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British Transport Police

R E P O R T

F.A. CUP SEMI-FINAL

LIVERPOOL -v- NOTTINGHAM FOREST

HELD AT

HILLSBOROUGH FOOTBALL GROUND, SHEFFIELD

SATURDAY 15.4.89



REPORT

LIVERPOOL V NOTTS FOREST : F.A. CUP SEMI-FINAL
SATURDAY, 15TH APRIL, 1989 AT HILLSBOROUGH, SHEFFIELD

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1. PLANNING

- 1.1 In 1987 a meeting took place between the then Divisional Commander, Chief Superintendent LEY, Superintendent NICHOLAS and senior officer's of the South Yorkshire Police regarding the reception and disposal of football supporters arriving and departing from Sheffield Midland and Wadsley Bridge Station, particularly with regard to the regular football semi finals being held in Sheffield. . The existing arrangements were discussed, refined and agreed without major changes.
- 1.2 The procedure at Wadsley Bridge Station is that supporters arriving by special train are passed from the British Transport Police to the South Yorkshire Police and walked along Penistone Road to Hillsbrough, a distance of about half a mile.
- 1.3 Supporters arriving at Sheffield Midland Station are placed on South Yorkshire Transport buses and taken to Hillsbrough by road.
- 1.4 The procedure for returning fans is as at paras. 1.2 and 1.3 but in reverse.
- 1.5 On the build up to 15th April, 1989, the District Inspector at Sheffield, Inspector MABBOTT, liaised with his counterparts at Liverpool and Nottingham, British Rail and officers of the South Yorkshire Police in addition to discussions with his own local senior officers.
- 1.6 A short order was issued and circulated (copy attached) (Appendix A).
- 1.7 In the planning stages the only problem which was envisaged was that of conveying a large number of supporters by rail.

2. ARRIVAL OF SUPPORTERS BY TRAIN

- 2.1 During the morning prior to the match 3319 identifiable football supporters arrived at Sheffield.

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- 2.2 As far as can be established 1932 were Nottingham Supporters and 1337 were Liverpool Supporters. There were also a number of fans who had no affiliation but only came to watch the match.
- 2.3 Four special trains from Nottingham conveyed 1241 supporters into Sheffield Midland Station.
- 2.4 One special train from Liverpool conveyed 430 supporters to Wadsley Bridge Station.
- 2.5 Three additional service trains from Liverpool conveyed 395 supporters to Sheffield Midland Station.
- 2.6 All other supporters arrived at Sheffield Midland Station by service train.
- 2.7 On arrival at Sheffield Midland Station, all supporters were separated and the Nottingham Supporters left the station via the North Gate where they boarded buses which conveyed them directly to the ground.
- 2.8 Liverpool Supporters left the Station via the South Luggage Entrance where they also boarded buses and were conveyed to the ground.
- 2.9 The 430 Liverpool Supporters arriving at Wadsley Bridge by Special train were walked from the Station to the ground. This journey takes about 15 minutes.
- 2.10 The Special Train arrived at 13.55hours, about 5 minutes early and after the fans had detrained they were handed to an escort of South Yorkshire Police who immediately escorted them to the Hillsbrough football ground.
- 2.11 For all train arrival times see Appendix B
- 2.12 No problems were encountered with the fans travelling on the inward journeys and on the whole they were happy, good natured and looking forward to an exciting days football. Very few arriving supporters showed signs of intoxication.

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2.13 A Yorkshire Television programme about the 'disaster' suggested that one of the factors contributing to the excessive build up of fans outside the ground was the fact that fans arriving by Special trains at Wadsley Bridge Station had been held there for an excessive length of time before being walked to Hillsbrough. This is a complete fabrication. Estimates from B.T.P. Officers at Wadsley Bridge indicates that from detraining to moving the fans off under escort by South Yorkshire Police took a maximum of 10 minutes, see reports from Sergeant [redacted] (Appendix E) and enclosed statements from Officers at Wadsley Bridge.

INVOLVEMENT AT MATCH

3.1 Following arrival of the train at Wadsley Bridge and consequent of messing facilities having been arranged for the B.T.P. Police Officers in the Gymnasium at the Football Ground the following Officers made their way there in full uniform.

- PS [redacted]Liverpool M.S.U.
- PC [redacted]Liverpool M.S.U.
- PC [redacted]Liverpool M.S.U.
- PC [redacted]Liverpool M.S.U.
- PC 1883 MASON.....Leeds

arriving at 14.25 hours.

3.2 After they had dined Sergeant [redacted] and P.C. [redacted] left the ground to return to Wadsley Bridge. The other Officers were standing in the tunnel entrance to the Gymnasium when the emergency occurred. They were asked by a South Yorkshire Superintendent to assist with crowd control. At the time Sergeant [redacted] and P.C. [redacted] heard of the problems at Hillsbrough and they returned to the ground to assist. At the request of Senior Officers of the South Yorkshire Police British Transport Police were involved in crowd control, public order situations, the administration of first aid and the removal of bodies to the temporary mortuary in the gymnasium.

3.3 P.C. MASON was asked to assist in the removal of a body to the mortuary and on arrival there he was directed to remain with it until it was identified. This occurred at 04.30 hours Sunday, 16th when PC MASON stood down, travelled back to Leeds. He signed off duty at 0630hrs after working for 20 hours.

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4. BRITISH TRANSPORT POLICE REACTION TO EMERGENCY

4.1 As soon as it became apparent that an emergency had occurred and the game was about to be abandoned, Acting Chief Inspector CRAGGS who was in overall command of the B.T. Police operation immediately took charge and co-ordinated the urgently needed reorganisation of the return arrangements for the travelling supporters.

4.2 Arrangements were made for the Special train to return to Wadsley Bridge Station, which it did, arriving at 16.00 hours. This train departed at 17.15 hours, 10 minutes later than scheduled, with 450 passengers.

4.3 The Nottingham Specials were brought to Sheffield Midland Station and the first one placed at Platform 1 prior to fans arriving. This train and the following trains departed as follows when laden:-

- 1) 17.25 hours.....500 passengers.
- 2) 18.05 hours.....600 passengers.
- 3) 18.34 hours.....550 passengers.
- 4) 19.04 hours.....150 passengers.

4.4. All Service trains to Nottingham and Liverpool were monitored and policed where necessary up to 20.30 hours.

4.5 In all, a total of 18 trains conveyed an estimated 3,600 Football Supporters to their various destinations.

4.6 In all 10 trains were policed by 41 Officers.

4.7 For all train departures see appendix C

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 The conveying of Supporters to and from Sheffield by British Rail was carried out swiftly and without problem.

5.2 There was no build up caused by fans arriving at the Ground after travelling to Sheffield by train.

5.3 British Rail reacted with speed and efficiency when faced with the emergency.

5.4 The attitude of Supporters returning from Hillsbrough was that of shock and, in many cases, disbelief. A number of them were blaming the Police for the disaster and because of this showered abuse on any Officer they saw.

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5.5. Only one B.T. Police Officer highlights any aspects of the operation that could be construed as a 'criticism' and these are contained in the last paragraph at page 2 of Sergeants [] report. (Appendix E).

Details are :-

5.5.1 Communications - he adversely comments on radio communication between Wadsley Bridge and Sheffield Midland Station.

Comment - This is not disputed and the problem which has been reported on previously is highly prevalent in the North East of England. However, communications were not such that they in any way hampered the transmission of messages through to Wadsley Bridge as is evident by the fact that it was possible to redeploy additional Officers from Sheffield Midland Station to Wadsley Bridge to assist in the returning operation as a direct radio request from a Sergeant at that location.

5.5.2 Sergeant [] comments that whilst his Officers were to all intents and purposes 'missing' for some 2 hours at the ground no Senior Officers of this Force visited the scene to find them.

Comment - It was known and pre planned that Officers arriving at Wadsley Bridge Station would be authorised to attend at Hillsbrough to take refreshments under South Yorkshire Police arrangements and they were not under instructions to return to Wadsley Bridge other than to be in good time for the returning special train. Hence it would be quite normal for them to remain at Hillsbrough for up to 2 hours. Additionally once the scale of the disaster began to unfold Senior Officers quite rightly concluded that our Officers would use their initiative and give all possible assistance to the South Yorkshire Police at the ground hence there was no reason at that point in time to be unduly concerned over their whereabouts.

5.5.3. Sergeant [] finally makes adverse comment as to the fact that when he eventually returned to Wadsley Bridge to all intents and purposes P.C. MASON was still 'missing'

cont.....



Comment - The previous comments made in 5.5.2 in this apply up until the time that the special train departed from Wadsley Bridge Station. What Sergeant [redacted] would not know was that after that departure Acting Chief Inspector CRAGGS made arrangements for checks to be made with the local hospitals and the South Yorkshire Police Control in order to ascertain if P.C. MASON had come under notice as being an injured Officer in any way. These enquiries proved negative and it was rightly concluded that he was still assisting at Hillsbrough. This assumption proved correct as illustrated in paragraph 3.6. No senior Officer of this Force was able to attend at the ground because of :-

- a) They were totally engaged in commanding and co-ordinating the urgently needed return arrangements, and
- b) It was not physically possible due to traffic and pedestrian congestion to make any practical effort to attend at the ground. Indeed to have done so would have been unwise taking into account the needs at Sheffield Midland Station at that time.

5.6 The British Transport Police Officers should be praised for their cheerful forbearance in the face of extreme difficulty when dealing with this type of situation.

6. ATTACHMENTS

Please find enclosed reports from the following Officers :-

- APPENDIX A Publication of local order and anticipated trains.
- APPENDIX B Factual details of arriving trains and plans.
- APPENDIX C Factual details of returning trains and fans.
- APPENDIX D Report from Inspector BROWN, B.T. Police, Liverpool re: pre planning train departures from Liverpool.
- APPENDIX E Report from Sergeant [redacted] B.T. Police, Liverpool M.S.U. re: duties at Wadsley Bridge Station and at Hillsbrough.

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APPENDIX F

Report from P.C. MASON, B.T.
Police, Leeds, re: duties at
Wadsley Bridge Station and at
Hillsbrough.

APPENDIX G

Report from Acting Chief
Inspector CHAPMAN re: returning
fans arriving at Liverpool.

In addition the following have made statements which are
separately bundled.

Sergeant
Constable
Constable
Constable
Constable 1883 MASON



