

My name is Brenda Fox and I was born on the banks of the river Mersey, the river separates the land into Liverpool and the Wirral, but not its people, they are united by an accent which is unique to our part of the world, and are commonly called scousers. The people born in Liverpool are known as Liverpudlians and we have the endearing term of squirrels from the Wirral.

In 1989 a football disaster occurred which rocked our great city to its core, the tremors were felt from the outskirts of Liverpool through the Wirral as far as Wales. I am often asked how Hillsborough affected me and my family. I will try to tell you, without trespassing on my friends private lives, as everybody's story is different. It is the circumstances which differ, but as we are very much aware, different circumstances affect people in different ways. And it is for them to tell their own story, I can only give my version, on how I felt when this disaster happened.

I had 3 children, Steve who was 21 years, Tony at 18 and Lynne 16 years old. Steve loved football and supported Liverpool, and had a season ticket, but if Liverpool had no game, he would also attend Tranmere Rovers with mates. The 15th April 1989 was a beautiful sunny day, and Steve was off to watch Liverpool play the semi final against Notts Forreest at Hillsborough, Sheffield.

It is very hard to put into words what came next, the match was on TV and suddenly the most horrific images were in front of your eyes, and the match was abandoned. There was a phone number to contact for concerned people, and after what we had witnessed, and news flash fatalities at the ground, we were concerned and tried to phone the emergency number but all of Liverpool must have been concerned too as it was constantly engaged.

At 5 o'clock his mate phoned to ask if we had heard from him, and he told us, that they were all to meet at the car, Steve and Ray had not made it back, he was phoning from a house where the car was parked, as queues for public phones were huge. He said the man of the house, was going to take him and one of the lads to the hospital to see if they were with the injured, and his wife and other mate would keep vigil on car. Now I was worried, I knew Steve would have got back to the car, or if he couldn't he would have rang, but you keep thinking, hoping, praying they will be all right, and keep ringing the emergency number, which was still busy.

Time went on and the lads who had gone to the match, had returned to the local pub and rang to see if Steve was home, the phone was constantly busy. We got through to the emergency number about 9.30 and reported Steve missing; the operator took details, and said we would be informed if they received any information.

It was about 11 o'clock when the phone rang, and Steve's mate told us he had found Ray and Steve, and they would not be coming home. We phoned the emergency number and informed them that we knew Steve was dead, and they informed us we would have to go to the Medico legal centre in Sheffield. To identify his body we said we would go in morning, right at that moment I was trying to think, how to tell his brother and sister, nan, aunts uncles and friends. Steve's sister Lynne was going to her friends birthday party, she was 16 and his brother Tony was picking her and Sarah her friend, who was staying over night at 10 o'clock, when Lynne, Sarah and Tony arrived home, we told them Steve, would not be coming

home, they were devastated, we all cried till the early hours of the morning, when we told them. We had to Sheffield, for a formal identification they did not want to come with us but we had to go. We started out for Sheffield at about 7.30, and as we had not drove to Sheffield before we got a little lost. We found signs and got back on track, as we going along a very long road we were wondering if we were lost again, ahead of us were a group of people carrying back packs, we decided to stop and check if we were on the right road. As we stopped and was winding down the window, we seen they were only young, and we asked if we were on the right road for the medical centre as, they were giving us directions many of them started to cry, I don't know if it was our red eyes, or scouse accent, perhaps they knew why we had to go there, but they were the emotional directions, I have ever had.

We arrived about 10 to 10.30, and were told, that we would have to wait as there were only 6 rooms available for identification, and other families were already there, we were introduced to Steve and Ann, who were social workers, they took us to what looked like a village hall, and other groups of families were sitting and crying, they brought us tea and coffee, they were a very nice couple, and we talked about Steve, how we found out, we sat and sat and time moved on, at about five thirty my husband who was a diabetic, realised that he had not brought any insulin with him, as we did not think we would be there that long, Steve and Ann took us to Sheffield Infirmary, where he received an injection and sandwich.

We went back to the centre and sat again, it was about ten o'clock when we went in to identify Steve, he was behind a piece of amber glass, all we could do was say yes this was our son, we signed a form and that was that. Ann and Steve asked us to stay overnight, but we wanted to go home to our two other children. When we arrived home the house was very quiet, my mother-in-law who lived with told us that the children where already in bed, Lynne was going to school the next day as it was the start of her GCSE exams, I had forgotten and my first thought was how would she cope.

The morning came and I took Lynne to school, she was determined to go and I knew if she missed them all her hard work would have been wasted as it would be another year before she could take the exams again. I went in with her to explain to her form teacher and explained what had happened, but she already knew and she offered her condolences to us all as she had taught Steve in previous years. She told me to get a doctors note for Lynne for compassionate consideration to the exam board, this would be handed in with her exam papers and they would look more carefully at her term work. I thanked her and she said she would ring me if Lynne could not cope.

I went on to visit our family doctor and as I entered the surgery the receptionist offered her condolences and said our doctor would see me as soon as possible. I thought how strange how does everyone know, I went into see the doctor and he asked how everyone was coping and did they need anything, he gave me a note for Lynne and one for myself for work, he explained that Sheffield had requested Steve's medical records and how sorry he was to lose a young fit patient like Steve.

I returned home to find it full of friends and family, we talked, cried and then talked some more, it was mostly about yesterday's papers and the stories that had

appeared. We only realised the extent of the dreadful lies that had been written when we actually read the papers ourselves.

At this point I would like to thank all my friends and family for helping me through this difficult and emotional time, for without them I would not have survived. We went to the undertakers and they could not have been kinder they made all the arrangements and contacted us with the date of the funeral and time.

The house was constantly full of friends and as one phone call ended another friend would be ringing. The radio, TV, Newspapers were full of reports of Hillsborough the lies about fans were unbelievable, one papers headline told of fans robbing the dead and being drunken yobs. Steve's friends who where at the match told a very different story, they explained their horrific experiences and said that the police were definitely to blame and that they would never forget the screams of the dying and wounded. How the fans had torn down the hoarding with their bare hands to carry the injured across the pitch to the ambulances that had not been allowed to come into the grounds but kept outside by the Sheffield police.

The undertakers informed us that the funeral had been arranged for a week on Thursday but Steve would be coming home sometime this Thursday and they would let us know when he arrived at the funeral parlour.

It was very strange two weeks; it was as if you were in slow motion, so much was happening and the days were endless and everything seemed so unreal. The TV announced that there were 95 dead and 400 hundred injured, the local radio were giving constant reports of bus services taking families to Sheffield to visit their injured relatives. They also announced that a disaster fund had been started to help the families and it was declared the worst sports disaster ever known

How could this happen. How could people go to see a football match and not come home?

An announcement was made that there would be a public enquiry into the events surrounding the disaster, and the West Midland police force would be conducting the investigation, for the lord chief justice Taylor.

Every time the word Hillsborough was mentioned, it brought tears to your eyes, as Steve came into mind, but your body froze, you had to listen, watch, or read, in case it shone a light on what had happed to Steve. A social worker from the bereavement centre at Clatterbridge Hospital called to see us, a service had been arranged at Tranmere Rovers, and he gave us tickets to attend.

There was still a constant support from friends and the sympathy was overwhelming. The funeral took place at St Joseph's church, where Steve was christened and the church was so full people were standing at the back. The floral tributes were magnificent, cushions, crosses, names, balls and arrangements including one of the pearly gates, I have never seen so many flowers. The service was uplifting and so very sad, when his young friends struggled to do a reading; it made us very aware of how brave and emotional it was for them. Bruce Grobbelaar, the goalkeeper at Liverpool, Steve's favourite from the team, also came and gave a reading; I still shed tears from the memory of that day, when the choir sang 'You Will Never Walk Alone'. I still have a picture in my mind of 6 very young men

carrying a coffin down the aisle of the church with a heart of red and white flowers and as I walked behind I was very aware of how much he was loved and as I looked out at the pews by how many were there.

My thanks to everyone for their kindness, generosity and support at that time.

On the Saturday we attended the service at Tranmere Rovers, once again so many people attended, it was full to bursting, and my shock was I actually knew them. Lynne had gone to school with one of them and their unfortunate family had lost two. As we sat and talked Joan asked if I had seen the flowers at Anfield and until then I had not heard of them. I said I would go across and see for myself and see her at the service which had been arranged for the following week at the Cathedral in Liverpool.

On Sunday morning we went over to see what so many people had been talking about. To all Scousers there is a double meaning for everything and this incredible sight spoke in volumes. As you approached the gates, full of scarves and sheaves of flowers the message back to the newspapers was we were not drunken yobs, it was as if every person from Merseyside, regardless of colour or creed had made their own silent protest and as we went onto the ground, the whole pitch was knee deep in sheaves, reefs, single flowers and arrangements.

As we walked around the edge of this amazing sight, watching supporters silently laying teddys, scarves and flowers at a specific spot were their fellow supporters who would never stand again. The message to the bereaved and injured was quite clearly, we know your grief and we feel your pain and you will never walk alone. A steward approached and asked if we were a bereaved family and when we replied yes, he asked if we would like to go inside and see the wreathes inside. It was a remarkable sight with teddies and arrangements from all over the world and their messages were overwhelming. The steward then took us for a cup of tea were a lot of the team and their wives greeted us. They were all in the same shocked state as we were. There were a lot of distressed families there, some we recognised from the service at Tranmere and we sat and talked and the team's wives constantly filled our cups, they were marvellous. They told us that they would be at the service on Sunday. We took a final walk around the Kop, prayed at Steve's spot and made our way home. It had been another emotional day.

The next week was a mixture of reflection. Steve had always loved playing football with his friends who shared his same love for the game and the banter between them had always been fun. Steve had a way of making everyone laugh and there was always a smile on his face. At 16 he left school and started work in the local chocolate factory and his other friends went into banking, insurance, food and various other occupations but they all remained firm friends. On the day of the disaster his two friends had been supporting Tranmere away from home and after their match they had gone into the local pub near the ground and had seen the services at Hillsborough. Their first thoughts were of Steve and as they were frantically trying to phone me, some of the patrons of the pub befriended them. They left for home with the phone number and a promise to let them know if their friend was ok. They eventually had to ring and say that no, it wasn't. the patrons of the pub wanted to do something to help and they wanted to do a charity run for the fund. They wanted to run from their local pub, through Liverpool to our local pub

and a fun run was arranged. A bus would take the competitors from our pub to the halfway point to meet their runners and they would all run in together. We would arrange refreshments and then the coach would take them home.

My Mother-in-Law's senior moments had gotten worse and her grief was uncontrollable and it was impossible to console her. The phone continually rang and friends still called. The tears were still fast and furious. The question on everyone's lips was 'Why'. We decided that we would go back to work after the service on Sunday and try to get some normality back into our families lives, not that life could ever be normal again. Sunday arrived and we made our way to the Cathedral there were small groups of people on the street. My mum remarked on how shell-shocked they looked. When I asked what they meant she replied that they had the same look on their faces as their neighbours had, after a bomb was dropped during the war and were waiting to see how they could help.

Liverpool was a very sombre city, the banter and laughter had left the streets and been replaced by people in deep shock and mourning.

The service was attended by Margaret Thatcher, the prime minister at the time, Duchess of Kent, Officials from the F.A., Officials from Liverpool Football Club and the players and their wives and the city council and more that I did not recognise. They filled the front rows and the families and injured were on the next rows, which did not leave a lot of room for the public. The local radio station was broadcasting to the public outside in the grounds and on the streets. The choir was magnificent and at the service all of the names were read out and prayers offered for them all.

After the service, the council provided refreshments for the injured and their families. While we were talking, the conversation was about how we felt about Liverpool replaying the match. We knew our loved ones would not want people missing the match because they wouldn't want to themselves. The answer was Get out there and win. Also we were asked about how we felt about the flowers at Anfield which had become a shrine and what we thought should be done with them as the pitch would have to be cleared. I can't remember whose idea it was, but I was decided that the teddies would be distributed to the Children's Hospital, homes and play centres and the flowers would be gathered and taken to the ferry boats and cast out onto the Mersey. There was also a meeting arranged for families at the Town Hall. We all said we would meet up again with more time to talk.

We all returned to work on the Monday and the girls in work were brilliant and in the evening the house was once again full of friends and family making sure we were all ok. We went over to a meeting at the Town Hall and as we talked to other families we found that it helped and arranged for another meeting. The weekend arrived and the young patrons from the pub, Lynne's friends and Tony's friends, all went off to meet the other runners. It was a beautiful sunny day and when they returned they were actually smiling. It had done them all some good, they felt as if they had done something worthwhile. It was also one of the visitor's birthday, so we had a birthday cake as a surprise and they all ate and drank and talked.

The time flew by and the coach arrived to take the visitor's home as we thanked them and said goodbye they asked if we would go down to their pub as they wanted to return the hospitality and Steve's mates said they would organise it.

The following weekend was not as pleasant. The phone rang and my friend told me that her husband was bringing Tony home and not to worry he was alright but he had been in a car crash. Even when your best friend tells you not to worry, it is impossible not to. Tony arrived home and he was in a state of shock. A car had pulled out in front of him and his car was a write-off. But except for whiplash and minor bruising, everybody was ok, but in his distressed state Tony had realised how close to serious it could have been. I also knew how lucky I was.

Tony's car crash had upset my Mother-in-Law and made her worse. She started crying even more and was calling Tony, Steve. When she realised it wasn't Steve, she would cry even more. When you tried to comfort her she would say I'm fine and walk away. She did not want to go to a doctor and ask for any help.

We continued to go to the meetings with the other families and I can't remember when we became the Hillsborough Family Support Group, it feels, like we have been this group forever.

We met up with other disaster groups and listened as they told us how they coped. By this time our loved ones had been branded and were constantly referred to as the '95'. The media was still focused on Hillsborough and how drunk everyone was, it seemed all they did was slag us off and because a loved one was part of the '95', you felt you had to defend them, how crazy does that sound. But guarding a grave was how I felt, my son was not a drunken job and somehow I had to prove it. Every time comments were made I took it personally, because my son was a part of it.

It would have been his 22nd birthday on 14th June and how I wished I could turn the clock back and he would still be here, laughing and joking, instead of standing at a grave, placing flowers, crying and wishing I could have him back. But you have to put on a brave face and do what he would have wanted, have a drink and celebrate him. It was a very emotional time for everybody as once again the grave was full of flowers and the tears flowed again. I missed him so much.

The words to describe what came next have not yet been invented. Devastation, disbelief and shock only brush the surface. Our solicitor phoned and asked to make an appointment and when he arrived he told us that Sheffield police had been in touch and sent Steve's autopsy we were unaware that this had taken place. As we read the full dreadful report, the feelings are indescribable, how could you bury your son and not know he had been cut to pieces, it was unbelievable.

Still in shock I took this report to my G.P and he explained that a Coroner, unlike a doctor does not need the consent of next of kin but he was very annoyed that it had gone to the solicitor and not to him as Steve's doctor. Steve was a first aider at work and had a picture ID to confirm who he was. He always carried it with him, along with an organ donor card. He told me when he first got his card in case of an accident that they could have everything except his eyes. When I asked my GP about his donor card, he said that the circumstances of the accident would have prevented the use of any organs. Reading about the good condition of his organs, which had been wasted at the time, hurt all the more. I could have complied with his choice at the time if they had asked for his organs, but not this. When I stopped crying, I looked at the date. It was the 16th of April at 3 o'clock – this had taken

place while I was sitting waiting to ID him. I had sat in the next room while they had cut him to pieces, it was unbelievable. I don't know whether the next HFGS Meeting made me feel better or worse, better because I wasn't the only idiot that didn't know or worse because they had done it to everyone, even the children. Our biggest question was why.

It seemed to bring the group closer together as we all wanted to do something, to make sure this wouldn't happen again. No family should have to go through what we went through.

It was at this point that we met Professor Phil Scraton who was a criminologist at the Edge Hill University. He had heard of our plight and wanted to try and explain the position of the coroner and the oncoming inquests we would have to attend. He also told us of his campaign to try and change the format of the coroner and what he felt would be unfair to the inquests. In view to what we had been through, we readily backed this campaign.

Professor Scraton has written two books, one called Hillsborough and the other is The Truth Of Hillsborough. He explains about the inquests in detail and how they affected this disaster.

Our meetings continued and life went on. In August we all received a copy of the Lord Taylor report and in this report he concluded "the main reason for the disaster was the failure of police control" [interim report, para 278]. But even though it was in black and white, people outside of Merseyside still believed the fans were responsible and Scousers were still regarded as 'drunken yobs'. The lies that the newspapers reported were still considered to be the truth. These comments made you feel like you had to defend your loved one and you were guarding a grave.

In the September my husband and I were contacted by the West Midlands police, requesting us to meet them at Birkenhead Town Hall, which we did. But unfortunately even after 19 years this meeting still haunts me. When I think about it or talk about it, it's like I have a TV inside my head and I can watch it like I am sitting and watching my TV at home. The images are still so clear I wish I could find the off switch but I can't and have to wait until it clears itself again.

The officers informed us that they were gathering evidence to use in disciplinary charges of neglect in duty that would be preferred against the Chief officers in control of the operation at the Ground. They needed our help as they could not identify Steve on any of the photographs they had of the match and as his parents we might be able to see what they couldn't.

We were given magnifying glasses and stacks of still photographs, scenes from the crush, and scenes from the crowd at the turnstiles. We could not find Steve on any of these pictures.

We were then shown the video from the police security cameras on the day of the crush. It was in slow motion and I don't know how many times they had to rewind it before I could see past the horrors of what was before my eyes and to see past the tears and focus on the actual crush. But I did and found a very familiar sight, the side of a head I used to wake of a morning and say 'That's Steve'.

After watching this video, my question was, if I could see the middle pens were full and the side pens were empty, why couldn't the trained officers watching try to do something about it. For the next couple of weeks, all I could see when I closed my eyes was the video of Hillsborough and the questions whipped through my brain until I eventually cried myself to sleep. I walked around with big red eyes for weeks and when friends asked me if I was ok, I said 'Yes', because I could not explain the terrible scenes that I had witnessed without the tears starting again.

My only consolation which kept me going through this very difficult time was that the Lord Taylor had ordered that the terrible fences had to be pulled down and the grounds would be replaced by seats. No fans would be crushed to death again and no one would have to view those terrible scenes.

Now, after 19 years, the video still plays through my mind as if it has been embedded in my brain but the tears do not tumble down.

My Mother-in-Law was now in the early stages of Alzheimer's and one day she would not know who or where she was. My husband decided he did not want to attend any more meetings, but I still felt that the friends that I had made still shared my concerns.

Christmas was approaching and my concerns at that time was how to get through what was always a joyous time without Steve. His banter at the Christmas table would be missed by us all. My Christmas shopping was done with the dread of him not being there. I tried to put a brave face on and smile and hide my feelings to make everyone feel better. My friends and family were all very supportive and helped cheer me along.

Christmas Day arrived and although there was not much laughter without Steve, we were getting through it. We had dinner and then my husband dropped another bombshell. He announced that he would be going into hospital in the morning to have his leg amputated. He did not want to say anything before dinner as he did not want to spoil our Christmas morning. It had been infected for a few weeks and was not getting any better. We were speechless.

On Boxing Day at 11 am we took him to the hospital and after settling him in we returned home, still in a state of shock. It was not like a Christmas I had ever known, it was unreal and the worst Christmas I had ever experienced.

The hospital did x-rays and tests and the surgeon decided to try and save the leg by doing a by-pass. The operation was scheduled for the 2nd January which meant my husband had to spend New Year in hospital.

He had the operation and was very lucky because it worked. The surgeon had saved the leg, but it still took weeks for the wound to heal.

While I had been busy at home, my friends at the HSFSG had been busy planning a service at the Cathedral for the first anniversary for our loved ones and we had notification of the mini inquests that would start on the 18th of April. It was difficult to

comprehend that it was almost 12 months since the disaster and people still talked about it like it was yesterday. It was still constantly on your mind.

The day of the service arrived and as we met with family and friends to travel to the Cathedral, it brought back the memory of the funeral and service of last year. As we arrived at the Cathedral the reception was overwhelming. Once again it was full of groups of people standing quietly in the street. The people of Merseyside had again offered their support to everyone involved in the disaster, in the singing of hymns and prayers. As every name was called out a candle was lit in their memory and after 10 names a chorus was sung by the choir. There was also a minute silence at 3:05, the time that the match was abandoned .

It was just as moving as the last one and once again the tears tumbled. We all ended up comforting each other and I remember thinking, how long will it be before we can talk about Steve without it hurting so much, how long before the pain goes away.

Professor Scratton had already explained that the purpose of an inquest was to give answers on our loved ones death. When, where, how and why. But the mini inquests might not give us any answers, they would come later in the main inquest.

These mini inquests were a waste of time to me. It was like a formality to get the papers in order as they told me nothing that I didn't know already:

The Where: at Hillsborough

The When: 15th April 1989

The How: Cause of death, Traumatic asphyxia.

There was nothing going on with the WHY.

Lynne had stayed on at school to get better exam results as so she could go to University and was on the last of her exams. She had been suffering from recurring tonsillitis, which our family doctor had put down to stress and was constantly advising us to go on holiday and get a change of air and scenery. Friends and family were also insisting that we took a break. My husband's cousin also volunteered to look after my Mother-in-Law for 2 weeks. The main inquest date had been set for November so I booked a holiday at Disney World. everybody was very pleased and excited except for me. I had very mixed feelings about this holiday. Disney World was a holiday of a lifetime and all I could think of was that I would not be going on this holiday if Steve was alive. I wished how he was still here and that I would not be going.

Disney World is a place with so much to see and do, Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck and other magical characters that make you smile. It would be very hard not to enjoy this magical world of Disney and the time passed very quickly.

We arrived home in high spirits and relaxed. After unpacking and sorting out, as we always do after a holiday, I went to take my mum some photos and a small present from Disney. She listened as I told her all I had seen and done and then she said, 'I am sorry to put a dampner on your holiday but while you were away, I had to go and see the doctor. He sent me for a mammogram and I have breast cancer. I go for a mastectomy on Wednesday.' I left feeling so guilty. I was rambling on about a

holiday while she was so worried. Once again I felt like a bomb had dropped on my world.

I took mum to the hospital for her operation and despite her having heart failure during the operation the surgeon was pleased with the result. His words were, 'she was very strong and should make a good recovery'. After the wounds healed, she would go for radium treatment and she should be ok.

Life carried on. Lynne was attending college, Tony had met a girl who later became his wife and my life was very hectic, taking mum to the hospital for appointments and looking after my Mother-in-Law. November came very quickly and the inquest arrived also the DPP announced that no disciplinary action would be taken against any of the police officers on duty at the match.

I do not know what I expected from this inquest but it was not like anything I had imagined. My personal feeling of disgust has never changed.

Although this procedure was perfectly legal and we had legal representation I have always felt that they were unfair. There was nothing in this procedure that related to the Chief of Justice Taylor's report. My feelings were this man who did not have 2 heads, 6 hands, and 10 feet and looked like an ordinary man was called a coroner and was judge, jury and executioner. He was determined to make a mockery of the Taylor report. The only people who were allowed to speak were at his request. He decided that at 3:15 everybody was dead and anything that happened after that point did not matter. The people he called up praised the South Yorkshire police for their actions on the day. When police officers were called up and asked questions, their answers were of the famous two. One, 'I cannot answer that question in case I incriminate myself' and Two, 'I did what my commanding officer told me to do'.

Two witnesses were a manager of a pub, whose questions was how much alcohol he sold on the day and the other was a lady who picked up beer cans from her garden. There was nothing asked of the officers in the control box, about the opening of the gate and an officer who insisted that fans could find own level, was not asked. Could he not see that one pen was full and could he not see that the other two were empty and why did he not act on this observation. This farce lasted until March. Meanwhile Christmas was like a formality we had to go through and smile at for the sake of the family. Mum was still attending the radium treatment and it was a very busy and sad Christmas, perhaps worse than the last.

The media had picked up on the beer cans and the alcohol sold, so in March when the farce came to an end and coroner ruled Death by Misadventure, we were back to where we had started.

Scousers were once again branded as drunks and thieves by the media and we were defending our loved ones. The why's had not been answered and the legal team launched an appeal.

There were no answers to the points in the Taylor report.

1, Failing to delay the kick-off in the light of the large crowds at Leppings Lane

- 2, Not noticing or taking full account of the fact that the central pens were full by 2:50pm
- 3, Not foreseeing where the supporters would go once Gate C was opened and not blocking off the tunnel – this was the critical mistake.
- 4, Not distinguishing distress from disorder and consequently not reacting quickly or effectively to the situation.

Nobody was held accountable or even lost a job. 95 people had died and 400 had been injured but nobody was held accountable.

The HSFG had arranged for a service to be held at Anfield as the anniversary approached. I was hurt and angry as this to me was not justice, it was a brush off. Just because we speak with a strange accent does not mean we are aliens from another planet. We are British citizens and should have the same rights as the rest of the country. We all pay taxes and remarks made at the time, they have had a public inquiry and a very costly inquest and they are still not satisfied. 'It's about time they moved on' only added fuel to the fire. When you feel you have not had justice it is impossible to let go.

It was two years and as we attended the service, it was still like yesterday. The people of Merseyside rallied around once again. The service was just as moving as the last one had been.

The legal team were applying for a judicial review and Hillsborough was still very much a topic for the media. There was no thought for the fans who had suffered in this disaster or the mental trauma they had had. When they were accused of it being their fault they must have felt, as they questioned themselves, could I have done something to prevent it. The hurt and pain was felt all over the city and as families all we could say was 'No, we know it was not your fault, we only wish we could prove it, but we will not stop until we do.'

Time moved on and Lynne went off to Brighton to study Documentary Photography and Tony was planning a wedding. It was just before Christmas when Tony took ill and was diagnosed as having diabetes. It was a bitter blow for someone so young, but at least it was treatable and once it was under control, it is something you learn to live with.

Lynne came home for Christmas and after the two previous years, this one was peaceful and enjoyable, but not as merry as they used to be.

A new year began and we were planning the third anniversary to be held at Anfield again. Still nobody had been held accountable for the disaster and the legal team were working to try and get a new inquest. But the legal wheels are very slow and time passes quickly. After the appeal was turned down, on 5th November 1993, the courts decision was to dismiss the application and without new evidence there was nothing our legal team could do. New evidence was something that had not been in the public domain and as the disaster had been on TV it would be almost

impossible to provide. We sent petitions to the Attorney General for a new inquiry but this was also turned down. There had been two TV programmes about Hillsborough; in 1990 there was the 'First Tuesday' programmes "Disaster at Hillsborough" and in 1994 the Yorkshire TV featured an episode in the 'Cook Report'. Granada TV approached us and asked if they could do a programme on Hillsborough and we decided that if we could go no further legally, we should at least set the record straight on the dreadful accusations of the media regarding the fans that had been made on the day and the slur it had brought to the city.

We gave permission for Jimmy McGovern to interview us all and write a documentary, which was simply called "Hillsborough". He did a great job and on 5th December 1996 this highly emotive and powerful drama was shown. At last after 7 years our feelings were shown to the public. It was as if a weight had been lifted off of our shoulders and we hoped the slur would be lifted from the Scousers who had bore the brunt of the remarks. What we did not expect was the thousands of phone calls that followed, people who had given statements and were waiting for people to get back to them, and the new evidence, tapes that Granada had brought out of the archives, that had not been seen by anybody as they were not allowed to show any of their news coverage that day.

What we had thought of as the end of the road, had become a new beginning, as the legal team decided that with this new evidence we could apply for private prosecution. In June 1997 the government appointed Lord Justice Stuart Smith to scrutinise the evidence relating to the Hillsborough disaster. Once again the legal wheels began turning. It is a strange feeling when you thought you were at the end and find that you are back to the beginning again, but we approached it with a renewed vigour and hoped that we could now hold the people we thought responsible to account. The legal team informed us that the costs would be considerable if they went against us, and could we afford it, as we had 7 years of legal costs to attend to already. It was a 'lorra lorra' money that we needed.

Once again the people of Merseyside came to our aid. The Liverpool Football Club started the ball rolling; they could not give us any cash, as all available funds were being used to renovate the grounds, but they held a charity football match for us. After that the offers came from everywhere. I would like to say Thank You to Liverpool Football Club, its players and staff, for allowing us to use the Anfield for a rock concert that took place on 10th May 1997, and to all the stars that performed, the staff behind the scenes and to everyone who purchased a ticket and attended. It was a great day and lifted our spirits high so thank you all, to each and every one of you.

My thanks also to the stars , who gave their time to attend the Golf Day, and once again thank you to all the people who took part. That was also a very memorable day, thank you all for your support and help.

Lord Stuart Smith finished his report and presented it to the Secretary of State in February 1998. Te DPP decided that the state would not bring any prosecutions from it, so we applied to bring a private prosecution against Mr Duckenfield and Mr Murray, the Chief Superintendent and his controller, on the day. We had a long wait for our legal team to be given the date on which the trial would commence.

The 10th Anniversary had arrived and it did not seem possible that the years had passed so quickly and we were still trying to get some kind of justice for our loved ones. The date for the private prosecution was finally released and it was set for early 2000.

It was at last here the time we could have all our questions answered publicly and leaves no doubt in anybody's mind that the fans had not been responsible for the events of that day. Our loved ones were not the drunks they had been labelled for so many years.

The most important questions to me were why the police in the control box, particularly the two senior officers, gave the order to open the gate and allow more fans into what was already a crowded area, when it was obvious to me, an ordinary untrained person, could see it on the tapes I had been shown, why couldn't they see? And why after it had happened did they lie and say that the fans were fighting, why not say that a barrier had broken, why continue this lie for 5 years? To me this was one of the most important issues as this lie prevented the other two emergency services to perform their jobs properly. This lie was the reason paramedics and their vital equipment were made to stay outside the ground and the reason for the fire brigade to turn up with a water cannon. Although I hasten to add that the firemen themselves soon put that right and my thanks to them all and to all the medical staff that helped on that day.

The trial took place in Leeds and lasted for a long seven weeks and although I did not get a definite answer to my questions, I felt the truth had at least been brought to the public. Although the jury could not reach a verdict and our chance of justice had gone, I felt I had achieved something, the truth was out and people could now make their own decision based on the facts.

It was at this point that we were asked what we would do next, would we take it to Europe. But unfortunately, you cannot go to Europe, just because you lost in the UK. Another question I was asked was will you still be a member of HFSG and my answer to that is, I am proud to be a member. We failed in justice for our loved ones but we made the grounds safer for everyone else and helped in the changing of the inquest procedure. We had achieved a lot of what we had intended on doing. Our intention had always been to make things easier for anyone unfortunate enough to be in our position.

We still hold our memorial service at Anfield and we do not forget our loved ones. We are approaching the 20th Anniversary and it still feels like only yesterday when it happened. So when I am asked if I will ever forget it, the answer is no. I will never forget my son and Hillsborough robbed me of him.

When I am asked if I will ever forgive the South Yorkshire Police, the answer is difficult, not all of them were at fault and like we were labelled drunks, they were labelled as bad policemen. So my answer to that one is to the officers themselves, as they alone know who they are, to the officer who did not deserve this label e.g. the officers who helped to carry the makeshift stretchers across the pitch, the officers who came forward and told how their statements had been changed, and

indeed any officer who helped our fans on the day. To these officers I say thank you, but to the officers who heard the fans scream for help, who observed and shrugged their shoulders and turned their backs and did nothing, and the senior officers in the control box who did the same and produced this lie, which resulted in the slur of our city and it's people and brought shame to the uniform they wore and the officers who 'served under them. I only have one simple message; No, Never. May the shame of the day always be with you and the guilt on your conscience be with you for ever and ever.

Yours truly
B.Fox