

BRADFORD CITY FOOTBALL CLUB
FIRE

DISASTERS

MAY 1985

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
13.5.85							
15.5.85							
17.5.85							
20.5.85							
22.5.85							
<p>PREM 19/1448</p>							

Colin Sampson, O.P.M.
Chief Constable of West Yorkshire



Bradford City

P.O. BOX 9,
WAKEFIELD,
WEST YORKSHIRE WF1 3QP

CC/TM/LSH

22 May 1985

Mr Timothy Flesher
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
LONDON

Dear Mr Flesher,

Thank you for your letter dated 20 May consequent upon the visit on Sunday last of The Prime Minister to West Yorkshire.

I am grateful to you for your comments and for troubling to write. I shall ensure that your letter is brought to the notice of those concerned.

As you are aware, The Prime Minister has written personally, and I have acknowledged that letter.

Many thanks once more.

Sincerely
Colin Sampson



FLK

SH

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

20 May 1985

Dear Ambassador,

I was most grateful for your kind message following the tragic fire at Bradford City Football Ground. It was most thoughtful and considerate of you to express your sympathy in this way. I shall ensure that your condolences are passed to the families of the victims.

With my best wishes.

Yours sincerely
Margaret Thatcher

His Excellency Mr G M Mamba

RM

E. R.

IBROX DISASTER FUND

The Fund was launched by the Lord Provost of Glasgow immediately after the disaster on 2 January 1971, in which 66 people died. £361,000 was collected including a £10,000 donation from Glasgow Corporation which was approved by the Secretary of State for Scotland. **There was no Government contribution.**

The Fund was administered by Glasgow District Council's finance department and 12 children of the victims are currently receiving montly payments from the Fund. These will continue until their 18 birthdays and last payments will be made in 1989.

The money collected was distributed as follows:

Grants to injured	£ 30,000
" to widows	£142,000
" to children	£120,000
" to parents	£ 56,000
" to funerals	£ 13,500

file

MJ



ufo

10 DOWNING STREET

17 May 1985

THE PRIME MINISTER

PRIME MINISTER'S

PERSONAL MESSAGE

SERIAL No: T 93/85

a message ops

Dear Mr. President

It was most thoughtful of you to send me a message about the terrible fire at Bradford City Football Club. Your concern and sympathy will be very much appreciated by those who have suffered from this tragedy. May I thank you on their behalf.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely
Raymond Whelan

His Excellency the Honourable Dr Q K J Masire, JP, MP.

BT

As at 17 May

Duty Clerk

PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO BRADFORD : SUNDAY 19 MAY 1985

Mr. Flesher to make own way to RAF NORTHOLT
(Blue Citroen Visa JGM 199Y)

Miss Caines to be picked up from
44 Marsham Court, Marsham Street, SW1
and driven to RAF NORTHOLT

0745

Depart Chequers

Car 1

Prime Minister
Mr. Thatcher
Detective

Car 2

Mrs. Ailes

0815

Depart RAF NORTHOLT for Leeds Bradford Airport

Prime Minister
Mr. Thatcher
Mr. Flesher
Miss Caines
Mrs. Ailes
Detective

0910

Arrive Leeds Bradford Airport
Depart for City Hall

Car 1

Prime Minister
Mr. Thatcher
Detective

Car 2

Mr. Flesher
Miss Caines
Mrs. Ailes

0930

Arrive City Hall
Greeted by Lord Mayor, Chief Executive, Bishop,
Chairman of the Bradford Appeal Fund, Lord Mayor
Elect plus leaders of the three main political
parties
Coffee

Depart City Hall

1000 Arrive Valley Parade Football Ground
Met by Chairman, Manager and Captain

1030 approx Depart

1045 Visits to St. Luke's Hospital and
Bradford Royal Infirmary

1200 approx Meet representatives from Police, Fire
and Ambulance services

Lunchtime Return to City Hall
Visit Appeal Office
[Meeting with bereaved]

1445 approx Depart City Hall

1500 Arrive Leeds Bradford Airport

1600 approx Arrive RAF NORTHOLT

Depart for Pinner

Car 1

Prime Minister
Mr. Thatcher
Detective

} Bob.

Depart for Marsham Court/No.10

Car 2

Miss Caines
Mrs. Ailes

} Tom.

cc Prime Minister
Mr. Thatcher
Mr. Flesher
Miss Caines
Detectives
Drivers
Duty Clerk
Switchboard

Cabinet / Cabinet Committee Document

The following document, which was enclosed on this file, has been removed and destroyed. Such documents are the responsibility of the Cabinet Office. When released they are available in the appropriate CAB (CABINET OFFICE) CLASSES.

Reference: CC (85) 17th Conclusions, Minute 5

Date: 16 May 1985

Signed Wayland Date 3 December 2013

PREM Records Team

Telephone 01-730 5216-9

Overseas Cables
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Telex No. 262897
Telex Answer Back Code
BOHICO LDN SW1

BOTSWANA HIGH COMMISSION

162 Buckingham Palace Road
London SW1W 9TJ

Our Ref HCL/4/1 V L2

PRIME MINISTER'S

PERSONAL MESSAGE

15 May 1985

SERIAL No:

T 90 M/85

u MASTER
OPS

The Private Secretary to The
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
LONDON

Dear Private Secretary

I have the honour to request that the following message from His Excellency Dr Q.J.K. Masire, President of Botswana be brought to the attention of the Right Honourable Mrs Thatcher.

"Quote

The Right Honourable
Mrs Margaret Thatcher
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
LONDON

Dear Prime Minister

It was with a deep sense of sorrow and regret that I learnt of a fire disaster at Bradford which left 52 dead, others missing and a large number of people hospitalised.

On behalf of the Government and the People of Botswana, and on my behalf, I wish to convey to you and the British people, deepest sympathies on this very sad occasion.

.... /2

May I also convey through you, Prime Minister, heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families, speedy recovery to the injured and a happy reunion to the families of the missing persons.

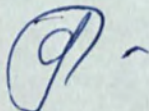
Yours sincerely

Q.K.J. Masire
President of the Republic of Botswana

Unquote"

With deep respect.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'O J Tebape', with a stylized flourish at the end.

O J Tebape
Acting High Commissioner



file

207

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

15 May, 1985

GHANAIAN MESSAGE OF CONDOLENCE

Thank you for your letter of 15 May conveying the message from Flight Lieutenant Rawlings about the fire at Bradford City FC.

I should be grateful if you would reply in the terms of the draft Note Verbale enclosed with your letter.

Handwritten signature/initials

(C D Powell)

C.R. Budd, Esq,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Handwritten signature/initials



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

PRIME MINISTER'S

PERSONAL MESSAGE

15 May 1985

SERIAL No: T 89/85 a MASTER
OPS

Dear Charles,

Ghanaian Message of Condolence

The Ghanaian High Commission have asked us to transmit the following message to the Prime Minister from the Chairman of the Provisional National Defence Council of Ghana, Flt Lt J J Rawlings:

"I have learnt with shock and sadness reports about the fire outbreak at Bradford Stadium and the resultant high toll of deaths and injuries. The People and Government of Ghana join me in expressing our sorrow to the British People. Please accept and extend to families of the bereaved and injured our deepest sympathy and condolences. Highest regards".

The Prime Minister may wish to respond on the lines suggested in the enclosed Note Verbale.

The Ghanaian High Commission would have no objection to the text of Flt Lt Rawlings' message being released to the press.

Yours ever,

Colin Budd

(C R Budd)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
10 Downing Street

DRAFT: ~~minute/letter/teleletter/despatch/note verbale~~

TYPE: Draft/Final 1+

FROM:

Subject cc master ops

Reference

DEPARTMENT:

TEL. NO:

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

TO:

Your Reference

- Top Secret
- Secret
- Confidential
- Restricted
- Unclassified

Office of the High Commissioner for
Ghana
13 Belgrave Square
LONDON SW1X 8PR

PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE
SERIAL No. T90/85

Copies to:

PRIVACY MARKING

SUBJECT:

.....In Confidence

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office present their compliments to the Office of the High Commissioner for the Republic of Ghana, and with reference to its Note of 14 May, have the honour to request the Office of the High Commissioner to arrange delivery to Flt Lt J J Rawlings, Chairman of the Provisional National Defence Council of Ghana, of the following message from the Prime Minister, the Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher:

CAVEAT.....

'I am most grateful for your thoughtful message of condolence to the families of those killed and injured in the terrible fire at Bradford Football Stadium last weekend.

The tragedy has saddened the whole nation. The people and Government of the United Kingdom will be deeply touched, as I am, to know that our sorrow is shared by our friends. We thank you, and through you the people and Government of Ghana, for your sympathy at this sad time.'

Enclosures—flag(s).....

With best wishes''

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office avail themselves of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the High Commissioner for the Republic of Ghana the assurances of their highest consideration.

File

MJ2AKR



at Pro

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

15 May 1985

**PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE
SERIAL No. T 88/85**

cc MASTER
OPS

Dear Helmut:

I was most grateful for your kind message about the tragic fire at Bradford City Football Ground. It was most thoughtful of you to convey your sympathy which I shall ensure is passed on to the families of the victims.

I look forward very much to seeing you on Saturday.

Yours

Rogers

His Excellency Herr Dr Helmut Kohl

88

File

08241W



cc: fco

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

15 May 1985

PRIME MINISTER'S

PERSONAL MESSAGE

SERIAL No. T 87/85

a MASTER OPS

Dear Prime Minister,

It was very kind and thoughtful of you to send a message about the tragic fire at Bradford City Football Ground last Saturday. It was indeed a terrible disaster. But I am sure that the victims and their relatives will be comforted by your kind words, which I shall pass on to them.

With my best wishes,

Yours sincerely

Raymond Stalker

His Excellency Dr. Mario Soares

088

cc Masters
Ops

DG

File



cc Ho
fco

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

14 May 1985

PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE
SERIAL No. T86A/85

Your Prime Minister,

I was most grateful for your kind message following the tragic fire at Bradford City Football Ground. It was most thoughtful and considerate of you to express your sympathy in this way and your gesture will be much appreciated in this country. I shall ensure that your condolences are passed to the families of the victims.

With my best wishes,

Yours sincerely
Margaret Thatcher

His Excellency Senor Don Felipe Gonzalez Marquez

SRW



cc: FCO

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

14 May 1985

Dear Secretary-General,

I was very grateful for your message about the tragic fire at the Bradford City Football Ground and shall ensure that your kind words of sympathy are passed on to the families of the victims.

I was glad to see you and your colleagues yesterday evening and found our discussion very useful.

With my best wishes,

Yours sincerely
Margaret Thatcher

M. Chedli Klibi

08

ca: RSO

Courtesy Translation

**PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE
SERIAL No. T 86/85**

a MASTER
OPS

T e l e g r a m m e

from Herr Dr. Helmut Kohl

Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany

to The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, MP, Prime Minister

Bonn, 13 May 1985

Dear Prime Minister,

May I express to you and to the relatives of the victims and injured my most sincere condolences on the terrible disaster in Bradford which exacted a toll of more than fifty victims last weekend. The tragedy in Bradford has been broadcast and seen on television by millions of German viewers who were horrified and feel deep sympathy.

Yours Helmut Kohl

T e l e g r a m m
von Herrn Helmut Kohl
Bundeskanzler der Bundesrepublik Deutschland
an

The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, MP, Premierminister

Bonn, den 13. Mai 1985

Sehr geehrte Frau Premierminister,

zu dem schrecklichen Brandunglück in Bradford, dem am
Wochenende mehr als 50 Menschen zum Opfer gefallen sind,
spreche ich Ihnen und den Angehörigen der Toten und
Verletzten mein aufrichtiges Beileid aus. Die Tragödie
in Bradford, die über das Fernsehen in Millionen
deutscher Haushalte getragen wurde, ist von allen Deutschen
mit Entsetzen und tiefer Anteilnahme aufgenommen worden.

Ihr Helmut Kohl

Te

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R14

ce: fco

13 MAY 1985/2303

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ETATPRIORITE

HER EXCELLENCY MARGARET THATCHER

THE PRIME MINISTER OF UNITED KINGDOM

10, DOWNING STREET

LONDON

PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE
SERIAL No: T 85/85

a MATTER
OPS

DO PLEASE ACCEPT THE EXPRESSION OF MY GOVERNMENT'S AND MY OWN
DEEPEST SIMPATHY FOR THE TRAGIC ACCIDENT AT BRADFORD CITY
STADIUM LAST SATURDAY.

MARIO SOARES PRIME MINISTER OF PORTUGAL NESTRANGEIROS

COL 10,

for enquiries dial the number
shown in your dialling instructions

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Telegram

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252A1X
cc: PLO

R14

13 MAY 1985/2158

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TUNIS TELEX 76/73 13 1900

ETATPRIORITE

H.E MRS MARGARET THATCHER PRIME MINISTER
OF THE UNITED KINGDOM 10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON

YOUR EXCELLENCY

I HAVE LEARNT WITH DEEP EMOTION AND GREAT SORROW THE NEWS
OF THE BRADFORD STADIUM FIRE AS I IMPLORE GOD TO HELP
THE VICTINES FAMILIES THROUGH THIS TRAGIC ORDEAL I PRAY YOUR
EXCELLENCY AND THROUGH YOU THE BRITISH PEOPLE TO ACCEPT MY
MOST HEARTFELT CONDOLENCES AND PROFOUNDDEST SYMPATHY
CHEDLI KLIBI SECRETARY GENERAL LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES

COL ETATPRIORITE 10

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AGAINST DELIVERY

HOME SECRETARY'S STATEMENT ON FOOTBALL GROUNDS: FIRE AND
DISTURBANCES

13 May 1985

With permission, Mr Speaker, I should like to make a statement.

The entire nation has been horrified and appalled at the terrible tragedy at Bradford City football ground on Saturday. I know that the whole House will wish to join together in expressing our deepest sympathy for the families and friends of the dead and of the many who were injured, some of whom remain critically ill.

The fire started just before half-time, at about 3.35 p.m., under the floor at one end of the main stand.

The stand was an old one made of metal and timber with a bitumen and felt roof, and the fire spread extremely rapidly. There were about 3,000 people in the stand. The majority managed to move down onto the pitch; but a number tried to escape through the exits at the rear and found themselves trapped in a narrow alley between the back of the stand and the wall of the ground. In accordance with long established practice at sports grounds, the gates were locked to prevent unauthorised spectators gaining admission. It was here that many people died.

The Chief Constable of West Yorkshire has informed me this morning that he is satisfied that no more than 55 and no less than 51 persons died at the ground. Two others have died in hospital. The bodies of most of those who died at the ground have not yet been identified.

/In addition

In addition, over 200 people were injured, of whom 60 are still in hospital. 22 policemen were injured, of whom two are in hospital; and three firemen were injured, none of whom is still in hospital.

The cause of the fire has not yet been ascertained, but a team of detectives from the West Yorkshire police, assisted by forensic scientists and members of the West Yorkshire fire brigade, began sifting through the debris as soon as it had been made safe to do so. The police have asked for witnesses to come forward who might be able to give evidence about the possible cause of the fire, and it is essential that members of the public should give every assistance.

I should like to pay tribute to the courage and professionalism of the police and fire services. No-one who has seen the film of the events can doubt that as much as could be done was done to get people out of the stand, and then to deal with the aftermath of the fire. I would like also to express the warmest appreciation for the dedication and skill of the medical and pathological teams, the ambulance service and all the hospital and voluntary agencies who have since been working day and night, treating the injured and consoling the bereaved.

Further, the House will be aware that at Birmingham on the very same day many people were injured and subsequently one spectator died as a result of serious crowd disorder at the match between Birmingham City and Leeds United, arising from violence by groups of fans from both clubs. There were repeated invasions of the

pitch, missiles were thrown, and the police were attacked. In all there were 125 arrests, 96 police officers required medical treatment, of whom two are still in hospital, and over 80 spectators were injured. Some of the injuries were caused when a wall collapsed following a surge in the crowd, and it was a boy of 15 who subsequently died of the injuries he received.

This was a further example of disgraceful football violence, which illustrates the link between the problem of crowd safety and the problem of crowd control. With regard to this incident inquiries are of course also being made by the Football Association.

Investigations at Bradford are continuing and inquests will be conducted both there and at Birmingham. I shall expect to receive further reports in due course giving the conclusions of the police, forensic and fire brigade inquiries in Bradford and of the police inquiries in Birmingham. But over and above these particular investigations and hearings, the magnitude of these events demands that urgent steps should immediately be taken to examine what can be done to prevent such incidents. With my Rt Hon friend the Secretary of State for Scotland I have therefore asked Mr Justice Popplewell to chair an inquiry with the following terms of reference:

"To inquire, with particular reference to the events at Bradford City and Birmingham football grounds on 11 May, into the operation of the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975; and to recommend what if any further steps should be taken, including any that may be necessary under additional powers, to improve both crowd safety and crowd control at sports grounds."

I understand that Mr Justice Popplewell will visit Bradford tomorrow.

The inquiry's fundamental task will be to ensure that the demands of safety, on the one hand, and control, on the other, are not only each satisfied in themselves but also satisfied compatibly with each other. A subsidiary but important task will be for the inquiry to review what is known as the "Green Code", that is the "Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds", which provides guidelines for local authorities as to the conditions that they should require of clubs that seek certification under the 1975 Act. I shall ask that the inquiry should proceed with all possible speed, taking account of and supplementing, as necessary, the findings of the current police, forensic service and fire brigade investigations. I shall arrange for the Chairman to be assisted by appropriately qualified assessors - for example from the police and fire services - and to have available such technical advice and support as he requires. He will of course be able to make any further factual inquiries into what happened that he thinks necessary. If the Chairman thinks it necessary or desirable, I and my Rt Hon friend will welcome any interim report or recommendations he wishes to submit.

In addition, and in parallel with the work of the inquiry, I have decided to designate all grounds in the Third and Fourth Divisions of the Football League so that they become subject to the system of safety certification under the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975. The effect will be to require such clubs to apply for certificates

from the relevant local authority specifying in considerable detail what physical conditions and management practices - including as to fire precautions - must be followed. The Government announced only on 1 April that we should be extending designation to Third and Fourth Division grounds but starting with those with a record of club violence. It is plain, however, that the time for selective action has passed, and I shall accordingly be discussing with the football authorities immediately how universal designation may be implemented as soon as possible. It will, of course, be for the inquiry to recommend any changes in the present certification procedures or any other steps that should be taken to improve crowd safety and control. But I can see no reason why designating the Third and Fourth Division clubs or any of the other steps announced on 1 April should wait on their conclusions. It is clearly important that the public should be given all the protection that the existing law allows as quickly as possible, and that any measures to enhance safety and security that can be introduced speedily as a result of the work that has currently been proceeding should be implemented at the earliest possible date.

To ensure that the measures I have announced of a swift inquiry and a new programme of designation do not leave gaps meanwhile in public protection, I am asking chief fire officers immediately to visit uncertificated sports stadia in their areas to advise management on what steps they should take to secure proper standards of crowd safety in their particular circumstances. They will no

doubt wish to discuss amongst other matters the opening and locking of gates at sports grounds. Whilst I imagine such visits will be the more comprehensive if chief fire officers are accompanied by other members of the local authority safety teams, this work will brook no delay and, for that reason, I consider the duty to fall best initially on chief fire officers.

I must stress that the measures announced today are additional to those announced on 1 April after the meeting at 10 Downing Street with the football authorities. That programme of measures agreed to combat football hooliganism goes ahead with renewed urgency.

The events at Bradford and Birmingham were in their different ways both tragic and sickening. Nothing will wipe away the memory of that terrible afternoon. But our task now must be to take urgent steps to minimise the chances of recurrence. The measures I have announced today are designed to that end. I will report to the House in due course on their progress and outcome.

GR
Could MEA see
the earlier replies we
sent out to condolence
messages this week
Martin 15/5
att.

13 May 1985

RM

TELEMESSAGE
THE RT HON PRIME MINISTER
10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON
SW1

YOUR EXCELLENCY,
ON BEHALF OF THE DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY IN LONDON AND ON MY
OWN BEHALF, ALLOW ME TO EXTEND TO YOU YOUR EXCELLENCY AND
TO THE BRITISH NATION, OUR MOST SINCERE CONDOLENCES FOR THE
TERRIBLE TRAGEDY WHICH BEFELL THE BRITISH NATION AT BRADFORD
CITY ON SATURDAY 11 MAY AND WHICH CLAIMED SO MANY INNOCENT
LIVES STOP
PLEASE ACCEPT YOUR EXCELLENCY OUR HEARTEFL CONDOLENCES TO THE
BEREAVED FAMILIES AND OUR BEST WISHES FOR THE SAFE ROCEE RECOVERY
OF ALL THOSE WHO WERE HURT STOP

GEORGE M MAMBA
DOYEN

← Charles Powell

(Swaziland)

H.E. Mr G M Mamba
58 Pont St.
SWIX OAE

Serial H/C - since 3/5/85.
(i harden)

GR

PL type up on or attached
letter, but without separate tracklets.

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cc Master
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R1315

12 MAY 1985/1300

ZCZC CLM8529 ZGX4364 MTA761 PRE001 31003

GBXX CO ESMD 080

MADRID PRESIDENCIA DEL GOBIERNO 80/76 12 1300 (PAG. 1/50 WDS)

AMPLIATION

S.E. MARGARET THATCHER

PRIMER MINISTRO DEL REINO UNIDO

LONDRES

PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE
SERIAL No. T84AA/85

PROFUNDAMENTE IMPRESIONADO TRAGEDIA OCURRIDA EN CAMPO
DE FUTBOL DE BRADFORD CITY DESEO EXPRESARLE EN NOMBRE
DEL PUEBLO ESPAÑOL DEL GOBIERNO QUE PRESIDYO Y MIO PROPIO
LOS SENTIMIENTOS DEL MAS HONDO PESAR QUE LE RUEGO TRASLADE
FAMILIARES DE LAS VICTIMAS AL MISMO

PRE001 31003 S.E. MARGARET (PAG. 2/26 WDS)

TIEMPO QUE HAGO VOTOS POR EL PRONTO RESTABLECIMIENTO
DE LAS PERSONAS QUE RESULTARON HERIDAS EN LA CATASTROFE

UN CORDIAL SALUDO

FELIPE GONZALEZ MARQUEZ

PRESIDENTE DEL GOBIERNO

COL NIL

ons
Telegram for enquiries dial the number shown in your dialling instructions

British TELECOM for enquiries dial the number shown in your dialling instructions

Tele



Oxford United F.C. P.L.C.



Members of Football Association, Football League, Football Combination, South East Counties League
 Colours: Yellow Shirts, Blue Shorts
 Registered Office: Manor Ground, Headington, Oxford OX3 7RS Telephone: Oxford 61503
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 P. Reeves, W.H. Reeves, L. Town
 Manager: J.M. Smith
 Secretary: J.A. Hunt

From:
 Robert Maxwell MC
 Headington Hill Hall
 Oxford OX3 0BB

XM/IRM/LJ

12 May 1985

Robinson

The Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher MP
 Prime Minister
 No 10 Downing Street
 LONDON
 SW1A 2AL

Dear Prime Minister

RE: WIDENING THE CURRENT DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE FOOTBALL AUTHORITIES FROM ANTI-HOOLIGANISM TO COVER ALSO SAFETY IN ITS BROADEST SENSE, SO AS TO PREVENT ANOTHER TRAGEDY LIKE BRADFORD WHICH HAS SHOCKED THE NATION

My purpose in writing to you following the disaster of Bradford is to invite you please to instruct the Minister responsible for the current discussions with the Football Authorities which are related to measures to combat hooliganism to widen these discussions to also consider safety improvements at all designated grounds.

I believe that the success or failure of these talks will depend on the Government's willingness to make some resources available to enable the football industry and its authorities to finance the measures required to eliminate hooliganism and after Bradford to restore the public confidence in the safety of our grounds.

I further believe that there is strong all-party support in Parliament to get the Government to agree to a reduction in the football pools betting levy so as to enable the resulting benefits to go to the Football Grounds Improvement Trust to finance the necessary measures required.

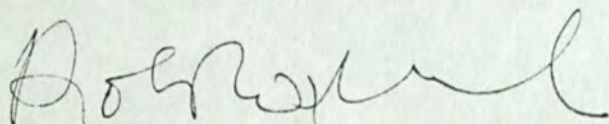
What you may not be aware of is that the agreement between the Football League and the football pools companies provides that any reduction of the levy is divided as to 60% for the profit-making ~~clubs~~ ^{Football Pool companies.} and only 40% to go to the Football Grounds Improvement Trust.

In my view the amount required to do the job thoroughly is between £5-10 million per annum over a period of 3-4 years. My recommendation is that if the Government were to agree to a reduction of levy, then the whole sum should go from the pools companies to the Football Grounds Improvement Trust for the 3-4 years duration. Thereafter if the Government of the day desires to extend it, then the reduction of the levy could be divided 50/50 between the Football Grounds Improvement Trust and the profit-making football pools companies.

I hope you will find it possible to give favourable consideration to this suggestion. I know that it would be in the national interest and that it would have strong all-party support in the Commons.

Thank you in advance for your kind consideration.

Yours sincerely



Robert Maxwell
Chairman

PS I enclose a copy of the speech I made at Oxford today which, if you have time to read it, will show you what Oxford is doing to deal with the problem and what advice I have given to my colleagues in the industry on these matters.



Oxford United F.C. P.L.C.



Members of Football Association, Football League, Football Combination, South East Counties League
Colours: Yellow Shirts, Blue Shorts
Registered Office: Manor Ground, Headington, Oxford OX3 7RS Telephone: Oxford 61503
Registered in England, Registered Number 470509
PRESIDENT: The Duke of Marlborough
CHAIRMAN: I.R. Maxwell M.C.
DIRECTORS: W. Black, G.E. Coppock, J. Devaney, H. Kimber, Miss G.N.M. Maxwell, P.D. McGeough,
P. Reeves, W.H. Reeves, L. Town
Manager: J.M. Smith
Secretary: J.A. Hunt

Points made by Mr Robert Maxwell at the Civic Reception given by the City of Oxford at the Town Hall on Sunday, 12 May 1985 to celebrate the double: winning the Second Division Championship of the Cannon League and promotion to the First Division.

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- 1 He asked the meeting for a minute's silence in commemoration of the dead and the bereaved at the tragedy that has occurred at the Bradford game which has cost so many lives.

 - 2 He assured the public and the supporters of Oxford United that the tragedy that occurred at Bradford cannot occur at the Mannor Ground, Headington, because of the measures that the Club plans to take before the next season opens. Naturally this is subject to the Sports Ground Improvement Trust and the City of Oxford combining with the Club to make available up to £1 million to pay for the improvements to safety and to provide basic amenities.

 - 3 The measures he announced for Oxford United's ground are as follows:
 - (i) All plastic seats to be replaced with non-inflammable material.

- (ii) Stand doors which are at present locked to prevent unauthorized entry during the game to be manned by stewards and to be unlocked in case of emergency or to be replaced with electronically operated gates which enable the public to get out and prevents anybody from coming in. If this safety measure had been taken at Bradford, both panic and casualties would have been very much reduced or avoided.
- (iii) Four water-hydrants and possibly six with the necessary hoses will be installed at the Manor Ground so as to provide strong and maximum fire-fighting equipment.
- (iv) Oxford will install a sound and visual fire-warning emergency system and carry out evacuation drills in co-operation with the Police, the Fire Services and the public in order to give the public confidence in and experience with the emergency warning and evacuation procedures.
- (v) The planned inner perimeter fence at the Manor will have gate openings in it so that in case of emergency people will be able to stream from any stand on to the pitch in an orderly fashion.

4 I urge the pools promoters, Littlewoods, Zettlers, Vernons and the others, to make an emergency contribution to the Sports Ground Improvement Trust of say £2 million to enable all clubs to finance the replacement of plastic seats with non-inflammable materials and to equip themselves with a sound and visual fire-warning emergency system.

- 5 Clubs who have wooden stands, and there are a great many of them with wooden stands and wooden seating, should also apply to their local authorities for a grant to assist them with this safety improvement work. Clubs should bear in mind that local authorities have statutory obligations to give grants to organizations such as local football clubs under the provision of local entertainment, and in return for this clubs who are not already doing so should offer their local authorities public use of the club facilities in such a way as would not interfere with the club's customary training and playing requirements.
- 6 This is what Oxford United has offered to Oxford City Council in return for a grant to us of some £250,000 and we are confident of reaching agreement with the City on this grant to support the entertainment that we provide in Oxford and Oxfordshire in return for public use of our facilities.
- 7 I have asked the President of the Football League to put on the Agenda for next month's Annual General Meeting the tragedy of Bradford and what steps the League and its 92 clubs can take to restore the public's confidence in the safety of our grounds, as well as combatting hooliganism which has been so much in the news lately, following the Government's decision to take a hand in this matter and to initiate discussions with the football authorities.

8 I have written to our Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, inviting her to extend the current discussions between the Government and the Football Authorities initiated by her on possible measures by Clubs to combat hooliganism, following the Bradford tragedy to now agree to widen these discussions to cover the urgent improvements that need to be undertaken to improve the safety of football grounds so as to avoid another Bradford.

9 As is well-known, both anti-hooliganism and safety measures require a great deal of money and if the Government's initiative of these discussions is to bear fruit, then the Prime Minister has it to hand to get her right honourable friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to agree to an amendment to the Finance Bill, to give a small reduction to the football pools betting levy which could yield between £5-10 million per annum, with the whole of this money being earmarked for the Football Sports Ground Improvement Trust for the 100% financing of urgent anti-hooliganism and safety measures for three years. After three years, if the reduction in duty is continued by the Government then the benefits should be divided 50/50 between the pools companies and the Football Sports Ground Improvement Trust.

10 There is a serious gap in the machinery of running our national game. There is confusion and ineffectiveness in many areas, resulting from the fact that we have two managing bodies - the Football League and the Football Association. Although these two bodies do their best through a liaison committee to work in the best interests of

PRIME MINISTER

BRADFORD FOOTBALL CLUB FIRE

There is still a high level of radio, television and press interest and the press section expects television cameras to be at Downing Street when you return tonight. I think it would be a good idea if you would say something to them which would then be carried on the main news bulletin at 10.15 pm.

I attach a draft of a possible statement for you to make. You may like to discuss it with the Home Secretary when he telephones, probably between 7.00 and 7.30 this evening. He will be better placed than to advise you on exactly what you might say about an enquiry.

He intends to chair a meeting of Ministers tomorrow before he makes his statement to the House in the afternoon. I imagine that you will be content to leave him to chair the meeting but will wish to be present in the House for the statement.

CHARLES POWELL

12 May 1985

DRAFT STATEMENT FOR THE PRIME MINISTER

I was dismayed to hear of the terrible tragedy which struck the people of Bradford and their visitors from Lincoln on what should have been a happy and victorious day for them. My thoughts have been very much with them since I first heard the heart-breaking news yesterday evening, and again today when we had prayers in church for those who lost their lives or were injured. I have asked that my deepest sympathy be conveyed to the families.

I was able to speak this morning to Mr Heginbotham, the Chairman of Bradford City Football Club, and tell him how shocked and grieved I was by this terrible accident.

We must now make sure that we learn from this tragedy. I have been twice in touch during the day with the Home Secretary and of course Giles Shaw, the Minister in the Home Office, and Neil Macfarlane, the Minister for Sport, have both visited the Bradford City ground. I understand that the police, the fire brigade and indeed all the emergency services have been magnificent. The Home Secretary will be making a statement in the House tomorrow and it would not be right for me to comment more before that except to repeat my deep and heart-felt sorrow for the people of Bradford.

*PM has chosen not to read out
the statement, but may ~~make~~ say
a few words 'as the doorstep' on
return to No. 10.*

W. B.

BRADFORD CITY FOOTBALL CLUB FIRE

ccMr Butler
Mr Ingham
Mr Turnbull
Mr Flesher
Mr Addison

1. **THE FIRE**

The police know where it started. They do not know how it started. The main reason for the deaths it caused is the fact that the exits at the back of the stand were locked and unattended. Had the ground been "designated", the exits would have been manned by stewards.

2. **THE VICTIMS**

On Sunday morning the total number of people unaccounted for was 83. There were 52 bodies. By Sunday evening the number of bodies remained the same but the number of people unaccounted for had fallen to 70. The police expect the gap to close further. They hope to identify up to 40 of the bodies tomorrow. The number of injured still in hospital is 55. Of these 6 are critical.

3. **PRIME MINISTER'S INVOLVEMENT**

The Prime Minister issued a statement on Saturday evening expressing grief and sympathy to the families of the victims. This was carried as lead item on all TV and radio news programmes. She had two long discussions with the Home Secretary by telephone on Sunday morning and Sunday evening, also reported by TV and radio. She telephoned the Chairman of Bradford City Football Club on Sunday morning. She answered radio and television questions on return to Downing Street on Sunday evening. She contemplated visiting Bradford on Sunday but decided against this.

4. **ACTION IN PARLIAMENT**

The Home Secretary will make a statement on Monday. A draft was produced by officials on Sunday afternoon and is being recast following discussion with the Home Secretary. The Minister for Sport is being consulted.

The statement will announce an enquiry in safety and crowd control in football grounds. The terms of reference will be flexible enough to take account of the reports which the police, coroner, etc, will in due course make on the Bradford fire.

The enquiry will be on the model of that into the Ibrox Park disaster and will be conducted by a judge.

5. POLITICAL POINTS

Issues which have emerged in discussion and will need to be considered further are:

(a) how far were Bradford City Football Club warned about the fire risk at their stand? The BBC allege that they were. But this may refer to the preliminary survey by the local fire brigade of the work which would be needed to bring the stand up to "designated" standards.

(b) Should all professional football clubs be required to bring their facilities up to "designated" standards? If so, who should pay for this? Should the Government contribute? In this context Robert Maxwell has written in to say that the levy on football pool companies should be reduced and the money used instead for safety. (The Home Office have been informed of this.)

(c) What is the balance to be struck between safety measures and crowd control measures? What are the implications for the Government's discussions with the football league of crowd control?

6. ACTION POINTS

(a) Clear diary to allow PM to attend statement (only a speech session is scheduled for 1530).

(b) Lord Chancellor to be urged ("told") to find a suitable judge.

(c) The Prime Minister is insistent that if local hospitals need more money to cope, they must have it.

(d) In due course recognition for members of emergency services.

U. R.

(e) Extent of Prime Minister's direct involvement in further discussions of this. The Home Secretary is keen to be in charge.

C.D.P.

CHARLES POWELL

12 May 1985

