

LGBTQ+ HISTORY MONTH

February 2021

LILY PARR

Born in 1905 (close to the turn of the century) to working class family, Lily Parr showed interest in associated sports (particularly football) from early age.

During WW1 she was spotted playing for a local St Helen's Ladies team and was recruited to play for Dick Kerr Ladies Team, Preston. Known not only for her skills on the pitch but also her large appetite and constant smoking. It is alleged that Parr requested part of her pay at the factory to be paid in cigarettes.

During her first season (aged just 14) Parr scored 43 goals for Dick Kerr Ladies Team. Dick Kerr played against both male and female teams with Parr scoring an estimated 1000 goals, winning 758 matches out of 828 (lost 24: won 758, drew: 46) during her career at Dick Kerr. Parr played in one of the earliest recognised women's internationals 1920, France vs England, where Dick Kerr's team won 4-0.

Parr finally retired from professional football in 1951 and continued with her employment as a nurse at Whittingham Mental Hospital, until she retired. It was whilst working at the hospital, Lily met Mary and the two began a relationship as an openly gay couple. Parr lived with her partner Mary for the remainder of her life, in Goosnargh, Preston until she passed away from breast cancer 1978 aged 73.

In June 2019, Parr's football career was recognised with a statue of her on display at National Football Museum, making her the first female football player to be commemorated in such a way.

Source:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lily_Parr

<https://www.nationalfootballmuseum.com/halloffame/lily-parr/>

<https://www.fifa.com/news/lily-parr-the-pioneering-star-2593969>

Image: <https://www.nationalfootballmuseum.com/halloffame/lily-parr/>

