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My ref:

Your ref:

13 June 1985

Dear Mark

MA

BRUSSELS

My Secretary of State thought that you might like to consider whether the Prime Minister would be interested in glancing at this supplement from the Liverpool Echo. The letters give a flavour of the awful tragedy, and also of the Italian provocation.

Yours ever

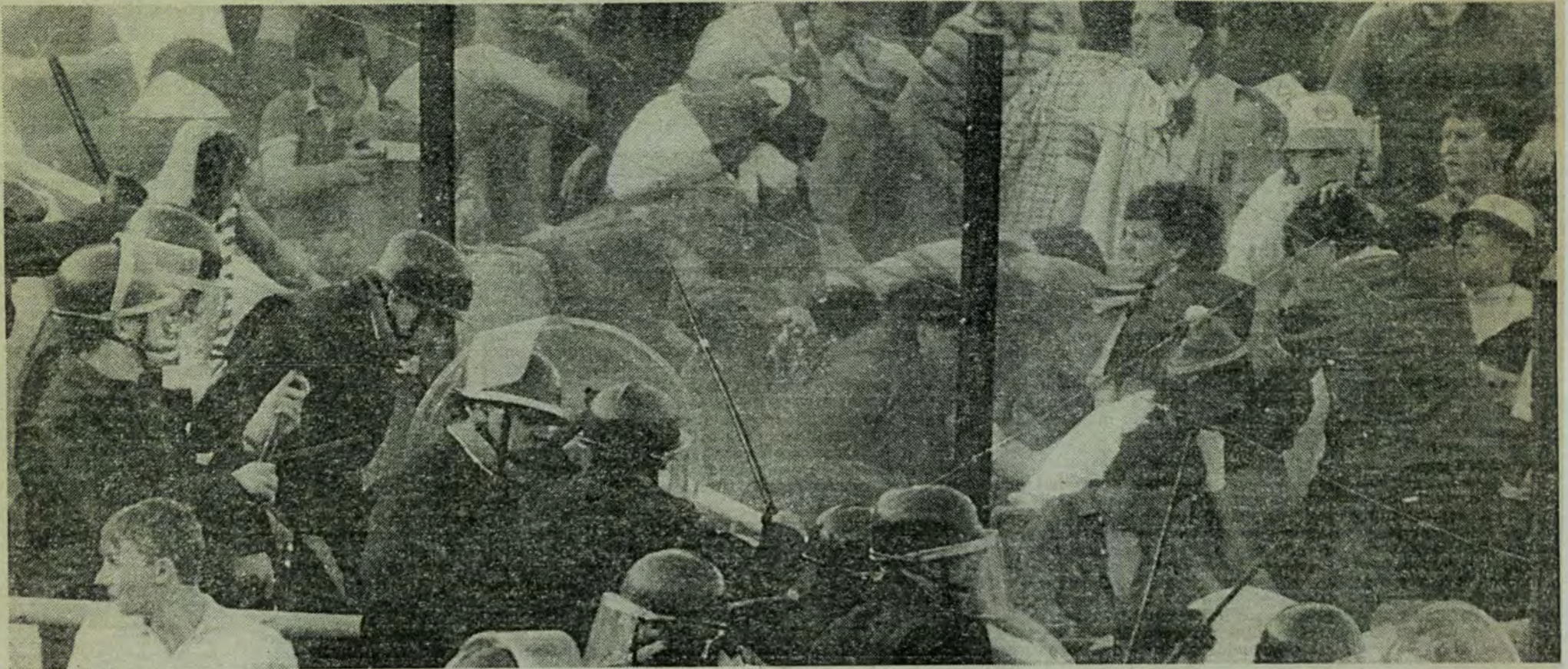
Alan

ALAN DAVIS
Private Secretary

Mark Addison Esq

THE SHAME AND THE SORROW

120 letters of sadness



● Battles on the terraces that led to 38 deaths at the Heysel stadium

AFTER the Brussels tragedy, we asked Echo readers: Were you there?

We received 120 testimonies, many of them full of emotion, all of them with a story to tell.

Pictures

Some enclosed match tickets, proof of the ease with which ticketless fans entered the Heysel Stadium.

Others enclosed colour pictures of holes in the outer wall of the stadium, through which fans could enter the terraces.

Fund

One enclosed 1,500 Belgian francs for the Echo disaster fund.

We have published a selection of your letters. These, and the rest, have been presented to Liverpool FC's legal adviser Tony Ensor by Echo Editor Mr. Chris Oakley.

They may help to answer the question: How did it happen?

Anonymous fan says: I helped to start it all

Oh God forgive me for what I have done!

SORRY about the writing and grammar, but I can't stop shaking and crying as I write this.

Yes, I was on the terraces on Wednesday night. I saw how it started because in a way I was one of those involved.

It wasn't like they say in the media. I was one of the supporters who fought with the Italian youth.

Madness

You can't imagine how I feel. I want to go straight into the local police station and tell them my part in it. I try to tell myself it wasn't my fault, but I can't. I haven't stopped crying since Wednesday night.

You think we've all forgotten it and don't care but you're wrong. If you knew how broken inside I feel, then maybe you'd realise it was just two minutes of madness. We just didn't realise how out of hand it got.

As far as we were concerned it was just a fight but look now, 38 dead. Oh God, I'm sorry.

Let me start by saying how it started and how I got involved, maybe that will give an indication of how we do feel — not just me but everyone concerned.

Axe

Before the game drink was freely available and yes I was drunk.

Outside the ground it was the same for the Italians, they were drunk and very aggressive. They were pulling knives out on everyone.

I was sitting on a wall when an Italian ran at me with an axe, he missed my head by an inch, and to get away I had to jump over a wall and run through an ally way.

By the time I got into the ground I was drunk and inside blamed all Italians for the attack on me. I was boiling up inside.

Once in the ground it was so packed I jumped over a fence/barrier. I stood there. There were many Liverpool supporters but mostly Italians.

I stood there for about five minutes. In that time one brick missed me by inches and another bottle hit a young lad in front of me. I hadn't done anything, I just watched, but at the same time I was thinking those animals. If I get the one who is throwing the missiles I'll have him.

Not long after that an older man who I'd watched trying to rally everyone to attack the Italians shouted to me and anyone around: "Why are we taking all this?"

He said something about the N.F. boys would show us how it's done and walked back to a larger group of men.

Laughing

At first I wasn't interested, I don't know if they were Chelsea N.F. as you suggest, but they were definitely Southerners.

I stood there for a minute or so, then I noticed large groups of Italian youths walking over and they walked near to me and I backed away.

One was laughing at me and then he pulled up his jumper and pulled up a large blade. I swear by now almost everyone of the young Italians had a knife.

I looked behind me for someone to run and suddenly, the group led by the Londoner ran down and started fighting and the Italians backed away.

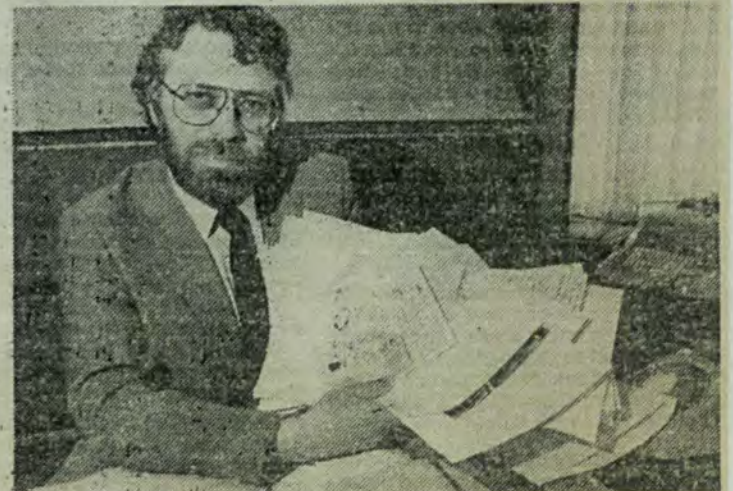
Hitting

Suddenly I snapped, I lost my head. I joined in. I ran towards the Italian who had pulled out the knife in front of me and I started fighting with him. He ran away and for some reason I chased him. I wanted him. I caught up with him again half way up the terracing.

He had nowhere to run. I started hitting him and lost my head, I started hitting any Italian who was anywhere near. It didn't matter who as long as they were Italian. I must have been enjoying it or I wouldn't have done it.

As I had run forward I was in a gap on my own. The Italians were backing away — I couldn't see the Italian who had the knife but it didn't matter, there were Italians everywhere.

(Continued on Page 2)



● Echo Editor Chris Oakley with readers' letters that will go to Liverpool F.C.

Eight pages of testimony on the Brussels tragedy

THE SHAME AND THE SORROW

**Crush
—then
fights
began**

WHEN we got to the turnstiles, we found many people climbing over the walls. Then the gates opened and everyone, expecting to show their tickets, moved as one towards them, but there was nobody there and everyone just walked in, still I had not shown anyone my ticket.

There seemed to be no breathing space at all and we were hurried towards the flimsy fence, through which we could see the Juventus — and some Liverpool fans. The crush got worse and then we saw a couple of fights break out in Z area.

One scene I remember vividly is a small Liverpool lad, swathed in scarves, being repeatedly punched by two or three Juventus youths. A few angry shouts began and soon the fence began to give way. The wire came down like paper and we were into area Z.

Bottles

My friend and I saw three English fans move towards the Juventus youths, but many Italians had, by this time, started to edge towards the other side as more and more Liverpool fans crowded through. Soon many fights had broken out and the Italians began running. Wave after wave of Reds streamed over and bottles and stones flew overhead.

After about half an hour, I can't remember exactly how long it was, we could see the Italians all in the same corner and still people ran into them kicking and punching. Martin O'Shea, Garston.

**Belgian police's
cowardice—by PC**

A LOT of criticism has been levelled at the Belgian police by the media and while my report is equally scathing, I feel that as a constable in the Greater Manchester Police and life-long Liverpool supporter, my opinions are possibly more valid than most.

● Outside the ground the humour was outstanding; souvenir swapping, hand shakes, friendly football matches and good humoured singing.

Cockney

● It was noticeable, walking around the ground that a lot of people were wearing England football shirts, a practice totally alien to Liverpool supporters and at one point I was approached by a Cockney with a handful of tickets for the Z area, offering to sell them for 500 francs. My own ticket was for the XY area, issued by the club.

● The police presence outside the stadium was minimal and only four inside the gateways through which 11,000 supporters had to pass (the four's sole purpose was to remove any poles from flags when it could quite clearly be seen that Italians at the opposite end of the stadium were waving flags).

Ironic

● The entrances were just two doorways, no turnstiles, which were manned by two elderly men at each. Shortly after I entered, the gates were closed on the fans outside as the gatemen could not cope. This incensed the fans outside, who were forced to climb over the walls to gain entry even though they were in possession of tickets.

● Despite the XY area becoming very crowded, the good humour was still prevalent and ironically many jokes were made about the insecure terracing.

● I could now see that the fans in England shirts that I had seen outside had been joined by many others, equally unusually dressed, in the Z area, adja-

cent to the barrier with the XY area.

● I saw with surprise the makeshift barrier between the two areas with, in comparison to English games, very few police manning it.

Police ran

● The trouble started with cat-calling in the Z area between the Italians and English; several flares were also fired into the Italians from deep within the XY area. This incensed them and several started throwing lumps of concrete towards the English; several were returned.

'When it got worse—they backed away'

● A number of charges were then made by the English at the Italians, several kicks and punches were exchanged. The police, amazingly, turned and ran and at no time made any serious attempt to stop this relatively minor level of trouble, when they were adequately armed to do so, with shields and large batons.

● The English in the Z area then encouraged fans in the XY area to join them. The fencing was pulled down, I could not see by whom and approximately 50 fans joined the others in the Z area.

● Again, with the problem escalating, the police backed away, showing embarrassing cowardice.

Factions

● A now much larger group ran at the Italians, causing widespread panic, the resulting tragedy now much publicised. Once again, the police were very slow in recognising what was happening and

the wall collapse was made much worse by their lack of assistance.

● All this time, the Italians at the opposite end were fighting among themselves and many banners were in evidence, pledging allegiance to various factions. There was also a large banner proclaiming "Reds — Animals" before any trouble had started. At this point, also the lack of police action was obvious.

● Despite all the chaos at the wall collapse and the Italian fans on the pitch, the police found it necessary to surround the previously peaceful bulk of the Liverpool supporters, while the Italians at the opposite end continued to fight and throw missiles. At one point, approximately 15 Italians ran the length of the pitch and attacked the enclosed Liverpool supporters with bricks, flagpoles and the corner flag. Not one was arrested, all were ushered politely back to their own end of the ground.

Horror

● The upsetting appearance of Mr. Fagan was greeted with jeers and abusive gesticulations by those fans in the Z area. Quite obviously not Liverpool supporters. The announcement by Phil Neal was similarly greeted.

● At no time was the situation made clear in English, when apparent announcements were being made in Italian. The true extent of the horror was not confirmed until we could buy papers at Dover at 7.30 a.m. the next day.

At the end of the game, everybody made their way to exits, only to find them shut and barred.

● Everybody ran quickly away from the ground towards their various transport. I did overhear a shout in a southern accent to the effect "Let's get the bastards," directed towards a group of passing, marching riot police. The call was largely ignored.

John Dunstan, Manchester.

**Boy of
10 was
being
kicked**

AS I approached the Liverpool end of the Heysel stadium in a group of about 30 other Scousers we were shepherded by the Belgium police into entrance Z, the excuse being X and Y were jam packed.

On entering the ground we found to our amazement 5,000 Juventus fans having a verbal fight with Liverpool supporters on the other side of the fence.

We automatically went to the fence standing on the Juventus side with about another 500 Liverpool supporters. Next thing, missiles were thrown from both sides, and about 100 Juventus fans approached us, some clearly brandishing blades.

Senseless

The police quickly moved in and started to escort us onto the pitch and into the Liverpool end. Amazingly they stopped after about only 250 of the 500 were through.

The next thing I saw was a boy sporting Liverpool colours being kicked senseless by 10 Italians. The boy was no more than 10.

Then the fence was down and the tragedy occurred.

It was quite clear the ring leaders had London accents but Scousers did follow. I was appalled by the scenes but I swear the Juventus fans caused their own downfall.

Their behaviour matched that of the animals dressed in the red of my beloved Liverpool.

F. Thompson (Dovecot).

**Italians spitting
through fence**

I BOUGHT a ticket for block Z which was allocated for Juventus fans.

I saw leaflets being handed out with a man voicing they were from the National Party.

I made my way to the middle of the terraces and was forced over to the left handside towards the wire mesh fence.

I saw Italian supporters spitting through the fence. These people were provoking Liverpool fans.

Retaliate

Then I saw bricks, blocks of concrete and coca-cola bottles being thrown at and over the fence into Block Y where Liverpool supporters were situated, men women and children.

Italians pulled at the fence but backed off when a small number of so-called Liverpool supporters started to retaliate. These supporters also definitely spoke in a London accent. Older people asked them to behave themselves, but one fan still sticks out in my mind.

He had a picture of a flag on his T shirt and N.F. tattooed on his forehead urging his mates on.

By this time they were tugging at the

fence, the Italians were already backing off.

When the fence came down I would say there were only 25-30 fans running toward the Italian fans, some of whom were being trampled on by fellow fans in the far corner.

Riot police took about 10 minutes to enter and gain some sort of authority on the terraces of Z and Y.

These so-called fans started to pelt police with bottles and flag poles.

I heard the wall collapse, and Liverpool supporters were urging these so called fans to stop.

The police retaliated towards the fans who had not caused the trouble. This caused a near riot as they retaliated having been beaten by police for nothing.

The police backed off and the so-called supporters pelted them with bottles.

While this was going on the Italians where still trampling over each other, the fencing down.

Hardly any of them helped each other. There were about 20 Liverpool supporters out of block Z helping the Italians to escape.

Paul Bennett, Anfield.

God, please forgive me

(From Page 1)

I stopped and looked around before I had taken it upon myself to become a yob and I had seen numerous fights in the ground around me, what had made me join in. I was well forward with a group of Liverpool supporters in a gap on our own. I looked back, no—walked back to where I had been standing and couldn't believe my eyes.

Thousands of Liverpool supporters had jumped the fence and came running over.

And then I stopped. It suddenly dawned on me, what was I doing.

As they came running towards me, I ran to the top of the terraces at the back of the ground and stopped.

I couldn't believe what I'd done. It was all sinking in now. I couldn't see now what was happening, but apparently it's on the cameras i.e. the Liverpool supporters ran at the Italians acting like animals, but only minutes earlier so had I.

Cut eye

I stood there and looked around at the Italian fans. I started to cry. I wasn't the only one.

One minute I was acting like a yob you see on TV, the next I was crying.

One young Liverpool supporter who I had seen fighting, his

eye cut just stood there and said "Oh God, what have we done, this wasn't supposed to happen."

An Italian family stood with us. The mother and father were trying to get their two children out of the ground. I gave the young girl my scarf and tied it around her neck. My friend did it also to the other young Italian.

Without saying anything we lifted the 2 children up to the Italians on the wall. All we could keep saying was sorry. The mother and father thanked us, — for what.

Caught up

Anyway, after 15 minutes with a bit of order restored I went back to the other side of the fence, there was lots more room. I still felt sick and disgusted with myself, one minute I just wanted to hurt the man who wanted to kill me, the next I knew I'd just lost my head, and got caught up in it all. If only I could have those 5 minutes all over again.

Imagine how I felt when they or I, found out that anyone had been killed, I didn't want anyone even hurt, except maybe my own Italian.

We had been misguided by pride, by the older ones, drink—certainly, or had we just forgotten ourselves when we shouldn't have.

I feel I was directly or indirectly involved in the murder of 38 people. Just because I couldn't keep my head, because I was drunk, because I thought I had something to prove.

Authority

How do you live with all this? If I had the courage I'd be down the police station telling them what I'm telling you, but I'm a coward.

If someone in authority could tell me for certain how I'd be treated, I'd come straight in, but no, the only thing people know is what they've seen on TV.

I won't ever forget what I've seen and to some extent done, but what is for certain, I'll never go back to a ground again. It's all over, my life as a decent person — decent?

Lonely

I'm scared. I think everyone who took part in it is scared. As they realise what they've done, especially those who didn't know when to stop.

This started as a letter for your dossier, but now maybe it's a cry from the heart, someone who's scared, lonely, who needs someone to talk to.

God forgive us for what we've done. Our lives have also just ended.

A shamed Liverpool fan.

I want to tell the police my part—but I just can't

THE SHAME AND THE SORROW

Abuse from drunken Reds fans



● Eric Winters — saw drunken fans.

ON arriving at the Heysel Stadium, my wife and I went to a mobile outside the coach park which was selling soft drinks, hamburgers etc.

In the queue were drunken Liverpool supporters who were using abusive language. They were carrying six-packs of small bottled lager. It seemed everyone was drinking beer and there was plenty of wine flowing.

On his own

A policeman was doing body searches on men and searching ladies' handbags. He was taking sticks out of flags. However, this seemed a bit ridiculous, as there was only one policeman and one barrier, which the fans just lifted out of their way. The policeman could not have done anything if he'd have wanted because he was on his own.

My wife and I made our way to a spot just behind the goal by the fence that dismantled. However, we soon had to move further

away from the fence because of the rocks (picked up from the ground!) cans etc., being thrown in our direction.

The ground was in an appalling state, the steps were breaking up, the barriers had no chance of holding up if the crowd had surged, they were cracked and you could see the iron bars inside them.

Liverpool supporters draped their scarfs and banners over the fence that was supposed to separate the crowd, as did the Juventus fans on their side of the fence.

Spitting

Then Juventus fans removed Liverpool banners and started provoking Liverpool supporters. Liverpool supporters retaliated by spitting, throwing cans. I saw one Juventus fan scale the fence and call Liverpool supporters to come in there, they spat and swore at them.

Meanwhile, not one policeman made any attempt to intervene or make any steps towards preventing the trouble, because at this time there were only about 20 people shouting, spitting, etc.

Drink

The disaster was a combination of things, the segregation was ridiculous, with the majority of Liverpool fans crammed into the XY side, whereas the Juventus fans had loads of room.

There were fans from other parts of the country who were involved in chanting and provoking the Juventus fans.

Also, the Juventus fans were not entirely blameless — they had crash helmets on and scarves covering their faces, and they were shouting the Liverpool fans to come on and fight, a number of these were also drunk. Eric Winters, Bootle.

Bricks and bottles

I WAS in block Y at the very top with four friends making our way down the terracing, when just below us, in block Z, there was a scuffle.

There seemed to be two or three Liverpool fans being set upon by at least ten Italians.

Then the Liverpool fans in their anger, pushed against the fence, which immediately fell down, but only at the top. We were pushed through with the surge of the crowd. The first Liverpool fans who had rushed over to the Juventus fans, were returning back to the Liverpool section, when the Juventus fans started pelting us

all with bricks, bottles and anything which they could find.

This made Liverpool fans more angry and even more fans ran over this time. Many Liverpool fans were hit by these missiles and suffered very bad cuts to the head. Less than half a minute later, the Liverpool fans had moved back towards their section, but the Italians carried on pushing to get out.

Charging

The Italian fans who were involved in the fighting just trampled over everyone to get out of the

way. There was absolutely nothing for them to run away from, as the Liverpool fans were back in their own section, but they still panicked and punched each other.

Shortly after, the Juventus fans, who ripped up their own fencing, came charging down the running track to the Liverpool section and began throwing missiles and attacking Liverpool fans who were on the pitch to help the injured.

But this, as everything else, has never been mentioned and probably never will.

Mr. Green, Wavertree.

They went berserk

ENTERING the stadium grounds we had to show our tickets, but walking completely around the stadium discovered fences down and fans just walking in.

Then entering the stadium itself through gates Y we expected to be searched but the police were only interested in taking the sticks out of all flags and banners.

Inside the stadium the youths match was taking place and most people were watching that. Originally we stood right by the inadequate chicken-wire fence, guarded by only two or three police along its

whole length. The fence separated us from the supposed neutrals but 95 per cent were Italians.

The youths' match finished and after a while people seemed to get bored. Then missiles starting flying mainly from Liverpool fans in Y over to Z. Many fans seemed incensed that the Italians had around 75 per cent of the ground while thousands of Liverpool fans outside had no tickets.

We moved back and away from the fence and noticed that fans were just getting in now without tickets.

Next minute about 100 so-called Liverpool fans by the fence just went berserk. The totally inadequate fence and police stood no chance and the Liverpool fans poured across to Z.

They started attacking Italians who then started pouring out on to the pitch. But the police who should have been helping them batoned them and tried to force them back.

It would never have happened if the two sets of fans had been kept at different ends of the ground or if two adequate fences kept the fans 30 feet apart

D. Jackson, Prenton.

Italians in Reds' area

I immediately noticed how full the ground was, and that the Italian supporters not only had all of the opposite end, but half of our so-called section of the ground as well.

There was no disturbance at this time, although a small number of Liverpool supporters who were in Z section were trying to move nearer the Liverpool section, and a number of minor scuffles broke out.

These very isolated incidents continued for approximately another 20 minutes without any noticeable intervention by the police, who were conspicuous by their absence.

When the police arrived, a small number of them appeared to go into the terraces, but they were totally lacking in organisation and the odd policeman just tried to rush small groups of Liverpool supporters who were now jammed against the fence segregating Z from XY section.

A small number of supporters reacted to the police, who immediately ran away and left. A number of Italians now started attacking the Liverpool supporters in Z section, and unfortunately some Liverpool supporters climbed out of XY section and clashed with the Italians.

G. Ireland, Woolton.

The battle unit that charged and charged

I WAS standing on terraces Y where I saw terraces Z reserved for Juventus supporters, this shocked me because I could sense trouble coming.

Along the segregating fence between Y and Z I could see the Juventus supporters standing well back off the fence out of trouble allowing a gap to form between themselves and the fence.

I could see people entering the Z terracing through the entrance where the wall eventually collapsed, wearing Liverpool colours, walking in front of the Juventus fans and waving flags.

My first thoughts were that the Juventus supporters would attack them, but to my pleasure they sat down, ignored them and like the rest of us looked forward to the game.

This carried on until the gap that had been formed was filled with so-called Liverpool supporters who had started to congregate beneath the scoreboard.

Bottles and lumps of concrete were then being thrown at the Juventus supporters by this minority of Liverpool supporters who had started to assemble into some form of battle unit.

Horror

I saw these so-called Reds supporters charge at the Juventus supporters who, at first fought back. The Liverpool fans then retreated into this corner beneath the scoreboard.

A second charge was then enforced by the Liverpool supporters in larger numbers which started to panic the Juventus fans, who began running to the

side. The Liverpool supporters once again retreated and congregated beneath the scoreboard, as if to wait further instructions.

By this time the Juventus fans were squashed like sardines against the wall, I thought then that these so-called Liverpool supporters would have the sense to see that the Juventus fans did not want to fight.

But too my horror a third charge was then lead toward the Juventus fans who were so scared they began pushing go get out of the ground, which resulted in the wall and fencing collapsing.

But, still these sick so-called Reds fans carried on putting the boot in on fans who could not escape.

A. McAllister, Tuebrook.

Police 'are to blame'

THERE was no sign of trouble until the police began pulling down banners draped over the front of the fencing. This brought a series of brick and bottle assaults on the police.

When missiles came from the fence separating Y and Z there became an atmosphere of violence and it was clear that a small incident could spark off a total tragedy. This incident, I believe was caused by Italians in section Z.

I heard shouting and saw scuffling from that section, and when I turned I saw about 20 youths aged about 18 running to a lad to help him but I could see with my eyes the Juventus fans pulling out knives

E. McGill, Neston.



● Mr. Ambrose — ground was a joke.

Find the scum who did this

FIRST let me apologise for the "scum" who caused all this horror.

Outside of the ground we were called so-and-so Scousers for not attempting to fight the Juventus supporters.

The person who called us was not from Liverpool, but was wearing our colours.

Going into the ground itself was a joke. The police searched us, took the cans out of our flags and threw them onto the floor.

Those who were carrying beer had it taken off them, and it was put on the floor. When they let us past them everybody was picking up what they had taken off them.

The entrance to the ground was also a joke.

Two police and a ticket collector — can you imagine it. One door was open at the back of XY and the door was wooden, about 6ft high and 2ft wide, so the pressure of the fan's trying to get in and the time it would have taken was unbelievable.

The ticket was snatched from you, ripped in half and stuffed in your hand again. I saw fans from Liverpool climbing the wall which was about 8ft high.

On entering the ground, it was a disgrace. The barriers, with a steel tube on top were

already loose and dangerous. We should have had the full allocation of the XYZ — it was pathetic the way they segregated the fans.

Yes, I did see some of our fans throwing bottles, but who can say they were actually from Liverpool itself.

You cannot tell me we Liverpool supporters waited 22 years just to start all this horror.

So for God's sake clear our names. Find the scum who did it. They must be on video or photos, so please find them.

A. C. Ambrose, Allerton.

'People were picking up the confiscated beer cans'

Seconds

to go

● Panic and fear drives the Juventus fans against a wall. While the madness of the Heysel Stadium continues just feet away, the wall cracks and collapses just seconds later. Thirty-eight people lose their lives.

—then tragedy strikes

Half-naked fans left girls crying

I WAS having a meal in a Brussels branch of McDonalds where the staff were threatened by half-naked supporters, one of whom was so drunk he had to crawl across.

As I left I told the manager how sorry I was and that we were not all like the people who had been in and left most of his young female staffs in tears.

However, as I was talking to the manager two people in Liverpool colours were relieving themselves against his front window.

I can't be sure when the trouble started inside the ground, but I would agree with most accounts that it was about 18.30 when the Liverpool fans started to throw stones (the flooring of the terraces) and fire either rockets or flares in section Z.

Surprised

Most people moved away from the fence. There was a period as things seemed to cool down.

Then the Liverpool fans started to push the fence down, without any provocation from the Italian fans. They came through the gaps and forced the Italians further over towards the far side of the ground. Again things seemed to calm down.

I was very surprised that no action had been taken by the police, in fact I could not see any police at this point. A second and more powerful charge by, I would estimate 200-300 people,

came across the spaces left empty, by the Italian fans. Unlike the previous charge these people crashed into the fans forcing the Italians down into the bottom corner of their section.

The crush forced the fencing over. There was a dull thud and the side wall gave way. Still many fans kept charging into the Italians, others danced up and down across the terracing. Only after this point did the police arrive in any number. However, they made little attempt to clear the area of section Z still occupied by Liverpool fans. Next the mounted police came. They seemed to think they were to give a riding display as all they did was form lines and trot around the running track.

The thing which shocked me was that as people were lying on the pitch dead or dying, a number of people started to play football in the goalmouth in front of us. There seemed to be some feeling that Italians got what they deserved for what they did to us in Rome. I can't be 100 per cent certain, but to the best of my knowledge these attacks were unprovoked, the Italians did not even fight back.

T. Johnston, Hough Green, Widnes.



I AM a coach driver who carried Liverpool supporters to Brussels.

On entering the ground I was searched by the police. I had a bottle of Coca-cola which I was told to drink. The empty bottle was placed outside the entrance and all flag poles were confiscated from the Liverpool supporters.

In the next compound the Juventus fans still had their flag poles and they were drinking wine from glass bottles.

At full-time of the youth friendly, the Juventus fans began to poke their flag poles through the rails (the ends were pointed) at the Liverpool fans, including myself. Then they began throwing bottles over.

Liverpool fans responded by throwing bread-rolls back. Next a flare was fired through the fencing and it struck a man just in front of me. I decided to move to the back of the terraces then for safety.

As I headed away I heard screams and bangs and I saw that the wall had collapsed and Reds' fans were climbing over the rubble. They appeared to be only wanting space.

The Italian fans began to climb out of the stadium via the perimeter wall.

John Standing, Rock Ferry.

I SAW a flare being thrown into the Liverpool Section Y. People retaliated with bottles, and other objects were thrown from both sets of supporters. The fence separating Y and Z started to be pulled down and climbed over, then all hell broke loose. We saw people scatter and run towards the corner of Z section, the police stood there like dummies before they had the courage to move in, then it was too late.

A Wolf, Bootle.

A YOUNG fellow from the Z section jumped upon the mesh and was calling to his mates on our side. He clearly had a Scouse accent.

A policeman came from nowhere and started to hit the mesh, near to this lad, with a big black or brown stick. The lad dropped down into the Z section. Behind us people were pushing and shouting abuse at the policeman.

Weapon of fear

I heard a whoosh from above and I looked up. There was a red flare heading into the Z section apparently fired from the XY section to our left.

I saw people pushing and climbing the mesh to get into the Z section.

The Italians began to run away from a gang of about 50 or so from XY section. The Italians were being punched and kicked.

I saw a man in Juventus colours throwing bottles back at us and the police just stood there and did nothing.

Jeffrey Morris, Norris Green.

WE HAD been in Y section about 10 minutes when I saw about 50 Liverpool supporters at the gate by the Italians trying to get with the Liverpool supporters.

I saw about 10 allowed through but the rest didn't get through so they made their way to the



Terror ordeal for my children

I WAS in section X with my 9-year-old son, 11-year-old daughter and two lads aged 14 to 16.

My son and the others had each purchased a flag, and were holding them by their sides waiting to enter, when suddenly a Belgian policeman snatched it from his hands, ripped the flag from the small stick, leaving the flag on the ground, and the lad in tears.

On entry to the stadium, we were again forced to submit to a token search, which in my case with the two little ones caused me to feel bitter towards the police.

I entered the stadium and told the children to wait just inside the gate. As I was looking for them, another policeman grabbed my bag, ripped it open spilling personal items over the floor. My daughter was in tears as she thought I was being attacked.

We decided to go into the corner of the X section near the stands. Flares and crackers were moving about from both sides of the terraces.

Rampant

Suddenly as a result of an Italian charge towards the Liverpool section, a counter-charge started and the fence in between the fans appeared to give way, and a full-scale charge took place, with the Italian section moving back towards the end of Z Section.

Italians from the other end of the ground ran the length of the pitch, and were directly in front of us, calling to the Liverpool fans to come over the fence, which I am sorry to say some tried to.

To protect the children from the fans climbing the fence near us, we were forced to get the children down onto the ground and cover them as supporters with London accents were jumping at the fence above us.

The riot police then started to hit the fence with the batons, missing the heads of my children by inches.

I can honestly say that at this time I had never been so frightened in my life.

Colin V. Wells, Leyland, Preston.

Moment all hell broke loose

I am a development agent for Liverpool F.C. and had won a free trip to Belgium for two. I took my youngest boy Robert, aged 8.

At about 6.15 the police inside the Z section were marshalling people down and out of a gate. Then in the space of 5 minutes all hell broke loose.

Flares were fired from positions below me into the Z section. Some went over the people and the stadium wall, but I saw two land directly into the crowd. Then bottles were being thrown from Z into Y and from Y into Z.

The police in the Z section then started pushing the people towards the wall. It was at this time that the dividing fence was pushed down.

The rush that ensued was like wild animals running from a fire. Italians then panicked and rushed towards the side of Z.

Cliff

The police on the outside of the fence at position H then started to hit the people with their batons. People were fighting for their lives and the Belgian police were trying to knock them back with batons.

I then saw a young man sitting astride the wall fall down as the wall, and the people there, fell down as though going over a cliff.

While this was taking place people at the Italian end pulled down the fence and started running up the track towards positions X and Y.

They were throwing anything they could lay their hands on.

My eldest son then started crying when he saw this and I moved my position higher up the terrace.

G. E. White, Appley Bridge.

—the flare

Some of the supporters started to take down so they could get through to the Liverpool supporters. There was now between the Italian and Liverpool sup-

porters as the fence was taken down a lad and us held an Italian flag aloft and set. There were some cheers around.

When I knew, the fighting broke out. There were no police at all to be seen. At first only about 10 supporters involved in the others saw that the Italians fighting back, things just got out of

porters wearing Liverpool colours ward to attack, more and more tag with every surge. The rest of us at night it would be over in a minute if the police would surge in and stop cool supporters, but no police came

and things got from bad to worse.

All the Italian supporters were fleeing for their lives as our so-called supporters ran after them. I saw three Italians stop and turn but about 20 Liverpool supporters attacked them.

This was my first European game and it will be my last.

Sean Culligan, Netherton.

MY brother and I entered the stadium and had taken a position some 20 yards from the dividing fence (between Sections Y and Z), about half way towards the front.

At this time there was a game on the pitch between two youth teams. After watching this game for a while our attention was distracted by a red "distress type" flare which had been fired from our far left (somewhere near to where the terraces and stands met) deep in the Liverpool Section X.

The flare landed among the Juventus fans congregated in the Z Section. This sparked off a short period of missile throwing from both sides of the Y/Z partition. Calm returned once again for a few minutes

before another flare was fired from the same area.

Once again the flare landed among the Juventus fans far away to our right in Section Z. And once again missile throwing began across the Y/Z dividing fence.

Meanwhile, we had noticed some Liverpool fans in Section Z making their way out of Section Z (at an exit in the fence by the athletics track, and being allowed to enter Section Y with the rest of the Liverpool following).

At least two more flares were fired (again from the same area of the Liverpool section), only to miss the Juventus fans.

But then another red flare was fired from the aforementioned area and, seconds after, two yellow/white flares were shot from behind us (to our right), quite close to the Juventus fans, some of whom retaliated by running towards the front of Section Z and assaulting the Liverpool fans trying to make their way from Section Z to Y.

S. A. and G. R. Avann, Knowsley.

THE SHAME AND THE SORROW

It all started with a banner

Scousers came under attack

BY about 6 p.m. the atmosphere was building up to that typical of a big final.

There was no real sign of trouble although, there was a small number of Liverpool supporters in section Z which should have alerted the police that there was the possibility of some trouble. At that time they could easily have been moved to section XY.

At about 6.30 a couple of small missiles were exchanged over the fence and fans became aware that it would not be advisable to stand too close to the barrier dividing them.

The police did nothing, they should have sent half a dozen men or so to stand alongside the dividing fence, which would have been the case in England.

Retaliated

The next thing I saw was that the small number of Liverpool fans in Z section were attacked by Juventus thugs who were obviously looking for aggro.

This incensed the main group of Liverpool fans in XY section and various missiles, including bottles and pieces of concrete were thrown by Liverpool yobs at the

I WAS at the rear of the terracing and had a very good vantage point over the whole affair.

At the time of the incident, the Liverpool part of the terracing was certainly not overcrowded, as some people have suggested. In fact, many people in the ground were lying flat out sun bathing and others just sitting down.

I happened to see the very incident which I thought sparked the whole invasion by Liverpool supporters.

Liverpool fans had draped the intervening fence between themselves and the opposition supporters with numerous banners and flags.

After the ritual burning of a Juventus banner by Liverpool supporters, an Italian tried to place another banner on the fence. The Liverpool supporters then not only tried to remove the banner, but also the Juventus supporter.

That was the time that many Liverpool supporters surged forward, bringing down the barrier and attacking anyone who appeared to be a Juventus follower, women and children included!

Prior to this, the Liverpool supporters had for long periods showered the Juventus supporters with a various array of missiles, bottles, bricks, stones, flares and coins.

I and my wife had the misfortune of being in Brussels for the whole of

Wednesday prior to the game. While it cannot be denied that many Liverpool supporters were in good humour, chatting with Juventus supporters, the vast majority were in a drunken stupor for most of the day, generally being obnoxious and terrorising local residents

Obscene

I have followed Liverpool for 30 or more years, home and away and in that time have seen the transformation from the fun loving, witty humour of the 60's to the present filthy, obscene chanting and the obsession to fight.

Going back to the riot, I must just add that it wasn't just a handful of people involved, but at least 1,000 or more.

The drunken Liverpool louts who were locked outside the stadium then proceeded to attack the ambulance-men and injured Italian supporters, plus pickpocketing and then kicking the corpses.

I'm sure these actions were not National Front inspired! I see Union Jack flags at both home and away games, week in and week out.

I drove to Brussels and on the return trip decided at Zebrugge to telephone home to ease relatives' fears. The lout in front of me dialled to Liverpool just to find out how many were dead!

He turned to me and said we've killed 40 in a jubilant manner. I was speechless.

I am still so shaken by the events that even now, five days later, I feel myself getting very emotional when discussing the matter with friends. — K. Martindale, Mossley Hill.

police there was dealing with the dead and injured, about 200 Italians broke out of the fence at the other end of the stadium.

They were armed with staves and charged the length of the pitch and began pelting the genuine Liverpool fans

I had my two sons and mother and father-in-law with me. I put my two lads and mother-in-law on the floor and myself and father-in-law stooped over them with our backs to the missiles which were raining all around us.

J. R. Hughes, Halewood.

It didn't take much for them to cross the fence, it was little more than chicken wire.

It started with about a dozen but within a couple of minutes a few hundred had crossed and were fighting and throwing at the Italians.

The only escape route was on to the pitch but the only way on to the pitch was through a small gate in the front fence which they were all trying to get through. The pressure finally told and the wall and several barriers gave way.

After about 10 minutes of mayhem and with what little Belgian

Juventus yobs, who retaliated.

The genuine fans on both sides of the fence retreated so a gap developed about 10 yards either side of the fence.

The Liverpool fans in section Z were well behaved and moved to the top corner of their section close to the score board. Meanwhile the yobs from both sides continued to throw. I could only see the faces of the Juventus front line and they were taunting and gesticulating the Liverpool fans both in their own section and those on the other side of the fence to come and fight.

Juventus yobs, who retaliated.

Juventus yobs, who retaliated.

Juventus yobs, who retaliated.



● Jane Colley — too few police

A teenager's diary on day of agony

I AM 16 years old and travelled with my older sister and brother and his friends.

On arriving outside the ground at about 3 p.m., we noticed quite a few people with Union Jacks draped round them and one or two we spoke to had Cockney accents.

We decided to enter the ground early, about 5.30, almost three hours before kick-off and we noticed several things.

● There were only two turnstiles for over 14½ thousand fans.

● The barriers inside the ground were very unsteady, in fact, on leaning on one, it moved slightly forward.

● The steps had grass growing from them with very loose stones which were used as missiles.

● On entering the ground, the lads I was with were searched, although this stopped later when the turnstiles were kicked down.

● The atmosphere became very tense, and

then Italian fans started throwing bricks and bottles, at which Liverpool fans retaliated.

● Then some Liverpool fans — a number wearing Union Jacks — kicked down the very inadequate fence partitioning the two sides and started fighting.

● A few people were drunk, but the drunken people I saw were incapable of causing any fights and the number didn't seem as high as some of the newspapers have stated.

● There were very few police to stop the fighting and they didn't have a clue what to do, both Italian Liverpool fans almost teasing the police.

The only sensible decision to be made was for the game to continue, because I hate to think what would have happened if it was cancelled — the same applies if Liverpool had won. It's the only time I have been thankful we lost. — Jane L. Colley, Maghull.

Fans kicking and punching

I WAS right next to the fence in section Y. All of a sudden through the fence I saw people from both sets of fans kicking and punching each other.

The fencing between us and supposedly just our fans, as I thought, gradually went crashing down. There were people trying to get out of the way of the fighting from the other side of the fence, plus people from my section making their way to where the violence was.

For a moment it had stopped between the two sets of the supporters, and then our so-called fans charged the police. People were pulling the fence nearest the pitch down and scrambling for safety on to the running track.

There was more scuffling with the fans and the police. Eventually it seemed to stop when I think most people realised the extent of the damage to people and property they had caused.

S. Ashworth, Fazakerley.

Italians started air raid

I HAVE sat and watched every news bulletin since I came home, waiting for someone to come forward to try to put Liverpool's side.

I went in the ground at 4 p.m. I, my son and my friend were searched three times before we got to our seats.

When we sat down we were watching the Liverpool end. All at once, a shower of bottles, tin cans and bricks came over from the Juventus side of the wire.

Iron bar

At that time we didn't see them being thrown back, that was much later. We also saw the police over the fence hitting our people with their truncheons.

Later, when the idiots from Juventus came running along the track, my son and I ran to the back of the seats. He was almost hit with an iron bar that some fool had thrown over the

fence and only for me screaming at him to run, it would have hit him on the head.

Massacre

They were also smashing bottles on the fence and ripping the boards from round the track and throwing them. Please don't think I condone what happened, because I don't. I'm as upset as anybody else about the deaths. I sent my deepest sympathy to the Italian families.

But my heart is broken for the lads — they played not to win and I'm not the only supporter who thinks that.

We'd just like to thank them because if they'd have won, it would have been a massacre in Brussels.

The U.E.F.A. committee say they have evidence that it was Liverpool supporters who did all the damage, I'd just like to know how.

M. Johnson, St. Helens.

'I screamed as an iron bar flew at my son'

THE SHAME AND THE SORROW

Fan ripped up three tickets

THE ferry journey was made in good spirits, even though there was a slight confrontation with "so called" National Front supporters from Coventry and West Ham.

Approaching the stadium, I witnessed a car carrying Juventus fans who were leaning out of the window wielding knives trying to inflict injuries to the passing Liverpool supporters. Outside gate Z, Juventus fans were congregated and I saw a Juventus fan approach a Liverpool fan and ask him if he would like to buy a match ticket. He then proceeded to rip three match tickets before his own disbelieving eyes. Understandably the Liverpool fan reacted with anger, only to be confronted by the same Italian waving a knife before his face.

Knives
I was in section Z surrounded by Juventus fans, I made my way to the flimsy fence which paraded both sets of supporters, hoping to be allowed into the Liverpool section.

At that time there were about 300 Liverpool fans standing alongside the fence and within the next 10 minutes we were subjected to extreme provocation, not only were we jeered at, spat at, a number of Juventus fans held up various offensive weapons including knives. All of a sudden, missiles were thrown by both sets of supporters, and as I turned around to face the Juventus fans I was hit by a brick to the stomach. I looked to see the fence being ripped apart through which Liverpool fans charged towards the Italians. I must point out that when calm was restored in the Liverpool end I saw quite a number of "so-called" supporters, e.g. wearing the red and white of Liverpool, were bearing tattoos of Chelsea and Tottenham on their arms.

M. S. Keeling, Woolton.

Trouble seekers

THERE were, I believe, many people in the X, Y, Z end who were not Liverpool fans, but intenders of trouble. One person came up to me and offered me bricks and stones to throw at the police. He was wearing an away England kit with a Union Jack around his shoulders.
Carl Flynn, Liverpool.

The Belgian in a Union Jack

WE were in Brussels wondering how to get to the ground when a man about 18 asked my friend for a light for his cigarette.

He told us which train to get to the station and what time it was leaving and where we would get it from.

The thing which mystified us was that he was Belgian and he was wearing a Union Jack draped around his waist.

As we got to the ground we were starting to see the lack of presence from the police which really amazed us.

We went through the big main gate which was littered with at least a dozen ticket touts and I heard at least three London accents and two foreign accents.

Four out of our group of six did not even show their tickets as we moved around to the Liverpool end of the Heysel and we just could not believe the scenes outside of the ground.

My personal opinion of why the fighting started was because a boy only about 10 or 12 was getting hit by some Italians, so the Liverpool supporters ran and the chicken wire went.

I was virtually in tears and could sing no songs. I took my hat, scarf and also my top off and the six of us left and set off back to our hotel in Brussels.

We were confronted by Italians as we were leaving the ground they spat at us and started calling us English bastards and English murderers.

We just looked at them and put our heads down because in a way we were.

So at the end of the day I would put the blame on the English supporters at the Liverpool end of the ground, not Scousers because they were outnumbered by at least four to one by Cockneys, Irish, Belgium and Dutch.

Ian Walmsley, Bootle.

Stamford stomper

Why was this Chelsea skinhead at the Cup final?

ON our arrival at the stadium we approached the perimeter fence where some supporters dressed in England hats and the Union Jack draped over their shoulders were being refused access.

We made our way towards the turnstiles Y and Z and passed another gate with only one policeman and a stadium official in attendance. The supporters outside just casually pushed past them making little effort to show any tickets.

There were two lads to my left handing something out like newsletters, but I saw no one next to me take any (I now

believe they must have been Nazi leaflets).

I noticed an unusual amount of Cockney people mingling with the Liverpool supporters. They stood out by their accent, and dress was different from the way your average Reds supporter dresses for matches.

We stood and watched the youngsters playing a match on the pitch for about ten minutes, then I was distracted by a disturbance in the Z section, we were in Y section.

I saw what I thought was a scuffle of about six or seven people. A few seemed to be fleeing towards our side. This was followed by some shouting from supporters on this side of the fence and some climbed up

and waved fists in anger and shook the fence.

A couple of minutes later, a lad standing behind me was struck in the face by a concrete brick the size of a fist. He was just standing watching the kids and was not involved with any incitement.

We moved further over towards the stand but only got half way over because of the crowd.

When I looked over to where we had been there was a group of youths and skinheads jumping up and down at the fence at about the middle.

Then the fence went down and they charged through which made the crowd on the other side scatter.

During all the fighting and charging the section of Liverpool supporters where we were now standing began singing "pack it in, pack it in" to which some of the rampaging yobboes turned and put up two fingers.

We kept on pleading to them but they kept on charging. The police appeared in that section and for a while seemed to divide the two sections of supporters. Then came another charge and the police ran away leaving the poor people to defend themselves.

In all I suppose there were about 50 to 60 yobboes from the English side involved. Then the disaster happened—I was so shocked I decided not to stay, I already had a feeling that some of those supporters had been killed before the wall went.

Italians were outside the Liverpool end of the stadium, beating up Liverpool fans who tried to leave the stadium. Once again there appeared some Cockneys wandering around and they were high on drugs or beer, shouting abuse and generally threatening.

One will live in my mind for the rest of my life—he had a skinhead hair cut, a Union Jack tee-shirt, skin tight jeans, a pair of boxing shoes, Chelsea F.C. tattoo on his arm, and a belt with Stamford Stomper written on it.

You could tell they'd been fighting by the look of them.

We consistently came across gangs of arrogant Londoners dressed in England hats, Union Jacks and some even wearing Chelsea colours.

R. Guy, Norris Green.

Flares fired into Juventus section

I WAS in section XY halfway up the terracing but about 10 yards from the stands where all the Liverpool supporters sat.

There had been no trouble at all when suddenly a man of about 20, who was standing about five yards in front of me, set off a green flare.

It shot high in the air over the Juventus supporters and landed at the back of the stadium. About 30 seconds later he set off another flare (a red one) this time it landed right in the middle of the Juventus supporters.

It was at this point when all the hooligans attacked the Juventus crowd.

About two or three minutes after the red flare was set off the man was arrested, but he was not arrested by police, he was arrested by five people (three men and two girls) dressed in combat uniforms, white safety helmets and white bibs with a red cross on their chests.

The man did not seem to resist arrest. I did not see if he was handed over to the police or not.

I saw a lot of fans without tickets walking through the gates—the officials did not bother stopping them.

At half-time during the game I went to the top of the enclosure to go to the toilet and I found that all the gates had been left open.

A. Anderson, Shevington, Wigan.

'Huyton Baddies' banner

I WAS on the terraces X & Y and hopefully have some information which may be of some help to you about the disaster.

Where the fighting occurred there were Liverpool supporters with a flag saying "The Huyton Baddies".

This seemed to always be among the trouble. It was first shown in the main Liverpool section and then when the fighting broke out it reappeared in the disaster area.

Name and address supplied.

Evertonian hooligan

We arrived in Brussels at noon on Wednesday. The availability of beer was very apparent, the Liverpool fans were buying pints at a supermarket. Lots of under-age youths were being served.

We met many Liverpool fans without tickets. Many Italians beating drums were walking up and down the main street selling tickets.

On entering the ground some were searched, sticks were taken off flags and thrown into alcoves at the rear of the ground which were easily retrieved by the fans later.

In the area Z the Italians were throwing stones at the Liverpool fans. A number of youths in Y block started rowing cans and bottles. The police did nothing. Then the youths charged the

flimsy fence collapsed and the people on the other side ran. The wall collapsed under the pressure and panicking people were crushed. The wall that collapsed and the walls around the stadium were most unsuitable for the safety of such a large crowd.

It was crazy—it all could have been avoided if they had put two lines of police in the space between rival fans.

Accents

Better still, the whole section should have been given to Liverpool fans, as the whole of the terraces at the other end were totally allocated to Juventus fans.

Many of the youths who had charged, later came and stood in front of us. A majority were not from Liverpool—they had cockney accents.

There were a number from Birmingham

—one youth had a Union Jack draped around him with Birmingham City across the middle.

Another young boy standing in front of us wearing Liverpool colours kept throwing bottles at the police. My friend asked him what he thought he was doing. He turned around and said he was an Evertonian and only there for the trouble.

We later found out from asking questions and listening that there were a number of youths who had made the trip solely to cause trouble.

A number of these were on the pitch fighting.

We tried to leave before the final whistle and got trapped at the top of the terrace. How more people did not get killed in the panic to get out I don't know.

Miss M. Harper, Sefton Park.

'It was crazy—it all could have been avoided'

THE SHAME AND THE SORROW

My five hours of absolute terror!



● Patricia Myers — I was scared.

OUR party split up outside the coach park, the younger members going down the hill to the front of the stadium, to buy large flags at a kiosk.

There they were set upon by a gang of Juventus youths, one of whom tried to "brain" one of our friends with an iron bar. Only a shout from a friend and a lucky duck and swerve saved his life. They ran — to get away from trouble.

Meanwhile, my husband and I stayed near the X/Y area, taking in the atmosphere, which seemed quite happy. Police were searching all males going through the link fencing in front of the stadium walls. They took all flags off staves and handed back the flags, and all bags carried by women were searched.

Refused

We were refused entry because I had a can of orange juice and a can of bitter for my husband, to last the waiting hours and the game, so we sat outside to drink on the grass, watching the proceedings.

The fencing was in panels, linked by simple twist ties which were easily indone, and we watched people getting through not 20 feet from the police, who did nothing about it.

We entered the crumbling old stadium in the X area. There was no real control at the

door, no turnstile, and only 2 policemen on duty.

I became separated from my husband in the pushing and shoving around us, and the police had to drag him through and push me back to get us through together (he had the tickets).

The tickets were not checked, just torn and passed back, and we were roughly shoved into the stadium.

That stadium was the worst I've ever seen. We walked from the fencing between the Z and Y area to the stands bounding the X fencing.

Crushed

The terraces were crowded, unsafe (crumbling into shale and dirt rather than solid concrete), too steep, and there were not enough crush barriers. The very few barriers that were there were twisted, had sharp bars sticking out of their ends, and had crumbling concrete posts that would have collapsed at the first surge.

I spent the next 5 hours in terror, too scared to leave the stadium (not knowing whether our coach was unlocked), not knowing whether to move up away from the Italians who were charging up from the other end of the stadium, or down to avoid getting crushed by people who were close to panicking and getting out.

We were not close enough to the Y/Z wall to observe the incidents that sparked the

The people fell forward, I knew they were dying—we were horrified

charge — although all of us stood or sat shocked, ashamed and in tears when forced to watch people dying — but reports came back to us from those close by.

Panicked

If that gang of Juventus youths I spoke of earlier were in the Z section, they may have been the ones who set about the very young Liverpool fan, or who, possessing cans of beer, then urinated in the cans and threw them over the fence, drenching the Liverpool fans.

Once it happened, the Italians panicked. The police came up into the terrace.

However, instead of grabbing the offenders and marching them off, they pushed both sides back.

I watched as they forced the Italians into an impossible situation — there was no more room, yet still the police backed into them, forcing them up walls and down on to the fence.

As the people fell forward I knew they were dying (they had to be, from the sheer weight of numbers) and the police stood by and did nothing to help. After the bravery we had seen by our police at the Bradford City fire, we were horrified.

Hordes

There was nothing we could do — if we had moved it would have looked like provocation — and everyone around shouted for calm, for people to sit down, be quiet, not panic.

I sat there in tears and watched the panicking hordes scrambling up the wall, and hid my face as I saw the wall go down, covered with people, having stood not 30 feet from the other side of that fairly high wall, before entering the stadium.

It took 40 minutes for useful medical help to arrive.

We moved gradually back, picking our way through the decent citizens of Liverpool seated on the crumbling terraces, while a group of idiots, not 30 feet below us, tried to pull down the fence from the inside while Italian thugs pounded up the running track towards us.

The leading thug, seen clearly on television according to our worried relatives at home, flung an iron bar into the mixed-nation stand by the X area, and hit a lad from our coach on the head.

As this lad was taken from the stand by police for his head to be dressed, he was accused of fighting.

In front of others of our coach party (in the same stand) an unfortunate woman sat in the front row, with her arms round two children to protect them, while Juventus fans (allowed to roam from their enclosure by the useless police) stuck knives through the wire — slashing her arm.

A middle-aged Italian fan got up in disgust, tore up his Juventus banner, and walked out of the stadium.

Disgusting

What happened to the Juventus thugs? The rioters who were allowed to roam at will around the stadium? They returned like wounded heroes to their homes. Have Juventus been banned? Not a sign as yet! Have Belgium been attacked for permitting its disgusting decrepit stadium to be used for a major sporting fixture, when it was not fit for a pig pen?

All I have heard is of "drunken Liverpool fans", while the sanctimonious, greedy Belgians kept their bars open all night on Tuesday, till 6 a.m. on Wednesday, to sell their entire stock, grabbing in our money, yet complaining about the drunken English.

They obviously see no immorality in their own actions, reflected in the quality of their policing, which is beneath contempt.

Patricia Myers, Allerton.

You didn't need a ticket to get in



Stuart Provo

I was in area Y with my mother and father, and two aunts and uncles.

I could see hundreds of people on the pitch.

In the day-time I saw lots of skin-heads by the shop where the jewels were stolen, but it wasn't them. My mother and aunt saw the window go in and they said they were locals they had no scarves on them or any red.

The skin-heads all had Union Jack regalia on and were Londoners, and I'm sure National Front.

There were three people on our coach who didn't even take their tickets out of their pockets. They walked straight in. I saw fans

shouting out from a hole smashed in a wall for fans to come over who didn't have tickets and there were two armed police inside doing nothing.

The police took all the flags from fans of Liverpool and snapped them in half but let Juventus fans in with theirs.

Just after I got into the ground fans were coming out scared saying "don't go in" but I did, I wanted to see the match.

At this time Liverpool fans climbed onto the toilets etc. and they were all shaking. Eventually I saw one collapse with fans falling down and that is when I got out through a hole.

There were no turn-stiles or there were none when I arrived. I saw metal bars on the floor in the mud with water everywhere.

All there was before you got in the ground was wire fencing.

Outside after I saw one man from Leicester who had blood all over the back of his head and he was dazed. The police gave him a gauze bandage and that was it.

In the car park there were Juventus fans waiting for people and the police were standing doing nothing saying "We have to sort out people in the ground".

Stuart Provo st, Anfield.

The tragedy that could have been avoided

I ENTERED the ground about two hours before kick-off and was positioned on the sections X/Y border where I watched what was to happen.

The two sets of rival supporters began hurling bricks and bottles at each other.

A small group of about a dozen from the Liverpool section began fighting on the Juventus side. A space emerged on the terracing while scuffles ensued, and the small police presence did nothing to intervene — if anything they moved away.

Seeing there was no opposition, a larger mob, possibly 200-300, charged into the Juventus people who seemed to turn and flee as one. It was at this point the wall collapsed and people were obviously very badly hurt at the opposite corner-flag to where we stood.

I must stress here that initially both sets of supporters were happy to throw bricks and bottles at each other's section. From experience at Roma last year, I know that is a favourite Italian trick.

After a while, with a lot of Italians having spilled onto the pitch and a lot of Liverpool fans standing peacefully on section Z, order seemed to restore itself — although it was still quite obvious people were badly hurt in the far corner.

At no point did I think people may have been killed.

Then there was some commotion at the far-end of the ground. About 10 Italians had broken out of their section and were heading down the running-track, confronting Liverpool fans in the stand as they did. They then stood in front of our section and hurled all sorts of missiles at us.

The police, standing about 10 yards from them, did nothing whatsoever. All

through the violence and mayhem they just seemed powerless.

Right up to kick-off time, the Italians at the far end of the ground continued rioting with the police. Many of them roamed the running track, even the pitch, with the odd scumish between any police and Liverpool fans they came across. Again, the police did nothing at all to combat this.

It was obviously one of the greatest tragedies at a football match, but the greatest tragedy of all is perhaps that it all could have easily been avoided.

The deaths were obviously caused by Italians fleeing from the charge of thugs.

While it would be nice to lay the blame at somebody else's door, we must face the fact that we would have this carnage every week at the Anfield Road end if segregation was not proper. Hooligans, unfortunately, are a cancer at every club.

John Foster, Toxteth.

'Both sets of fans were happy to throw bricks'