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[IMAGES](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/4glqcqy0eawy0j0/AABE5GpG1qqLMPIls9r6Cs21a?dl=0)

**LILY PARR: TRAILBLAZER FOR WOMEN’S FOOTBALL**

**MUSEUM’S NEW DISPLAY OPENS AHEAD OF ANNIVERSARY OF BAN**

Lily Parr – one of football’s first female superstars - gets a new permanent museum display dedicated to her life and legacy.

It features never-seen-before photographs of Lily and her teammates - which were found in an old suitcase hidden in a loft for four decades.

**MEDIA OPPORTUNITY: See the new display on Thursday 29 July between 11AM-1PM. Interview Belinda Scarlett, curator of women’s football. Contact** **dickie.felton@nationalfootballmuseum.com**

Emerging in the 1920s as part of Preston’s Dick Kerr Ladies, Parr scored nearly 1000 goals in a three-decade career.

She played in some of the world’s first women’s international matches and was a trailblazer for women footballers the world over. The National Football Museum unveiled a statue of Parr in 2019.

Among the new objects on display – original photographs from the 1930s – which belonged to Lizzy Ashcroft – a friend and teammate of Lily.

These images depict football’s first female superstars in the inter-war years. They were at the height of their game and fame – playing in front of huge crowds around the globe. The girls are portrayed hanging around in parks, going for cycle rides and hanging out with other top footballers from Europe.

Among them was Carmen Pomies. Born in Paris in 1900 she became a multi-talented athlete, competed in the first World Women’s Games (throwing javelin) and excelled in swimming, tennis, hockey and football.

She joined the team Femina (Football Francais Feminin) and was an outstanding player when they toured England in 1920. She formed lasting friendships with players from Dick, Kerr Ladies who she eventually joined. In the second world war she was in the French Resistance.

The photographs were uncovered by Steve Bolton – the grandson of Lizzy Ashcroft – in a loft at a relative’s home.

In December it is exactly 100 years since The Football Association banned women from playing matches at Football League grounds. That ruling would last half a century before being lifted in 1971.

The new display has been made possible thanks to a £55,440 grant from the Association of Independent Museums (AIM) Biffa Award, which gives grants to museums and heritage organisations to help tell stories of lesser-known historical figures through its History Makers Scheme. History Makers is funded by AIM Biffa Award, as part of the Landfill Communities Fund.

The display features around 35 objects – many on display for the very first time:

* An amazing postcard of the Dick Kerr Ladies team signed by the team including Lily Parr.
* The very minute book from 1921 which ruled women’s football be banned from league grounds. This was a defining moment in women’s football.
* A collection of postcards and images from the Lizzy Ashcroft Collection. Lizzy was a teammate and good friend of Lily Parr.
* Medals presented to Lizzy Ashcroft from the glory days of Dick Kerr Ladies.

Belinda Scarlett, curator of women’s football said: “We are delighted to open this new permanent display dedicated to Lily Parr. In 2019 the museum unveiled a statue to Lily – the first statue of a women’s footballer in the UK. We are pleased to further tell the story of Lily and her teammates’ remarkable achievements.

“As well as marking their footballing ability, the display tells of the girls’ defiance to play the game they loved while the powers-that-be tried to ban them.

“Lily is one of the most important figures in world football but is far from a household name. We hope to redress that balance with fresh attention on the women who defied the ban and inspired future generations of girls to play football.”

The museum enrolled contemporary artists Rosanna Firth-Salem and ‘Billy’ who worked with St Helens Girls FC to explore Lily’s story and inspire two new pieces of art that interpret her legacy.

The first, created by artist Rosanna, is a large-scale banner which has just been displayed in the museum’s entrance area.

The second is an illustration created by artist and creative practitioner, Alex Godwin, known professionally as ‘Billy’. This large illustration will be displayed alongside the Lily Parr statue and will use Billy’s bold colourful abstract style to interpret Lily for a new generation.

The artists will host a creative Lily Parr Activity Day on 20 August 2021.

Lily’s legacy lives on in her hometown of St Helens with schoolgirl side Knowsley St Helens playing in black and white stripes to honour her memory.

Centre-back Scarlett Latta, 13, whose voice can be heard in the new gallery, said: “Every time we play it reminds us of the struggles Lily made so that we – and millions of other girls – can play football. Not many people really know her story and now they will!

“Lily makes us really proud that she is from St Helens and we are playing football 100 years after she played for St Helens Ladies.”

Midfielder Amelie Waine, 13, said: “I hope that one day I can have as much of a positive impact on women’s football as Lily Parr did. I feel so proud to pull on my black and white shirt to represent the town, while doing the thing that I love – football.”

Lisa Ollerhead, Director of AIM, commented: “The purpose of the AIM Biffa Award History Makers programme is to inspire people though the lives and achievements of extraordinary historical figures. Lily Parr continues to be a great inspiration today and we’re pleased to have been able to support this new display and bring Lily’s story to new audiences.”

Born in St Helens in 1905, Parr was one of most astonishing and important figures in English football.

Starting her career at hometown team St Helens Ladies, Parr moved on to Dick, Kerr Ladies FC and later Preston Ladies.

Parr was renowned for having one of the most powerful shots in the game, wowed capacity crowds with her skills, showcased her talents overseas, influenced generations of female players and defied a Football Association ban on the game she loved.

Off the field, Parr trained as a nurse and worked in Preston's Whittingham psychiatric hospital. In 2002, Parr became the first woman to be inducted into the National Football Museum’s Hall of Fame.

**ENDS**

**Notes to editors:**

For more details contact dickie.felton@nationalfootballmuseum.com

**NATIONAL FOOTBALL MUSEUM:**

Unearth the game's origins, relive FA Cup fairy tales and explore how football is such an integral part of our culture. See the country's footballing crown jewels: the ball from the 1966 World Cup Final, Geoff Hurst's iconic shirt and the replica Jules Rimet Trophy.

Get in the game with a host of fun interactive challenges, from penalty-taking and shot-stopping to match commentary and check out the latest changing exhibitions on the ground floor and in our Score Gallery.

The National Football Museum is a registered charity. It was established and its collection acquired thanks to £9.3m investment by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Its vision is to become a leading national museum by 2022, exploring why football is the game of our lives. The museum’s social purpose is to provide equal opportunity for all to enjoy football culture.

The museum is free entry to City of Manchester residents.

The venue is fully accessible for wheelchair access. Cathedral Gardens, Manchester M4 3BG: [www.nationalfootballmuseum.com](http://www.nationalfootballmuseum.com)

**Biffa Award:**

Since 1997, Biffa Award has awarded grants totalling more than £175 million to thousands of worthwhile community and environmental projects across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The programme administers money donated by Biffa Group Ltd through the Landfill Communities Fund. [www.biffa-award.org](http://www.biffa-award.org)

**Landfill Communities Fund:**

The Landfill Communities Fund (LCF) is an innovative tax credit scheme enabling operators (LOs) to contribute money to organisations enrolled with ENTRUST as Environmental Bodies (EBs). EBs use this funding for a wide range of community and environmental projects in the vicinity of landfill sites. LOs are able to claim a credit (currently 4.2%) against their landfill tax liability for 90% of the contributions they make. Since its inception in 1996, over £1.6 billion has been spent on more than 56,000 projects across the UK. For further information please visit www.entrust.org.uk or see HMRC's general guide to landfill tax.

**AIM Biffa Award History Makers:**

Through the Association of Independent Museums (AIM), Biffa Award gives grants to museums, galleries and cultural facilities so that they can tell the stories of some of our lesser known historical figures through the History Makers Scheme. AIM is a national charitable organisation which helps independent and independently spirited museums, galleries and heritage sites prosper by connecting, supporting and representing them.

 