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[IMAGES HERE](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/uln1fzh55owi5by/AACSx3Pgj1r0BdNx2qMFy-X6a?dl=0)

**WHEN FOOTBALL WAS FOOTBALL**

**ICONIC PHOTOS BY SEFTON SAMUELS AT NATIONAL FOOTBALL MUSEUM**

Football images by one of Britain’s most iconic photographers will go on display at the National Football Museum.

**When Football Was Football: The Photography of Sefton Samuels 1960s-1980s** opens on 24 September until 31 December.

Sefton Samuels was LS Lowry’s favourite photographer and once described by The Guardian as “The photographic equivalent of Ken Loach.”

A lifelong Manchester City fan, Sefton is 90-years-old and still living in Manchester.

The exhibition of 30 images highlights a bygone era - a long-ball world of Bovril, packed terraces and northern rain. With supporters watching fantastic footballers with equally fabulous haircuts.

The photographs present the game in a world away from the bling and *ka-ching* of the modern top-flight game.

**When Football Was Football** features a combination of portrait shots of legendary players and managers including George Best, Joe Mercer, Matt Busby, Brian Clough, Denis Law and Bill Shankly alongside stills of football grounds, fans and ball games on Manchester streets.

Photographs in the exhibition include:

* George Best outside his menswear boutique in 1968.
* Sir Matt Busby overseeing club business sat at his desk in 1969.
* Bill Shankly in 1978 – just three years before his death.
* Action shots from Maine Road and Old Trafford in the 1960s and 1970s.

Sefton Samuels said: “These photos aren't just from a different era, they almost seem like they’re from a different game.

“A world where you could casually bump into megastars like George Best or City goalie Frank Swift in the street, local businessmen owned the clubs, and games were a different sensory experience - working men and lads packed together in the stands, with smoke, the waft of pies and colourful language thick in the air.

“It wasn’t always pretty on the pitch or in the stands - and some things were crying out for change - but there was an innocence and pure sense of community to football before big money moved in.

"It’s mind-boggling that a generation or so later we’re now talking about £100million players, the ESL and multi-billion pound businesses. I remember when only the team captains were allowed to own cars!

“My love affair with football began as a kid growing up in Manchester in the 1940s - when I used to cycle to Maine Road, pay 2p to leave my bike in someone’s garden and get into the ground for 6p… and, of course, sneak my camera in.

“I went on to spend decades photographing players and matches across the north.

“What I can see now is that it wasn’t just football I was chronicling, but huge shifts in how the north, class, family life and society were all transforming before our eyes. Football has been the lens to view these profound changes."

Jon Sutton, National Football Museum head of exhibitions said: “Not only do Sefton’s images offer a slice of social history, they also capture the much bigger story of post-industrial decline, north/south divide and working class alienation.”

Sefton was born in Manchester in 1931. He left Manchester Grammar School at 16, trained in textiles and went to work in mills around Yorkshire. But a camera was never far from his hand.

In 1960, Sefton was named Manchester Evening News amateur photographer of the year and headed back to his native city as it began to swing.

It was during the sixties on the gritty streets of Manchester that he developed his trademark style of poignant photojournalism edged with a black northern humour.

Today 70 of hispictures are in the National Portrait Gallery, 10 photos in the Victoria and Albert Museum’s National Collection of the Art of Photography - and more than 100 in total in national collections.

It was during the sixties on the gritty streets of Manchester that Samuels developed his trademark style of poignant photojournalism edged with a black northern humour - which were published in his best-selling book ‘Northerners: portrait of a no-nonsense people’ (Random House).

**When Football Was Football: The Photography of Sefton Samuels 1960s-1980s** will open in the museum’s Pitch Gallery next to a car once driven by George Best who features in several photographs.

Museum tickets are on sale now at [www.nationalfootballmuseum.com](http://www.nationalfootballmuseum.com). The museum is free to City of Manchester residents.

The museum has a new and improved access offer with both a [BSL video guide and visual story](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tb3IzsYevtM) helping visitors familiarise themselves before their visit.

**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.

City of Manchester residents are eligible for free admission. Please see the museum’s website for details.

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

