the early 1940s, **Harry Royal** and **Dai Jenkins**. Each player could fill a page of their respective club's histories in Dewsbury and Leeds. Royal was a Challenge Cup and Championship winner with Dewsbury and gained his two Welsh caps in 1948. He guested with Trinity in 1944. Jenkins gave Leeds thirteen years service which yielded seventeen Welsh caps and one Great Britain cap. He was also a Welsh rugby union international, playing against England in 1929 in his Swansea RU days. He played a game for Trinity in 1944.

Until the 1980s, Trinity's most capped Welshman was second rower **Derek Howes**. Signed from Llanelly RU in November 1945, the first of his 179 appearances was a 17-7 victory at Barrow on the 24<sup>th</sup> November. In his first season he walked away with two winners medals with Trinity winning the RL Challenge Cup and Yorkshire League Championship as well as reaching the Championship semi final. In doing so, Howes became the first Trinity Welshman to play in the Challenge Cup Final and the first of only four in the history of the club. He was a great ball handling forward and a fierce tackler and was often the link between the forwards and backs. These skills earned him five Welsh caps between 1948 and 1950, playing against France and England twice as well as Other Nationalities in the European Championships. He also won a Yorkshire Cup winners medal in 1951 before departing for Featherstone Rovers in 1953

## Dennis Boocker

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One of Trinity's most popular ever players, Australian Dennis Boocker, was born in Wales before emigrating 'Down Under' and represented Wales on five occasions whilst playing at Belle Vue.

'Dinny' Boocker was born in Gelli in the Rhondda in Wales in 1922 but his family moved to Australia when he was eighteen months old. They settled in the Newcastle area of New South Wales and Boocker started playing rugby league with the Kurri Kurri club in the Newcastle region, and was part of the Bulldogs' 1945 Premiership side. A year later he signed for Sydney Premiership side, Newtown Bluebags (pre-Jets days) and played thirteen games in the Premiership.

He became Trinity's first ever direct signing from Australia when he signed in April 1947. He arrived a few months later and debuted in a 15-8 home success over Salford in October 1947, scoring the first try.

Over the next seven years he became a firm crowd favourite scoring 127 tries in 221 appearances, his prolific try scoring symbolised by his 'swallow-dive' form of crossing the line. He scored many of his tries when airborne! He played wing or centre at Belle Vue and picked up Yorkshire Cup winners medals in 1947 and 1951, the two 1947 finals being only his second and third appearances in the red and blue.

He made his Welsh debut against Australia at Swansea in 1948. He subsequently made four further appearances, two each against France and England over the next three seasons.

His 127 tries sees him fifth in the club's all time try scoring lists, behind Neil Fox, David Topliss, Fred Smith and Ernest Bennett and his 32 tries in 1953-54 was classed as a new season record for many years until new research noted the Billie Simpson had scored 34 in 1910-11.

He went back 'home' to Australia in March 1954, receiving a hero's farewell at Belle Vue. He returned to Kurri Kurri where he passed away in June 1987, aged 64. His hero worship did not end there and he was voted into the Kurri Kurri 'Team of the Century' in 2010.



Maesteg born **Billy Banks** developed into a Huddersfield legend, playing 281 games between 1948 and 1956, representing Wales (17 times), Other Nationalities and was a non-playing member of Great Britain's 1954 World Cup squad, but it was at Belle Vue where he learned his rugby league trade. He signed for Leeds from Maesteg RU but within a year he had signed for Trinity. He was crafty scrum half who debuted in a home win over Widnes in December 1946. He competed with future Hall of Famer, Herbert Goodfellow for many years but after being overlooked for the 1947 Yorkshire Cup Final he put in a transfer request and opted for the Fartowners over Wigan where he became a regular and earned his sought after Welsh cap.

A month after Billy Banks' signing, another former Maesteg RU player, **George Hughes**, followed his good friend from Headingley to Belle Vue, making his debut, at loose forward at Keighley in January 1947. He played 44 games for Trinity before following Banks to Huddersfield in January 1949.

**John Leighton Davies** was another Welsh centre signing. He moved North in October 1948 after signing from Neath RU and had a very successful try scoring career before injury forced his retirement three years later. He was schoolboy international in Swansea and gained six Glamorgan county caps before Trinity snapped him up. He scored 42 tries in 64 appearances before a succession of knee injuries forced his retirement in 1952, Following retirement he became a popular figure in the city's rugby union circles, mainly Wakefield RU before passing away in 1995.

In 1950, stand off **Glyn Meredith** became Trinity's first signing, direct from Wales for fourteen years when he joined from Newbridge RU. He was an ex-Monmouthshire RU half back as well as taking part in Welsh trials without breaking into the test team. Meredith was also an accomplished cricketer, playing for Glamorgan CC before his move north. He played a starring role when Trinity lifted the 1951 Yorkshire Cup defeating Keighley, 17-3.

### **Don Vines**

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**Trinity's most decorated Welshman was powerful forward Don Vines who gained seven winners medals at the club as well as Welsh and Great Britain caps.**

He hailed from Newbridge where he played centre in their rugby union side and was a Welsh Youth international before signing for Oldham in 1956. Seventy games and five winners' medals later, including the 1957 Championship, he signed for Trinity in September 1958 debuting in a 15-14 victory at Huddersfield. He was part of the re-building process that was slowly moulding into the 'Glory Years' team of the early 1960s. He was a superbly fit forward with a centre's handling skills and forward's strength and determination.

Apart from a year at St Helens in 1960-61 when he was sensationally transferred for £8,000 but returned a year later, he played 185 games before retiring at the end of the 1964-65 season. His seven winners medals included Wembley wins in 1960 and 1963, Yorkshire Cup in 1961 and 1964 and Yorkshire League Championships in 1959, 1960 and 1962. Add in his two winners medals at Saints, including the 1961 Challenge Cup, Vines retired with fourteen winners medals. He made two appearances for Wales in 1959 and 1963, both in Toulouse against France and three Great Britain caps, against the French at Leeds and Grenoble and the second test against the Australians at Leeds, all in 1959.

When we look back at the pack of the 'Glory Years', Don Vines' name stands proudly alongside the likes of Turner, Wilkinson and Briggs in the one of the greatest packs in the club's history.

He passed away, unexpectedly, in 1989, aged 57

