

Hillsborough



What is Hillsborough?

The Hillsborough disaster was a fatal human crush during a football match at Hillsborough Stadium in Sheffield, South Yorkshire, England, on 15 April 1989. It occurred during an FA Cup semi-final between Liverpool and Nottingham Forest in the two standing-only central pens in the Leppings Lane stand allocated to Liverpool supporters. Shortly before kick-off, in an attempt to ease overcrowding outside the entrance turnstiles, the police match commander David Duckenfield ordered exit gate C to be opened, leading to an influx of supporters entering the pens. This resulted in overcrowding of those pens and the crush. With 97 deaths and 766 injuries, it has the highest death toll in British sporting history. Ninety-four people died on the day; another person died in hospital days later, and another victim died in 1993. In July 2021, a coroner ruled that Andrew Devine, who died 32 years after suffering severe and irreversible brain damage on the day, was the 97th victim. The match was abandoned but was restaged at Old Trafford in Manchester on 7 May 1989 with Liverpool winning and going on to win the FA Cup.

What went wrong on the day?

Despite having a larger fanbase, Liverpool, to their annoyance were, as in 1988, allocated the smaller Leppings Lane End of Hillsborough, consisting of a seated tier accessed from one block of turnstiles, and a terrace for 10,100 standing spectators, accessed by just seven turnstiles.

Even by the standards of the day this was inadequate and resulted in more than 5,000 Liverpool supporters pressing outside as the 3pm kick-off approached. Had the start of the match been delayed, the crush may well have been managed. Instead, the South Yorkshire Police's Match Commander, David Duckenfield, ordered one of the exit gates to be opened, allowing 2,000 fans to rush through.

Those who turned right or left towards the corner pens found room. However, most headed unwittingly, with no warnings from stewards or the police, to the already packed central pen, accessed via a 23m-long tunnel.

As the tunnel filled, those at the front of the terrace found themselves pressed up against steel mesh perimeter fences, erected in 1977 as an anti-hooligan measure. Incredibly, with fans patently suffering within full view of the police (who had a control room overlooking the terrace), the match kicked off and continued for nearly six minutes until a halt was called.

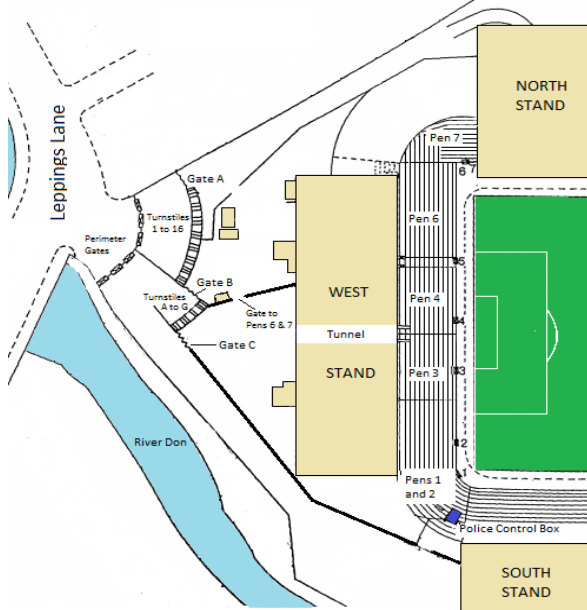
The aftermath

In the following days and weeks, South Yorkshire Police (SYP) fed the press false stories suggesting that hooliganism and drunkenness by Liverpool supporters had caused the disaster. Blaming of Liverpool fans persisted even after the Taylor Report of 1990, which found that the main cause was a failure of crowd control by the SYP. Following the Taylor Report, the Director of Public Prosecutions ruled there was no evidence to justify prosecution of any individuals or institutions. The disaster also led to a number of safety improvements in the largest English football grounds, notably the elimination of fenced standing terraces in favour of all-seater stadiums in the top two tiers of English football.

Based on initial briefings by the police, The Sun laid the blame for the Hillsborough disaster squarely on Liverpool fans, accusing them of being drunk, and in some cases of deliberately hindering the emergency response. It alleged that

fans had urinated on a policeman, and that money was stolen from victims. Overnight The Sun achieved pariah status on Merseyside.

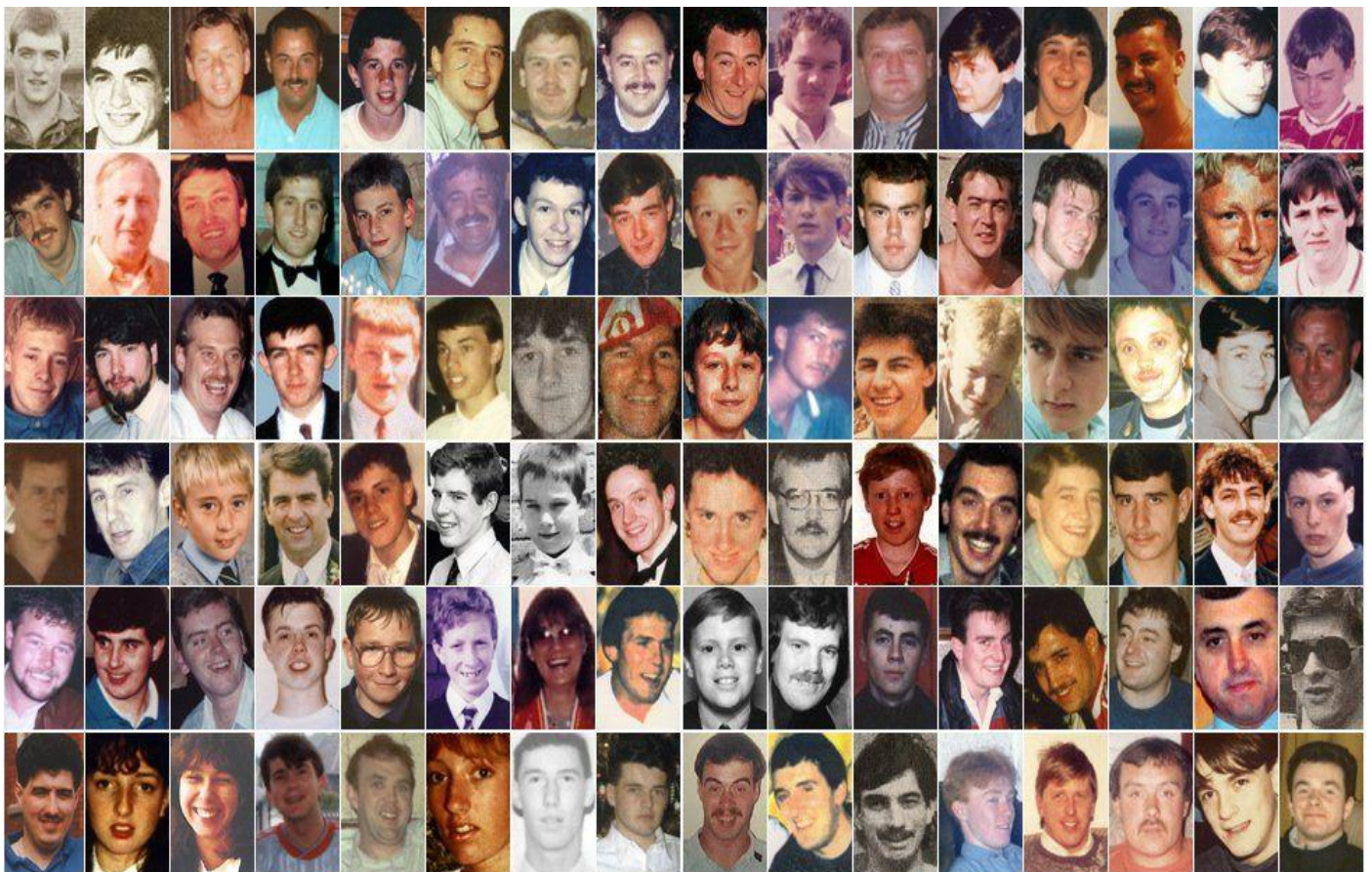
Hillsborough Stadium Leppings Lane end



Hillsborough Stadium is a 39,732-capacity association football stadium located in Owlerton, a north-western suburb of Sheffield, Yorkshire, England. It has been the home of Sheffield Wednesday since its opening in 1899.

It remains the UK's worst sporting disaster. Ninety-six men, women and children lose their lives with hundreds more injured. The oldest victim was 67, the youngest just 10 years old. Much to the pain of the victims' families and survivors the legal process to establish the facts and ascribe guilt for the Hillsborough disaster has endured and campaigned for more than 30 years to discover how and why they died.

Who were the victims of the Hillsborough Disaster?



Steven Gerrard says death of his cousin at Hillsborough was biggest inspiration

As recorded by a memorial at Liverpool's Anfield ground, Hillsborough's youngest victim was 10-year-old Jon-Paul Gilhooley, a cousin of the future Liverpool and England star, Steven Gerrard.



Steven Gerrard says the memory of his cousin who died in the Hillsborough disaster has inspired him to reach the pinnacle of his profession.

"Unfortunately for myself and my family we got the dreaded knock the next morning to say that a member of our family was at the game and had been killed," said Gerrard today. "Obviously it was difficult to know that one of your cousins has been tragically crushed but seeing the reactions of his mum, dad and family helped me drive on to become the player I have developed into today."

Has stadium safety improved since the Hillsborough disaster?

Hugely. The Taylor Report recommended that major grounds be all-seated after 1994, and that the role of local authorities should be overseen by a newly formed Football Licensing Authority (since renamed the Sports Grounds Safety Authority). A raft of new measures relating to medical needs, radio communications, stewarding and safety management has now become standard. Not least is the requirement that safety is now the responsibility of stadium operators, not the police. All FA Cup semi-finals are now staged at Wembley.

Educating children of Hillsborough disaster in schools

An inaugural programme to educate schools and political institutions about the Hillsborough tragedy is set to be launched in Liverpool. It furthermore recognises the important role of education in learning the lessons from the disaster and, a programme of education which should cover the events of the past 32 years, the continuing campaign for justice and how to ensure the events of that fateful day are not forgotten and that the ensuing miscarriage of justice is never repeated.

- Schools across Liverpool are set to add specific lessons about Hillsborough to the curriculum after the proposals were passed unanimously by the council.
- Primary and secondary schools will host special assemblies on a dedicated "Hillsborough Day" each year. It will be on the nearest Friday to the anniversary of the disaster.
- Lessons will also look at the subsequent cover up and long fight for justice by the families of the 97 Liverpool fans who died.

The Hillsborough Day would involve every Liverpool school taking part in a special assembly and there would be a particular focus on Professor [Phil Scraton](#)'s influential book, '[Hillsborough - The Truth](#)', the definitive account of the disaster and its aftermath.

Charlotte Hennessey lost her dad Jimmy in the tragedy; she says taught in the right way the tragedy can help shape kids to be better people in the future.

"We are all accountable for our actions and words that we say, and I think the Hillsborough disaster is a great way for doing that whatever profession children will eventually go into. They'll have to adhere to policies and procedures and be in their role in a truthful manner".



A new ITV drama **Anne** will explore justice campaigner Anne Williams' attempt to find out the truth about what happened, after she refused to believe the official record of her 15-year-old son Kevin's death at Hillsborough. She fought her own relentless campaign. Five times her pleas for a judicial review were turned down until in 2012 the Hillsborough Independent Panel examined the evidence she had gathered – despite her lack of legal training – and overturned the original verdict of accidental death.

Cost of Hillsborough

The cost of the Hillsborough inquests and the two major linked and ongoing police investigations is running at more than £116 million and rising. Of the figures currently available, court running costs and fees for legal representation during the inquests paid from public money amount to around £36.9 million - but details of at least one sizeable chunk of spending during the hearings has yet to be made public, reports the [Liverpool Echo](#).

Outcome

After 32 years, 601 people associated with the Hillsborough Disaster in Sheffield, UK in 1989 have finally received compensation from the West Midlands and South Yorkshire Police forces. It was later found to be the fault of the police but was the subject of a large police cover-up. Three men allegedly involved with this cover-up have been acquitted of charges relating to the perversion of the course of justice.

Most recently, two retired police officers – Donald Denton and Alan Foster – and an ex-solicitor – Peter Metcalf – were tried for perverting the course of justice. They stood accused of altering police statements to mitigate the damage to South Yorkshire Police and conceal their involvement in the aftermath of the disaster. They were thus charged with perverting the court of justice. Yet, there has been little closure and no justice for families.

Support links and resources available for Hillsborough:

https://www.liverpoolfc.com/hillsborough/contact
https://www.hsa-us.co.uk/
https://www.amazon.co.uk/s?k=hillsborough+-+the+truth&i=stripbooks&adgrpid=53022466517&gclid=EAlaIQobChMllom4rcqY9gIVFZftCh2Angm8EAAYASAAEgL7afD_BwE&hvadid=259102504208&hvdev=c&hvlocphy=9046552&hvnetw=g&hvqmt=e&hvrnd=12055802088502789666&hvtargid=kwd-298365035218&hydadcr=24431_1748949&tag=googhydr-21&ref=pd_sl_4olalu3iq9_e
https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=anne+hillsboroug+h+drama

