



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

L.S. LOWRY'S MATCH DAY PAINTING CONTINUES ON TOUR WITH BOOST FROM SIR BOBBY CHARLTON'S CHARITY

- LS Lowry's *Going to the Match* painting is on tour at five North West venues until early 2025
- The Sir Bobby Charlton Foundation announced as new tour partner
- Venues will team up with local football clubs to engage new audiences
- Tour follows recent purchase of iconic painting by The Lowry, Salford at record £7.8 million

The Lowry, Salford is delighted to announce **The Sir Bobby Charlton Foundation** as a supporting partner on tour of LS Lowry's celebrated painting *Going to the Match* to five venues across the North West. Sir Bobby Charlton's name is synonymous with English football both as a player and as an ambassador for the sport. He set up his charity - The Sir Bobby Charlton Foundation - in 2011 to ensure that people in war-decimated countries could play football safely and to address some of the devastating injuries which prevented them from leading healthy and fulfilling lives.



The Sir Bobby Charlton Foundation has found that universally, football has the power to bring people together. As part of the programme of activity on the *Going to the Match* tour, workshops will be organised with a particular focus on bringing people together from refugee communities (in Manchester, Bury and Salford) to experience the painting, to share their love of football and what it means to them.

The tour of *Going to the Match* started in December 2023 as LS Lowry's masterpiece left its home at The Lowry, Salford for a 14-month tour of five North West venues. The first was Gallery Oldham and the tour has continued to The Grundy Art Gallery, Blackpool where *Going to the Match* is currently on display until 30th March 2024. The painting will then tour to the Williamson Art Gallery & Museum, Birkenhead, The National Football Museum, Manchester and finally Bury Art Museum & Sculpture Centre.

The 1953 Lowry painting features football supporters streaming into Burnden Park, the original home of Bolton Wanderers FC. Lowry spent much of his life painting people going about their everyday lives – going to work, to school, to the park and here, going to see a football match. Most of Lowry's crowds, as in *Going to the Match*, are painted against a backdrop of Lancashire's

industrial landscape. In fact the majority of fans shown in the painting would probably have been factory workers. Visitors today still see themselves in this work, as the shared experience of going to a football match is in many ways the same as it was in the 1950s.

The painting's iconic status has thrilled visitors of all ages: those who love art, those who love football and anyone who loves the unique excitement of a 'match day.' The tour will mean this painting can be enjoyed by the widest possible audiences across the region. *Going to the Match* will be a focus and inspiration for creative workshops, projects in schools, family days and commissions to create new artistic responses to it.

“The North West is home to many families who have fled war-affected countries. The tour of Going to the Match will reach out to those communities, introducing the joy of art through its football theme.”



Each venue will work with their own audiences, local schools and communities as well as their own local football clubs to develop a programme of events that will reach and engage as many people as possible. The tour has been boosted by a £95,000 grant from Arts Council England through its National Lottery Project Grants programme as well as this additional support from The Sir Bobby Charlton Foundation which will help enable each venue to mount an extensive learning and engagement programme, tailored to their own local audiences and football fans.

Chief Executive of The Lowry, Julia Fawcett O.B.E. said:

“Going to the Match is a masterpiece and for that reason alone, it was important we were able to secure it so that future generations could come and see it, for free, forever.

Lowry was a great observer of ordinary people, particularly in the industrial landscape and the picture captures that pre-match expectation and excitement. It was so important to us that an artwork which speaks so directly to the people of the North was brought permanently back to where it belongs. Thanks to the wonderful generosity of The Law Family Charitable Foundation we were able to purchase the painting for the City of Salford, and we look forward to returning that generosity by sharing the painting with other venues and communities across the North West of England over the coming months and years.”

Chair of The Sir Bobby Charlton Foundation, Stephen Cross said:

“The Sir Bobby Charlton Foundation is excited to support the tour of LS Lowry’s celebrated painting, *Going to the Match*. Whilst painted 70 years ago, it still evokes powerful memories and thoughts about match day, so special to Sir Bobby and evocative of ‘the beautiful game’ that he so loved. Sir Bobby was always passionate about supporting young people - in their education, in their football careers and in developing into good citizens. He dedicated the last years of his life to his charity, which focuses on supporting those with significant challenges resulting from a background of conflict.

Since its beginnings in 2011 - following visits to Cambodia where the devastation of war was evident in communities blighted by landmines, where youngsters going out to play football could come back with life changing injuries or not come back at all - the Sir Bobby Charlton Foundation has expanded its reach to refugee communities. The North West is home to many families who have fled war-affected countries. The tour of *Going to the Match* will reach out to those communities, introducing the joy of art through its football theme.”

For more information about the Going to the Match tour visit:

<https://thelowry.com/going-to-the-match/>

For more information about The Sir Bobby Charlton Foundation visit:

www.thesbcfoundation.com

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Contact

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Notes to Editors

Going to the Match Tour Dates:

2 Dec 2023 - 24 Feb 2024	Gallery Oldham
2 Mar 2024 - 30 Mar 2024	Grundy Art Gallery, Blackpool
19 Apr 2024 - 27 Jul 2024	Williamson Art Gallery & Museum, Birkenhead
19 Aug 2024 - 1 Sep 2024	National Football Museum, Manchester
19 Oct 2024 - 1 Feb 2025	Bury Art Museum & Sculpture Centre

More information about the tour at <https://thelowry.com/going-to-the-match/>

About the campaign to purchase *Going to the Match*:

Going to the Match had been on public display at The Lowry since it opened in 2000, courtesy of a loan by the then owners the Professional Footballers Association (PFA). However, following the decision by the PFA in 2022 to sell *Going to the Match*, there were no guarantees that any future owners would share the commitment to keeping the work on public view and free to access.

The painting held a special place not only as part of Lowry's legacy but also in the hearts and minds of visitors, particularly in the north of England. It was for this reason that The Lowry – already home to the world's largest public collection of paintings and drawings by LS Lowry - was determined to ensure that it remained available for the public to see, for free. The Lowry launched an extensive media campaign to bring the impending sale to public attention, making the case that the work should remain on public view. There was a fear that the painting could be acquired by a private collection – potentially outside of the UK - and not be seen again.

Following the high-profile campaign, *Going to the Match* was purchased at a record £7.8 million by The Lowry in Salford for The Lowry Collection at the Modern British & Irish Art Sale at Christie's in London in October 2022, thanks to the generous support of The Law Family Charitable

Foundation. *Going to the Match* came home and was returned to public display at The Lowry in November 2022, and now The Lowry is delighted to be working with venues across the North West to ensure that the piece can be enjoyed by audiences across the region.

About the Lowry

Situated on the waterside, at the heart of Salford Quays, The Lowry is an award-winning venue housing two major theatres, extensive art galleries and a range of public spaces including cafes, bars, a restaurant and shop. The Quays is also home to MediaCityUK, which includes BBC North, ITV Studios and Imperial War Museum North.

The Lowry galleries are free to everyone and display the famous LS Lowry Collection, alongside a vibrant programme of special exhibitions. Bringing visual arts and performance together are central to The Lowry's exhibition and engagement programmes. The Lowry galleries are named The Andrew and Zoe Law Galleries in recognition of the couple's £1m donation to the arts centre, which is a registered charity.

www.thelowry.com

About The Sir Bobby Charlton Foundation

Founded in 2011, The Sir Bobby Charlton Foundation is a registered charity based in Knutsford, Cheshire, which supports victims of conflict. For further information about the charity, please contact Tessa Blakemore tessa@belladesign.co.uk tel. 07919 177243 / 01565 325 015.

www.thesbcfoundation.com

About Arts Council England

Arts Council England is the national development agency for creativity and culture. We have set out our strategic vision in Let's Create that by 2030 we want England to be a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish and where everyone of us has access to a remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences. From 2023 to 2026 we will invest over £467 million of public money from Government and an estimated £250 million from The National Lottery each year to help support the sector and to deliver this vision.

www.artscouncil.org.uk