

SIR NORMAN CHESTER CENTRE FOR FOOTBALL RESEARCH

Fact Sheet Number 2: Football Stadia After Taylor

1. Introduction: the Hillsborough Disaster

1.1 On the 15th April 1989, the worst tragedy in the history of British football took place at the Hillsborough Stadium, home of Sheffield Wednesday F.C. Ninety-six Liverpool fans were crushed to death on the terraces at the Leppings Lane End during the F.A. Cup Semi Final match between Liverpool and Nottingham Forest.

1.2 As a result, Lord Justice Taylor, a High Court judge, was commissioned by the Government:

“To inquire into the events at Sheffield Wednesday Football ground on 15th April and to make recommendations about the needs of crowd control and safety at sports events.”

(Taylor, Final Report, HMSO, 1990)

1.3 Despite suggestions in some national newspapers, notably *The Sun*, that drunken Liverpool hooligan fans were behind the events at Hillsborough, the official inquiry concluded that police "operational errors" (HMSO, 1990, p.25) were the main cause of the disaster. Some parents of the Hillsborough victims continue a public campaign which seems aimed at seeking convictions for those senior police officers in charge on the day who, it is alleged, ignored available video evidence that the pen where most of the deaths occurred was becoming dangerously overcrowded some time before the tragedy took place. Families of victims also complained about the 'insensitive' treatment they received immediately after the disaster when the bodies of loved ones had to be identified, scenes vividly dramatised in Jimmy McGovern's C4 TV dramatisation of the

events in Sheffield. A recent (1998) official investigation of 'new' evidence about the disaster failed to convince the authorities that it justified a re-opening of the Hillsborough case. Despite apologies from the South Yorkshire Police, the Hillsborough families fight on, supported by spectator campaigns in Liverpool and elsewhere.

2. Background: Other Spectator Disasters

2.1 This was not the first time a major tragedy had occurred in the post-war period at a British football ground. The **Shorrt Report** back in 1924, and investigating chaos at the first Wembley Cup final in 1923, argued that: *“the police should be responsible for all matters appertaining to the preservation of law and order and that the arrangements for the convenience of the public the ground authority should be responsible”*. In 1946, the **Moelwyn-Hughes Report** followed the deaths of 33 spectators due to crushing at Bolton Wanderers' ground, Burnden Park and recommended that one police officer should be present per 1,000 spectators at English football grounds. In 1972, 66 supporters died at Ibrox Park in Glasgow when fans tried to return into the ground on an exit stairway. This disaster led to an inquiry conducted by Lord Wheatley (the **Wheatley Report** 1972) and to the introduction of a **Green Guide on Safety at Sports Grounds**, and the first **Safety at Sports Grounds Act (1975)** which first introduced designated sports grounds and safety certificates for large sports stadia. The **Popplewell Inquiry** in 1985/6 followed the deaths of 56 fans in a fire at Bradford City's Valley Parade. The Taylor Investigation was, in fact, the *ninth* commissioned Inquiry into ground safety and crowd control at football matches in Britain. Many of the reports produced by previous inquiries had already recognised some of the problems which were manifested at Hillsborough although the strict implementation of recommendations from previous reports had, arguably, not always been adhered to.

2.2 Thus, there is something of a long tradition of spectator tragedies in British football. A combination of poor facilities and poor crowd management and the sometimes aggressively passionate support for the sport in Britain have worked together to claim the lives of at least 306 fans since the turn of the century in 27 separate incidents in which a further 3,500 fans have been injured. Since the war around 186 people have

been killed in accidents at Football League matches though from a massive 1.2 billion spectator admissions (Inglis, 1993). Disasters do happen elsewhere in the world, of course. In Eastern Europe there have been a number of sports crowd disasters. Recently in Guatemala, but also in South Africa, where 43 died at Ellis Park in April 2001, and in Harare, Zimbabwe where 12 died in July 2000 after police fired tear gas into the crowd at the Zimbabwe v South Africa match, spectator tragedies have occurred, usually because of a combination of poor crowd management and inadequate facilities.

Selected Football Stadium Tragedies in Britain

<i>Date</i>	<i>Stadium</i>	<i>What happened?</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
1902	Ibrox Park	Terrace collapsed	50 killed, 500 injured
1914	Hillsborough	Wall collapsed	80 injured
1914	Turf Moor	Spectator crushing	1 killed
1946	Burnden Park	Spectator crushing	33 killed, 400 injured
1957	Shawfield	Barrier collapsed	1 killed, 50 injured
1961	Ibrox Park	Barrier collapsed	2 killed
1971	Ibrox Park	Crushing/barrier collapse	66 killed, hundreds injured
1985	Valley Parade	Fire	56 killed, hundreds injured
1985	St. Andrews	Wall collapsed	1 killed
1989	Hillsborough	Spectator crushing	96 killed, hundreds injured

3. The State of Football: Hooliganism, Policing and Safety

3.1 During the twenty years before Hillsborough, crowd management and crowd control had become synonymous in England with the prevention of hooliganism. Measures such as high-profile policing, strict segregation of supporters, perimeter fencing and penning had become the main priority in policing operations at major matches. The effects of these strategies on non-hooligan fans seemed less significant. A breakdown in communication between the authorities, police and supporters had often resulted in confusion and, sometimes, mutual hostility. To travel to football as an 'away' fan in the 1970s and 1980s was often to experience something of a 'military' exercise in terms of policing, and hostility and sometimes violence from 'home' and away fans. Relatively few older supporters or female fans then seemed tempted by the prospect. This 'prison-like' character of football grounds has been noted by some theorists who study spatial aspects of sport spectatorship (Bale, 1993).

3.2 Recently, as modern stadia have become much more 'tame' spaces compared to those of the 1980s, there has been considerable nostalgia demonstrated for the 'hooligan period' in the publication of a range of books celebrating the male rituals of the football 'hooligan wars' of the 1970s and 1980s. Sometimes these come in the shape of novels such as *The Football Factory* (John King, 1996) or the superior *Awaydays* (Kevin Sampson, 1997) or else in a lurid 'pseudo-documentary' style such as in the range of books of hooligan reminiscences published by Eddie and Dougie Brimson, professed ex-hooligans from Watford.

4. Legislation and Sports Stadia

4.1 Legislation on stadia safety and fan behaviour inside grounds has been a central feature of public policy in relation to football since the mid-1970s. Some key pieces of legislation are:

Safety of Sports Ground Act, 1975

Sporting Events (Control of Alcohol) Act 1985

Public Order Act, 1986 (Exclusion Orders)

Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sport Act, 1987

Football Spectators Act, 1989

Football Offences Act, 1991

Criminal Justice Act, 1994

Football (Disorder) Act, 1999

Football Disorder Act, 2000

4.2 The **Sporting Events Act** prohibits the carriage of alcohol in vehicles going to football matches and also makes it an offence to attempt to gain admission to a ground when drunk. The **Public Order Act** allows for fans convicted of hooliganism to be banned from football grounds for a specified period. Clubs can also refuse admission to fans who commit offences against ground rules. The **Criminal Justice Act, 1994** was aimed at criminalising ticket touting but has been criticised by supporter groups because it also criminalises supporters who want to sell on unwanted tickets. The Act also provides police with new powers of stop and search and also in relation to aggravated trespass.

The latter has also concerned fans who felt that their right to peaceful protest against unpopular directors or managers might be endangered by the new legislation (Greenfield and Osborn, 1996). Under the **Football (Disorder) Act of 1999** courts were for the first time *required*, not merely allowed, to make a banning order if the criteria were met – and to explain in open court why no banning order was applied. Fans who were banned were also required to hand over their passports at a police station and report there at a specific time and date. **The Football Disorder Act 2000** abolishes the distinction between domestic and international banning orders.

5. Hillsborough: The Interim Report (1989)

- 5.1 The Interim Report on Hillsborough by Lord Justice Taylor was published in August, 1989. It produced 43 practical recommendations which could be immediately implemented by League clubs in order to improve safety for the start of the new season (1989/90).

The main recommendations were:

- Restrictions on the capacities of self-contained pens.
- Monitoring of crowd density by police and stewards, who would be specially trained for this job.
- A review of all terrace capacities with an immediate 15 per cent reduction in all ground capacities.
- The opening of perimeter fence gates.
- An immediate review of the safety certificates held by all grounds.
- New provision for first aid and emergency services at all grounds.
- The setting up of locally-based advisory groups to advise on ground safety.

The Final Report, 1990

- 5.2 In Lord Justice Taylor's Final Report published in January 1990, he praised the football clubs for their positive attitude in implementing the interim recommendations. He then went on to look at the problems facing British football. The report discusses and criticises:

- Leadership of football in Britain
- Poor facilities and services at football
- Old and outmoded football grounds
- The lack of consultation between officials and fans
- The sometimes, poor behaviour of players
- The selling of alcohol at football, a possible cause of disorder
- The attitude of newspapers and television
- The effects of hooliganism and segregation on the general experiences of football spectators

5.3 Lord Justice Taylor then went on to make a total of 76 recommendations designed to improve the state of football in Britain. The most important of these were:

- The gradual replacement of terraces with seated areas in all grounds by the end of the century, with all First and Second Division stadia being all-seater by the start of the 1994-5 Season and all Third and Fourth Division by 1999-2000.
- Setting up an Football Stadium Advisory Design Council to advise on ground safety and construction and to commission research into this area.
- That no perimeter fencing should have spikes on the top or be more than 2.2 metres tall.
- Making ticket touting a criminal offence.
- Introducing new laws to deal with a number of offences inside football grounds, including racist chanting and missile throwing.
- Sending older offenders to Attendance Centres and using new electronic tagging devices for convicted hooligans

The Football Spectators Act, 1989

5.4 Due to the apparent increase in violence at football grounds in the mid-1980s the, then, Minister for Sport, Mr. Colin Moynihan, introduced the Football Spectators Bill to Parliament in 1988. Part One of the Football Spectators Act, 1989, dealt with the domestic game, proposing compulsory membership or identity cards for all spectators at League, Cup and international football matches in England and Wales. Part Two of the Act was concerned with imposing restrictions on fans travelling abroad to follow the

England national team, another source of violent disorder on many occasions during the 1970s and 1980s.

- 5.5 As a result of the Taylor Report, the section of the *Football Spectators Act 1989*, which proposed the introduction of a compulsory membership, or identity card scheme for football supporters was shelved. Many people felt that such a scheme would not have helped prevent disasters such as that at Hillsborough, which was not caused by fan violence. Football supporter organisations and other critics went further, saying that the membership cards would have made matters worse by actually slowing down the process of getting supporters in and out of the ground. Taylor's initial recommendation that all major stadia should be all-seated was amended by the Home Office Minister, David Mellor in July 1992. He agreed that some standing accommodation could be retained by clubs in the lowest two divisions of the Football League.

6. The Football Licensing Authority (FLA)

- 6.1 The FLA was created by the Football Spectators Act of 1989. It is responsible for either granting or refusing a licence to admit spectators to any designated premises to watch football matches. The FLA holds considerable powers to impose conditions on football clubs and to suspend or refuse licences. It has a number of functions:

- To enforce, via license, Government policy that clubs in the Premier League and Football League Division One have all seated stadia.
- To ensure that local authorities are implementing their powers under the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975 as they relate to football.
- To ensure that standing accommodation at lower division grounds meets prescribed standards by August 1999

- 6.2 The main functions of the FLA relate to ensuring the effective management of football supporters inside football stadia. This involves encouraging a general move toward high profile policing and low profile policing. The FLA provides for training modules for stewards, who normally far outnumber policeman at football these days, often by as many as five or six stewards to every police officer. The FLA is also required to keep

under review the discharge by Local Authorities of their functions under the Safety of Sports Grounds Act. All clubs require a safety certificate, which indicates a 'safe capacity', in order to stage matches, and periodic tests must be carried out by clubs to ensure their facilities and emergency services are up to standard. Local **Safety Advisory Groups** involving police, fire and ambulance services and, sometimes, supporters are also used to assist local authorities in exercising safety functions. If clubs fail to meet safety standards they can be prosecuted for contravening a safety certificate or the FLA can insist on a reduction in stadium capacity until the necessary work is done. The post-Taylor regime at football has effectively moved the safety and management of supporter functions at matches to *clubs* and their appointed agents and *away* from the police, whose responsibility now is to deal with public order problems and crime at football.

The Home Affairs Comm. Report, 'Policing Football Hooliganism', 1991

- 6.3 The Home Affairs Committee was set up by Parliament to examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the Home Office and associated Government bodies. The report *Policing Football Hooliganism* is concerned with police costs and efficiency and with public order at football matches. In England and Wales, about 5,000 officers police football each Saturday at an annual estimated cost of about £22 million.

The main recommendations to come out of the report were:

- Re-examine all-seater proposals for small clubs.
- Lower profile policing and higher-profile stewarding.
- Better liaison between police, football authorities and fans.
- Moves towards de-segregating rival fans where possible.
- Clubs to develop better liaison with fans and local communities.

- 6.4 The call for supporters to be involved and consulted more by clubs and to be treated with more respect and dignity was welcomed by supporters' organisations such as the National Federation of Football Supporters Clubs and the Football Supporters Association. It has been widely recognised as a further step towards the greater 'democratisation' of football.

7. Financing the Taylor Recommendations

- 7.1 It was evident that the implementation of the Taylor Report would be a tremendous financial burden on many football clubs. Immediately after the publication of the Taylor Report, the Football Trust, a body responsible for helping clubs with money raised from a tax on the football pools and 'Spot The Ball' competitions, said that it would only be able to help clubs with the most basic requirements for the introduction of seating.
- 7.2 However, in March 1990 the, then, Chancellor of the Exchequer, John Major, announced that the amount of tax levied on football pools was to be cut by 2.5 per cent, releasing £100 million over five years to assist clubs in redeveloping their grounds. This was later extended to the year 2000, providing up to £200 million for stadium improvements from this source. In October 1990, the Football Trust announced that, in addition to this initial £100 million, it would also be distributing around £40 million, (three-quarters of its income) for ground redevelopment over the five year period. The maximum amount of money that any one football club could receive under the new scheme was to be £2 million.
- 7.3 At this time, the Trust indicated, however, that it might be willing to grant more than the combined maximum total of £4 million to two clubs planning to share a new ground, providing both were prepared to invest the entire proceeds from the sale of existing grounds into the new venture. Even in the so-called 'enlightened' post-Hillsborough times for stadium design and for the construction of new stadia no English or Scottish clubs have actually come forward with proposals to **share** facilities in a manner which is much more common on the continent, where stadia are often owned, not by the clubs, but by local authorities. This last point often means that continental stadia are often multi-purpose and often have athletics tracks, providing watching conditions for football not favoured by British fans.
- 7.4 By January 1991, the Football Trust had contributed £7.73 million towards ground improvement projects. Of this amount, both Liverpool and Glasgow Rangers received £2 million, to convert the terraced parts of their stadia into all-seated areas. Combined redevelopment at Anfield and Ibrox Park came to a total cost of more than £22 million.

In total, in the first year, applications were received by the Trust from 76 clubs for 120 separate projects. For the rest of 1991, the Trust anticipated approving further projects to a total value of £25 million. By 1997 almost £500 million had been spent by clubs in England and Scotland on major improvements or new stadia, with the Football Trust contributing around 30% of this total cost. Where else did money come from for this modernisation programme? Some came from the sale of old stadia and land; some came from sponsors; some came from club owners; some came from local authorities as partners.

Funding Football Stadia, Post-Hillsborough (£millions)

	Raised by Club	Football Trust Grant	Total Cost
1991	32.5	10.6	43.1
1992	71.9	29.5	101.4
1993	69.5	24.3	93.8
1994	46.9	26.2	73.1
1995	20.7	10.5	31.2
1996	60.2	18.7	78.9
1997	69.6	16.7	86.3
Totals	371.3	136.5	507.8

- 7.5 As mentioned earlier, the Trust's guidelines for grant-aid to clubs allows for larger contributions to be made towards ground-sharing by two clubs. However, no money has yet been allocated for these purposes. Richard Faulkner, the Trust's First Deputy Chairman commented: "*...some proposals for new stadia may prove hard to fulfil because of planning permission problems, and there is as yet little enthusiasm for ground sharing.*"

8. The All Seater Stadia Debate and the Symbolic Meaning of Stadia

"There is no panacea which will achieve total safety and cure all problems of behaviour and crowd control. But I am satisfied that seating does more to achieve those objectives than any other measure."
(Taylor 1990).

- 8.1 The move to all-seater stadia is seen by many in the game as the necessary way forward. Soon after the Hillsborough disaster, Liverpool Football Club announced plans to convert its Anfield Stadium to seating. Announcements by both UEFA and FIFA (the European and World governing bodies for football) indicated the determination of both organisations to stage, by 1993, all major games played under their auspices in grounds where all fans are seated. The trend towards the elimination of terracing was seen by the authorities in England as an important step towards increasing spectator safety and crowd control.
- 8.2 However, despite the arguments above, the opinions of design experts and football supporters themselves are not so clear-cut. Simon Inglis, a writer and researcher on football stadia, has argued that many of the major stadia in the world at present still have terracing and it is the behaviour, management and control of spectators on terracing which are crucial to explaining tragedies like Heysel and Hillsborough. Early research on this issue undertaken on the views of members of the Football Supporters Association at the Sir Norman Chester Centre for Football Research at the University of Leicester in 1989 indicated that a majority of these 'activist' fans were opposed to all-seater stadia. However, given certain qualifications on issues such as price and covering, the opposition to all-seater stadia even among these committed fans does diminish quite considerably.
- 8.3 More recent research suggests that, in the main, most fans are reasonably happy with new stadia developments, but that a number of issues do concern them. For example, the **National FA Premier League Fan Survey** (2001) suggests that most fans like the new facilities at football and agree that hooliganism has been reduced inside top grounds and crowd management has improved. However, supporters are also very concerned about the lack of 'atmosphere' in some seated grounds and they are also anxious about the ticket pricing at some venues. At some top clubs close to a majority of fans now

want some terraces; fans have also identified the possible advantages and disadvantages of a return of some terracing.

- 8.4 One of the reasons for the early resistance to all-seater grounds was, of course, this fear of losing the ‘terrace culture’ experienced when standing at a football match. Many fans feared losing the unique atmosphere of passionate and committed support associated especially with football in British stadia. A poll in the early 1990s in ‘France Football’ rated English football grounds very low on architectural merit, but highest on stadium atmosphere. Many clubs have already developed all-seater family enclosures aiming to encourage more families and women to attend matches and thus reduce the potential for hostility by ‘feminising’ the atmosphere at matches. Concerns about safety in football stadia in England are also very high now following the Hillsborough disaster. Balancing up the demands for safety *and* excitement inside stadia is a key question for fans and administrators these days (Frosdick, 1996). However, ‘*A National Survey of Female Football Fans*’ conducted by the Centre for Football Research at Leicester University (Woodhouse, 1991) found that many women who already attend football show the same resistance to change in stadium design and facilities as do their male counterparts. In the 2000 FA Premier League National Fan survey (SNCCFR, 2000) 24% of all supporters still wanted to stand. At Leeds United 39% of fans preferred standing. Ex-Minister for Sport, Kate Hoey continues the campaign for standing areas in 2002 on the basis of offering more choice for fans and that *safe* standing areas – as in Germany and the lower divisions in England for example – are possible. Some top German clubs remove seats for domestic matches but replace them for European competition. The FLA rejected the comparison with Germany, however, arguing that fan cultures in England and Germany are very different.
- 8.5 In addition to these issues, many fans also have a considerable *emotional* investment in their football stadia. Stadia have an enormous *symbolic* value to fans (Williams and Giulianotti, 1994). Many working class men in particular experience some of their most important collective experiences in the local football ground. The ground also ‘carries’ the memories of earlier generations of supporters. Sons (and some daughters) follow in their father’s footsteps by standing in the same space as did their parent(s). Fans often feel they ‘own’ certain parts of the stadium and they become strongly attached to the idiosyncracies which marked earlier generations of English football grounds. Moving

grounds or demolishing old stands runs the risk of producing sterile, modern, rationalised 'non-places' which are cold and anonymous and which evoke little of the memory or the great 'community' traditions of clubs (Canter, et al 1989; Duke, 1994).

9. Ground-Sharing and Relocation

- 9.1 A solution suggested by Taylor to the financial problems incurred by the requirements for ground improvements and the transition to all-seater stadia, was the sharing by two clubs of an existing ground, or the relocation of clubs to new stadia. The vast majority of English League grounds remain in the same locations of fifty or more years ago, in cramped, working-class residential and industrial areas close to town and city centres.
- 9.2 By 1910, for example, 66 Football League clubs had moved into the stadia they still occupied in the early 1990s. Most of the others moved between 1912 and 1955. Up until the new Taylor-inspired generation of football stadia only two new Football League grounds had been built since then, at Scunthorpe and Walsall. The National Stadium at Wembley, currently being redeveloped, is now around eighty years old. The high cost of implementing Lord Justice Taylor's recommendations forced many clubs to reconsider their position at their existing grounds. This has especially been the case as interest in football has boomed in recent years and some clubs have found their new all-seated venues are simply too small. In the last couple of years Manchester United in England and Celtic in Scotland have extended ground capacity to over 55,000 spectators.
- 9.3 For some clubs, it has proved more cost effective to move and build a new stadium. For example, Millwall FC in South East London was one of the first clubs to move to a new site. Around 48 clubs were reported to be 'interested' in relocating elsewhere in the early 1990s. The number of relocations (11) has been much smaller, but impressive nevertheless, especially given the initial reticence of most clubs in this direction.

English Stadia Relocations as part of the post-Taylor Initiative

Club	Stadium	Year	Capacity
Chester City	Deva Stadium	1992	6,000
Millwall	New Den	1993	20,146
Northampton Town	Sixfields Stadium	1994	7,653
Huddersfield Town	McAlpine Stadium	1995	24,000
Middlesbrough	Riverside	1995	35,000
Derby County	Pride Park	1997	33,000
Sunderland	Stadium of Light	1997	41,590
Bolton Wanderers	Reebok Stadium	1997	25,000
Stoke City	Britannia Stadium	1997	24,054
Reading	Madejski Stadium	1998	20,000
Southampton	St. Marys Stadium	2001	32,000

9.4 In addition to these shifts in site, Charlton Athletic has recently moved back to its original site at The Valley. Oxford United has also been building a new ground, though the club is also suffering financially which has delayed its opening. Arsenal, Leeds United, Leicester City, Manchester City, Everton and Coventry City are also planning to move stadia in the near future. Southampton has tried to find a new site for almost 10 years but has been repeatedly turned down for planning permission on the south coast. Despite the apparent willingness of some clubs to move, many, like Southampton, experience problems such as finding the required money, getting planning permission from local councils and facing opposition from residents in the area to which the club wishes to move. The difficulties of acquiring appropriate 'green field' sites outside town centres are quite considerable. Southend, Wrexham, Bristol Rovers and Shrewsbury Town have all had plans to move blocked. Only two top English football clubs actually *share* a stadium - Wimbledon and Crystal Palace - at Selhurst Park in South London. In 2002 the Chief Executive of the Football League was quoted as saying ground sharing was the only route to a secure financial future for a number of Football League clubs playing in the same city as local rivals. However, as some clubs have tried to make maximum usage of their stadium facilities a number now share with *other sports*. Reading, Watford and Queens Park Rangers all share their venues now with top *rugby union* clubs.

Rugby *League* uses football facilities in the north of England, at Bury, Huddersfield and even on occasions at Elland Road, Anfield and Old Trafford.

- 9.5 A controversial proposal for relocation has recently come from Wimbledon FC. The club shares a ground with Crystal Palace, has a very small fan base and like many Football League clubs is losing money. The club proposed a stadium move, firstly to Dublin and then into a custom-built new facility in Milton Keynes. Most of the club's fans favour a move back to the London borough of Merton, where opinions are divided about whether a stadium is a viable proposition. For the fans, the issues here are the club's traditions, its historic links with South London and the principle of maintaining the organic links between football clubs and their places of origin. If Wimbledon was allowed to move, then any buyer could step in and buy an ailing Football League club before locating it elsewhere, where crowds might be larger. This is more like the system for sport in the USA, where owners effectively purchase the *franchise* – the position a sports club holds in a sporting competition. For Wimbledon's South African-born chairman Charles Koppel and its Norwegian owners, the issues are increasing the club's appeal, securing the financial future of the club and the fact that even with the fans' preferred move back to Merton local support will not offer the club the prospects of gaining an FA Premier League place or long term commercial survival. The decision in this case is crucial for future policy on all football relocations. Wimbledon's aims seem likely to offer an option for the future in cash-strapped times.
- 9.6 In the late-modern period most major stadia have now become less sports' facilities than *sites* for a range of functions and types of leisure consumption and business activities. The communal areas below the seats which traditionally would have remained unused or available only for informal activities, have now been converted at many grounds into areas for bars and shops - the 'streets of the stadium'. At Leeds United a veritable shopping 'mall' has emerged under the giant new East Stand. All major grounds now house club shops which are open on most days. Top clubs such as Liverpool and Manchester United also have stadium museums. Many clubs with new stands try to utilise their facilities for a range of local business and conference functions. This *diversification* of club activities points up the determination of clubs to maximise their resource and to try to open up new markets for football - as well as seeking a return on stadium investment. Club matches and stadium facilities are now used to attract

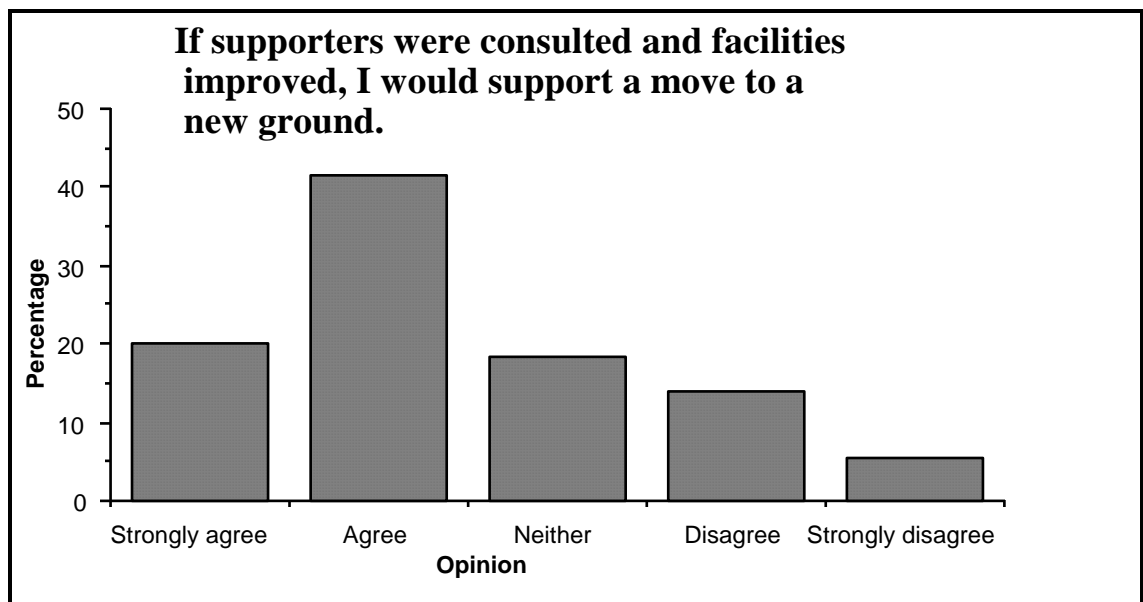
corporate customers - Leicester City described its new Carling Stand as the 'business stadium'. Executive boxes are controversial for many committed fans, who would clearly prefer more space for 'dedicated' club followers. But football stadia now can also act as a strong lure for international business in their new role as a focus for regional regeneration, business development and 'place marketing' (Williams, 1996). The executive facilities are here to stay.

- 9.7 But a word of warning is worth making here. Some stadium managers and club owners imagined their new venues might become major sites for other sports, for pop concerts, firework displays etc. However, the market for such events is actually quite small *and* competitive. Millwall hoped to corner some of this market when opening the New Den; but the club failed to book major events, mainly because the venue was simply too large or else it was poorly located. Partly for this reason the club was soon in major financial trouble and facing economic ruin. After a period of trauma the Millwall club is back in recovery though the New Den still hosts few non-football events of any note.
- 9.8 In addition to this, new football facilities often now contain 'community' rooms and even classrooms as clubs seek ways of maintaining positive links with local people despite the extended multi-purpose use of venues which once used to be active only once or twice a week. However, a new national organisation, the **Federation of Stadium Communities** has been formed in order to represent the interests of people who live close to football grounds. When clubs want to extend their facilities or their activities this often has negative implications for the local community. In recent years, for example, Arsenal FC has faced substantial opposition from residents in Highbury because of that club's ambitions to increase the stadium capacity. More stadium capacity means more traffic and more potential nuisance to residents - especially as stadium activities are no longer contained to the 'traditional' Saturday/Wednesday couplet. In fact, most research on stadium nuisance suggests that people who live near football grounds are less concerned by hooliganism than they are by the problems of car parking and other forms of 'incivility' (Mason and Robbins, 1991; Bale, 1993)

10. Do Fans Want to Move?

10.1 Again, the view of supporters and ‘experts’ appear to be mixed on these issues. For one thing, it is often pointed out that by no means all continental stadia have ‘out of town’ locations, and that some of our ‘city’ stadia are actually quite well placed for facilities, parking etc. In the 1989 survey by the SNCCFR of members of the Football Supporters Association, the majority were *opposed* to ground-sharing, but more appeared to support moves to newly-built stadia if fans were consulted and facilities improved. (See Graph below).

10.2 Some of the opposition from fans to ground-sharing - and even to *moving* grounds - may stem from the fear of losing their local identity and of damaging the ties that exist between football clubs and their local communities. The intense rivalry that can occur between clubs in the same area is also a significant obstacle to ground-sharing. In fact, in the 1990s as the Premier League has become such a powerful force and the **quality** of club facilities a clear sign of the *ambition* of clubs to reach, or remain involved in, the top league supporters seem much more willing to support a move to a new ground. The facilities at Sunderland, Middlesbrough and Derby County, especially mark the ambitions at those clubs to remain a major force.



Source: SNCCFR, 1989

Bolton Wanderers have probably moved furthest, and the impressive Reebok Stadium - like Pride Park and the new Reading stadium - perhaps lacks the traditional 'football infrastructure' - bars, shops etc. - which give older venues part of their character and a 'sense of place'. Certainly, fans at Middlesbrough seem very impressed by the new Riverside venue, which has, itself, played a major role in the general rejuvenation of the fortunes of that club.

11. Wembley Stadium

- 11.1 Back in 1914, when Liverpool played Burnley in the FA Cup final at Crystal Palace, fans from the North travelling down to the match were already wary of the metropolitan exploitation which lay ahead. Spectators for the final, for example, had to pay a shilling (5p) admission to the pleasure grounds before gaining access, for an additional payment, to the football stadium. This was, naturally, frowned upon by the hardy Lancastrians who had gone 'down' for the Cup, and when the Final moved to a new stadium at Wembley in 1923 supporters from outside the metropolis remained ambivalent towards the attractions of a London final. Most people, sure, were in awe of the size and symbolism of the new stadium and, eventually, its place in the world game. But, increasingly, travel down to London became a nightmare as more and more people wanted to do it in their own cars. Access to final tickets for fans was also frozen to a miserly 12,000 until supporter action and public opinion finally shamed the FA into change.
- 11.2 In recent years, especially as English club grounds have improved in their facilities and services, as travel to European football venues has opened up (usually invidious) comparisons, and as fans began to demand more from the final as an 'event', the privations of the North London venue and its environs became more and more apparant. Where could you eat or drink? Not in Brent, and not easily in the parking venues around the suburbs north up to the Stanmore tube link. *Inside* Wembley became known for its poor offers and high prices.
- 11.3 In June 1996 Sir Norman Foster unveiled plans for a new national stadium, initially incorporating the famous twin towers. In December, after a nebulous beauty contest, the

Sports Council chose Wembley as the site for the new national venue at a cost of £230 million, to be used to host the 2001 World Athletics Championships and as a centrepiece for London bids for the Olympic Games in 2008 or 2012. £120 million of this cost was earmarked from the Lottery, the rest to be raised in loans from the City; a feasible and timely national sports project. But because commercial companies cannot receive Lottery funds this also meant that the then owners of the stadium, the ailing Wembley plc, needed to be ditched. Rather than a trust established under the auspices of the Sports Council (the original plan), the FA became ambitious owners of Wembley via their subsidiary, Wembley National Stadium Ltd (WNSL). Trouble ahead.

- 11.4 When Ken Bates took charge of the Wembley project he had four apparent, if unlikely, aims in mind: one, to build a new stadium at top cost fit for the ill-fated 2006 World Cup bid; two, to turn the new stadium into a lucrative corporate and hotel base *a la* Chelsea Village - in *Brent?* - three, to build a football stadium complex *for* the FA but apparently with no FA cash input at all; and four, to squeeze athletics and any other sports *out* of the Wembley picture. Chris Smith, Minister at the DCMS, and now blanching at the huge sums involved, agreed in January 2000 that Wembley should be a football-only venue. But as the sums involved looked increasingly bizarre as the cost of the stadium rocketed to £660 million, Ken Bates himself was forced to leave this leaky ship before FA Chief Executive Adam Crozier finally called a halt on the whole embarrassing and overblown affair, calling for another £150 millions worth of public investment to 'save' Wembley.
- 11.5 Plans are now afoot to revive the Wembley project, possibly including athletics once more. Some fans were alarmed that the new scheme plans to have 15,000 VIP seats at the stadium to cover the costs of the new venue. But the world has also moved on since the grand old stadium's closure. Cardiff, with its friendliness, easy reach cafes and bars and reasonably priced accommodation, has actually done an excellent job of hosting English football's major events and of showing up north London's more obvious failings. And the Millennium Stadium is no hyper-commercialised forum of a kind visioned by the English game's elite. It's an impressive football *and* rugby venue built for sport, not just for consumption, and is an important focus for Welsh civic pride. An FA Cup final half-time spent on the sunny boardwalk over-looking the River Taff, or in the shopping 'streets' of a new London stadium mall? It's a good question

11.6 Also, the gains of having England playing international football matches in club grounds *away* from London since the Wembley closure have been considerable. The atmosphere at these matches so far has been powerful and far less poisoned than what we too often got at Wembley. Taking England to the provinces might just help to dissipate some of the jingoism and racism which attaches itself to the national team and which the government and the FA seem so keen to try to target at the moment. Surely, we cannot now go back to playing *all* England's matches in the capital? As many fans point out, the national team, after all, belongs to the north as well as the south of England.

11.7 A national survey of fans drawn from 43 FA Premier League and Football League clubs was conducted by the SNCCFR in 2001 (see Williams, 2001). Some of the results are as follows

- 45% of the sample tried to attend at least one England match at home every couple of seasons. 65% are interested in attending *more* England games in future
- 98% of respondents would typically try to attend a play-off match or a domestic final involving their own club
- 74% of the sample had been to the old Wembley Stadium in the past five years. 50% of the sample describes the old Wembley as a 'poor' venue. 66% of the national sample thought the old Wembley offered 'poor' value for money
- A majority of fans in our sample favours Birmingham (60%) over Wembley (29%) and Coventry (11%) as the venue for any new national stadium
- There is, generally, stronger support for a Midlands venue for a new national stadium because it will even up travel time for all fans (60%). International demands and the large fan base in the London area sways far fewer respondents towards a London location (13%)

- 43% of the sample say they would be ‘more likely’ to attend top matches involving their own club if they were staged in Birmingham rather than London. Only 5% say they would watch fewer matches of this kind
- A substantial proportion of fans, however, now wonder if there is any necessity for a new national stadium at all, or for one which aims to host *all* of England’s international matches at home
- 80% of fans say the funding for any new national stadium should come from a partnership between government, football and business. Only 12% argue football alone should fund the venue
- 40% of respondents argue the new stadium should host athletics, as well as other sports. Only 27% argue for a ‘football-only’ venue
- 73% of the national sample say it would be cheaper for them to travel to a Midlands venue than to one based in London. Average travel costs to the Midlands are an estimated 29% cheaper than to London

12. The Future?

- 12.1 Some time has now elapsed since the Taylor Report was published. There has been much discussion on what has been probably the most comprehensive review of the condition of British football in the history of the game. The move towards all-seater stadia is the most radical and significant development during this time. One club, Coventry City, tried seats in the early 1980s, with little success. (See Williams et al, 1984). But since this initial experiment the English game and its public has changed considerably. Seating and improved facilities have been *generally* welcomed. Some clubs have seen the cost of introducing seats into decaying and run-down stadia as money badly spent compared with the prospects for ground relocation. Many grounds are no longer the best places for the clubs they house. Some clubs have successfully moved, while others have fallen foul of planning permission or of supporter resistance. Finally, it has become clear that rather than being seen by public authorities as a focal point for

social problems, football stadia today are now regarded more as an important boost to the local economy and to local identity and 'place marketing' (Williams, 1996). Recent struggles in England over the siting of stadia suggest that the 'dependent city' syndrome of the USA (Euchner, 1993), where cities are desperate to keep or attract sports franchises, may soon become a feature, too, of the British landscape.

- 12.2 Most fans are convinced that more clubs will have to move, but more now want their own club to do so. Currently, both Arsenal and Leeds United are set on a stadium move. A move also looks likely at Everton, where more than 80% of fans voted for a new location. There is, arguably, a need for greater realism and less conservatism among supporters and clubs and, once again, a need to build upon the sorts of positive outcomes which supporters and clubs might expect from a move or from stadium redevelopment which is properly handled and financed. By the same token, many clubs are probably still best suited by their current location. One wonders, however, whether some of the money spent post-Hillsborough has, perhaps, been used, too quickly, to create modern stadia for *today* rather than the football venues which will be needed for the 21st century. New football stadia in Holland and Belgium, for example, already seem more advanced than our own. Here a retractable roof and a removable pitch are already features of new venues. Computer programmes now offer the opportunity to 'design' a stadium on screen and for fans to see the view they will have of matches before a single brick is laid. These features are also available in Japan, where a reported £4 billion has been spent on stadia to house the 2002 World Cup finals. Will Japan benefit from these new venues after the finals? Soon, and in the wake of the challenges posed by ever-more-sophisticated TV coverage, top football stadia are likely to offer higher paying fans individual video consoles, as already happens in the USA. But will it still be possible, then, to generate the conditions of a sports *crowd* rather than a sports *audience* in the new stadia of the future?
- 12.3 The future for the game as outlined by documents like the Taylor Report and the Home Affairs Committee Report, however, will involve more than simply an improvement and extension of facilities. The need for co-operation between all those involved in our national sport is becoming more apparent. According to this agenda, all interested parties - including clubs, fans, police, local authorities and the football Establishment - will have to work effectively together if real progress is to be made. Balancing up the 'business'

functions of the new football venues with the requirement that football grounds remain best designed to generate the sort of 'atmosphere' which is strongly associated with traditional British football venues.

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Last updated March 2002