Dear Colleague,

I have recently been approached by the father of one of the deceased at Hillsborough to inquire what steps if any I was taking with regard to making available material, documentation and papers including photographs etc., relating to or arising out of the Hillsborough Disaster.

He told me that he had been making some personal inquiries and has discovered that a considerable amount of material is available in relation to the Ibrox and Bolton Disasters and as I understood him he appeared to be able to obtain copies of some of this material, if he so wished.

I am of course aware that generally speaking, coronal papers are not disclosed to the general public for a period as specified in the appropriate Act subject to the exceptions with which we are all familiar. It is also of course possible for a coroner to give specific consent to allow access to coronal papers.

The matter is fairly complex because in addition to the coronal inquiries there may have been public inquiries as well as inquiries by or on behalf of the D.P.P. the Police Complaints Authority, the Health & Safety Executive and Air Accident Investigators, quite apart of course from any private inquiries and investigations undertaken by the parties themselves.

The material which becomes available following a major disaster seems to me to fall into the following classes:-

1. Coronal papers proper i.e., transcripts, documents admitted under Rule 37 and exhibits at the inquests.

2. Statements, photographs, documents, videos etc., on which the evidence contained in the documentation referred to in No.1 above was based.

3. Other statements, documents, photographs, videos, tape recordings or other material which was available but was not used in the coronal proceedings.

4. Documents etc., which were collected on behalf of or prepared for the D.P.P. or the public inquiry, whether or not these were also made available to the coroner.
5. Intra-office papers e.g., correspondence, minutes of meetings etc.

In addition to the coroner, the Chairman of the Public Inquiry, the D.P.P.,
the Police Complaints Authority and the police themselves who have taken the
statements, there may be other parties who may have interests in some of the
material e.g., B.B.C. or I.T.V. in respect of T.V. footage.

On the other hand, I think it is probably right to say that with events which
we class as major disasters, there is a considerable argument for saying that
the material relating to this event should not only be preserved but should
also be made available for historical purposes, research, and preventative
reasons.

I would be most interested to know whether you have had any similar
approaches from anybody in relation to the disasters in which you were
connected.

Whether or not you have had such an approach, I would be most interested to
learn whether you have any views with regard to the inquiry, the disclosure
of the material in whole or in part, or any other comments relating to this
matter.

One thought that has crossed my mind (bearing in mind the somewhat complex
nature of the situation) is whether there might not be some advantage in
discussing the issue with the public records office or one of the major
museums with a view to them taking over the material, sorting out with
various interested parties the rights and wrongs of disclosure and perhaps
even setting up what one might describe as a Major Disaster Section where
material from several of the major disasters could be collated and collected
with a view to having in one place this sort of information available for
inspection, subject to such restrictions as might be appropriate or agreed.

It may well be that there will be some material, e.g., personal
 correspondence or other matters which may be deemed to be of such a
 confidential nature that it should not be included in such a venture or that
 its disclosure be restricted for the appropriate period of time allowed for
 in the Public Records Act.

I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours sincerely,

S.L. Popper,
H.M. Coroner.

c.c. Dr. P. Chambers.
Dr. P. Knapman.
Mr. R. Sturt.
Mr. J. Turnbull.
Mr. P. Tomlinson.
Mr. L. Gorokin
SLF/JT.

Mr. L. Gorodkin,
H.M. Coroner,
Fire Station Buildings,
London Road,
Manchester. M

Dear Mr. Gorodkin,

I have written the attached letter to your colleagues, as you will see on the circulation list. As you dealt with the Manchester Air Disaster, I would appreciate any comments which you would wish to make.

Yours sincerely,

S.L. Popper,
H.M. Coroner.
Dear John,

IDENTIFICATION OF VICTIMS IN MAJOR DISASTERS.

Neither Lord Justice Taylor nor I dealt with one matter which caused considerable concern to many of the relatives, namely, the identification of victims following the Hillsborough Disaster.

There are two limbs to this:

a. the identification and procedures at the temporary mortuary and

b. the further viewing/identification of victims at the Medico-Legal Centre.

You will appreciate that as far as the inquests were concerned, these matters were strictly outside my powers and Lord Justice Taylor did not feel that it was necessary for him to deal with the matter either. The complaints that I seem to recollect (not necessarily exhaustive) were as follows:

a. That the bereaved had to wait for a considerable period of time before it was possible to allow them to start identifying their loved ones.

b. That the choice of the temporary mortuary was unsuitable.

c. That the viewing of photographs caused pain to the bereaved.

d. That the bodies when presented for identification were in body bags and had not yet been cleaned up or tidied up (I believe in fact some attempt was made but as you will know, a sero-sanguinous fluid can leak from a dead body even after it has been cleaned).

e. That not enough time was allowed for relatives to stay with their loved ones and to handle and touch them.

f. That statements were taken of identification immediately after the viewing.

g. That there was not enough privacy.
h. That when the bodies came to the Medico-Legal Centre the viewing arrangements did not allow the touching of the bodies because of the glass partition which was built into the viewing room.

i. That again there was not enough time with the deceased and all the people had to wait a long time for viewing.

j. That in some instances, officers involved were rude or curt with people.

Whether or not these criticisms have any substance is not the purpose of this letter. In fact I think that the viewing arrangements with the use of photographs to save people having to look for their loved one amongst 95 dead bodies were a very major improvement, but what I am interested in is whether you think that the Coroners' Society ought to consider setting up a sub-committee with a view to thinking about the best possible methodology for dealing with viewing and identification of deceased people in a major disaster situation.

I am of course aware that once the body is handed over to the families there is no reason why they should not have as much time as they wish with the deceased but in practice, however fast one acts, a few days is likely to have elapsed and it may be too late for the people involved.

Yours sincerely,

S.L.Popper,
H.M.Coroner.
Dear Paul,

Thank you very much for your letter of the 2nd of October. I have noted what you say.

Yours sincerely,

S.L.Popper,
H.M.Coroner.
Your Ref: SLP/JT  
Our Ref: PAK/ER  

Stefan L Popper Esq  
H.M. Coroner for South Yorkshire  
Medico-Legal Centre  
Watery Street  
Sheffield  
S3 7ET

2nd October 1991

Dear Stefan,

Thank you for your letter.

My view is only the evidence of the inquest (i.e. transcript plus admitted documents) should be available, i.e. item 1.

By all means keep the rest for your private historical purposes, but it is the beginning of a slippery slope.....

Paul A Knapman  
H.M. Coroner  
Inner West London
Dear Richard,

Re: ARCHIVAL MATERIAL.

Thank you very much for your letter of the 2nd of October, the contents of which I have read with interest.

I have heard from Paul Knapman and am awaiting the views of others.

I thank you very much indeed for replying so promptly. I had hoped to see you at the annual dinner but unfortunately it was not to be.

Yours sincerely,

S.L. Popper,
H.M. Coroner.
Dear Stefan,

Thank you for your letter of the 27th September. As you know, I have a mini museum in my attic where all my Zeebrugge archives are stored, and I have recently added the Royal Marines material to it. The intention has been to allow seriously interested students to have the papers available for historical research, but I am bound to say that no-one has approached me with a request to go through it. I am not sure that the idea of a central archive is a particularly good one. It might become a hunting ground for ghouls.

I frequently get requests from people wanting to pursue a particular case. I had one only recently, who was conducting a campaign against St. Augustine’s Mental Hospital and wanted to look at the papers of an Inquest conducted by my predecessor in the 1970s for the purpose of gathering ammunition. I refused him permission to have such access and he made quite a nuisance of himself. We therefore vet all such applications very carefully to ensure that the inquirer has a bona fide academic interest in what is required. You might like to know that TVS supplied me with a video of a good deal of the highlights from their new coverage of my Zeebrugge Inquest and I have this video in my archives.

Hope you are keeping well. Kindest regards.

Yours sincerely,

R.H.B. Sturt
H.M. Coroner for Kent
Canterbury & Dover District

S.L. Popper, Esq., LL.B., B.MED.Sci., B.M., B.S., M.R.C.G.P.,
H.M. Coroner for South Yorkshire
(West District),
Medico-Legal Centre,
Watery Street,
SHEFFIELD, S3 7ET
Mr. R. Wells,
Chief Constable,
South Yorkshire Police,
Headquarters,
Snig Hill,
Sheffield.

Dear Mr. Wells,

Re HILLSBOROUGH DISASTER.

I have had a telephone conversation with Mr. Devonside, the parent of one of the lads who died. He is very anxious to prepare for his own nuances as I understand it, a series of photographs of the disaster. He assures me that he does not want any shots of individuals, it is more general scenes than specifics.

What he would like to do is to go through the bundle of photographs and pick out a number he thinks maybe between 20 and 40 at the very most and then obtain copies of these. A large number of photographs are of course South Yorkshire Police photographs and others were taken by various other people. Would you have any objection to Mr. Devonside either looking through the photographs at Police Headquarters (I assume that you have sets of copies) or alternatively if you made arrangements for him to view them here, so that he could identify those which he might find helpful.

I would be grateful if I could hear from you on this as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

S.L. Popper,
H.M. Coroner.
DEPUTY CORONER & ASSISTANT DEPUTY CORONER COVER.  
HILLSBOROUGH PREPARATION AND INQUEST COVER FROM 3.10.90 - 28.3.91.

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1.11.90 - 19.12.90: 3 weeks

27-28.12.90: 4 weeks

31.12.90 - 28.3.91: 13 weeks

Total: 20 weeks
Dr Popper,  
Medico Legal centre,  
Watery Street,  
SHEFFIELD S3 7ET

30th April 1991
EMS/DW

Dear Dr Popper,

I noticed in the Press at the weekend that you will shortly be retiring from your Office as Sheffield Coroner.

I would like to take the opportunity both on my own behalf on behalf of the rest of the Steering Committee and our clients thanking you for your kindness in the past and to wish you every happiness and success in the future.

It has been a very long two years since the Hillsborough tragedy particularly as far as the families are concerned.

The care and sensitivity and in particular the arrangements made for the families at the individual Inquests was very much appreciated both by them and by us.

As far as the lawyers are concerned your unfailing courtesy and consideration to the advocates and ready response to various problems that we, as Solicitors, have had to burden you with have been appreciated by us all.

I doubt whether any other Coroner has been faced with such a task before and whatever you decide to do in the future we thank you for making a difficult time easier and send our very good wishes.

Yours sincerely,

MISS E M STEEL
SLP/JT.

Mr. P. Hammond,

Dear Mr. Hammond,

With reference to our recent telephone call, I have arranged for a copy of the Interim Inquest Transcripts to be sent to Mrs. Williams.

I have written to the Council regarding your request to waive £5,000 of the transcript costs and have given them your address and asked them to correspond directly with you.

Yours sincerely,

S.L. Popper,
H.M. Coroner.
SLP/JT.

Mrs. P. Gordon,
Chief Executive,
Sheffield City Council,
Town Hall,
Sheffield.

Dear Mrs. Gordon,

I have had a telephone call from Mr. Hammond of the Hillsborough Steering Group. Apparently the cost of the transcripts has not yet been fully repaid to the solicitors and it seems as if there are some difficulties with recovering all the money from the various families.

He told me that it looks as if he and Mr. Hicks will have to foot a substantial proportion of the expenses and inquired whether the Council would be prepared to waive £5,000 of the charge. I think that they want to keep these transcripts amongst their archives.

This is obviously is a matter for you to decide, and I am giving you Mr. Hammond's address so that you can deal directly with him.

Yours sincerely,

S.L. Popper,
H.M. Coroner.
Mrs. P. Joynes,

Dear Mrs. Joynes,

Re: Hillsborough Stadium Disaster.

I am in receipt of your letter of the 17th of July. It is my view that no useful purpose would be served by corresponding with you regarding the matters which you have raised and I do not intend therefore to do so.

Yours sincerely,

S.L. Popper,
H.M. Coroner.
TO: Dr Popper

Dear Sir,

Re: Hillsborough Stadium Disaster

I would be very interested to hear your views:

The Police Complaints Authority have decided to discipline Mr Duckinfield and Mr Murray (two years after the disaster). I am hoping that they will be dismissed without pensions with a view to seeing justice done, especially after the Inquests in Sheffield which were a total "whitewash" for the establishment.

Yours, a very sad bereaved mother who once believed in the Police and British Justice.

PATRICIA JOYNES
Stefan L. Popper, Esq., LL.B, B.MED.Sci, BM, BS, MRCGP,
Coroner,
South Yorkshire (West District),
Medico-Legal Centre,
Watery Street,
SHEFFIELD,
S3 7ET.

Dear Sir,

HILLSBOROUGH INQUEST

Thank you for your letter of 1st May, 1991, which I note you have copied to the Home Secretary and Dr. Helen Muir. I have noted your observations and shall of course be pleased to assist in any way I can any initiatives to find solutions which are reasonably likely to improve spectator safety at sports grounds.

To a very large extent I believe that the major issues of safety arising from Hillsborough have been addressed by Lord Justice Taylor in his Interim and Final Reports. The 76 recommendations in the Report covered all the major issues which arose during the Inquiry. Apart from the move to all-seated accommodation which should naturally create better control over crowd numbers and improve the comfort of spectators, it was recommended that an Advisory Design Council be set up, together with a National Inspectorate and Review Body, and that the Green Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds be reviewed.

The recommendations have been accepted by the Government and steps have been put in hand to ensure their implementation. My experience in South Yorkshire is that the recommendations provided in the reports are being treated as requirements and you will be aware that the Green Guide has been revised by the Home Office in accordance with the Report and the recommendations of the Technical Working Party (see Appendix 3 of the Report).

Cont’d. ...
I believe that the safe organisation of any match is achieved jointly by the Police and the Club Management, both of whom ideally require the co-operation of spectators which sadly is not always the case. They, unlike the Fire Service and other members of the Advisory Group who do not as a matter of course attend matches, are in attendance/control on match days. I consider effective ground management to be an absolutely essential feature in achieving safety in full realisation that good management can compensate for some less than ideal aspects resulting from the existing nature of grounds, whereas poor management can make an otherwise ideal situation unsafe. I am pleased therefore to note the increased emphasis upon management responsibilities in Section 2 of the revised Green Guide.

As you may realise, in the aftermath of the disaster I gave positive thought as to how it happened and what steps might be taken to prevent any repetition. In so doing I was conscious of the need to put forward practical suggestions capable of being implemented quickly and relatively easily. I therefore enclose for your information a copy of my submission to Lord Justice Taylor.

I have copied this letter to the Home Secretary and Dr. Muir for their information. Should you wish to discuss any aspect further please do not hesitate to contact me again.

Yours faithfully,

Chief Fire Officer.
1. **Introduction**

I feel sure that all the members of the Safety of Sports Grounds Working Party, including myself, never believed that the disaster at the Hillsborough Stadium, Sheffield, could ever occur. However, it did, and having given positive thought as to why it happened and what steps might be taken to obviate the possibility of repetition at any stadium, I submit the following recommendations for consideration. In making these I am conscious of the need to put forward practical suggestions capable of being implemented quickly and relatively easily.

2. **Recommendations**

2.1 **Ingress**

To prevent any unduly large crowd from being kept waiting for admission and at the same time minimising the consequent dangers of crushing and illegal entry:

2.1.1 Separate turnstiles should be provided to permit access to each stand, terrace and pen within the stadium.

2.1.2 The turnstiles providing the access mentioned in 2.1.1 above should be in sufficient number to be capable of admitting the capacity calculated using Chapter 16 of the Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds in not more than 1 hour, using the notional rate of 750 persons/turnstile/hour.
2.1.3 Where there are insufficient turnstiles to satisfy 2.1.2 above, either:

(i) additional turnstiles must be provided, or

(ii) the capacity of each stand, terrace or pen should be restricted to the number of spectators that the existing turnstiles will admit using the notional rate mentioned in 2.1.2 above.

2.1.4 Chapter 5 of the Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds should be amended to satisfy the above and cross referenced to Chapter 16.

In effect the capacity of each stand, terrace and pen will be the lowest figure produced based on exit capacity, standing or seating area and the capacity of the turnstiles.

The factor which determines the capacity should be recorded on the General Safety Certificate for each stand, terrace and pen.

2.2 Control of Numbers

There has never been a legal stipulation in the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975, that required the capacity of individual parts of a sports ground to be specified in a General Safety Certificate.

Section 2(2) of the Safety of Sports Grounds Act, which did set out matters which had to be included, was replaced by Section 19(2)(a) of the Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sport Act, 1987, with effect from 1st January, 1988.
The present position is that the Secretary of State now has power to issue Regulations detailing the matters to be covered, including capacities, but has not yet done so, therefore each authority is free to apply whatever conditions it wishes to, therefore:

2.2.1 The Secretary of State should urgently make Regulations regarding the terms and conditions as may be included in the General Safety Certificate. This should include a requirement for the capacity of each stand, terrace and pen to be specified.

2.3 Perimeter Fences

Planned means designed to allow for the quick release of crowd pressure need to be clearly specified in guidance to authorities.

Chapter 15, paragraph 215 of the Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds provides guidance on the width but not the frequency at which gates should be provided in perimeter fences.

The provision of perimeter fences goes against all professional training of Fire Service Officers and it is hoped that a better solution might be found.

2.3.1 Perimeter fences should only be required where it can be shown that they are absolutely necessary and the continuing provision of all existing fences should be reviewed in this light.
2.3.2 An accepted professional body should be requested as a matter of urgency to produce a standard specification for a perimeter fence for use at sports grounds. I recommend that this specification provide for sections to be quickly and easily removed from the perimeter track side by authorised personnel in an emergency. When available, this standard should be satisfied at all grounds where perimeter fences are considered necessary.

2.3.3 Where perimeter fences are required then gates, not less than 1.1 metre in width, must be provided to allow spectators to be quickly evacuated onto the pitch perimeter. Such gates should be sufficient in number to provide for the evacuation of each area within 3 minutes, with a minimum provision for each area of 2 such gates. Chapter 15, paragraph 215 of the Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds should be amended accordingly.

2.3.4 A level stepping arrangement should be provided through gates to avoid tripping hazards and wherever possible such gates should be in line with radial gangways. Gate-release fastenings should be capable of easy and immediate release from the pitch side only, especially under crowd pressure.

2.4 Stewards

It is vital that the number of stewards on duty are sufficient in number, adequately trained and effective in their duties.

2.4.1 I recommend that in broad terms a syllabus to enable satisfactory training for stewards, together with examination standards with regard to their duties, be established on a national basis.
2.4.2 The Police should be the examining authority for stewards and the passing of the examination will enable those so qualified to be employed if so capable as stewards at sports grounds.

2.4.3 The standard of examination should reflect the responsibilities and duties of each steward.

2.4.4 A Chief Steward should be appointed to take charge of all stewards.

2.4.5 Senior Stewards should be appointed to take charge of the stewards in a defined area of the ground.

2.4.6 All stewards should be readily identifiable when undertaking their duties and I suggest that this be in the form of coloured jerkins each separately numbered to enable each steward to be identified from a distance.

2.5 Communication

2.5.1 The use of the public address system to provide advice to stewards and Police should be fully realised, especially when noise seems to apparently reduce the overall effectiveness of hand held radios. Training in the use of this equipment should be provided for those who use the equipment to instigate messages and those who are expected to react to them.
2.5.2 Should any decision be made to evacuate any part of a stadium for whatever reason, I suggest that each emergency service be alerted even if their attendance may not be required at that time. This will provide a pre-warning during which basic requirements as to the correct address to which a response may be needed can be satisfied, together with the need for a likely rendezvous point.

Should the situation develop to the point of needing a response from another or all emergency services a much briefer call will ensure this.

2.5.3 I understand that the Police have made recommendations to the Inquiry which suggest either:

(i) A senior officer of each of the emergency services be in attendance at the Police control box at a stadium, or

(ii) the Police control box at the stadium is provided with a private wire connection to the Control room of each emergency service.

My opinions regarding these suggestions are not supportive. I understand that at Hillsborough on 15th April the Police in the control box were not aware of the difficulties that existed on the West Terrace. Should this be so then I would assume that a Fire Service Officer would have equal difficulty but even when the problem was identified he would be of little use without the manpower and equipment that he would undoubtedly request. The advantage would, therefore seem to be related to knowing the abilities of the Service.
The provision of a senior Fire Service Officer to achieve this on, hopefully, the extremely infrequent occasions when it will be required would seem to be an over-provision which could be achieved more easily by close liaison between the Services.

I also understand that the Police were in communication with their own main control room at Police Headquarters which already has private wire connection to each of the emergency services. Private wire connections from each of the stadiums provided with a safety certificate, or likely to require such in the future, to each of the emergency services control rooms would also be an extremely expensive way of providing good information to the other Services which good training and liaison should satisfy.

2.6 Liaison

2.6.1 Regular liaison between all those responsible for implementing the requirements of the Safety of Sports Grounds Act and the respective clubs should take place to provide a greater understanding of the problems being met.

2.6.2 The arrangements proposed by the Club and Police, where these differ from those specified in the General Safety Certificate, should be considered by the appropriate local authority working party to ensure that these will not affect other safety precautions.
2.7 Other Matters

2.7.1 The Club managements of each ground requiring a General Safety Certificate should be required to audit the safety provisions within their ground considering the different uses to which they are put. A full written report should be presented to the local authority for consideration. The full satisfaction of the Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds should be used for such audit.

Any proposed changes to the ground which would affect any part of the safety precautions should be accompanied by a safety audit report identifying the effects of the proposals and the steps proposed to compensate for them. The proposals and the report should be submitted to the local authority for consideration and approval under the Safety of Sports Grounds Act prior to any other submission for approval.

2.7.2 In order to undertake such duties effectively it must be realised that manpower resources are needed and this should be catered for in the departments of local authorities holding such responsibilities.

HEW/JMT

10th July, 1989.
Mr. Knowles left early from Birkenhead at 10.15. There were traffic delays on the road around. He arrived in Sheffield at 1.35. He had two boys with him. His aim was to get into the ground as was his normal practice a good half an hour to forty minutes before the game, in order to enable the children to get a good position. On this occasion because they had had a long journey, they stopped off at a pub in the town centre, where they had something to eat and drink. Supporters were there from both sides as well as local people and the atmosphere was grand. They caught a taxi to the stadium, leaving at about 10 past 2. They were dropped off at approximately ten minutes walk from the stadium which they approached from over a little bridge, turning right into the ground. They arrived at about 2.30. They were met by a 'bunch crowd' attempting to make their way into the ground. He also noticed that there were people milling around on the little bridge. He noticed that there were no orderly queues, there was just a crowd. He did see some perimeter gates and that there were two police horses in front of them. The gates were shut. He together with the boys made their way through the crowd and came up to the horse. There was a bit of pushing and he also felt in some danger from the horse itself. He was noticed by the policeman standing within the gate, and because of the two boys, he was allowed to go through, the gate being opened slightly. He describes the attitude of the crowd at that time as being frustrated, not knowing exactly what was happening. There was no indication of why the gates were shut. He does however say that there was quite a crowd inside and again there were no orderly queuing and so he thought that people were a bit anxious about what was actually happening. He heard various remarks including comments like "I have got a ticket. Why can't I be allowed to go through". When asked whether this was being said forcefully or not he said "no, they were shouting but not really aggressively". Having now got beyond the perimeter gates but outside the turnstiles in the area of turnstiles H and G, he says it was literally a free for all trying to
Robert Arthur Knowles (cont'd).

get through the turnstiles. There was no sort of queuing or anything. There was a police force in there at the edge of the crowd. People were trying to get past him to get out saying they were in the wrong place with wrong tickets, and that they weren't being allowed in. This was impossible, because the gates were closed. He felt it was pointless to try and join a queue so he stood to one side and watched. There were people climbing the walls, there were people on the wall trying to pull people up and there was quite a crush going on, in fact it was worse than it had been outside the perimeter gates. He describes it as being a complete blockage with no real movement but that the area outside the turnstiles was barred on the right by a barrier and that beyond that, things were moving quite freely. By about quarter to three he was getting a little anxious. He was comparing the situation with other football matches where policemen are normally stationed by the turnstiles asking for tickets and forming queues. The situation he observed was just a crowd of people pushing each other and trying to gain entrance. He said "obviously probably they paid money, they wanted to get in and see the game. They were worried about not seeing the kick-off". He spoke with the policemen and he was told that the men had been pulled out as they were worried about getting hurt because they were standing by the wall and were being pressed up against the wall. He was told that the policemen had actually being taken out. When pressed, he confirmed that he recollected that the actual words which were also said to him were "let them fight amongst themselves, if that's what they want to do". The impression he formed was that control in that particular area had been lost, had been given up and the matter just been left to the fans to try and get in any way they could, which left them open to pushing and shoving each other in an attempt to get through. Interestingly, he suggested that the concertina gate might be opened to allow people through and thus relieve the blockage at the turnstiles. When asked whether he noticed that the crowd at this stage was becoming aggressive he replied "I think they were very frustrated in trying to gain access to the ground. The ones at the back were pushing and saying come out let's get in and the ones at the front knowing that there was nowhere for then to go were shouting back please stop pushing, people are actually getting crushed in the front part. Please ease back, but in a situation like that you can't really hear or understand you are just pushing forward trying to gain access. I don't think they could hear anything being shouted from the front". He was asked whether he heard any loudspeaker announcements. He said that although he saw an officer with a microphone, he did not hear anything himself. Eventually he overheard a message to the effect that the gate should be opened and he managed to enter it. He distinctly heard shouts going up from the back, a message being passed back that the gate was open and he said that there was no sort of funnelling or telling people in which direction to go. He entered the tunnel with others and exited on to the left side, Pen 4. The back of this terrace was
Robert Arthur Knowles (cont'd).

quite full but he did not think this was anything unusual and he therefore, because of the boys, decided to move to the front. Their first aim was to go down behind the goal but noticing that if was packed, he told the boys to move left away from the centre. They managed to get right down to the bottom and he then said "down at the bottom there was a yard or so of flat area right next to the front and that was fairly free. There was a gap you could walk along so we walked along as far as we could go. We then came up against the fence running from front to back". He didn't particularly like it there and he stepped back a little way into the terrace and he positioned the boys a couple of steps forward and actually on the fence itself. He remembered that on entering the terrace, the players were on the pitch, the goalkeeper was in the goal in front of them. He said that having got their the viewing position and had been satisfied with it the game kicked off "possibly in a minute or so the game did actually kick off". He noticed that the enclosure next to him on the left was empty (this is in fact a void area and was intended to be so) but he also noticed that the outer pens were relatively spacious. The game having kicked off was a shot at the Liverpool goal. There was a forward movement from the crowd and he was moved against the boys. He found that he could not move back. He noticed the people further along were beginning to climb the fence to try and get out. He said "I don't know why, I will never know why, I just said to the two boys "climb over the fence and get on to the pitch. I just don't feel comfortable, I think there is something wrong". You may feel that this inclines at that point he had not yet appreciated the seriousness of the situation but instinctively felt that the boys should be put into a safe environment. He said that at that point he was not being crushed in the sense that he was hurting in any way but he was up against the fence, unable to move and that did worry him. He thought if I am going to get pushed any more from the back, there is nowhere for me to go. At that point, it was bearable but any more pressure would have been a different matter. People were beginning to shout "please stop pushing" and in fact he heard shouts from the back saying "move forward". He was unable to say whether the cheering came from his own Pen. He described his son being put back into pen 3 by a policewoman but confirmed that that pen was in fact empty and that his son was in no danger in that enclosure. Somewhat later, he noticed a man who appeared to be in a very poor state. He describes how a police officer who was standing at the gate helping people by pulling them out coming into the pen and attempting to give him the kiss of life. He then left the enclosure, assisted with trying to rip up the fencing and then quite properly went and looked for the children. He felt that there was no way of going backward and that the only way out of the enclosure was through the fence or over the fence. You will probably remember this this of Mr. Hale because he used their illustration of p's and was trying to demonstrate with that the fact that if pressure is applied to columns which are not contained, they
Robert Arthur Knowles (cont'd).

will merge. A proposition which the witness accepted. When asked by Mr. Payne what was the nearest ordinary means of escape he replied "back through the tunnel". Mr. Manning explored the reasons for the trapping at the perimeter gates and the crushing within the turnstile area. He agreed that there obviously was a danger of police officers being crushed, but he would have thought so would have other people standing next to them. He also could understand the feelings of apprehension which somebody like Mr. Gillan might have felt. Finally he agreed with Mr. Manning that at the moment just before the kick-off the terrace did not appear to him abnormal. He agreed with Mr. King that he was not aware that the Leppings Lane terracing was divided into pens and indeed he described them as cages. He also said that terrace 6 and 7 were virtually empty. That he was surprised at this bearing in mind the closeness of the kick-off and the crowds which were still outside. He agreed that there was no queues at the turnstiles, that it was like a bottleneck he said. There was nowhere for anybody to go and that although, when he approached the perimeter gates were shut, the fact that there were masses of people within the turnstile area indicated to him that at some point they must have been open. He confirmed that he had seen stewards in the concourse area but that they had stood aside when the gate was open. He also said that he wondered how it was possible to get on to the outer terraces. We then had some discussion with regard to the difference between swaying and surging. The witness himself in his statement had used the word 'surge' to describe the events, having at least described two of these. He confirmed that after the second surge he had heard screams and shouts from the crowd against the fence indicating the pain and obvious discomfort. He was specifically asked whether he got the impression that people were trying to get out, that there was panic around him. His response was not in the sense people were frightened, but I think they were all expecting the crush to ease off. Question "but it didn't" Answer "it didn't". Question. "and you heard shouts clearly from people wanting to get out" Answer "Yes". He said that he felt that the police on the pitch side at that stage had not realised what was going on. Mr. Knowles just before the end of his evidence was asked to re-summarise the position with timings. He said "we came out of the tunnel. There was a fair pack of people at the top of the terrace so I suggested we make out way to the front of the terrace and to the left because there was a fence down the middle. You could only go left so I pushed the lads in front of me. We forced out way down. It was tightly packed, but you could gain access. We got down to the front and behind the goal and began to walk along the front towards the left of the ground. There was a slight gap at the bottom that you could walk straight along. You