



DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT
2 MARSHAM STREET LONDON SW1P 3EB
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My ref: M/PSO/11252/89
Your ref:

11 APR 1989

Dear David,

Thank you for your letter of 22 March enclosing a cutting from the Daily Express about the venue for the FA Cup semi-final match, Liverpool v Nottingham Forest.

The choice of venue for these matches and the allocation of tickets is entirely a matter for the football authorities. I understand that the Football Association took account of Liverpool's views in considering the venue for the match against Nottingham but decided that, in all the circumstances, the Sheffield Wednesday ground at Hillsborough was the most appropriate location. The arrangements for the allocation of tickets have been handled by the Sheffield Wednesday club who are staging the game on behalf of the Football Association. I gather, as suggested in the Daily Express article, that the allocations were made on the basis of police advice.

Yours sincerely,

Colin

COLIN MOYNIHAN

David Alton Esq MP

The Hillsborough tragedy

VITAL MISSING FILTER ON WAY TO TURNSTILES

LARGE numbers of Liverpool fans DID make the journey across the Pennines without tickets.

Witnesses say they were allowed to make their way unchallenged right up to the Leppings Lane end — adding to the growing crowd and the chaos.

Edward Faulkner, deputy chairman of the Forest Trust, who saw Saturday's tragic scenes, said he was in a state of panic, hoping they could get in.

Last year when the game was played at Hillsborough there was a checking of tickets taking place some distance away from the ground.

"Then the fans were filtered through to the ground. None of that happened on Saturday."

Dr John Williams, an expert on soccer crowds, was also at the game. He said: "You could see a lot of lads were looking for tickets a long way from the ground."

He added: "There was no attempt at the end of the road approaching the ground to discriminate between ticket holders and non ticketholders. Supporters were going down as a common mass."

"There was no attempt to stop people without tickets getting to the turnstiles."

While the crush and the chaos increased outside the Leppings Lane end, the Nottingham Forest fans encountered no problems getting into Hillsborough.

Club secretary Peter White said the club had sold their full ticket allocation.

He said the Hillsborough Kop had accommodated the Forest supporters "quite comfortably."

He added: "We have had no reports of our fans having trouble trying to get into the ground."

The allocation of FA Cup tickets for major ties has long been a bone of contention on Merseyside.

A Liverpool trading standards department probe into the allocation of Cup Final tickets revealed abuse of FA rules when it was published last year.

The department claimed ticket shortages led to violent scenes outside Wembley with touts attacked and ticketless fans charging gates.

But semi-finals differ from the Wembley game — all tickets ARE divided between the two clubs involved.

Peter Mawdsley, Chief Trading Standards Officer said: "I would say that inadequate ticket allocation systems for major matches in the past have resulted in significant numbers of fans being used to travelling to games without tickets."

"It may have been one contributory factor, only the inquiry and time will tell."

SENTENCED TO CHAOS

PRINTED in block capitals on Hillsborough semi-final tickets is a simple sentence: "You are requested to take up your position 15 minutes before kick off."

Many Liverpool fans who arrived before 2.45 pm found themselves caught up in the growing crush at Leppings Lane.

The two blocks of standing and seating entrance at the Leppings Lane end were next to each other, separated by a steel barrier.

Fans had to approach them from the same direction and many spoke of the confusion as people converged, heading for both sections.

Norman Bush is the Liverpool City Council officer involved in safety at both Anfield and Goodison.

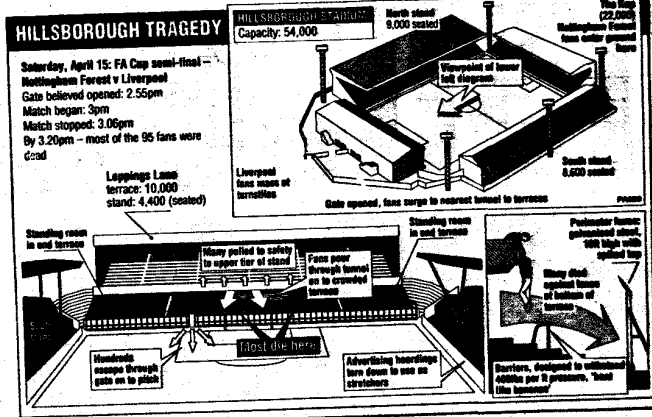
He says: "People have got into a bad habit since all ticket matches. Everyone thinks they can arrive in the last five minutes."

Medical student Niell Wilson, 21, from West Derby, arrived at the Leppings Lane end at 2.30 pm.

He said: "Instead of queues, there was just an ever-expanding crowd building up. There appeared to be no marshalling of supporters."

A Liverpool season ticket holder he adds: "At Anfield we know we can turn up at ten minutes to three and get in, because it is organised."

"What happened there couldn't happen at Anfield. I don't think half past two is too late to get into a match, it is ridiculous."



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