

THE EXPERIENCE OF ENGLISH SUPPORTERS IN EUROPEAN CLUB COMPETITIONS

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THE INDEPENDENT **FOOTBALL** COMMISSION

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1. CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

This report on the experience of supporters who travel to European matches arose out of concerns expressed by English clubs which had participated in European games over many years. With the agreement of the football authorities, the IFC embarked on an extensive enquiry into the preparation and staging of matches in the 2005-6 Champions League and UEFA Cup. The IFC review encompassed six English Premiership clubs, Arsenal, Chelsea, Liverpool and Manchester United in the Champions League and Bolton and Middlesbrough in the UEFA Cup. The fact that Arsenal and Middlesbrough reached the final of their competitions extended the range of the enquiry.

The IFC constructed an extensive evidence base from which the report has been written. We met with all six clubs both before and after their matches; we joined them for away-leg planning meetings; we attended eleven away matches; we had conversations with FA and club security officers and with police match commanders; we attended UEFA delegate meetings on match days and met with a range of official agencies, including the Home Office, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and UEFA itself. We invited supporters to comment on their experiences while following their clubs in Europe and have incorporated their views in our discussions.

The IFC wishes to commend warmly the careful preparations English clubs make to ensure, as far as possible, that their fans have a safe and enjoyable experience. In the light of our findings, we make a number of recommendations, mostly addressed to UEFA, but also to the clubs, governing bodies and government agencies.

I believe that our report is the first of its kind and I hope that you will find it an interesting and valuable review of a subject, which involves many thousands of English supporters each season.

My colleagues and I wish to record our sincere thanks to the clubs and their senior officers and to the many individuals and organisations who were generous with both time and information. Without their assistance the IFC would not have been able to complete its enquiries.



Professor Derek Fraser
Chairman

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. There needs to be an annual meeting before European competitions get underway to ensure that English clubs are fully informed about local and national rules, regulations and traditions, changes to UEFA guidelines and latest security issues. All clubs who have qualified for Europe should be invited along with UEFA, Home Office, Foreign & Commonwealth Office, security advisors, Football Association, FA Premier League, Football League, and clubs previously involved in European matches. A second meeting should take place as the competitions unfold. The FA to organise / facilitate. (p32)**
- 2 UEFA should enforce protocol before matches. Too often English clubs meet with the wrong people at crucial planning stages. If English clubs request pre-match meetings on the premise of ensuring safety for their fans, then UEFA should insist that the host clubs oblige and that top personnel should attend and, crucially, that they are the people who 'matter' on the day of the game. There is no point in having a meeting two weeks before a game, only to find that the people who make the real decisions only appear at the official meeting on the morning of the game. (p15)**
- 3 Better and more information needs to be provided to English fans by their clubs. This information should be sent out as soon as possible. Too often the IFC found information being distributed to fans on the aeroplane out to the game. (p39)**
- 4 Experiences of fans from other clubs should be included in the information provided to supporters. Fans are more likely to take notice of what other fans have to say rather than follow the instructions and advice of their club. (p28)**
- 5 English stewards should be used as widely as possible. UEFA should look at trying to implement an agreement whereby stewards from the visiting clubs do have some sort of official role. The IFC appreciates that this could be awkward due to local laws, insurance and police formalities, but it should be investigated to see whether something could be done. (p17)**
- 6 Police to be clearly identifiable, whether in a cap, arm band, waistcoat etc. This would help fans to find them and local police to identify them. English fans are likely to show restraint if they are present. Ticket-less fans would be more wary. Some fans may feel more reassured if an English police officer arrives on the scene if there is trouble. Under normal circumstances the English police officers would remain anonymous but, on occasion, it would be useful if they could be instantly recognisable as being someone in authority. It should be a criminal offence for anyone who is not a police officer, found wearing one of these identification articles. (p30)**
- 7 UEFA licensing needs to be much clearer. UEFA need to set their own safety standards rather than rely on local legislation which in certain cases can be used as an excuse for sub-standard conditions. If UEFA feel that a stadium does not meet their standards, then the host club should be restricted from staging games. (p24)**

- 8 UEFA state that trying to avoid crushing at the entrance to a stadium is an example of Best Practice. The IFC disagrees and feels that this should be mandatory. There should be no question that if safety is being compromised that either something is done about it or the game does not go ahead. UEFA do not insist that crushing must not be allowed. Commonsense would surely suggest that such an incident must be avoided at all costs. (p23)
- 9 The Football Association should organise regular meetings between the authorities and fans groups. This would help the FA pass on information to the fans while gleaning information from the people who actually go to the games. It is all very well passing on information to the clubs, but this is done with the assumption that the clubs will then hand on that information to their supporters. If clubs are given the opportunity to speak to police, government officials and the football authorities, then the fans should also be allowed to have their input. After all, the vast majority of the planning visits and meetings conducted by the English clubs are done purely with regard to the supporters. (p33)
- 10 British Consular officials should do more to quell the fears of European authorities and to make them fully aware of the improving behaviour of English fans. European clubs and police authorities still view English fans as a bunch of riotous hooligans. Euro 2004 and the 2006 World Cup have shown that the situation is vastly improved and that the security officials who lie in wait of visiting English fans can use a lesser degree of force and aggression. The British Consular staff are on hand in European cities to provide this education process. They can also help furnish the local authorities with up-to-date predications regarding ticket-less fans and the nature of those fans. (p37)
- 11 There needs to be research into how tickets can be prevented from falling into the wrong hands. Ticket-less fans can cause a massive headache for both the English and host clubs. Even more worrying though is when English fans acquire tickets in wrong areas of the stadium. UEFA should also investigate whether the allocation and sale of tickets can be speeded up. (p49)
- 12 The authorities must ensure adequate segregation before tickets go on sale. Some clubs appear to organise their segregation measures at the last minute depending on how ticket sales are going. This can mean inadequate segregation between rival fans. (p47)
- 13 UEFA should mount its own series of spot-checks at stadia to make sure that when the local police claim everything is in order, that it really is in order. At pre-match meetings, the UEFA delegate appears to take the word of the local authorities regarding safety, security, segregation, seating and ticketing arrangements etc. A single UEFA delegate on his / her own can't hope to check all of this. (p16)
- 14 UEFA must give greater priority to disabled supporters and make their access to the stadium a priority and not merely Best Practice. From the experience of the IFC, too many European clubs make up these arrangements on the night; there is no preparation. This leads to distressing and sometimes threatening situations for English fans with disabilities. (p54)

- 15 UEFA should encourage the major cities where English teams are likely to play in various European competitions, to consider welcoming ticket-less English fans. These fans are going to arrive in any case so, as happened in the 2006 World Cup with the 'fans' parks' it can be hugely beneficial to everyone if plans are in place to occupy and assist these supporters rather than simply cope with them. (p39)
- 16 UEFA should recognise that a higher proportion of fans will wish to follow their club to the final of any competition and therefore a stadium should be chosen that is large enough to cope with demand. The PSV Eindhoven Stadium for the 2006 UEFA Cup final was too small. English clubs traditionally attract a huge travelling support and, if the supply of official tickets is low, then it encourages ticket-less fans to travel in the hope of finding a ticket from other sources at a late date. A large stadium would help accommodate more loyal fans and reduce the problems of touting. (p46)
- 17 UEFA needs to encourage the implementation of consistent policing arrangements. The onus needs to be put onto the clubs that something must be done so that all of the security officials, whether from England or the host town/city, know what each other is doing. (p29)

3. INTRODUCTION

The last few years have seen English football enjoying a large degree of success in European competitions. The 2004-5 season culminated in Liverpool claiming the European Champions League title. The 2005-6 season saw English clubs reach the final of both the Champions League and the UEFA Cup, although ultimately Arsenal and Middlesbrough fans went home disappointed. The growth in importance of the Intertoto Cup as a route to the UEFA Cup has seen more English clubs involved. There has even been access to Europe via UEFA's Fair Play award. The 2006-7 campaign is in full swing and once again English clubs rate amongst the favourites to lift some silverware. Preparations are underway for Euro 2008 in Austria and Switzerland with, at the time of going to print, England's national team making a mixed start to their qualification. World Cup 2006 in Germany is already a fading memory and while the England results didn't live up to all of the hype, the tournament was generally viewed as a success for English football with thousands of fans enjoying themselves and, in the main, behaving themselves too.

International football is now a regular feature of pre-season friendlies and testimonials. It is not uncommon to see English clubs travelling to and entertaining many of the top clubs from all over the World. There are various pre-season tournaments scattered across Europe and beyond that generally include at least one English club. And of course there is the England team facing competition from all quarters whether as part of the World Cup, European Championship or friendlies. There has never been so much football played between English and foreign clubs and there is nothing to suggest that the trend will not continue. If anything, the frequency of matches will increase.

There is a similar pattern in terms of support by the football fans. It wasn't too long ago that European games were followed via a crackly radio or, if you were very lucky, the match was televised. The fans who travelled to support their team on the other side of the English Channel were few and far between. They would make the effort for top matches but lesser games were generally ignored. Of course, this was not due to a lack of passion on behalf of the fans; it was down to pure logistics. The days of cheap air travel were still a long way off. Many cars could not be relied upon to endure a return journey of hundreds of miles and the Channel Tunnel was still a sketch on a piece of paper. A coach journey could require several days off work. There were fewer European games overall because most competitions were played on a straight knock-out basis. The idea of group stages in European competitions hadn't even been considered. For most clubs, the thought of a pre-season friendly outside the UK was a pipe-dream.

Nowadays, it is a vastly different story. The routes to European games for fans are varied both in terms of convenience and price. They can choose from joining specially organised flights that require only one day away from home. Some of these flights are organised directly by the clubs, others are via independent tour operators who provide similar services for numerous other sports. The more well-heeled fans can charter their own aircraft. The advent of cheap, no frills air travel means that many fans are now close to an airport that offers a direct connection between their home city and the European destination. A few fans will choose to use the train while others prefer to drive or use club coaches. Others will take advantage of their trip abroad to make a mini holiday out of the occasion. No matter how they get there, the chance of travelling to Europe, sampling the local fare, being with your mates following your favourite team and hopefully enjoying some warm sunshine, makes a tempting proposition for any football fan. One thing is certain, in future years more and more English fans can be expected to leave these shores in support of their team. The World Cup summer of 2006 saw the biggest migration so far. It is estimated that at certain times there were over 150,000 English fans in various German cities, either supporting their team at the stadium or in many of the specially organised fan venues.

Liverpool were given 20,000 tickets for their European Champions League final in Istanbul. Despite not being the most accessible place, it is estimated that 40,000 Liverpool fans made the

trip to Turkey. Arsenal fans had the relatively simple task of reaching Paris for their final against Barcelona. It is not surprising that the authorities estimate 30,000 Gunners fans made the short journey to France. 21,000 supporters had tickets for the stadium; the rest enjoyed the atmosphere of being in Paris with their team and viewed the game on televisions in hundreds of bars.

There is a new sort of football fan evolving; one that will happily spend time and money travelling abroad but without a match ticket and with only a remote hope of being able to buy one at the destination. Thousands of fans set off knowing that they will more than likely be watching the game in a bar, just like thousands of other fans back home. Many clubs across Europe see these ticket-less fans as a problem. If so, then it is a problem that is likely to increase as travel becomes more accessible in terms of flight frequency, availability and price. It seems inevitable that the tide of ticket-less fans will continue to rise. Such is the passion displayed by English football fans.

It should also be noted that this ever-increasing number of fans travelling abroad is occurring at a time when coverage of football matches is better than ever. All European Champions League games are televised. The vast majority of UEFA Cup and Intertoto games are televised. We can frequently watch seemingly meaningless friendlies beamed in from all over the world by the plethora of satellite channels. The country is awash with local radio stations covering football, and most clubs now have dedicated websites that either provides some sort of sound broadcast or a steady flow of updated words. For those fans unable to find the time or the money to follow their team abroad, they have never had such a wide variety of sources to keep in touch with what's happening on the field.

For those fans who have sampled European football abroad, the general consensus is that it is a brilliant experience and leaves them wanting more. This comment from David Sheepshanks, chairman of Ipswich Town FC, will find agreement amongst most fans:-

"This club has enjoyed some big nights on the European stage. Recently, we have had two seasons in the UEFA Cup. We took over 10,000 fans to Inter Milan. I can safely say that every single person linked in any way with Ipswich Town would say that being involved in Europe is a truly wonderful experience and I would support anything that would see more games between English and foreign clubs in the future."

The vast majority of fans would echo those sentiments. The football authorities would too. Many observers feel that it is highly likely some sort of European Super League will emerge, not because the time is right for this sort of competition, but because up until the last few years it would have been impossible to flit backwards and forwards across Europe. Judging by the way things are going, some fans will not be setting off in cars to drive along the M1, M25 and other highways and byways of England on a regular basis to watch their team, they may be packing their passports and climbing aboard an aircraft to jet off to some foreign country.

It all seems very tempting, but there needs to be an assurance that while the numbers of games increase and the level of fans travelling to support their teams continues to rise, fans can enjoy these games in complete safety, no matter what the destination. Supporters need to leave their homes with an expectation that the stadium and surrounding area will be safe; that there will be reasonable facilities in terms of lavatories and catering, and that they will return home safely. It is paramount that all football stadia should be safe places. The level of security should be in relation to the number of fans and the nature of those fans from both home and visiting sides. Every precaution should be taken to ensure that the game passes without incident. Sadly, this hasn't always been the case.

On 29 May 1985, English football clubs were banned from playing in European competitions. It was to be an indefinite ban following the riot between Liverpool and Juventus fans at the Heysel

Stadium in Brussels which saw 39 fans die. The ban was eventually lifted 5 years later, although it took several more years for English clubs to reassert their influence within European football.

On 15 April 1989, 96 people lost their lives at Hillsborough following a crush at the Leppings Lane End. Although this wasn't a European fixture, (FA Cup semi-final between Liverpool and Nottingham Forest), the effect of the Hillsborough disaster was far-reaching in terms of the English game and therefore has an influence on the way football at all levels is played here. It should also be pointed out that the work done by the authorities and several other organisations to resolve issues and learn from these disasters has been adopted by many nations around the world.

From those two matches, 135 people left their homes to go and watch a game of football and didn't return.

Since those two disasters, there has been a dramatic improvement in the way English grounds are run and built. Policing and stewarding are like a military operation with in-depth research and contingency plans. Systems have been refined and revised. Our stadia are some of the most modern anywhere in the world with high standards of security and safety. Hooliganism within football grounds is much less prevalent than it was at the time of Heysel and Hillsborough although it hasn't been completely eradicated and we cannot become complacent. There are still isolated incidents but, on the whole, the vast majority of games now pass without any serious problems both inside and outside the stadium.

Although we appear to have our own 'house in order', what about the experience for English fans who travel to watch their teams in European games? They will quite rightly expect the same levels of safety and security as they have at their own ground. They also expect to have access to decent facilities, a decent seat and a decent view of the game. In many cases, fans will have taken time off work and paid out a not inconsiderable amount of money to follow their team.

In an ideal season where teams successfully go through their qualification fixtures, England has 4 clubs in the European Champions League, 3 clubs in the UEFA Cup and, if they decide to enter, one club in the Intertoto Cup. As mentioned earlier, there are also pre-season friendlies and some sponsor-led tournaments. The majority of these games are now within easy reach of keen supporters so we have the potential for more clubs and more fans making their way to a European destination than ever before.

A natural assumption would be that we learn from our experiences. Familiarity with European clubs would lead to an improvement in facilities and conditions for English fans travelling to the continent. It would be hoped that the experience of one club playing in Europe would be passed on to successive English clubs travelling to the same venue. It would therefore be reasonable to assume that when reports of concerns regarding safety, control of fans, ticketing, transportation, policing and stewarding, facilities or the lack of them etc are passed on to the relevant authorities, that these issues would, if sufficiently serious, be dealt with by UEFA.

UEFA has a set of regulations¹ that any club involved in a European competition must follow. We shall look at these later in this report. UEFA has a reputation for acting swiftly if any English club steps out of line. There are always veiled threats that if a club or any supporters cause a problem, then English clubs and even the England team could be thrown out of various competitions. Without doubt, the reputation of English fans continues to worry European clubs and UEFA. But is this justified? Are English supporters being unjustly pilloried?

Consequently, with all of the experience gained by English clubs in Europe why are there still problems endured by English clubs and English fans? It is by no means rare for the same

¹ UEFA Club Licensing System (Version 1.0): UEFA

problems to raise their heads at a ground where an English club had played in only the previous season. Is anyone taking any notice of complaints? Are the authorities acting in a responsible manner to make sure that problems are eradicated or at least reduced?

Is it really necessary to herd supporters onto buses like cattle? Why are some fans kept in the ground for two hours after the game has finished? Why are English fans searched at the turnstiles for almost every conceivable item whilst the home fans seem to have access to distress flares, thunderflashes that create huge explosions and flags the size of a house? Do fans really need to be at the ground three hours before kick off? Should the seat number on a ticket actually mean stand anywhere? When is a seat not a seat? Why does the local constabulary like to flex its muscles by hitting English fans? Who came up with the idea of confiscating all coins from English fans, yet when they go to buy a drink at the burger stall, they hand over a note and receive coins in return as their change? Why bother to ban all alcoholic drink from the fans holding area before a match when there is a steady stream of people walking back from the supermarket around the corner, laden with tins and bottles of the local brew? Does anyone have the faintest idea how a single lavatory is supposed to cope with over 3000 people? And yes, how do we stop English fans being attacked, stabbed and robbed?

English clubs believe that they abide by UEFA rulings. Our stadia are unrecognisable from twenty years ago but, elsewhere in Europe, football is still being played in some very primitive arenas. Even at clubs with experience of staging both domestic and international games, where you would anticipate no problems, there are glaring concerns. And why, if a European club is breaking UEFA rules is that club not thrown out of the competition until their ground meets the required standards?

Many English clubs have expressed concern and frustration that they appear to have the same problems from season to season. They frequently return to a club or country expecting problems to have been resolved, only to find that nothing has been done. The football authorities have had a similar experience. Consequently, the IFC was well placed to conduct an independent enquiry with the support of the authorities to ascertain whether the situation could be improved.

When the Independent Football Commission was asked to undertake this investigation, the first move was to speak with the clubs to find out how they went about preparing for European games abroad and what sort of precautions they took to ensure the safety of their fans. What goes into organising a trip to a foreign club for several thousand supporters? Discussions took place with the six English clubs who were involved in the main European fixtures during the 2005-6 season. They were Arsenal, Bolton, Chelsea, Liverpool, Manchester Utd and Middlesbrough. (Everton and Newcastle Utd had been knocked out of their respective competitions before our investigations began). We spoke to all of them to find out what they did to prepare for European games and the sort of precautions they took to ensure their fans' safety. All of them had strong opinions about playing games in Europe, the actions of UEFA and the way we stage games here in England. We also met with senior officials from the Government to find out the role of the British Consul when it comes to football matches. We met with the Home Office to discuss the legal process and we spoke to senior security officers from the Football Association. The IFC also visited UEFA.

During its enquiries, the IFC attended European fixtures in Spain, Portugal, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Romania and France. IFC personnel have travelled by various routes; with the club's official party, flying with the team on the day prior to the match; on an official supporters' flight organised by the club; on one of the independent supporters' flights; by train, and by making their own way to the game using scheduled flights. Several planning meetings were attended where the English clubs travel to the venue in order to check out where their fans will be situated, how they will get to the stadium, safety issues, policing, ticketing etc. This takes place normally two weeks before the match. Meetings were attended on the eve of the game and on the morning of the game to witness the preparations in the build-up to a European match, noting what the English club officials are trying to do and the precautions they take on behalf of their fans. On some occasions senior club officials were shadowed. At other times, IFC personnel were with the English police

officials or with the police spotters or perhaps an FA security advisor. They sat / stood amongst the main party of fans at games or spent the entire game outside monitoring the entrance / exit areas. They have been with fans in the areas where they were instructed to congregate in the hours leading up to kick off. IFC officers travelled to the stadium either on the fans' coaches or made their own way there by public transport or walked. They tried to ascertain whether the host club and local officials were helpful or downright obstructive. They have been threatened by local police and have been involved in a crush when police were trying to force their way through a crowd of fans who were waiting in an orderly manner. They aimed to discover how fans are treated by being part of the throng and looked carefully at what the English police do in a foreign country, keeping a close eye on any English stewards too. There was a need to investigate what sort of support the security personnel provide for fans who travel abroad and what their role was in the build-up to, during and after the game. Who pays for several officers to travel to Europe? Should they be there at all or should we rely purely on the local authorities to ensure the safety of English fans? What sort of intelligence can they work from to try and anticipate problems? What do they do about the potential of hooliganism from within the home supporters? The IFC asked what the fans themselves thought and invited them to comment on their experiences, good or bad. The fans also have a responsibility; after all they are visiting a foreign country with different laws and traditions. There was a close look at the experience of disabled fans and whether their special requirements are catered for.

We looked at the role of the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Does the information they provide find its way to the fans? We examined what UEFA does to ensure that English fans are safe at stadia around Europe. While insisting that our stadia meet certain requirements, do they ensure that all other stadia where UEFA games are played reach a similar standard? It should also be noted that UEFA and the European Union are looking closely at working together. Could this latter point see football clubs and football associations being forced to adopt a European-wide set of regulations?

We considered the role that the English football authorities have to play because it is their clubs who are taking part in the European competitions. Do they help the clubs? Do they ensure, via UEFA, that action is taken when complaints and concerns are raised? In short, the IFC have endeavoured to monitor what goes on 'behind the scenes' at football matches and experience as widely as possible what happens to the fans.

It would be easy to say that this IFC report will be merely an exercise to prove to UEFA that while English clubs are meeting all of their requirements, many European clubs are not....and what does UEFA intend doing about it. There is a temptation to assume that here in England we do everything correctly while other European nations do not and that if everyone followed our blueprint for staging football matches, then there would never be any problems, anywhere. We must also be aware that there may be a feeling of jealousy or annoyance within European football circles that the English, who many countries see as being the race of people who invented hooliganism, now have the bare-faced cheek to come strutting along and tell everyone else how to run the game.

The aim of this IFC report is to evaluate the experience of English fans. It is hoped that the evidence revealed will enhance that experience. It should be pointed out that as well as evidence from the 2005-6 season, various other points from previous seasons have been included in this report if it was felt relevant and helped support the IFC research. This additional evidence was sourced mainly from the FA, English police or club security officials. If the report encourages the authorities at home and abroad to take action, such a response would be warmly greeted by English clubs. At the moment, English clubs are doing their utmost to anticipate and hopefully resolve any problems *before* their fans arrive at the foreign stadium. This is sometimes done without much in the way of assistance from the host clubs. But is there more that could be done? Can they be given more help? Although this report cannot guarantee that English fans travelling abroad in future seasons will not have their trip soured, the IFC hopes that the recommendations will improve the European experience overall.

4. THE DAY OF THE GAME

A fan's-eye view of going to the big match

Before analysing what the IFC has discovered in its investigations, it seems appropriate to outline what should, theoretically, happen from a fan's perspective when his or her English club takes part in a game in Europe and they have to travel abroad. Once the European draw has been made there is then the allocation of tickets to the fans. For many supporters this was probably a bit of a lottery especially if their team is in the latter stages of a European competition or if the destination is particularly attractive and easy to reach, or if the club they've been drawn against is one of the big names in world football. If there is more than one of those plus-points, then the demand will have been far greater. It is generally impossible for the club to satisfy the fans clamour for tickets.

For the purpose of this exercise we shall assume that the fans have got their tickets and have decided to use the club's own special flights. They could have made their own arrangements or travelled on one of the flights organised by independent companies, but some fans prefer to stay with the official party.

On the days leading up to the game, the fans will receive information from their club regarding the travel arrangements, local customs and a few basic do's and don'ts. They will be warned that local laws and regulations mean that they shouldn't act in certain ways or say certain things. They will be informed that, generally, all fans are searched upon entering the stadium. No sharp objects, missiles, flares, flags, alcohol, drugs etc, will be allowed. Some countries don't allow you to take coins into the ground. There will also be some general information about the stadium and they will be reminded about travel documents etc. There is generally an early start required. This is no bad thing because the club has planned it so that you will have some time for a bit of sightseeing. Most fans seem to like this because if they're spending a lot of money travelling somewhere, they may as well absorb some of the atmosphere in the build-up to the game and have a look around. Of course, this is alright if the destination is attractive with plenty to do and as long as the weather is fine. Things tend to unravel slightly if it is raining or the team you've been drawn against comes from a small town or a backwater. People can easily become bored. For some fans though, all of this will be irrelevant because they will immediately head for the nearest bar.

Once the fans touch down at the airport, there tends to be a reasonably slick operation to get everyone through the terminal and onto the buses. Fans rarely travel with any luggage. From the matches the IFC attended utilising the fans transportation, this worked well. There was a bit of confusion on occasion with fans struggling to find the right coaches, but generally it only took about half an hour to get through the airport and away. Most clubs use travel companies to organise all of this, much the same as when you travel aboard on a package tour and have to find your coach to transfer to the hotel.

There then follows a journey, usually in convoy, to a central place within the town or city, reasonably close to the ground or certainly where there is decent access to the road network to reach the stadium quickly. This tends to be at around lunchtime and fans are told to report back to coaches in plenty of time for the final leg of the journey to the ground. Some fans will go off to do some sightseeing; others will head straight for the pubs and bars. There is usually a particular bar area, street or locality which is frequented by the away supporters. The police are in attendance but this is normally low key. The police have a dual role to not only keep an eye on the visiting fans but to also make sure that the home fans do not turn up to aggravate and intimidate the opposition supporters.

At a pre-determined time, the fans return to the coaches. This is strictly organised and fans that don't arrive on time are likely to be left behind. They would then have to take their chances and make their own way to the ground. This is something that would not be advised and is frequently

the time when English fans, wandering along strange streets, can be attacked. Again, the buses travel in convoy to a parking area adjacent to the stadium. This area is heavily policed and isolated from the home fans. Once alighted from the buses, fans are then guided towards the turnstile area. There is a search and various items can be confiscated. As mentioned earlier, fans will have been given a list of items that are generally not allowed. Next, the fans show their ticket or have it scanned, enter the stadium and find a seat. Once inside, the announcements over the tannoy system should be made in both the home tongue and in English. There should be refreshments on sale. Lavatories will be available.

At the end of the match, foreign clubs traditionally hold the visiting fans back. This is to allow the home fans time to disperse. Supporters will be told how long this is likely to be. Clubs tend to err on the pessimistic side so everyone should be out of the ground quicker than anticipated. The fans then make their way back to the coach park, find their appropriately numbered bus and set off back to the airport. Once inside the terminal, everyone normally makes rapid progress through to the aircraft which tends to be the one they travelled out on, therefore allowing a swift getaway. The customs officials know these aircraft will be taking home the same people that travelled out only a few hours earlier, so they don't make too much of a fuss. The flight gets back into the fans' local airport in the early hours of the morning. Again, the customs officials know that these planes are carrying the football fans and there isn't usually much of a delay. The airport should be reasonably quiet and fans can make decent progress through to the car parks and away home.

This is the ideal vision of what most fans and clubs expect to happen when they follow their team into Europe. It is planned to be an enjoyable day that allows plenty of time for some relaxation, to see the sights and watch the game in safety. However, as the IFC has witnessed and many thousands of fans have experienced, things sometimes don't go the way everyone would like them to.

5. THE CLUBS

Outlining the role of the English club in the build-up to their game in Europe

As mentioned earlier, when the Independent Football Commission began looking into the European experience of English football fans, there were six clubs remaining in both the European Champions League (Arsenal, Chelsea, Liverpool and Manchester Utd) and the UEFA Cup (Bolton and Middlesbrough). Everton had already been knocked out of both competitions by Villarreal and Dynamo Bucharest, and Newcastle failed to reach the final of the Intertoto and therefore a place in the UEFA Cup, going down over two legs to Deportivo la Coruna. We visited each of those remaining clubs leading up to games to consider how things had gone to date and what they were planning for the rest of their European campaign.

All of the English clubs followed a similar pattern in their build-up to European games. As soon as the draw is made, they liaise with the opposing team and arrange a pre-match planning visit. This meeting is often organised when the club representatives are attending the draw. As soon as the draw has been made, they then search out their equivalent representative from the club they have been drawn against and rapidly sort out a visit. English clubs are fully prepared for this initial meeting at the draw venue. They have a folder or leaflet that outlines all of the relevant details for the game that will take place in England. This is passed on to the opposing club representative and will answer questions about ticket allocation, policing, location of visiting fans within the English stadia, hotels, travel companies, airports, important contact details etc. The IFC was impressed by the quality and content of the briefing material prepared by the English clubs. However, information provided by the European clubs is best described as patchy. Some clubs go to the lengths that the English clubs do, but some don't. Senior officials from Chelsea attended a Champions League draw in Monaco and came home with nothing more than a business card from a European club representative. "When you get home, phone the number I've written on the back," was the only helpful additional information.

Speed is frequently of the essence here. For example this season, in the 2006-7 UEFA Cup competition, the draw for the group stage of the competition took place at UEFA's Swiss headquarters on 3rd October 2006 with the first match of the group stage scheduled for 19th October 2006, leaving the away club with just over a fortnight to organise a pre-match visit, ticket allocations, transportation and security. This is a huge undertaking for any organisation let alone a football club which, in certain cases, may only have experience of taking a few hundred fans to an away game as part of their league fixtures in England. Suddenly they are faced with taking thousands of fans into Europe.

This can be particularly tricky for clubs in the UEFA and Intertoto Cups because there tends to be an interesting selection of teams from lesser known cities and regions across Europe. Those clubs taking part in the Champions League can generally expect to visit more recognised stadia, although this can also be a problem because the number of fans wanting to make the trip is probably larger due to the stadia being capable of accepting higher numbers. They also tend to be in more major cities that are likely to be serviced by regional airlines from across the UK.

Following the draw, English clubs will visit the away location, inspect facilities, and meet club representatives and security officials. If flight and time schedules allow, this can sometimes be completed in a single day, however if the foreign city is in a rather more remote area, this will be extended to a couple of days. The size of the party from the English clubs can vary. On one occasion Liverpool FC took only two representatives while Bolton took eight. This can be explained by Liverpool being experienced in European games and having visited many clubs previously. They have built a useful database of contacts and information, and know what to expect. Bolton on the other hand were being involved in a European campaign for the first time.

This meant they were inexperienced and needed additional planning. Generally though, included in the party will be a senior club official like the club secretary who can investigate protocol, ticket arrangements, team requests and generally oversee the entire operation. There will sometimes be a member of the club's travel club who can look into where the team, club officials and fans can stay. This person sometimes stays on for an extra day so that hotels, restaurants and airport can be visited. A member of the club's security staff or the match commander will be present to look into safety arrangements for their fans. This will be someone who is well versed in the nature of the club's travelling fans and can anticipate how they will react when arriving at a foreign club. An FA Security Advisor is generally in attendance although this isn't always the case because experienced clubs can deal with most issues themselves. There is often someone from an independent travel company who will assist with organising aircraft, airport facilities, and liaising with local tourist personnel. On occasion, the English party is met at the airport or the ground by the local Consular official from the British Foreign & Commonwealth office. This person will have local knowledge and also speak the local language. It should be pointed out that whenever an English police official travels with an English club, it is the club that pays for the police officer's time and expenses.

It would seem to be a logical extension of this to assume that the opposing club would also provide an equivalent number and status of officials. It might be expected that, for example, the local Spanish or Italian police would be keen to speak to a UK police officer who is used to dealing with the fans from the visiting club. This would allow them to glean useful information and help then make preparations for the influx of English fans. Senior club officials would be expected to be on hand to help with ticketing arrangements and know exactly what sort of numbers of tickets would be made available and where the visiting fans would go. There ought to be a system whereby the host club would be able to tell their visitors precisely where the team and supporters coaches could park or where the most appropriate hotels were or where the best holding area for fans would be.

From our observations this sometimes never happened and there then ensued an often heated discussion as to who went where and how many tickets would be made available. For example, it would be assumed by most people that a visit to Real Madrid and the Bernabeu stadium would be straightforward. As one of the world's most famous stadia, it has been used for many top games over the years. When the Arsenal party arrived for their pre-match Champions League meeting, it was noticeable that the senior Real Madrid officials were rather disorganised. The meeting began with the Arsenal party, led by the Club Secretary, stating what they wanted in terms of tickets and that they would like to check the area where their fans would enter / exit the stadium and where the fans would be sitting. This seemed to flummox the Real Madrid officials. Bit by bit, the number of people from Real Madrid steadily grew so that at one stage there were a dozen people huddled around a table trying to figure out the ticket allocation. Arsenal had already done this and the Real officials eventually agreed with their calculations. The party from England then asked to see the area where the Arsenal fans would enter / leave the ground and where their seating areas would be. The Metropolitan Police Match Commander travelling with the Arsenal party was concerned that the vast majority of Arsenal fans would all have to enter through a single turnstile. This then led through into a tower where fans could either walk in a spiral or use escalators to reach the upper storeys of the Bernabeu. There was concern that the Arsenal fans were expected to congregate in a mass at the foot of this tower area rather than be funnelled through a series of barriers. The local senior police officer stormed off saying that this would be provided but, in the end, the barriers didn't appear on the evening of the game.

The reason for the English police concern...and this is a familiar trend across all English clubs playing in Europe...is that those English fans who are making their own way to the stadium often arrive very late. They tend to sit in bars and pubs surrounding the ground and have worked out to the minute how long it takes to walk from their bar stool to the entrance turnstile. This does not take into account the searching, problems with electronic ticket scanning machines, congestion and the fact that, in the case of Real Madrid, most fans will access the ground through one entrance only. This leads to large numbers of fans milling around and, if there are no barriers,

some will start to push in. Others will start to push forward in a vain attempt to make the queue move more rapidly. The police can then become agitated and start to take action. During the IFC's discussions with UEFA, the late arrival of English fans at the ground was one of the main reasons they cited as the cause of potential disorder and difficulty.

The Arsenal Match Commander was also concerned about the body search. This was done inside the fairly narrow entrance to the tower only yards before the turnstiles. It was felt that if a fan was refused admission, it would be extremely difficult for that person to be then ejected from the ground when having to walk against the tide of fans making their way into the stadium. The IFC witnessed this on the evening of the game. The area was extremely congested and, although we didn't see any fans being told to leave, we appreciated that it would have been impossible for someone to turn around and force their way through the mass of fans moving in the opposite direction.

While the Arsenal officials were keen to investigate as much as possible, there seemed to be a rather laboured, bored response from the Real Madrid officials. Several of them looked totally uninterested; others spent large parts of the meeting on their mobile 'phones. There was a definite impression of simply going through the motions. However, in the Arsenal Club Secretary, they met a man who has many years experience in dealing with European opponents and, in the end, they shrugged their shoulders and followed his lead.

The whole aim of the pre-match planning visit is to establish ground rules and meet people. It is a fact-finding mission and allows the English club to go home with a mental picture of where their fans will go, how they will be transported from airport to stadium and, in the case of those fans paying extra for an overnight stay, where the hotels will be situated. They will also know precisely how many tickets they are getting. Under UEFA regulations, the visiting club is entitled to 5 per cent of the total capacity of the stadium. There is a certain amount of juggling with this figure because it gets broken down into tickets for the general supporter who is likely to make a day trip out of the game; for executives who pay extra for an overnight stay and a better seat; and VIPs who are senior club officials and their guests. They will also have a list of contacts at local hotels, coach companies, security officials, airport personnel and anyone else that may have some sort of impact on the organisation of getting several thousand fans from England to the continent. They are also likely to have met with the local Consulate representative.

Once the club officials have returned home, arrangements are swiftly put into motion. It is a race against time for those clubs who have been drawn away from home in the first leg. The thorny issue of allocating tickets to fans often causes a massive headache for clubs because of the difficulty in meeting the demand from their supporters. There is also the matter of deciding how many tickets to make available to fans who want to make their own way to the foreign stadium and how many to utilise as part of special package deals organised by the club. Due to the boom in cheap air travel, many fans decide to make their own travel arrangements, especially those who live some distance away from the airport where the club flights will depart from. There are also various travel companies who specialise in providing one-off flights aimed purely at the supporters.

English clubs always ask for a meeting on the evening before the game just to iron out any last minute problems and check final arrangements. Surprisingly, the host club frequently sends officials different from those who attended the pre-match visit a few days earlier. For example, the UK police official sometimes has to go through all of the arrangements again with a complete stranger. There seems to be no protocol whatsoever. **The IFC recommends that UEFA instigates some sort of framework or protocol that assures key personnel are on hand for the planning meetings. When English clubs are trying to do their best to ensure the safety of their fans and therefore help the host club and local authorities avoid any potential difficulties, it is to be hoped the host club would also do their utmost to maintain a line of command and communication, and provide the same, senior personnel throughout all of these meetings and of course at the game itself.**

It should be emphasised that up to this point all of the meetings have been totally at the request of the English clubs. None of these meetings is stipulated by UEFA and none of them has been at the request of the host foreign club or the local authorities. It seems unacceptable that clubs could, theoretically, receive several thousand tickets, distribute them to their fans, and then expect there to be nothing in the form of information, directions, and warnings, contact details etc in the build-up to the game. The fact that English clubs do this for their fans, and no doubt for their own peace of mind, should be applauded. It is a rarity for foreign clubs to go to these lengths. On one occasion the Head of Security at Middlesbrough FC was expecting to welcome a party of guests to go through details regarding the visit of their latest European opponents. In the event, only one person turned up and he was a travel agent who asked for any important security information which he would try to pass on.

On the morning of the game, usually at around 10.00am, there is a formal meeting chaired by an official from UEFA. This is essentially a 'box ticking' session by the UEFA delegate who is in overall charge of the game. If he / she is not happy with something, the game could be jeopardised. However, with thousands of fans on their way, hundreds of TV and radio engineers swarming all over the stadium rigging it for the evening broadcast and caterers already preparing food, it is highly improbable that the game would ever be postponed unless for some totally unforeseen circumstances. Surely UEFA must realise that having a meeting of such magnitude less than twelve hours before the kick off makes it impossible for major changes to be made. The IFC has noted at several of these meetings that the UEFA delegate simply asks the senior policeman from the host city whether he is satisfied with arrangements, and on every occasion the police officer says "yes". He is unlikely to say anything else. The IFC appreciates that a single UEFA delegate on his / her own cannot hope to be an expert in everything, but there does seem to be a tendency to take everyone's word without question. **The IFC recommends that UEFA mounts its own series of spot-checks on grounds to make sure that when the local police official says everything is in order, that it really is in order.**

The tone of the meeting is reasonably informal. Both clubs confirm which strip their team will be wearing; the match officials are introduced to everyone; the UEFA delegate fires a series of questions to which everyone nods. Everything is presented in English, the official language of UEFA. Some of these meetings can be over within about 30 minutes; others go beyond two hours.

Once the main part of the meeting is over, there tend to be smaller sub-meetings. The key one is the security meeting. The UK police official meets his counterpart and they go through the arrangements for the evening. Some of the policing will already be underway as English fans arrive early. Many will have been in the host city for one or two days before the game. As before, there seems to be a lack of agreed procedure here. There are invariably several new faces at this meeting but it by no means guarantees that these are the people who really count. At the meeting prior to the Juventus v Arsenal game in Turin, the Arsenal match commander met with the senior Italian police official who confirmed that he would be in charge and would therefore be available all evening and would be happy to work alongside his English counterpart. He was never seen or heard from again.

Once this meeting has been concluded, the club officials disperse. The people from the club's travel organisation either scatter to the airport or go to give the hotels and coach companies a final check. The senior UK police official briefs his team which by now has grown to typically 3 or 4 spotters who keep an eye on the visiting fans and check for any known troublemakers. There will also be a senior security official from the club, perhaps a chief steward. The UK police will generally tour some of the bars near the ground so as to give an early warning of any potential trouble. Some of them will also go to the airport. By now there will also be an FA Security Advisor in attendance, either observing or taking an active role. Many of these advisors are ex-police and / or have been Match Commanders at football clubs. They know how the English police will operate and how the English fans are likely to behave, and generally monitor whether everything is going to plan. They generally have a watching role but due to their level of experience can often be

extremely valuable in assisting the English police and stewards, and helping communicate with the local authorities.

At this point, everything should be in full swing and the build-up to the game starts to gather pace. Fans begin to arrive in the surrounding streets. The English club officials return to the stadium to see whether things are running smoothly. The UK police representatives are now largely relegated to a watching and advisory role. Some clubs take their own stewards with them. The stewards have generally travelled out on the club's organised flights. These stewards have no 'official' power outside the foreign ground but most fans will recognise them and they provide a valuable calming role if things get heated. They can offer useful advice and direction, and act as a reassuring familiar face. As one Bolton Wanderers fan who had travelled to Bulgaria to watch his team play in Burgas against Lokomotiv Plovdiv told the IFC by e-mail:-

"We were very pleased to see Bolton Wanderers stewards outside the stadium, especially as there seemed to be a nasty element of Bulgarian yobs trying to make trouble. The club's organisation was excellent."

Unfortunately, stewards can also be a source of tension between the two clubs. The English club prefers to have some of its own official representatives to help their fans, but the European club often takes this as an affront to their own stewarding arrangements. It is handy for these stewards to be in with the fans during the game too, so English clubs provide them with a match ticket to be able to enter the stadium. As long as everything is communicated fully with the host club, this seems like a good idea. It worked well for Liverpool's Champions League final against Real Madrid in Istanbul. Liverpool took 200 stewards with them to help their fans. Despite difficult conditions, the Liverpool fans behaved excellently and caused few problems. Real Madrid weren't so well organised and only bothered to send around a dozen of their own stewards. **The IFC recommends that UEFA looks at trying to implement some sort of agreement whereby the stewards from the visiting club do have some sort of official role.** Arsenal FC felt that there could be a case for visiting stewards from European clubs to have some sort of role inside their Emirates stadium because instead of fans coming up to UK stewards and potentially being ignored, there was a good chance of UK stewards taking more notice of a complaint from a visiting steward because both parties were, essentially, working for the good of the fans and ensuring a safe match. The IFC appreciates that this needs to be handled carefully due to legal implications and that insurance matters need to be considered, however stewards from the visiting club should be viewed as being helpful rather than a hindrance.

The numbers of stewards travelling with the visiting club should be provided well in advance to the host club so that any preparations can be made. This didn't happen when Anderlecht visited Chelsea's Stamford Bridge ground. The Belgian club arrived with several stewards and expected them to operate both inside and outside the ground. They didn't have any tickets either. Chelsea instructed Anderlecht that stewards would not be allowed to operate inside and that, unless they had a ticket, they would not be allowed inside in any case. To defuse the situation, Chelsea provided Anderlecht with sufficient tickets in the away section to accommodate the stewards. There was a similar situation when Ajax visited Highbury. Arsenal had no idea that Ajax intended bringing stewards and, as with Chelsea, they arrived without the knowledge of Arsenal and without tickets. This once again underlines the importance of communication between the two clubs. This was a situation that diverted attention from the English police and Chelsea/Arsenal stewards and officials at a busy time in the build-up to the game. It could and should have been avoided.

The English clubs will have given fans some information sheets regarding the stadium. This includes basic directions and, in most cases, a few do's and don'ts. One recommendation is for fans to get to the stadium early. As mentioned previously, English fans have a reputation for arriving at the last minute. They are used to doing this at English stadia because so many of them are season ticket holders and have a fixed timetable when attending matches. They know where to park, how long it takes to get to the ground, how long it takes to have a pre-match snack or

drink, and how long it takes to get to their seat. They frequently have it timed to perfection, arriving at their seat just in time for the kick off. People arriving inside an English stadium 20 minutes before kick off will frequently find it sparsely populated. Consequently, the same mentality of arriving just in time persists when travelling abroad. Add in the effect of alcohol and some nervous, twitchy police, and it is easy to see how the situation can become inflamed. Of course, the problem with fans arriving late is even worse when the stadium is situated in the centre of a city. The visiting fans can either walk to the ground or use taxis or local public transport; hence the concerns of Real Madrid.

The recommendation to get to the European stadium early will only work if the fans feel that the timing is reasonable or if they can be sufficiently convinced that it would be very unwise not to make use of the special transportation that is normally laid on by the local authorities to ferry English fans from a holding area to the stadium. It is easy to see why some fans are willing to take their chances though and dispense with these organised buses. When Middlesbrough were in Rome to play AS Roma in the UEFA Cup, fans were instructed to congregate in a large park called the Villa Borghese approximately 5 miles from the stadium. This park was fairly close to the centre of Rome and was easy to reach and on first inspection seemed like a handy place for fans to gather. The IFC party, which had travelled to Rome on the previous day, was initially told to be there at 3pm. This seemed rather early bearing in mind that the kick off wasn't until 8.45pm. Within an hour or so, this had been moved back to 4pm. We managed to find out this information because we were in one of the official hotels, but many fans were ignorant of any alterations.

Due to problems the previous night when Middlesbrough fans had been attacked, (this will be looked at more closely later in this report) alcohol was banned from large parts of the centre of Rome and there was no alcohol on sale in the park. However, several supermarkets were freely selling alcohol just around the corner from the park area and fans were arriving laden with tins and bottles. It was easy for them to evade any police because the park was poorly lit and it was dark. At 6pm, all of the fans were loaded onto the buses. The bus doors were locked and fans were told that they could not get off, even if they needed to visit the lavatory. The buses waited for one hour before moving and took another hour to reach the ground. Fans were packed in like sardines. It was assumed that the police felt they had more control over the fans if they were shut inside buses. The journey to the ground was done in a military operation. By chance, the IFC officials were in the first bus to leave the holding area. In front of them was a van with police hanging out wielding batons. One police officer was sat on the roof with what was presumably a gun that fired tear gas. Police on motorcycles roared past stopping all traffic. One fan on the same bus as the IFC officers commented that he felt as though he should place a towel over his head because he felt like a criminal. Several people were very frightened. Italian police claimed the delay was due to concerns about a potential ambush of the Middlesbrough fans buses by the Roma Ultras, a hard-line group of supporters with a fearsome reputation who seem to specialise in terrorising both the visiting fans and the local police. The slow transit resulted in some Middlesbrough fans missing the kick off.

Bolton Wanderers fans had to endure similar delays in their game at Olympique Marseille. Due to the complex entry system for visiting fans at the Marseille stadium, fans are taken into a holding area adjacent to the stadium. However, it took almost one hour before fans could disembark the 13 buses. Many of the fans had been drinking throughout the day and were in desperate need of visiting the lavatories but they were forced to stay on the buses. Consequently, it is easy to see why fans that have experienced something similar on previous occasions are prepared to make their own way to the ground.

The game itself is out of the hands of the English club's officials however more problems can loom at the end of the match. The scale of any potential problems will frequently be determined by the result. The vast majority of fans will need to return to the airport. There is a mass evacuation of English fans onto coaches, although from this point onwards, it is easier to police because most fans are heading in the same direction at the same time. They can be channelled onto the

coaches and into the airport for flights home. This is another area where stewards come in handy because they will have been briefed as to where coaches are parked. Some fans will forget which coach they need to board, but generally this works well.

At the airport, there tends to be very strict security in any case so if trouble does break out, it is usually very minor. The local authorities tend to get fans through the terminal and onto aircraft as rapidly as possible.

The logistics of all of this are extremely complicated and it is an achievement that English football clubs successfully take so many thousands of English fans abroad on a regular basis. The vast majority have a thoroughly enjoyable experience. The clubs should be applauded for their efforts in putting so much time and effort into giving their fans an excellent service. It isn't all rosy and sometimes things do go wrong but no matter what the nature of the problem, even if it was none of their doing and something over which they had no control whatsoever, it is the clubs who face the barrage of complaints. It is therefore not surprising that they try to plan everything well in advance. But, could they be given some extra help?

6. UEFA

The role of European football's governing body

The European Champions League and the UEFA Cup both come under the direct control of European football's governing body, UEFA. It should be pointed out though that UEFA only has direct control over UEFA competitions. They have no legislation over English clubs or English leagues and competitions. In a nutshell, the only guideline here is that if a club wants to take part in a UEFA competition, then that club needs to abide by UEFA's rules and regulations and make sure that both the club and its stadium reach the required standards. We shall look at these standards shortly.

Each UEFA game 'belongs' to UEFA. For every game, they appoint a senior UEFA delegate who is in control of everything. If he / she is worried about anything such as policing levels, whether an area of the stadium looks unsafe for visiting fans, or isn't happy about the position of advertising hoardings or even the colour of the teams shirts, they have the power to insist that the changes are made and, ultimately, if there are major concerns over safety, they can postpone the game. This delegate chairs a meeting with senior club officials from both teams on the morning of the game; with local police, fire and ambulance personnel; with the match officials and with the TV companies. They need to be satisfied that everything is in order before giving clearance for the game to go ahead. There is a lot of ground to be covered in these meetings and therefore most of the conversation resembles a tick-box exercise.

The IFC noted that in one pre-match meeting in Spain, the UEFA delegate quickly went through the various points and came to the section about racism. He said that racism would not be tolerated during that evening's game. Everyone sitting around the table nodded seriously and the senior official from the local club said that there would not be any racist chants and that in any case, racism was not a problem in Spain. Perhaps he'd forgotten that only twelve months prior to this Champions League game, England's Shaun Wright-Phillips and Ashley Cole had been subjected to monkey chants in Madrid, prompting a flurry of indignation from the FA, British government and FIFA. There had also been problems at the Under 21 game on the previous evening. All of this came on the back of alleged remarks made by the Spain coach Luis Aragones about Arsenal striker Thierry Henry.

UEFA keeps a close watch on what is happening in all of their European games. They receive reports before and after each game from one of their senior officials and from the referee. They study police reports and take into account any concerns that may have been raised by national Football Associations.

UEFA insist on certain regulations before any club can either take part in European competitions or host a game. These guidelines appear in a weighty publication called the **UEFA Club Licensing System (Version 1)**². This manual has recently been updated and will have been received by all clubs who anticipate taking part in one of the UEFA competitions. The new rules and regulations will apply from the 2008-9 season and have been revised following feedback from the various national FAs. However, as the IFC conducted research during the 2005-6 season, no reference shall be made to this latest report in respect of the IFC findings and concentrate purely on what clubs should be providing as per the current licensing agreement which came into effect in 2004.

The report breaks down the recommendations into four categories...(Ch 2. Par 2. Criteria Graduation.)...**A-criteria MUST, B-criteria MUST, C-criteria MUST, and D-criteria BEST PRACTICE**. If clubs don't comply with something in **A-criteria MUST**, then they cannot gain a UEFA Licence. If they fail to achieve certain areas within **B-criteria MUST**, then UEFA makes a

² *UEFA Club Licensing System (Version 1.0): UEFA*

note of these shortcomings and offers alternatives. If these alternatives cannot be met, then the licence is not granted. **C-criteria MUST** is items that UEFA would like to see complied with but, if the club cannot, then they could be either fined or given a caution. However, the club cannot be prevented from taking part in a UEFA competition. **D-criteria** is purely related to **Best Practice** and are recommendations only. If any club fails to meet any or all of these recommendations in **D-criteria**, it doesn't matter and the UEFA licence will be granted in any case, although UEFA says that some of these recommendations may at some stage in the future, appear in the other **MUST** categories.

It should be pointed out that **Version 2³** of the **UEFA Club Licensing System** dispenses with the four categories and replaces them with three, namely **A-criteria MUST**, **B-criteria MUST** and **C-criteria BEST PRACTICE**. All that has happened is that the **B** and **C-criteria** from **Version 1** have been slightly reworded and merged together. It also states that there has been a problem caused by the number of documents regarding safety and security at stadia. It would appear that some clubs and FAs have become rather confused by the plethora of material and are therefore unclear as to what they require. UEFA has decided to streamline all of this and include it in a single document.

A large part of this Club Licensing Manual is wrapped up in financial and legal jargon, but the IFC is interested in how it affects English supporters attending games in any country that comes under the UEFA banner. These rules and regulations need to be treated with a certain amount of flexibility because, as UEFA comments, everything is defined in accordance with local or national legislation, so something that may be perfectly acceptable in Estonia, Holland and Spain may not be acceptable in England. Consequently, UEFA rules stipulate the following:

UEFA's general aim, in terms of infrastructure, is that "the football spectator is accommodated in a safe, comfortable and customer friendly environment." (Ch 7. Par 2.) The following are the main UEFA requirements. (Ch 7. Par 4:1)

Description:	Grade:
All grounds to have a safety certificate.	A Criteria
All public passageways and stairways in the spectator area must be brightly painted. This includes entry and exit gates either out of the stadium or onto the pitch.	A Criteria
All exits to open outwards, be free of obstructions and remain unlocked.	A Criteria
All passageways to be kept clear of obstructions	A Criteria

³ UEFA Club Licensing System (Version 2.0): UEFA

Description:	Grade:
All doors and gates to be attended by a specially appointed steward.	A Criteria
Loudspeaker system and / or scoreboard and / or video screen to provide information to fans in event of an emergency.	A Criteria
Seats must be fixed to the floor, have a backrest of at least 30cm, be individual and be numbered. Each fan must have their own individual seat.	A Criteria
Adequate toilet facilities for people of both sexes.	C Criteria
These facilities should be bright, clean and hygienic with washing facilities and towels / hand dryers. These facilities should be maintained during the match.	C Criteria
In addition to this latter point, UEFA recommends that for every thousand fans there should be 5 toilets with seats and 8 urinals for men, and 5 toilets with seats for women.	
Clear signage, preferably with colour coding, in international languages. Tickets to contain clear information about seat areas. A wall map to be provided to help fans with directions.	C Criteria
Facilities for disabled fans and their helpers.	C Criteria
Preventative measures must be taken to avoid crushing at entrances.	D Criteria
Once a spectator has passed through a turnstile or entry door, he or she must not be left in any doubt as to which direction to take. There should be no reason for any confusion or uncertainty. Clear signs must point him / her to the sector, row and seat.	D Criteria
Every stadium provides at least one outlet for food and beverages. It should be clean, attractive and easily accessible.	D Criteria

Description:	Grade:
Ideally, security fences or screen should not surround a playing area.	D Criteria (UEFA admits this is a tricky one because so many grounds have these features built into their structure. UEFA has mounted a fence-free campaign to eradicate these fences.)
There should be a minimum of 5 seats per 1000 for disabled fans. Disabled fans should be given easy access to viewing areas; unobstructed view, separate entrance / exit, ramps for wheelchairs, toilet facilities near by, support facilities, and they should be able to move freely and quickly if required in the event of an emergency. Some sort of weather protection should be provided and disabled fans should not be positioned near the pitch on the track area.	D Criteria

Safety and security have to be the main points of importance for any organisation that stages a public event. **The IFC would therefore recommend that UEFA's wording, "preventative measures must be taken to avoid crushing at public entrances" (7.4.3 – 1.29) should be moved from a D Criteria which merely reflects Best Practice, to A Criteria as something that a club MUST ensure otherwise they will not be given a licence.**

The IFC witnessed crushing at turnstiles in Paris leading up to the Champions League final, and a Bolton fan had a worrying time when she travelled to Portugal for the match against Guimaraes. In her e-mail to the IFC she said:-

"I was put off going abroad again because when we were queuing to go into the ground there were far too many people trying to get through too few turnstiles and much too slowly. The queue started to swell dramatically and, being trapped in the middle with everyone pushing and panicking that they were not going to get in on time, was a very frightening experience. At this time there were no marshals, police or staff around, other than those at the front concerned with security upon entering the ground. It was very lucky that no-one was hurt. There were parents with small children in the middle of the crowd who were very concerned indeed. The staff at the entrance did start to process people faster when they realised what was happening, but this wasn't soon enough. There definitely needs to be plenty of personnel monitoring the queues because, without a doubt, there will be a repeat of crush / suffocation injuries at yet another football game. I was very, very frightened at the time."

UEFA also has rules and regulations featured in their **2004 Binding Safety and Security Instructions**⁴. Some of the relevant points are...Ch 3.8

- Spectators do not bring substances into the stadium that are likely to be used in acts of violence, nor alcohol or fireworks of any kind.
- A sufficient number of entry gates and / or turnstiles should be available in order to avoid congestion and ensure a proper flow of the crowd.
- Within the stadium, it should not be possible for spectators to move from one sector to another. If it is necessary to have more than one group of spectators in a particular sector, a division should be maintained between them by means of an insurmountable barrier or fence controlled by the security forces, or by the creation of a no-go area kept free of spectators and occupied only by security personnel.

UEFA is in a powerful and influential position. The organisation needs to take 'ownership' of its games and can lead by example if it adopted a hard-line stance and insisted that many of the above points were mandatory rather than requests. The IFC feels that if this was the case, their football matches would be safer, more secure and provide a more pleasant experience. The IFC appreciates that it is difficult for UEFA to insist that every club in every country that qualifies for one of its competitions must meet all of the criteria, but it is difficult to know when to turn a blind eye to something that may lead to problems. Finances are obviously very tight in some countries when it comes to facilities and standards at sports stadia but there must be a concerted effort by everyone within UEFA to ensure that the situation improves. It should be pointed out that UEFA does take into account the varying capacity of newly independent countries to meet the full requirements.

This report is compiled with a clear knowledge that it will be read largely by followers of English football who have become used to generally excellent standards within English football stadia. The vast majority of English fans who travel abroad will be reasonably experienced in what they can and cannot expect at foreign grounds. They may be prepared to accept poor seating and a lack of facilities, but they should never be put in a situation of potential danger. No football fan from any country should expect this at a public event. Safety issues are difficult to spot by the untrained observer. Fans will quickly realise if they haven't got lavatories or refreshments or a clear view of the pitch, but they are unlikely to spot whether they are in an area that is overcrowded in terms of exiting the stadium in the event of an emergency, or being in an area that is susceptible to crushing due to the lack of barriers. Fans should be able to enter a stadium in the knowledge that all safety criteria are being fully met and that those criteria have been rigorously upheld. UEFA need to be 100 per cent confident that as soon as a fan arrives at a football ground to watch a European game, that he or she will be in a safe and secure environment. There is no room for cutting corners in the build-up to a game because if something goes wrong when the game is underway, it could be too late to do anything about it.

The IFC recommends that UEFA looks closely at its licensing of stadia. There seem to be several grey areas where clubs can slip through the net and continue to stage matches when clearly they are not meeting the required criteria.

The IFC tried on several occasions to get UEFA to answer a series of questions to be included in this report. The IFC even enlisted the help of the English FA to try and coax UEFA into some sort of response. However, after a month of trying, nothing had transpired, so it was decided not to bother any further. It is hardly surprising that English football clubs get frustrated.

⁴ *Binding Safety and Security Instructions (Edition 2004): UEFA*

7. POLICING & SECURITY

Anyone who has travelled abroad will know that police officers and the way they go about their business, vary considerably from country to country. Some police seem to adopt a very easy-going approach, while others bristle with armoury and attitude. English fans should be made fully aware by their respective clubs of what they cannot do or say and what local traditions may or may not allow. From what the IFC has witnessed, police and local authorities tend to be reasonably tolerant of English fans. They expect a boisterous crowd, some of whom will be drunk. In most cases, local police allow fans to congregate in a certain area of the town or city near the stadium while mounting a discreet cordon around adjoining streets. Although the police are obviously keeping a close eye on what the English fans are up to, they are also watching out for local supporters who may be trying to infiltrate the visiting fans and cause trouble. English fans should therefore bear in mind that the local police are also playing a protection role as well as being ready in case things get out of hand amongst the visitors. A large degree of commonsense has to be applied here by the travelling fan. A certain level of tolerance will be allowed but, just as at home, if they overstep the mark, then they must suffer the consequences and when many foreign police act, they act with a large amount of gusto. It should also be pointed out that foreign police can't be accused of being heavy-handed solely with the English supporters. It is obvious that some cities across Europe have problems between local fans and the authorities.

Policing within grounds varies widely too. This can be a problem for both the host football club and the visiting club because in many instances continental clubs do not own their ground. They are municipal stadia where, in effect, the club merely rents the stadium. It is the job of the local authorities to provide police, security, first aid etc. The club doesn't really have much say in what goes on. For this reason, officials from the host club often appear uninterested when it comes to the security matters and, to be fair to them, they cannot answer questions to which they don't know the answers and have no bearing. However, this is often when problems arise when the English club is trying to find out what is going to happen in terms of policing, stewarding and general security regarding their fans. Unless the correct, senior security officials have bothered to turn up for the pre-match meeting, there is then a strong chance that the person who *really* counts and who has the authority to make decisions, won't appear on the scene until the evening of the game. By then it will be too late to get correct information to the English fans. As the IFC recommended in the previous chapter, UEFA should ensure that if a club asks for a pre-match meeting, then the person(s) who will be in charge on the day / evening of the game, must be in attendance at all meetings. This is in everyone's interest.

Communication and co-operation between the English and European police forces was patchy. The general consensus was that if the match was taking place in any other country apart from Italy, then you would more than likely receive a certain degree of assistance. In Italy, when the IFC officials asked the English police or club officers who were attending pre-match meetings or the game itself, what they thought of the local police authorities, the overriding comment was 'lack of co-operation on behalf of police, despite earlier promises,' and 'failed to turn up.'

Spanish police seem to be willing to help and listen to their English counterparts, although their actions are sometimes questionable. An FA Advisor witnessed a Spanish police offer striking Chelsea fans at the Barcelona game purely to move them to another turnstile. One Chelsea fan was struck by a police baton at the Real Betis game and suffered a nasty head wound. However, a recurring problem with several European countries is that policing is influenced by the division between local, regional and national police forces and the sometimes changing decisions of which particular branch will assume lead responsibility for a particular game.

Relations between English police and their counterparts in places like Budapest, Dubnica (Slovakia, where Newcastle played in an early European game), Bucharest, Stuttgart, Eindhoven,

Alkmaar, Plovdiv, Besiktas and Villarreal all prompted comments of good or excellent. This was frequently helped by the provision of a police officer who could speak English. It should also be noted that on several occasions, the English police team also included someone who could speak the local language.

There needs to be consistency amongst police forces too. When Arsenal were preparing for their Champions League final against Barcelona in Paris, there were two pre-match meetings. The first took place before the semi final in Villarreal where things like security, travel, hotels, use of the Paris Metro etc were discussed. Once Arsenal knew they were into the final, their officials attended a second meeting at the request of UEFA, at the stadium in Paris. The Arsenal Match Commander estimated that half of the arrangements agreed at the initial meeting in Villarreal were either changed or abandoned altogether. For example, in the first meeting, Arsenal had been promised parking spaces for 100 coaches and therefore made plans accordingly. At the second meeting, the number of spaces had been reduced to zero and coaches had to be parked miles away on the opposite side of Paris. Arsenal also made the effort to take all of their senior personnel to that second meeting; Barcelona did not. Surely it should be up to UEFA to insist on having the top people in attendance so that the correct decisions can be made with confidence.

This latter point is important in order to assure the very best levels of preparation in terms of safety and security in the build-up to and during high profile games that will be attended by many thousands of people. With this point in mind, the IFC, during the course of its investigations, was disappointed to hear from Arsenal that UEFA would not bow to the movement of fixtures in order to allow the London club to monitor these issues at their new Emirates stadium. This is a brand new stadium that requires a series of what are referred to as ramp-up events. The police and local authorities do not want to open a new stadium and allow a capacity attendance instantly. They need to monitor how fans, police, stewards and the ground facilities will cope with thousands of people who don't know where they are going. So, there is generally a small event organised to allow, say, 20,000 people into the stadium, followed by another event to allow 40,000 and then when everyone feels confident that everything is ready, they go for the full attendance and, assuming that all goes to plan, the stadium is awarded its safety certificate. Arsenal were concerned that they needed to use one of the early European games as a ramp-up fixture. To aid the arrival of fans walking through strange surroundings and obviously being unsure of where their entrances would be, Arsenal asked UEFA if they could play one of their matches on a Saturday at 3pm, therefore allowing fans to arrive in daylight and, as it was a non-work day, it would allow them plenty of time to make a casual journey to the stadium. It would almost most certainly have helped the police and stewards who of course were also operating in unfamiliar surroundings. UEFA chose to ignore these safety concerns and insisted on a midweek evening.

Foreign clubs have a policy of holding back English fans at the end of the game. This varied widely and, at times, seemed unnecessarily long. The local security forces say English fans are kept inside the stadium because that is the safest place until the home fans have been dispersed. Fair enough. At Real Madrid, Arsenal fans were kept waiting for around half an hour. This seems to be the average and, from what the IFC witnessed, most fans seemed reasonably content with this. Obviously the mood can vary according to the result, but the vast majority of fans realise that there will be a delay. This can happen at English football matches for the visiting fans, although it is a rarity and less of a concern.

Middlesbrough fans experienced the full extreme of police after-match activities. Following their game in Stuttgart, Middlesbrough fans were allowed to exit the stadium immediately. However, once Middlesbrough's game against AS Roma had finished they were held back for almost two hours. This is a ridiculous length of time to have to wait. It got to the stage that most of the floodlights went out, much of the stadium was in darkness and the video that had been played on the big screens was starting to become boring, having been repeated four times. There were no police or stewards in the vicinity. No information was provided. By the time the fans were finally released and the final bus had set off for the airport, it was almost three hours since the game had

ended. Middlesbrough fans should be praised for their restraint. The convoy of buses made its way to the airport along totally deserted roads. When arriving at the airport, batons were drawn as the fans alighted from the buses. Why on earth the Italian police put on such a show of force was difficult to fathom. Middlesbrough had won the game; the Boro fans hadn't caused any trouble and all they wanted to do was go home. Having been marshalled from the ground, onto buses and then onto the aircraft, it understandably irked a few fans that some of the Rome police were asking for their scarves as a souvenir! Planes arrived back into Durham Tees Valley airport at 6.15am; most fans went directly from the airport to work.

Bolton Wanderers fans were forced to endure a 50 minute holdback following their game against Besiktas, although this was largely due to police and stewards being occupied trying to quell a protest by some of the home fans.

A key part of any security operation at a football stadium, is to ensure that fans don't enter the arena with any dangerous objects. All fans are searched when they enter the stadium. Or are they? There certainly seems to be vigorous searching of the English fans when they arrive in the area of the turnstiles. Fans will already have been told that they cannot bring weapons, fireworks, glass, or flags with sticks into the ground. At most stadia attended by IFC officials items such as ladies lipsticks, an orange, tops from plastic bottles and, curiously, sticks of celery (Barcelona v Chelsea) were also confiscated. The IFC also had reports that some grounds would not allow fans to have coins in their pockets. By contrast, the home fans, who were also supposed to be searched to a similar extent, seemed to have massive flags on 10ft long poles and a whole array of fireworks and explosives. At almost every stadium visited by the IFC during their investigations, whenever a goal was scored by the home team, there would be several huge explosions from thunderflashes, accompanied by dozens of flares. The host club seems to accept that these flares will be present and that at some stage they will be thrown onto the running track or pitch surround because there are fire personnel stationed at various intervals wearing heavy clothing and armed with a stout pair of tongs. They collect the flare and place it into a bucket of water. The IFC has witnessed fires breaking out on terraced areas amongst the home fans at AS Roma and Juventus. Whether this is caused by flares or fans setting fire to rubbish is unknown. During a Newcastle Utd game at Marseille, flares were thrown into the moat that separates the fans from the pitch. A large fire broke out necessitating the use of a fire engine to douse the flames.

The IFC's concern is if one of these thunderflashes or flares is thrown into an area where the English fans are held. In Middlesbrough's game at AS Roma, when Middlesbrough scored, the Roma fans easily burst through a cordon of stewards and rushed a solid, plastic fence. Although this was threatening, the height of the fence made it unlikely that any fans could successfully scale it. However, it would have been simple for a fan to lob a flare or thunderflash into the middle of the away fans' section. Chelsea fans had to endure a barrage of coins from Real Betis fans in Seville. Arsenal fans were pelted in their game at Juventus. It would appear that nothing has been learned by the Juventus officials because in the previous season, Liverpool fans had been forced to suffer a barrage of missiles from the home supporters throughout their game (13th April 2005). There had been trouble outside the ground when local fans tried to break through a police cordon to get at the Liverpool fans. CS gas and baton rounds were used. A couple of cars were set on fire. However, despite being assured that everyone would be searched, Liverpool fans had to face bottles, broken seats and fireworks being thrown into their area. Juventus fans could easily break through the line of stewards and police, race up to the fence that separated them from the Liverpool fans, and launch whatever they could get hold of into the visiting section. The Italian police and stewards did little to prevent this. In short, if the visiting English fans are subjected to a thorough search where things like lipstick, an orange and celery are confiscated, why are the home fans allowed to enter with all manner of articles?

Another problem is that many countries have several police forces. There is a national force, a regional force, and a force that seems to be locally based. This causes confusion not only among the English police officers who are acting as spotters and the senior security officials with the

English club, but also within the forces themselves. It makes it extremely difficult for the English officials to figure out exactly who they need to liaise with. On numerous occasions the IFC witnessed club security officials being unable to speak to the person whom they assumed was in charge, purely because that person had either decided to make themselves scarce or more likely because no-one from the police seemed to know where the senior people were or who was in overall command. This caused serious problems for Middlesbrough who had arranged to meet senior police officials on the evening before their game against AS Roma. Despite several attempts to get in touch with their Italian counterparts, no contact had been made by the end of the day. Their first meeting was the following day at the UEFA gathering. Consequently there was no communication on the evening before the game. At this time a very serious incident occurred in the centre of Rome at the Campo de' Fiori. Around 150-200 Middlesbrough fans were attacked by Italians, assumed to be the notorious Ultras, wielding knives, sticks, axes and chains. There were even reports of oranges with razor blades sticking out of them. Three Middlesbrough fans were stabbed, one seriously, and many others were injured. Riot police then arrived and used considerable force against the Middlesbrough fans as well as some of the Italians to restore order. Thirteen Middlesbrough fans were taken to hospital. The senior English police officer with the travelling party only found out what was going on when one of his colleagues back home in England telephoned him. This is a ludicrous situation and could have cost vital time and possibly someone's life if precise information was required.⁵

It was a sorry season for Middlesbrough in respect of incidents involving their fans. One Boro fan was murdered on his way home from the game away to AZ Alkmaar. The incident occurred in Amsterdam, although reports suggest that this was not football related.

Arsenal had a concern regarding policing for their game against FC Thune in Switzerland. This game was switched to the national stadium in Berne due to the Thune stadium being too small. The main problem here was that the Berne police not only didn't know the Arsenal fans and how they would react but they had no knowledge of the FC Thune fans either. The Thune police were in attendance, but they were overruled by the Berne police. The general impression given by the Berne police appeared to be that Thune fans were country bumpkins and Arsenal fans were hooligans. Arsenal security officials also had concerns in their game against Juventus in Turin. They confirmed that several of the security cameras and monitors were not working, therefore meaning that the overall security surveillance operation was restricted.

English fans need to be made fully aware of how police and stewards are likely to react. When both Liverpool and Chelsea played Anderlecht in Belgium, there were problems with local police laws. The authorities operate a no-ticket exclusion zone. In other words, if you do not have a match ticket, you do not go into certain areas. The fans had been informed about this by their clubs, but when arriving in Anderlecht many fans strayed into the no-go zone. 27 Chelsea fans and 75 Liverpool fans, all without tickets, were arrested. Liverpool officials felt that this was totally unjust because during the day, fans were being welcomed into the no-go zone where they could drink and eat freely. In fact, it seemed to be encouraged. Then the police arrived and, in a casual manner, wandered around the fans asking whether they were having a good time. The police would then mention about whether the fans had a ticket or not, and if they replied no, they were arrested. Liverpool confirmed that fans had been told of this Belgian idiosyncrasy but admitted the fans will try to beat the system. **The IFC recommends that the experiences of fans from other clubs is circulated to the fans of those teams who are about to start a European campaign.** Although fans may wish to ignore the advice given to them by their club or the foreign authorities, they are likely to take greater notice of warnings and instructions from other fans who have

⁵ The Rome incident has now been referred to the European Parliament. The fans involved approached their local MEP who took their case to the EU. It has been decided that the Parliament will be looking into the role of the Italian police. The local newspaper in Teesside strongly backed the campaign of the Middlesbrough fans. It should also be pointed out that when the owner of the bar where the incident took place was spoken to by the English police he confirmed that it was the Middlesbrough fans that had been attacked by the Italians and that they were merely defending themselves.

previously had problems. In the end, most fans were released after the game, although many had missed their flights and had to make their own way home. However, it serves as a warning to fans, if you haven't got a ticket, be very careful where you decide to spend the day in Belgium.

UEFA needs to encourage the implementation of consistent policing arrangements. The IFC appreciates that it is difficult for an international organisation to meddle in the affairs of national or local police forces, but the onus needs to be put onto the clubs that something must be done so that all of the security officials, whether from England or the host town / city, know what each other is doing. Lack of communication, preparation and simple protocol between forces needs to be strictly monitored otherwise vital information and time could be lost if something happened. Let us suppose that the Middlesbrough fans that were stabbed in Rome needed special treatment or perhaps had an unknown or complicated medical problem. The quickest way to find out what was needed would be for the Rome police to contact the English police who were in the city at the time and then let them find out the information from back in the UK. If the English police had been informed immediately, they could have already done the research by the time the fans had arrived in hospital.

Fans should also be made aware that although they may not like the way European police go about their duties, there is not a great deal that can be done about it by the English club or indeed the English FA or British government officials. Many police forces will act on experience and can be very inflexible. Take for example the notorious 'hangar' at Marseille. One FA Advisor referred to it as being 'inhumane.' The 'hangar' is a large warehouse type of building situated opposite the Marseille stadium and is used for 'processing' visiting fans. Having had access to reports of matches between English clubs and Olympique Marseille over the past 6 years, it would appear that the 'hanger' facility and the way it is policed hasn't changed and, we can then surmise, is unlikely to change in the near future.

Visiting fans disembark from their buses or walk from car parks into a large open area from where they are guided into the 'hangar.' Inside this hangar there are no facilities whatsoever; no toilets, no refreshments. Once the fans have been body searched, they are put into groups of approximately 2-300 people. The building is situated opposite the stadium across a road. For the fans to get across and into the stadium, large metal gates swing across the road blocking traffic and, more importantly, keeping home fans well away from the area. On the other side of the gates, riot police with dogs chase the home fans down the road to keep them at bay. The visiting fans are then ushered across the road, into the stadium, the gates close behind them and the whole process is repeated. On the occasion that the IFC visited Marseille with Bolton Wanderers, there was a delay. The crowd inside the hangar increased to what the FA Advisor estimated to be in excess of 1200. Remember, a lot of these fans will have been drinking in the centre of Marseille for much of the day and there are no lavatories within the 'hangar.' In his report, the FA Advisor states that this number of people was too many and some fans experienced pressure and distress at being part of such a large group in a confined space. There was a similar occurrence when Chelsea visited Marseille in February 2000. The FA Advisor reports that up to a thousand fans were held in the 'hangar' for up to an hour. Requests for the use of refreshment and lavatory facilities were turned down. There was evidence that the 'hangar' had been used as a toilet in several places.

When Liverpool visited Marseille in March 2004, the UEFA delegate had spotted problems in the 'hangar' and had asked the local police chief to try to move people through more quickly. Two months later, it was Newcastle Utd's turn to visit the same stadium. Police were described as being inflexible and that fans were being treated like animals. Consequently, although English clubs have complained about the way police and stewards get visiting fans into the Marseille stadium and that UEFA delegates have tried to act, it would appear that the police continue to do things their own way, whatever anyone says.

One Bolton Wanderers fan who contacted the IFC summed up the situation in Marseille perfectly:-

"We were treated very poorly in Marseille being body searched in a large warehouse outside the ground where the facilities were abysmal. The only danger though came from lunatic Marseille supporters who seemingly could do anything they wanted inside the stadium, including hurling missiles and lighting flares. Not so for Bolton supporters who were faced with hundreds of riot police."

This is a tricky problem for UEFA, but security and safety need to be the leading priorities at any match. A regular comment made to the IFC was that UEFA spent more time fining clubs for forgetting to put an advertisement in the correct sight-line of the TV cameras, than worry about the safety of fans.

It should also be noted that the 2006 Independent European Sports Review⁶, instigated by the UK Minister of Sport, the Rt.Hon Richard Caborn MP when the UK held the presidency of the European Union, also makes reference to the need for improved safety and security at football stadia. The Review is aimed at studying the needs of European football in the years to come. One section refers to the need for *'Harmonisation of the legal approach to issues of hooliganism and to institutionalise cooperation of police authorities in this respect.'* The report also recommends that the European football authorities and EU institutions ... *'cooperate in all matters related to safety and security for the maximum protection of the public and to further develop the partnership between the EU institutions, Member States and the football authorities.'*

The English police who travel to the European games perform a vital role. They often have a thankless task and on one occasion witnessed by the IFC, can be injured in the course of their duties. The Match Commander is the person who delegates his staff around the stadium. The key role of these police officers is to monitor the activities of the visiting fans, operating as spotters. They frequently wander around the vicinity on the day of the game, and sometimes the previous day too if large numbers of fans are expected to arrive early, keeping an eye open for potential troublemakers, banned fans who may have slipped through the net and just trying to get a feel of the atmosphere. All of this will provide vital information when the game approaches. They also go to the airport to watch the majority of fans arriving. It should be emphasised that they have no legal rights when operating in a foreign country and are purely there to monitor the situation, provide information and assistance to the local force and of course try to help the English fans if there are problems.

It is in this latter area where some confusion can arise. On one occasion, an English police spotter realised that trouble was starting to flare amongst a group of English fans. He recognised some of them and intervened to try to prevent things escalating. Unfortunately, as he remonstrated with some of the fans, the local police identified him as a troublemaker and struck him with a baton. He didn't have a good command of Spanish and the local police knew very little English so it took a while before he could identify himself. With this in mind, **the IFC recommends that the authorities look at some way in which English police officers can, if they feel the need, clearly identify themselves. Perhaps they could have a cap, bright waistcoat or an armband that would show everyone that they are English police officers.** This would have a double benefit; it would help the local police identify the English officer who may be trying to help and he / she would be instantly recognisable if they needed to quickly require their assistance. It would also help English fans realise that they were either being watched by an English police officer or, if they needed help or reassurance, they knew to whom they could turn. Obviously we would not want fans mimicking the police identification articles, so it would be an offence for them to wear anything that made them look like a police officer.

⁶ *Independent European Sports Review*. Report by Jose Luis Arnaut. Published 2006.

The IFC appreciates this recommendation, as with the suggestion to allow visiting stewards to have more of a role inside stadia, has legal and insurance implications and that local police authorities may resent any interference. However, it should be noted that these foreign authorities seem more than happy to have English police officers in plain clothes providing assistance and surely this would only help snuff out certain problems more quickly and therefore be beneficial to everyone.

8. THE FA

The role of English football's governing body

The English Football Association has what largely amounts to a monitoring role when it comes to English league clubs playing in Europe, although if they feel as though one of the English clubs has an important grievance or a recommendation that would considerably help in terms of safety and security for future visits by clubs, then the FA is perfectly placed to make representations to UEFA. The FA also operates in a reverse role, passing on rules and legislation from UEFA to the English clubs. However, the vast majority of clubs will enter a European campaign and at some stage leave it, without any real contact from the FA. If there have been no complications along the way, they would have no need to get in touch with the English game's governing body.

The FA plays a key role though in making sure that fans are safe. They have a team of security advisors who attend most matches. These advisors travel with the English club to assess the actions of foreign police, stewards, club officials and, of course, the personnel who're with the English party. At the end of each game, the advisors write a full report and hand it on to the FA. The FA's own Head of Security will compile a full report at the end of each season and if he feels as though representations need to be made to UEFA, then he will encourage them to make any necessary changes for the following season. The fans frequently contact the Football Association. This happened following the 2006 Champions League final in Paris when many Arsenal fans were unhappy about the way they were treated. The FA passed these letters on to UEFA. The general feeling amongst most observers at that particular game was that the actions of the French police took everyone by surprise and that ticket and turnstile arrangements were poor.

It is such incidents as above, that the FA needs to bring to the attention of UEFA. It will assist in preventing future problems. The FA is also ideally placed to bring all agencies and organisations together to discuss experiences from previous seasons and help to anticipate potential problems for the next campaign. Obviously there is a danger of information being repeated because many of our clubs involved in the European Champions League and UEFA Cup now take part in these competitions on a regular basis. Some of them will be returning to a club and / or city that they have visited previously. However, there is invariably something of value that can come out of clubs and people getting around a table and discussing how they dealt with problems or managed to solve issues. This will prove especially valuable for clubs who have rarely visited Europe, as was the case with Bolton Wanderers in 2005-6 and Middlesbrough in 2004-5. **The IFC recommends that an annual meeting takes place before European competitions get underway to ensure that English clubs are fully informed about local and national rules, regulations and traditions, changes to UEFA guidelines and latest security issues. All clubs who have qualified for Europe should be invited along with UEFA, Home Office, Foreign & Commonwealth Office, Security Advisors, Football Association, FA Premier League, Football League, and clubs previously involved in European matches. A second meeting should take place as the competitions unfold. The FA is perfectly placed to organise and facilitate this meeting.** Such a meeting would allow issues of concern to be identified and would certainly help the FCO with their networking and therefore be beneficial to the English clubs in general. It would help all parties in identifying clubs in Europe where potential problems exist. There was such a meeting in January 2005 but there has not been one since then. The FA led this initiative and many clubs that the IFC spoke to thought that it was a valuable idea. Some felt that nothing happened in the aftermath of the January 2005 meeting and that various ideas and proposals were not followed-up and therefore the impetus was lost, however many would like to see something similar organised in the future. The IFC is not keen on having meetings that are unlikely to be beneficial, but it would appear that it would be a valuable few hours for many clubs if there was the chance to exchange ideas, opinions and experiences with one another, plus an input from relevant organisations.

The general impression from clubs the IFC spoke to was that they would like to talk to the other agencies involved in European games. Some of them were unsure of the role of the British Consul. Others weren't clear as to what sort of discussions they should or shouldn't have with UEFA. Consequently, the IFC feels that a meeting of all English clubs involved in Europe would be beneficial, with as many of the agencies as possible being invited to attend.

The FA can also help when clubs need to deal with red tape. Although it was too late to do anything at the time, the FA could have helped Arsenal with problems regarding Channel Tunnel trains. This was obviously an ideal method to transport large numbers of Arsenal fans to and from Paris for the European Champions League final. The French authorities said they would make sure that extra trains were provided on the day of the game and make sure that fans could make their way home on these trains following the game. Unfortunately, the UK authorities refused entry for additional late-night trains. This meant that many Arsenal fans had to sleep rough in Paris until the next morning. The FA is also first point of contact for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office if it is felt that the clubs and their fans should be furnished with important information.

International relations are something else that the FA can help with. Their role in the build-up to and duration of the 2006 World Cup in Germany should be commended. Help in organising things like the 'fans parks' and assisting with the flow of communication between England and Germany showed that when careful planning and thought is applied, a massive tournament with an estimated 150,000 England fans following their team at any one time in a foreign country, can take place without too much in the way of hooliganism. The FA's role in improving the status and image of England fans should be applauded. Their work with 'englandfans' has stood them in good stead and they have steadily built good links with supporters' organisations. The FA should take advantage of this. **The IFC recommends that the Football Association should organise regular meetings with fans' groups. This would help the FA pass on information to the fans while gleaning information from the people who actually go to the games. It is all very well passing on information to the clubs, but this is done with the assumption that the clubs will then hand on that information to their supporters. If clubs are given the opportunity to speak to police, government officials and the football authorities, then the fans should also be allowed to have their input. After all, the vast majority of the planning visits and meetings conducted by the English clubs are done purely with regard to the supporters. This meeting should be separate to the clubs meeting mentioned earlier.**

The FA can also deal with sensitive issues such as racial abuse. It is difficult for an English club to complain on their own about something like this and therefore can look to the FA to lobby UEFA and the European clubs on their behalf should something arise. Racism is something that English football has worked hard to address especially via organisations like Kick It Out and Show Racism the Red Card, but there seems to be a continued problem on the continent with abuse being shouted at English players from both the terraces and the opposing team. It is encouraging that UEFA took a hardline stance over the October 2006 incident in Poland when it was alleged that the Blackburn Rovers striker, Benni McCarthy, was subjected to racist taunts when playing a UEFA Cup match against Wisla Krakow. The FA had earlier confirmed that they would be acting on behalf of Blackburn once they had gathered together all of the information. UEFA said they would look at the issue, but a spokesman said that it would be difficult to substantiate anything. However, UEFA banned the player involved for five European games.

The FA needs to be strong when encouraging UEFA to act, although it is in a tricky situation because UEFA can, in effect, take note of what the English FA says and then do nothing about it. UEFA has to juggle between trying to encourage small nations who generally have limited funds, while making sure that should several thousand English fans turn up on the doorstep of some far flung outpost, they will be safe and secure. The FA needs to continually monitor UEFA and study their actions, or lack of actions, in response to any concerns that may have been raised. It is to be hoped that UEFA do not view the Football Association and English football in general as being a bunch of whingers who think they know best. It is a fact that football in this country has had a lot of

serious problems and, overall, many of those problems have been addressed. The game is by no means perfect in England but it is a lot better, from the majority of fans' point of view, than it was twenty years ago. This experience has been invaluable and should be shared. UEFA should seek help and advice from the English authorities rather than see it as meddling and interfering.

9. THE HOME OFFICE & FOREIGN OFFICE

The Home Office became involved in football following Euro 2000 when there had been a great deal of disorder involving English fans. The UK Government decided to amend the Football Spectators Act 1989 with the Football (Disorder) Act 2000, which gave additional powers to the police and the courts. The Government was concerned about the potential for further problems in the 2002 World Cup in Japan and South Korea, and the Euro 2004 tournament in Portugal. They adopted a three-pronged strategy. The first was to be tough on football offences and increase the number of banning orders. At the time of publishing this report, there are around 3,500 banning orders in place, thereby restricting the movement of a significant number of individuals. The second was the strategy of giving maximum support to the various authorities including overseas Consuls, the Fans Parliament, the Fans Embassy and the various authorities involved in the game. The third strand was to empower fans because otherwise there was a self-fulfilling prophecy that if the fans were denigrated as incapable and disorderly they would behave as such. The main strategy was to have a broad policy of self-policing. As the worst offenders are prevented from going abroad because of banning orders, it's now possible to treat the rest of the fans in a less heavy-handed fashion. The fans have generally responded very well to this as we saw in both Portugal 2004 and World Cup 2006 in Germany. Granted, both tournaments weren't entirely trouble free and English fans cannot remain blameless, but the situation is dramatically improved from only a few years ago and England's reputation is certainly improving within the European football community as having its hooligan problem under control. The Home Office has had a lot of support from the Football Supporters' Federation (FSF) and 'englandfans' that encouraged fans to be disciplined and police themselves. This whole strategy had been multi-agency involving the Foreign and Commonwealth Office because of their Embassies, the Police and the football authorities all working together. A lot of good work is being done by the UK Football Policing Unit partly run by ACPO (Association of Chief Police Officers) and the Home Office. It acts as the national football information point, liaising with similar departments across Europe. It is most encouraging to report that overseas arrests have fallen markedly as a result of the improved strategy.

One match worthy of note is the 2005 European Champions League final in Istanbul. The stadium and surrounding area were not ideal but there were no arrests and no disorder amongst the Liverpool fans, despite many thousands of them being in Istanbul without tickets. The Home Office feels that the nature of football disorder is changing and because fans have the ability to control themselves to a large extent, the general culture is now of football supporters NOT to be violent. This attitude has isolated the violent fans who are much less involved than previously.

As far as the Foreign and Commonwealth Office is concerned their main interest is through the Consular service, rather than the Embassy which tends to get involved in England team games. The FCO has an important role due to the number of English people who arrive on foreign soil and stay for a short period. Throw in the ingredients of people being in a strange place, alcohol, gang bravado, the requirement to keep a match ticket, passport and money safe, possible illness etc, and it is easy to see that the representatives of Her Majesty's Government could be kept busy. But they have a limited role to play in the actual game itself.

Initially, the Foreign Office works in a co-ordination role. Once the draw is made for any European competition, the FCO (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) contacts all of its Embassies and Consular Officials in the relevant destinations. Some smaller European cities do not have their own FCO representative so someone from a neighbouring city is drafted in. The FCO also keeps in touch with the local police forces in England and generally help to keep everyone informed and up to date.

As for the staff at the Consuls, many of them are keen to get involved but their role is mainly to help the English clubs with local issues and interpretation. They will help English fans with any problems as mentioned earlier. The Consulate does not have an 'active' role but they are particularly handy because they usually know the area and can often give advice when perhaps the local officials are being awkward. They can help break down some language barriers and they will know the local traditions. There is also a certain degree of responsibility on their part too, after all it is their role to help British citizens and, when several thousand descend on a city it is only sensible that they should also be part of the organising team. Their knowledge of local police and, of course, the local language was invaluable when Chelsea had problems with a turnstile at Real Betis. The local Consular staff helped direct Chelsea fans to the right entrance and thereby defused what could have become a serious incident although it must be stressed that this is not the role of the Consular staff. There have been incidents in the past where officials have been frightened by events. Consular staff are not front line officials. The host clubs sometimes struggle to get their message across, so this is where the Consul helps.

Football matches are a major problem for Consuls. They suddenly find several thousand English fans turning up in their city for 24 hours, some of whom become boisterous. This places a huge, short term strain on what is often a handful of staff. The main issues are replacing passports with temporary ones, although in most cases, the airline will accept passengers without a passport IF they have flown in on the same aeroplane.

Consuls generally meet both the English and host clubs when they attend pre-match meetings. They help resolve local issues and warn the English clubs of potential problems. They help make the visiting clubs realise that the police react in a different way to what we experience in England when dealing with football fans. Beforehand, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office passes on information to its foreign Consulates such as the number of fans likely to attend and the nature of those fans. In return the Consul will tell the visiting club what they can expect in terms of police support and club support. They can also help the English clubs by continuing conversation and liaison when the pre-match meetings have ended. Arsenal's Match Commander felt that there were frequently occasions during the pre-match meetings when the police or security representative from the host club or local authority, could not answer relevant questions because they were not of a sufficiently superior status. In this instance, it was therefore useful to have the Consul on hand because, once the English club had gone home, they could continue the discussions with the appropriate people and pass on information at a later date.

As soon as the draw is made for a European competition, the FCO sends out a checklist to the clubs and the foreign Consulates. This is to hopefully start off lines of communication. The FCO will then liaise with the FA who acts as point of contact for all football matters. They also liaise with the UK Football Policing Unit. Some clubs get in touch with the FCO immediately for advice, especially those who are either new to European games or are perhaps travelling to a country or city they have never previously visited. The IFC has noted that several clubs would welcome some sort of protocol in the build-up to games. The FCO could help clubs in this respect by pinpointing the important local officials. As much guidance as possible should be given to the clubs.

Theoretically, the FCO should be a good source of early information for fans. They have a special area on their website purely for sports fans that outlines a few basic do's and don'ts. Go to www.fco.gov.uk/travel and click on 'Know Before You Go' if you fancy checking it out. Sadly this service is let down by a lack of information and, at the time of publishing this report which coincides with the busiest time of the European campaign, not a single football match or club is included on their list. If you click onto the 'Sporting Events' tab you will find several pages of information about the England cricket team's 2006-7 tour to Australia and the ICC Cricket World Cup which is staged in the Caribbean in March 2007. There is a full list of fixtures, contacts for tourism news and accommodation, Consular details, tickets details, and even how to get package deals on the Barmy Army's own website. If you are interested in any information regarding your

football team in the European Champions League or UEFA Cup, you will be disappointed. To their credit the FCO did publish an interesting leaflet called "*Avoiding Penalties*"⁷ specifically for the World Cup in Germany. Perhaps something like this could be sent to all fans when they receive their tickets for European games. It took you through some local rules and regulations and gave advice to what fans should and shouldn't do. The FCO was also involved in the excellent "*Free Lions*"⁸ booklet which again provided fans with some simple ground rules. This was a splendid idea; well thought out and well received.

The Football Supporters' Federation (FSF) could turn out to be an excellent source of information for fans travelling abroad. They are in the process of developing an area of their website (www.fsf.org.uk) that will be devoted to fans heading for Europe. It will be compiled by the fans, for the fans and will contain the sort of information they are likely to be interested in. While the Foreign Office may feel that recommending the best bars, best clubs, where to watch the match on TV if you haven't got a ticket and the best variety of local / cheapest brew is something they couldn't possibly get involved with, the FSF is likely to be able to furnish what many supporters will view as the most valuable of all information.

One thorny issue regarding Consular staff was them asking for tickets to the match. There was a sense that many of them were only showing interest in helping the club so that they could get some free tickets. There is no entitlement for the FCO officials to be given tickets, although most clubs expressed their appreciation by providing tickets as a courtesy. Commonsense needs to come into this. It would also seem sensible that Consular staff who were interested in football should be the ones who provide the regular liaison between the host club and the visiting English club. Consuls seem to do a good job providing the clubs with as much information as possible. They can help them provide relevant information for the supporters and ensure that any last minute news in the build-up to the game is passed on. They will also help fans who are in trouble. However, Consuls have limited powers and clubs should not rely too heavily upon this FCO service. The IFC understands that the FCO is drawing up guidelines for Consular staff in dealing with English clubs competing in Europe.

The communication role of the Consular Officials is paramount. **The IFC recommends that as soon as the draw is known, Consular Officers inform the host club of what they can expect with particular emphasis on the likely number of ticket-less fans and the nature of those fans. The host club and the local authorities need to be totally clear as to the category of the visiting English fans. There should also be emphasis on the fact that English fans are much improved in terms of behaviour,** citing the examples of Euro 2004 and the 2006 World Cup. Too often the host clubs think that all England fans are hooligans and that once they have been drawn against an English team that there will be huge problems with violence. This impression is then transmitted to the local authorities who adopt a hard-line approach to the English fans. If the police could be persuaded to adopt a more genial approach, it would help reduce tension. Perhaps it would be useful if the FCO officials could emphasise that with over 3,500 banning orders in place, the hooligans won't be travelling from England and therefore the authorities can relax a little more.

Overall the help from the FCO was welcomed, although the service appears to be rather patchy. Some clubs thought that the Consular Official did an excellent job and frequently helped set up additional meetings when the host club seemed reluctant. Others saw them as freeloaders. However, as more and more fans gain access to cheap flights to local airports, it would seem that the role of the FCO and Home Office will continue to increase, as will the inevitable problems that seem to be generated by thousands of English fans arriving in a foreign country.

⁷ *Avoiding Penalties (World Cup 2006)*: published by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office

⁸ *Free Lions* booklet: published by the Football Supporters' Federation

10. THE HOST CLUBS

To take part in any European competition, clubs must abide by the rules and regulations laid out by UEFA. There has recently been a brand new set of standards delivered to all national FAs around Europe. These will be passed on to the appropriate clubs. This ranges from security and policing, to general facilities like seats, lavatories and catering. To say that standards vary across Europe is putting it very mildly indeed. During its investigations, the IFC has witnessed everything from small, tidy grounds that do a great job despite having very limited space and obvious financial constraints, to massive national stadia that, quite frankly, should be demolished. How some of them even manage to gain a safety certificate, let alone stage a football match, is staggering. Those fans who attended games in England over 20 years ago will feel like they are stepping back in time. They will recognise many of the problems they faced then when they go to various European countries to watch a game of football.

Most of these problems stem from a general lack of finance. Here in England we have become used to many clubs spending millions of pounds building new grounds or improving existing stadia. The 2005-6 season saw most of England's richest clubs taking part in European competitions. Followers of those clubs have become used to watching their games in stadia of high quality and it is therefore understandable that they can be rather surprised by what they find when travelling to the continent to watch a match.

Many countries that come under the UEFA banner are in dire straits when it comes to the financial strength of their football clubs. It is a credit to those clubs from Europe's smallest countries that they even reach the qualifying stages of competitions. This has become one of the attractive features of the UEFA Cup and in particular the Intertoto Cup. Whereas clubs in the Champions League tend to face similar opposition, year in year out, those teams who are in Europe's lesser competitions can find themselves travelling to some far flung destinations, especially in the early rounds.

UEFA has recognised that there is a dramatic imbalance between the wealth and strength of football in some countries when compared to the rest of Europe. The *Independent European Sports Review* (2006) highlighted this issue and gave various possible solutions. What it does lead to though is wide variations in the standard of stadia across Europe.

The role of the host club is, obviously, to stage the match. They will have needed to comply with all of the various UEFA rules and regulations as mentioned earlier. In some instances, the club's stadium is deemed either unfit or too small. Perhaps modernisation work is taking place and the club is playing elsewhere for one or two seasons. However, wherever the match is being staged, it needs to fulfil all of the UEFA Criteria A requirements and as many as possible from Criteria B, C and D.

English clubs traditionally take their preparations very seriously indeed and generally insist on a pre-match visit. Host clubs in many European countries do not bother to plan ahead. They rarely send many fans to away games and, in some instances, their stadium doesn't belong to them. They simply do not understand why there should be an additional visit to the ones that normally take place on the eve of the game and on the day of the game itself. We have noted that promises made at these meetings sometimes are not kept, arrangements have been altered and, on one occasion, the local police refused to speak to the UK police representatives. We have also noted that when European clubs come to England, they rarely bother to send anything more than a token party for a planning visit. Some don't bother at all.

It should be remembered that English clubs do these visits mainly for their fans. It gives them reassurance that their travelling supporters will be safe. It allows them to gather additional information that can be passed on to the supporters. A lot of research takes place that the fans

probably do not appreciate. They are not aware of the level of attention being made on their behalf. All of the English clubs witnessed by the IFC researchers, made strenuous efforts to ensure that everything was carefully planned and that the travelling fan would arrive at a sensible time to allow some sightseeing; that their journey to the ground would be safe and that the match can be enjoyed in reasonable surroundings. Their departure from the game is also planned. Obviously some fans will make their own arrangements, but the club still provides every fan with as much information as possible. The IFC applauds the dedication of the small band of people within English football clubs who spend long hours, often battling against local idiosyncrasies and language difficulties, trying to make sure that the club's fans have a completely hassle-free trip. **The IFC was particularly impressed with the contents of the briefing information provided by the clubs to their travelling supporters, although the IFC recommends that this information should be sent to them as soon as possible.** The IFC party travelling with Middlesbrough FC to their game in Rome received important information on the aeroplane travelling out. One of the suggestions provided by the club was that if fans lost their passports or had them stolen, it would be sensible to take two passport sized photographs with them plus a photocopy of their passport so that a new passport could be quickly issued by the authorities in Italy. This was a good idea, but rendered totally useless by telling fans too late in the day.

At several pre-match meetings, the IFC witnessed that representatives from the host club weren't really interested. They appeared bored. On several occasions, the senior people from police, stewards, ticketing department etc, were not in attendance. When Arsenal went to the Bernabeu for their meeting on the day before the Real Madrid game, most of the security officials had gone to the wrong place. All of this was hugely frustrating for the English club personnel. Bearing in mind that most English clubs travel to every game with several thousands fans, surely it would be in the host club's interests to do everything in their power to assist.

There is a feeling among many European clubs that being drawn against an English team means only one thing: trouble from fans. They assume that our fans will cause havoc. They see England as the home of hooliganism. Some of the enlightened clubs see English clubs as a massive opportunity to promote their town or city and enjoy a useful pay day in terms of ticket sales. It is unlikely that some of the bars and restaurants, hotels and clubs in the vicinity of the stadium, will enjoy a more lucrative couple of days than when the English fans come calling. The 2006 World Cup showed what can be done with some preparation and imagination. The German and English officials worked very closely in the full knowledge that, despite regular appeals, thousands of England supporters would travel to Germany without a ticket. Rather than putting up barriers and preparing to arrest and expel as many England fans as possible, the authorities made them welcome. They provided facilities for the England fans and made sure that they felt welcome, whether or not they had a ticket to the game. It is estimated that wherever England played, there were 70,000 England fans in the city before and after the match. The authorities knew the fans would turn up, so they did their utmost to make sure they had a good time. The England fans responded by, in the main, behaving sensibly. In two years time there will be a similar need for the authorities to be fully prepared. All being well, England will qualify for Euro 2008. It can be assumed that a similar number of England fans will travel to the tournament which is being staged jointly by Austria and Switzerland. However, the problem of ticket-less fans is likely to be even greater simply because the stadia are smaller than those in Germany.

So, with this in mind, **the IFC recommends that UEFA encourages the major cities where English teams are likely to play in various European competitions, to consider welcoming ticket-less English fans** rather than merely 'burying their heads in the sand' and preparing for a period of 24-48 hours where they will keep their fingers crossed that, by mounting a near-military operation, they will manage to keep everything in check. Rather than seeing thousands of ticket-less English fans as a nuisance, see them as an opportunity to promote their town, city, region and country and hopefully encourage them to return as tourists in the future. The ticket-less fans will be coming in any case, so make use of them. The IFC is in no way promoting fans to travel

without a ticket, merely recognising that this is a 'problem' that won't be going away and is only likely to increase.

Too often the host clubs made mistakes with details printed on the tickets sent to English clubs. It is imperative that fans know precisely where they are going when arriving at a strange ground. Any confusion can lead to aggravation and congestion. Chelsea fans arriving in Seville for their game against Real Betis were told to use a variety of entrances into the stadium. This included Gate 19. It turned out that only Gate 17 was available to the Chelsea fans, despite many supporters having tickets that clearly showed Gate 19. FA Advisors witnessed Chelsea fans being manhandled away from the area of Gate 19 by Spanish police. One lady was struck with police batons and punched. Chelsea also had entry problems in Barcelona. At a pre-match meeting, Barcelona officials had told Chelsea that their fans would enter via Gate 46. At extremely short notice, Barcelona then changed this to Gate 51. This caused problems as it was difficult to contact Chelsea fans to tell them of the changes. This meant that Chelsea fans arrived unsure as to what was going on. It is interesting to note that the FA Advisor who accompanied Chelsea to Barcelona had also been with them when they visited the Nou Camp in the same competition in February 2005. Fans were originally instructed to enter via Gate 21. However, it soon became clear that fans were also being allowed through Gate 19. Barriers had been erected so that stewards could search and check tickets but this arrangement ceased at 8.00pm, 45 minutes before kick off. It was then decided that Chelsea fans would need to enter only via Gate 46, despite having other gate details printed on their tickets. This caused considerable pressure on Gate 46 although at 8.50pm the police decided to leave the area, the gates were opened, and it was possible for completely uncontrolled entry. The FA Advisor witnessed many fans entering the stadium who were drunk and without a ticket leading to a serious danger of disorder from undesirable people.

Two IFC officials attended Bolton's match in Marseille. They both had tickets for Block P. Once inside the stadium, there was a long queue to find seats. Confusion was caused by there being no Block P. The IFC officials backtracked to find a steward and were told to go and sit anywhere. This led to a large degree of milling around. At Chelsea's game against Real Betis, the FA Advisor spent several minutes trying to find the seat that corresponded to the details on his ticket. He couldn't find it. He then approached one of the Real Betis stewards for directions, but he couldn't find it either. As one fan who e-mailed the IFC commented:-

"Seat details on the ticket! What a waste of ink."

Finding a seat became something of a lottery at many grounds. In games between AS Roma and Middlesbrough, Marseille and Bolton, and Basel and Middlesbrough the IFC witnessed what seemed to be a general rule amongst stewards. The match ticket merely gets spectators into the stadium. After that, fans can sit anywhere. If there is plenty of space, this is not a serious problem, but in the event of a large crowd, this can cause confusion, frustration amongst fans who find someone is sitting in their seat, congestion because fans want to get the best view and therefore avoid the areas where perhaps there may be a restricted view and crowd into the areas where the entire pitch can be seen and, of course, reduce the flow of fans exiting the stadium in the event of an emergency. This also encourages fans to stand rather than sit, purely because there are more people standing in the row than there are seats. There is also a tendency for people to spill over into the stairways and concourse areas where they continue to stand for the duration of the game. In Basel, it was simple to migrate from one section of the ground to another. Many Middlesbrough fans with tickets on the lower tier felt that they would be better off moving into the next tier for an improved view. None of the stewards checked tickets or did anything to stem the flow of people. For the first half hour of the game, there seemed to be a steady trickle of people wandering from tier to tier.

Many fans also find it rather intimidating if they are forced to confront someone merely to allow them into an area or seat that they have paid for and been allocated by their club. This Liverpool

fan contacted the IFC about a similar experience when he travelled to Portugal with three friends to watch his side's Champions League game against Benfica:-

"When we got to the ground we were informed by stewards that there was free seating and that everyone could choose where they sat. This led to all sorts of incidents where the most forceful and unpleasant people dominated the prime positions and, although the four of us were together, we ended up being crowded into our four seats by an extra five people. This in turn meant that we were forced to stand for the duration of the game. We saw one fight amongst our 'fellow' fans and several heated exchanges caused by this seating policy. Some of us aren't as big and forceful as others and are not inclined to disagree with the less civilised members of the football community. By ensuring that tickets are applied to seats and seating plans are adhered to, the enjoyment of such occasions would not be spoilt for the likes of myself and my friends. This experience will certainly make me think twice about travelling abroad to a game next season."

For some fans, there were no seats in the first place. According to UEFA legislation, any stadium that wants to be given a licence to stage a European game MUST fulfil the requirement that every fan should have a seat. That seat must be securely fixed to the floor, have a backrest of at least 30cm, be individual and be numbered. In several of the games attended by IFC personnel, this was not the case. Chelsea's officials felt that the Anderlecht stadium was a disgrace for a club playing in the Champions League. The seats, which IFC officials witnessed at several grounds, were moulded pads that had been fastened to terracing normally used by fans for standing during league games. Most seats had no numbers, while those that did, were all mixed up. Hence seat numbers on tickets for Chelsea fans were irrelevant. This was really a standing area made into a seating area purely for the Champions League.

Middlesbrough fans had to do without seats at AS Roma and Steaua Bucharest. In the AS Roma stadium, the seats were filthy because most fans, both for this game and no doubt most previous matches, stood on them. In comparison though, these seats were luxurious to those found in Bucharest. Due to renovation work going on at the Steaua ground, this match, the semi-final of the UEFA Cup and therefore a prestigious game, was played in the national stadium. The report from the FA Advisor sums things up perfectly:-

"The stadium is in a serious state of disrepair. Steps leading to the top of the bowl are poorly maintained and uneven. The lighting is poor. Various repairs to broken seats have been performed by bolting replacement seats on top of the existing broken seats. In several instances the bolts protruded some two inches from the back of the seats and posed a hazard to those sitting behind. Several blocks of seats had come away from their mountings and areas of concrete have started breaking up."

At the UEFA meeting, the FA Advisor was so concerned about the state of the section where the 1,750 Middlesbrough fans were supposed to go, that he suggested two of the sections should be cordoned off. The club and police agreed to this.

In their game against Olympique Marseille, Bolton fans had to choose either a flat pad seat, or sit on the concrete where one of the pads had been removed. These seats were also filthy due to people standing on them. Only a handful of seats had numbers on them but it didn't really matter because stewards were instructing fans to sit / stand wherever they fancied. It is interesting to note that in the previous UEFA Cup campaign when Newcastle Utd visited Marseille, (6th May 2004) there were similar issues with the lack of seats. The FA Advisor for that particular game commented that at one stage there was a large surge of fans caused by someone falling over. He felt that this was as a result of the missing seats. He also pointed out that the surge was possible because in an area where seating had been removed altogether, there were no crush barriers.

This is a major concern at grounds where flat seat pads are used instead of proper seats. Fans stand on these pads and turn the seating area into a standing terrace. As happened in the Newcastle Utd game at Marseille, it only needs someone to fall forward or push, and this could very easily lead to a surge and crushing.

The extremely experienced FA Advisor who travelled with Bolton for their game in Marseille also attended a pre-match (4th January 2006) visit some seven weeks before the game was due to take place (23rd February 2006). In his report he comments:-

"In March and May of 2004 respectively, Liverpool and Newcastle visited and played UEFA cup matches against Marseille. There have been no structural changes since those games and sadly, the accommodation for visiting supporters is inadequate and does not comply with UEFA regulations (and) nothing has been done to rectify the problem. At the Newcastle match, the UEFA delegate expressed his concern and I am sure he would report the facts to UEFA".

The FA Advisor finally adds:-

"The upper part of the stand (where the Bolton fans would be) is just concrete rafts which can be sat on in hot sunny weather, but in truth is totally inappropriate for seating. When I queried the situation with Marseille officials, I was informed that the matter was in hand...eventually. We also have to accept that the stadium has locally certified as safe. It would not be the case in England".

The accommodation for visiting fans at the Marseille stadium has now become renowned. The problems crop up on a regular basis and, until UEFA decide to do something about it, will persist. Marseille appear to have got away with it in the past, so one can safely assume they will try to do so in the future.

One Bolton Wanderers fan who e-mailed the IFC summed things up:-

"The security operation seemed excessive. We were herded into a large shed where we were searched and then held before being allowed into the stadium. Once inside, there were no stewards in the seating area which meant no-one paid attention to the seat numbers. The view from the visitors section was the worst I have experienced at any stadium. A fence runs in line with the goal line which means that for most fans in the visitors section, they watch the entire game, with the exception of action in the far end goalmouth, through a fence. The fence has been constructed with no attempt to minimise its impact. Appalling."

At Real Madrid's Bernabeu stadium, what appeared to be a minor irritation quickly developed into a problem that caused confusion and a lot of milling about by the fans. The rows of seats were marked with letters in the normal fashion. Row A was at the front and then as you moved further back up the stand, the letters changed accordingly in alphabetic order. However, the seats themselves were numbered in odds and evens. If you turned right, the seats were numbered 2,4,6,8 etc. Those to the left were 1,3,5,7 etc. For the fans that arrived early, it was easy to spot this and, once discovering for example that seat number 21 wasn't to be found between seats 20 and 22, it was a simple matter to turn around and head to the opposite rows. When the stadium was busy however, this caused a lot of irritation as fans would struggle along the row apologising to everyone, only to find that they'd gone the wrong way and needed go back the way they'd just come. It is unlikely that Real Madrid would re-number their entire stadium purely at the request of

English clubs but it would be handy if there were signs or prior information given to the visiting fans.

During the IFC's meeting with UEFA, there was a tendency for them to stand behind local rules and legislation, saying that if the local authorities had regulations stating that the pad style of seats were put in place so that the area could be swiftly evacuated in the event of an emergency, then surely it is up to UEFA to decide whether or not *they* feel that the stadium is safe. According to their regulations, the area used by the visiting fans at the Olympique Marseille stadium does not meet their required standards. It didn't meet them when Bolton played there on 23rd February 2006. It didn't meet them when Newcastle played there mid 2004. Interestingly, the FA Advisor who attended the pre-match meeting for the Newcastle game noted that the UEFA delegate made the point that the missing seats in the visiting supporters section had to be replaced for future UEFA matches. Plainly, this has not happened. Granted, it would appear that the stadium meets with local French regulations, but it plainly does not meet with the UEFA regulations. UEFA cannot hide behind this. If they feel that all stadia for their competitions should be of a certain standard, then they must adhere to their own rules and insist that if a club wants to be involved, then they need to get their act together otherwise suffer the consequences.

The host club is obliged to provide instructions and directions, (both printed and verbal) in the language of the visiting club. This is to help supporters find their way around the stadium to locate the correct seating area and amenities, but more importantly to make sure they know how to exit the stadium in the event of an emergency. 40 minutes before Middlesbrough's game kicked off in Stuttgart, a smoke detector triggered an automatic emergency announcement asking all spectators to leave the stadium immediately. The broadcast was in German only, leaving the Middlesbrough fans unsure as to what was happening and what they should do. The FA Advisor commented that stewards did eventually begin to encourage Middlesbrough fans to leave the stadium, but the IFC official who was amongst the Middlesbrough fans heard or saw nothing in this respect and therefore remained in the stadium with all of the other Middlesbrough fans in her section. She only knew that an evacuation had been announced when she read about it the following day in her local newspaper. To compound the situation further, security officials isolated the problem and another announcement was made to cancel the evacuation. Again, this was not done in English. This meant that those Boro fans who had begun to leave the stadium were then asked to turn around and go back. This hopeless situation was extremely confusing for everyone concerned. Thankfully, although Middlesbrough fans were not adversely affected by anything, it exemplifies how vital seconds can be lost when people are not given precise, clear information.

Everyone involved in organising a football match needs to know exactly what will happen and what might happen. Plans and precautions can then be put into place. It would be beneficial to all parties if the host club made every effort to assist the English club representatives and make sure that information, instructions and directions were accurate and could be understood. Leaving everything until the meeting on the eve of the game or even the day of the game itself is cutting things very fine. Every club involved in Europe should be encouraged to do their utmost to help with any arrangements, no matter how far in advance of the game. This can only improve the chances of a trouble-free, safe and secure match. Communication is vital.

Lastly in this section of the report it seems only right to point out that sometimes things do go wrong in this country. English clubs are well organised and it is a rarity for there to be problems when European clubs travel to our shores. It should be reiterated that continental clubs do not travel in anything like the numbers that follow the English clubs. In early rounds of the UEFA or Intertoto Cups, English clubs can take hundreds or thousands of fans to far flung corners of Europe while only a handful travel to England. But, that is not to say that everything always runs smoothly.

During the 2005-6 season Chelsea entertained Anderlecht and the Belgian fans were dropped off in the wrong place. They could not get into central London because it clashed with the day of the

England cricket team's tour through the streets to celebrate their Ashes victory. This meant that hundreds of Belgian fans were milling around in the streets near Stamford Bridge. The pubs and bars in the area were crammed with Belgians, so much so that when the Chelsea fans arrived for a drink in their regular haunts, there was no room. This led to aggravation between both sets of fans and there was some damage to one of the pubs. There was also the problem that the coaches that dropped off the fans did not have any sort of numbering. Consequently, at the end of the game, the Belgians took a long time to finally board their transport. This led to tension because of the number of Chelsea fans in the vicinity.

There was plainly a breakdown in communication at some stage but it must be emphasised that the vast majority of European games in this country take place without any trouble and with both sets of fans having an enjoyable evening. It is a rarity for the visiting fans to be held back; most are allowed out at the same time as the English fans.

11. TICKETING

Ask any fan or any club what the main problem is when it comes to European games, and you will almost certainly get the same answer. Ticketing. There are invariably too few tickets to go around. This is rarely a problem for continental clubs travelling to watch games in England because of the lower numbers of supporters who are prepared to make the journey, but it is a regular concern and irritation for any English club travelling to Europe. This leads to a series of problems. There seems to be inevitable confusion in England whenever tickets are being allocated. Many fans cannot work out how tickets are given to some fans and not to others. Clubs generally have a rigid system depending on season tickets and matches attended but there never seems to be a satisfactory conclusion. This then leads to other problems. Fans without tickets bought from legitimate club sources, will then look elsewhere. Ticket touts were in evidence at many games attended by IFC officials during the course of their investigations. Touts know that when an English club is in town, there will almost certainly be hundreds of fans looking for a ticket. A Dutch tout was arrested before Arsenal's game v Ajax in Amsterdam. He was in possession of eight tickets that had been sold through the Arsenal FC membership scheme. Arsenal took action against the members involved. Arsenal officials also witnessed widespread selling of black market tickets for their game in Villarreal. In the build-up to Chelsea's game against Real Betis in Seville, touts were observed standing outside the Real Betis ticket office selling tickets in the Chelsea sector for twice their face value...€80 instead of €40. In a previous season, Chelsea reported to the IFC that they had seen police in Moscow accepting money in exchange for either a ticket or entry into the stadium. IFC officers, attending the Champions League final, were approached by a hopeful tout who offered a ticket for €1,000. They also witnessed many Arsenal and Barcelona fans desperately searching for tickets.

One Arsenal fan felt that it should be made a priority of football in general to rid the game of ticket touts and find out where they were sourcing their tickets. In his e-mail to the IFC he said:-

"In both Madrid and Paris, tickets were changing hands for well above their face value. The tickets were readily available and unjustifiably overpriced by dubious dealers around the grounds. The unanimous feeling of fellow fans was that some form of monitoring system is crucial to maintain the integrity of these competitions for the travelling fans. Tickets should not be able to be passed on for monetary gain and that if sponsors or other benefactors are not using their full allocation of tickets by a certain date, then those tickets should be redistributed to genuine football fans via the clubs concerned."

It should be noted that in the 2006 *Independent European Sports Review*, chaired by Jose Luis Arnaut, the issue of ticket touts was an area considered to be in need of close attention.

"We recommend that the EU institutions employ the relevant instrument to provide legal certainty and coverage in relation to....enactment of appropriate legal framework to combat the practice of ticket touting in Europe."

Some clubs sell tickets on the day of the game, anticipating the arrival of English fans who have not been able to buy tickets from their own club. This is only done if all parties are in agreement. However, some of these ticket sales are indiscriminate. Everton, for example, sold their allocation of 1,800 tickets for their game against Villarreal. It is estimated that a further 1,500 fans made the journey to Spain and gained access to the home areas of the stadium. Fighting broke out after Villarreal scored. Bolton fans who had purchased legitimate tickets via the club were particularly aggrieved during their game in Marseille when those Bolton fans who had bought tickets locally were admitted into an area of the ground that had a far superior view than the one afforded to the 'official' fans. They had better seating too. This infuriated many Bolton fans, one of whom commented to the IFC personnel that such action didn't do much to instil confidence in the ticket

allocating policy of Bolton Wanderers. This wasn't Bolton's fault but, as with most situations when a fan is unhappy, they lay the blame at the door of their own club. Arsenal rapidly sold their allocation of 3,650 tickets for the game against Real Madrid. At the end of the game when the Madrid fans had left the stadium, there were pockets of Arsenal fans scattered around the Bernabeu. It is estimated that as many as 2,000 had bought tickets for the home sections of the stadium. It is obviously tempting, especially for smaller European clubs, to sell as many tickets as they can, but many seem prepared to sell tickets for the home sections to the visiting English fans. This is obviously an unwise thing for the English fan to do and exposes them to potential danger, but many are obviously prepared to take the risk. It also compromises the safety measures put in place by the local authorities. However, one club commented to the IFC that they felt it was often the local police who encouraged the sale of these tickets because they were keen to get English fans off the streets.

It would seem logical that UEFA chooses a stadium that is big enough to cope with demand. Although the IFC would not wish to see small clubs prevented from qualifying for or entering European competitions, there must surely be some sort of consideration given to the capacity of the venue that is awarded the final. Middlesbrough were allocated just 9,200 tickets for their UEFA Cup final against Seville. The match was staged at PSV Eindhoven. This caused an immediate problem because it would be impossible to satisfy the demand for tickets. Middlesbrough at that stage had around 24,000 season ticket holders. The PSV Eindhoven stadium had a capacity of just 32,000 for this match which is hopelessly inadequate bearing in mind that the recent average attendance since the UEFA Cup final switched to a neutral venue, has been in the region of 52,000. **The IFC recommends that UEFA recognises that a higher proportion of fans will wish to follow their club to the final of any competition and therefore a stadium should be chosen that is large enough to cope with demand.**

Another problem is caused by the Internet. Many clubs now sell their tickets on-line. There appears to be a whole range of methods in circumventing the rules and regulations regarding the sale of tickets over the web. This varies from ex-pats buying tickets on behalf of fans back in England to others simply using false details and collecting tickets on the evening of the game. One particular scam seems to be registering one address officially and then using dozens of different names for that address. As long as the person requests only a couple of tickets per day, many club databases do not appear to be picking up the repeat transactions. No doubt there are other ways of beating the ticketing system via the Internet, but clubs do finally seem to be latching on to this problem.

Allowing fans from one club into an area populated by the fans from another club, is asking for trouble. There needs to be clear segregation and a definite sterile zone where no fans are allowed. If fans can either get at one another or be within distance of throwing missiles, there is a temptation for trouble to break out. When Middlesbrough faced FC Basel in Switzerland, even the UEFA official was concerned about the minimal segregation between the two sets of fans. This consisted of some flimsy netting laid from the back of the stand to the front, stretched over just four sets. A handful of stewards were in attendance. The UEFA official's concerns were well founded because at the start of the second half, drinks were thrown across the segregation area, scuffles broke out which the stewards could not control. Riot police came in and tear gas was used to break up the disorder. Without a no-go area between the two sets of fans, something minor like the throwing of drinks was bound to aggravate the situation.

Arsenal fans were pelted with missiles thrown by Italian fans during their game against Juventus in Turin. Thankfully the particular area where the Arsenal fans were situated was sparsely populated, so the police moved the Arsenal fans further away. It could have been much worse in another area of the stadium though where Arsenal fans were in amongst the Juventus supporters. There was no segregation whatsoever. This was intimidating for those people sat on the edges of the Arsenal group of fans and it made it rather threatening when either heading to the refreshment area or lavatories. Thankfully for the Arsenal fans seated in this section, there were no problems,

but it could have very easily become inflamed. There were no police or stewards in the main body of the stand, only at the entrance / exit areas. There had been similar missile-throwing incidents with other English clubs visiting this stadium in previous seasons. The situation wasn't helped by one of the local senior police officials being interviewed on English radio, confirming that Arsenal fans were likely to be met with a barrage of stones, coins etc. This led to a more heightened atmosphere in the build-up to the game. Twelve Arsenal fans were mugged on their way to the stadium. Chelsea fans had to endure a barrage of coins being thrown by Real Betis fans at the stadium in Seville. Middlesbrough fans were threatened in Rome when some of the home supporters rushed past a cordon of stewards and attempted to climb a fence between the two sets of fans.

All of this could be helped if there was a sizeable neutral area devoid of fans and that ticket allocations took account of this. High netting would help plus the attendance of police and stewards to deter any breach of security. Many grounds have all of these measures, but there is an impression that some would prefer to take a risk while squeezing in a few extra fans. For the UEFA official to express concern at the thin line of security on the morning of the game between FC Basel and Middlesbrough is leaving things far too late. **The IFC recommends that authorities must ensure adequate segregation before tickets go on sale.**

A recent innovation at football stadia is ticket-reading machines. They help in the detection of forgeries and monitor the number of people entering the ground. It should help with security too because it could remove the danger of a steward misreading a ticket when giving it a cursory glance. As more and more stadia are fitted with these machines they should become increasingly reliable but when they malfunction it causes a serious problem. During Arsenal's Champions League final in Paris against Barcelona, the ticket-reading machines developed a problem. This meant that the entry of Arsenal fans into one section of the stadium was reduced to a trickle at times. By 8.00pm a large crowd had congregated and they became increasingly frustrated and aggressive. An FA Advisor witnessed fans shouting at police. Some fans tried to push in past the turnstiles. The police reaction to this was to shut one of the turnstiles, merely adding to the problem. There were several complaints regarding crushing. The IFC was caught up in this particularly nasty incident at the Stade de France. There seemed to be problems with three turnstiles at Gate K, so this put a lot of pressure on the remaining one. Only a trickle of fans were making their way into the ground. There were no English speaking stewards to explain why there was such a long delay. A large, dense crowd of fans built up and, although there was no crushing at this stage, the area was particularly congested and there was a fair amount of pushing because fans were becoming anxious that they may miss the start of the match. Suddenly, a police van arrived and tried to force its way through the mass of supporters. Police officers alighted from the van and shouted at the Arsenal fans to move out of the way, but there was nowhere to move to. The police then took out their batons and riot shields and tried to physically force the Arsenal fans back. The atmosphere became very tense and frightening and plainly people were starting to get crushed. Eventually, commonsense prevailed as the police realised that they were never going to be able to break through the crowd. They gave up and departed.

Several Arsenal fans contacted the IFC about this same incident and commented:-

"The treatment of fans attempting to enter the stadium at the Arsenal end was nothing short of disgraceful. If the fans hadn't attempted to control the crowd themselves, there would have been serious injuries. The French police were totally inexperienced and, apart from trying to ride into a dangerously congested crowd, stood back and watched. The crush was caused by a malfunctioning gate. The police attitude was that they were there not for crowd control but to police the Arsenal fans as potential troublemakers. As there was a high percentage of visibly distressed women and children in the crowd, their attitude was negligent."

Another Arsenal fan added:-

“The way we were treated was disgraceful. There was a heaving and increasingly angry crowd unable to get in. No announcement of any sort was made and the risk of injury was very real. There were no stewards visible outside the ground to organise us as we pushed to get in as kick off approached. The whole experience was nasty; I had visions of a Hillsborough. It spoiled my enjoyment of what should have been a great occasion. The failure to communicate to us why there was a delay was key to the disturbed atmosphere.”

One fan pointed out that things could have deteriorated rapidly but felt he knew the reason for the delays:-

“As more people arrived, a crush began to form. Within half an hour we had moved only a couple of metres. The actions of the French police only made the situation worse. Apparently there were a lot of forged tickets around. This was making entry into the stadium slow. The authorities should have put a cordon around the ground and checked the tickets before people got to the turnstiles. Also, people were being searched just after they got through the turnstile which just gets in the way. Also, the tickets had barcodes which had to be read. This is a time consuming method especially as tickets get creased and covered in beer. The biggest match of my life, ruined by some poor organisation. This is the 21st century; it's not a new problem though.”

And a final Arsenal supporter's comment on this matter:-

“The French CRS are without doubt the worst police force.”

As the Arsenal fan implies above, barcode-reading ticket machines might seem like a good idea, but that they appear to struggle to read anything apart from a completely flat ticket. Bearing in mind that many fans will have had their ticket stuffed in a wallet or pocket for many hours, it is highly unlikely that most tickets will be anything other than crumpled.

New ideas regarding the distribution of tickets to the away fans are also surfacing. For example, rather than sending out tickets to fans, they are given vouchers. This has several advantages. It means that the visiting club can control their fans, so if fans arrive at the stadium and can't prove who they are, they won't be given a ticket, irrespective of having a voucher. This need for a voucher AND identification should help in the battle against ticket touts. If supporters arrive drunk, they won't be given a ticket. It also stops fans buying cheaper, early round tickets against potentially unattractive opposition, merely to accumulate 'points' for future rounds. The points system is how many clubs allocate tickets to fans. If fans can prove that they have bought tickets for the early rounds of a European competition, it usually stands them in good stead for future matches. However, many fans simply throw away their tickets for the early rounds while guaranteeing a 'point' on the club's database as having got a ticket for the away game and therefore qualifying for tickets in later stages of the competition. But, with the voucher system, if the fan doesn't turn up to cash it in for a ticket on the day of the game, it is assumed that they haven't bothered to travel and merely bought the ticket to notch-up loyalty points. Obviously, this requires the club to send more staff to the away game, although Arsenal FC confirmed that, in the scheme of things, if added expense was deemed to make it safer and more effective for their fans, then money wouldn't come into it...the club would go ahead and implement this idea. Some fans will also feel that it is up to them how they spend their money and, if they decide to throw away their ticket then that is up to them. However, the IFC takes the view that it seems only fair that when future rounds come along in a European competition, that tickets are allocated to fans who

not only bought a ticket for the less attractive and not so easily accessible matches, but they also proved their loyalty by taking the time and trouble to follow their team in person.

It would also be useful if clubs could speed-up the sale of their tickets and inform fans as soon as possible whether they have been successful in getting a ticket allocated to them. The IFC appreciates that the timetable for European matches is sometimes very tight and that there is only a short period of time between finding out which team you play next in a competition and the actual night of the game. Particularly in the latter stages of competitions there is inevitably some sort of strict formula as to whether fans do or do not qualify for tickets. This frustrates many fans because they are left in limbo and restricts their chances of booking cheap flights well in advance. One Liverpool fan commented to the IFC:-

“The biggest complaint of my wife and I is the length of time taken to organise ticket allocations and their selling arrangements. You have to wait to find out whether you have been successful in applying for a ticket, making it impossible to secure relatively competitive prices for travel. It is frequently not until the week of the game that we are told whether or not we have tickets. To me, this is crazy. All clubs should know at the start of the season what the minimum allocation for away fans is likely to be and what the price should be. The visiting club would then have this information from the moment the draw is made and could start organising around it. Sure, if more tickets become available, then all well and good, but at least the minimum number has already been dealt with. This is a huge issue when trying to organise flights and hotels at the last minute.”

A Bolton Wanderers fan has a similar view:-

“The Guimaraes tickets only arrived in Bolton about one week before the game. This meant that we only found out we had been successful with our application approximately four days before heading out to Portugal. With European games, for which flights have to be booked and accommodation arranged, tickets should be allocated and despatched to the relevant club as soon as possible after the draw is made, thus reducing the cost of travel for fans as the later flights are booked, the more expensive they become.”

The IFC appreciates that the allocation of tickets will sometimes leave a number of fans disgruntled, but every effort must be taken to explain the allocation formula and pricing as quickly as possible, and then let fans know at the earliest opportunity whether they have been successful.

The IFC recommends research into how tickets can be prevented from falling into the wrong hands and encourage the authorities to ensure adequate segregation before tickets go on sale. They should also investigate whether the allocation and sale of tickets can be speeded up.

12. THE FANS

Of course, although this report is aimed at improving the experience of English fans travelling abroad and aiming to ensure that they have a safe and enjoyable time, there is also a large amount of responsibility resting on the shoulders of the fans themselves. More and more people travel abroad for a holiday or on business; indeed many of them will be returning to a country or city they have visited previously with friends or family or as part of their occupation. Consequently, it is not unreasonable to expect that most fans should know how to behave when visiting a foreign country. There are local laws and traditions; there are things you should and shouldn't do. Policing varies widely from country to country. Some actions will be tolerated in certain countries whereas in a neighbouring country you may find yourself in trouble.

Communication is a key feature here. Fans should be fully informed as to what they must and must not do. As previously mentioned, the IFC has recommended that the experiences of fans from other clubs should be circulated amongst the supporters. It is more likely that fans will take note of what happened to other fans rather than listen to the instructions and directions from their club or UK police. As one Bolton fan who had endured an unpleasant experience in Marseille told the IFC:-

"My experiences in Marseille (he had been attacked in the port area by some home fans) have not put me off taking in away European ties in the future, but it will definitely influence the choice of games I decide to go to and possibly make me take more notice of events of previous English club visits, for example the experience of Middlesbrough fans in Rome this year."

This distribution of experiences is likely to be fairly straightforward in regard to the European Champions League fixtures where we are increasingly seeing the same clubs involved in the competition on a regular basis. Although it isn't always the case, most English clubs travelling to face European clubs of a high standard, will find that their fans are situated in the same area of the ground as other English clubs who have visited previously. Their fans are likely to head for the same bars or holding areas and, for those staying overnight they will usually stay in the same hotels. The turnstiles are likely to be the same or very similar and the routine of getting to and from the stadium, airport or coach areas, will also be similar. It should therefore be a reasonably simple process for English clubs to glean information from one another and pass on instructions and experiences to their own fans.

However, this is more tricky in the UEFA Cup especially the early rounds where English clubs can find themselves travelling to some remote, far-flung destinations. There are likely to be fewer fans making the journey and, if it is a destination away from major cities or in a country not generally visited by large numbers of English people, then there are likely to be fewer options in terms of direct flights from local airports. Hardened supporters though, will shrug off these complications and complete the journey one way or another.

Fans should be given as much advance information as possible. This information needs to be accurate. On several occasions the IFC has noted that fans are given information on the flight out to the game. While this is useful as a final reminder and is probably the last occasion when the club has got fans together in one place and therefore in a situation where they can update any last minute information, but there is little point in telling fans something that required action before they left home. It would also be useful if fans were given some detailed information about the place / region / country they were visiting.

As stated earlier, there is a degree of emphasis on the English supporters themselves. If they behave in an aggressive, loutish and offensive manner, they can expect to find themselves in trouble, just like they would at home. There is no reason for an English fan to assume that they

can travel abroad, threaten police or insult women, without receiving some sort of reaction. On one occasion the IFC travelled with local police on the way to stadium. The coach passed a crowd of drunken English fans who, although not being aggressive, were making various suggestive comments to some local women. The police inspector said that if they had been a crowd of local men, he would have had them arrested, but as they were visiting English fans he decided to ignore the situation. He did add though that if there was any hint of aggression, action would be taken.

There is also the question of reputation. It cannot be denied that when the draw is made for any European competition and a foreign club is drawn against an English team, there is a certain degree of trepidation amongst the foreign club and their local authorities. One general comment received by the IFC is that it is like being invaded. English fans are a loyal bunch and traditionally follow their team in vast numbers. This is in contrast to the rest of Europe who don't generally experience such high levels of travelling support. It is not uncommon for an English club to take thousands of fans to the away leg, yet when the return game is held in England, only a couple of coach loads of visiting fans turn up. On the positive front, the reputation of English fans is improving. The experiences of Euro 2004 in Portugal and the recent World Cup in Germany, has done a lot to win English football new friends. Although both tournaments didn't pass without incident, the problems amongst English fans were generally small and were quickly snuffed out. Bearing in mind the fantastic number of fans making the trip to both Portugal and Germany, it is a credit to those supporters for behaving so well and flying the flag, literally, for English football. It is to be hoped the good news stories that have come out of these tournaments regarding English fans will help soothe a few nerves when it comes to the Champions League, UEFA and Intertoto Cups.

The IFC believes that many authorities abroad react to the previous reputation of English fans rather than the actual behaviour of what is currently taking place. There needs to be some sort of educational process whereby the European clubs and authorities appreciate the strides that have been made in England to resolve the hooliganism problem and that English fans can now be treated with an increased degree of leniency. As mentioned earlier, the British Consulate can play a role here in educating the European clubs.

Information and communication played an important role in both Euro 2004 and the World Cup. In Germany for example, there was a lot of good work done by the authorities, supporters' organisations and the Government. Various publications and leaflets were sent to fans. The Free Lions booklet was particularly good and is a terrific example of what can be produced with the fan in mind. The Fans Embassy again provided supporters with a point of contact and the Government also played its part by establishing emergency Consular services at every ground to help fans who had lost passports, lost money etc. It shows that when everyone works together that problems can be anticipated and surmounted. The FA and British Government even managed to persuade the German authorities to allow English, uniformed police into their cities. The Germans should be congratulated for their foresight and willingness to help in cooperating for the common good. It is an excellent example of showing that football can break down barriers.

With this latter point in mind, there needs to be clarification of fan categories. Security forces give matches a category according to whether they feel that the game carries a high or low risk in terms of trouble amongst fans. The IFC heard from several English clubs who felt that the European police forces had been given the wrong information about the category of fans who would be attending matches. In every case, their fans were being given a worse category which therefore meant that the local police were more concerned than they needed to be. This led to an increase in the amount of tension among the security forces and tended to make them 'jumpy' and keen to pounce on any minor misdemeanour.

Our police should also be congratulated for the way in which the hard-core hooligan element is being stamped out. Weeding out these people has played an important part in making the European experience much more enjoyable for everyone. There is also recognition by the

European authorities that this security programme is a shining example to the rest of Europe. We have identified a large number of our problem fans and it should be something that all other countries under the UEFA banner should utilise. UEFA have admitted that we have a grip on this problem although there is still a feeling amongst UEFA that we created football hooliganism so it is our duty to help eradicate it. The FA and its Security Advisors have worked strenuously to reduce trouble amongst fans. Their work is acknowledged Worldwide. An FA Advisory Team has recently returned from working in South America where it was helping to educate the authorities in ways to solve a variety of safety and control issues.

Travelling to watch a game in Europe is something that nearly every fan the IFC spoke to, would recommend. There were a handful of people who'd had a bad experience but this was a rarity. Most were happy to spend a not inconsiderable amount of money and time following their team and, all being well, would be happy to continue doing so throughout the competition. For those Middlesbrough and Arsenal fans that travelled to their first European game at the start of the 2005-6 season and stayed loyal all the way through to their respective finals, they will have paid out several thousands of pounds and taken a lengthy chunk out of their holiday entitlement. Such is the devotion of the English football fan.

While it is a duty of the authorities and the club at home and abroad to do whatever they can to help those people who travel to support football clubs, the individual supporter needs to be fully aware that they are responsible for their own actions. Those fans who act sensibly, don't insult the locals or taunt them, avoid areas they have been told to avoid, respect local police and regulations, don't overdo things in local bars and ensure that they follow the timings and directions provided by the club, should enjoy the European experience and want to keep coming back for more.

European football is here to stay. If certain clubs get their way, we will not be restricted to just European cup competitions; there might be a European league. Many observers believe it is only a matter of time before something like this arrives. For some fans it would appear that the thrill of European football is going to become less of a rarity. It will be a new fixture list. Travelling away from home to watch your team will take on a whole new meaning. It doesn't mean a journey down the motorway; it means a trip to a foreign country. In practice, the travelling time from A to B may be very similar but instead of experiencing a slightly different accent and a different brew in the local pubs, it will be a completely different culture, different policing standards and a strange language waiting outside the European airport. Fans cannot be led by the hand all of the time. They should quite rightly expect to be given adequate information about the destination but, in the end, commonsense will need to prevail.

The IFC would like to thank the fans who sent them information via their respective club websites. This was particularly useful because it gave us the chance to find out additional information. It also proved that the experience of fans is wide and varied. Those experiences should be noted by their clubs and passed on to other clubs involved in European competitions. As mentioned previously, fans are more likely to take notice of information passed to them from other football fans which is why the development of The Football Supporters' Federation website (www.fsf.org.uk) to include a section that will be devoted to fans heading for Europe is likely to be well received. The FSF has wide experience of travelling with fans and is building a database of useful material that will be tailored to supporters. It has been particularly successful in working alongside the FA and British Government to assist fans who travel to watch the England national team. The IFC would encourage all fans who travel with their clubs to support this initiative because it will be to the benefit of everyone in future seasons.

13. DISABLED SUPPORTERS

From what the IFC saw during its investigations, English football clubs do their utmost to make sure that disabled fans have just as good an experience when it comes to European football, as all of the other fans. Disabled fans tend to be some of the most passionate supporters at any football club. Getting to and from matches within England is no mean achievement for many of these people so they will quite rightly expect to be able to follow their team into Europe. In England, although there is always further work that could be done, the facilities and general awareness of what disabled fans need, is vastly improved to what it used to be only a decade ago. Most grounds within the higher echelons of football now have designated areas for disabled supporters and their helpers. New stadia generally provide excellent facilities and clubs are encouraged to be in close consultation with disabled fans groups to ensure that facilities are improved and maintained. This is not quite so straight forward in older grounds where physical barriers can be difficult to overcome without the need for some major construction work. Thankfully there is generally a way to surmount these problems and there appears to be a willingness to do whatever is possible to allow as many disabled fans into safe and secure areas as possible, no matter what the age or standard of the stadium.

In European matches, there is a loose obligation on the part of the home club, but no requirement, to provide facilities for disabled fans. A percentage of tickets from the total allocation must be used for disabled supporters. This tends to be largely regulated by the number of tickets requested by the English club. Chelsea and Manchester Utd for example, sometimes only need a couple of spaces for disabled fans. They rarely take any more than five. Arsenal regularly takes up to a dozen fans in wheelchairs along with their helpers. In general, disabled fans have to cope with much the same problems as all of the other fans experience; a lack of facilities and certainly not what most supporters would be used to at an English Premier League ground.

The majority of English clubs spoken to by the IFC during the course of this investigation felt that the European clubs generally did their best to accommodate disabled fans, but that they didn't really have any purpose-built facilities. It would be a rarity to find a specially designed area with facilities to assist those fans with various disabilities to enjoy the game. There seemed to be a 'make it up on the night' type of policy. The English clubs research the disabled facilities in the various pre-match meetings and then either make a decision there and then, or wait until they discuss the situation with their disabled fans once everyone has returned home. Most clubs seem to enjoy a good relationship with their disabled fans groups and there appears to be a lot of commonsense operating here. If a football club recommends its disabled fans not to travel, then everyone seems to take heed of this advice.

One of the disabled supporters' groups that the IFC spoke to however, felt that there was insufficient communication between the disabled fans and the clubs they supported. They felt that there was a tendency for the decisions to have been made by the club before they'd returned from the pre-match meetings whereas perhaps discussions could take place upon their return and then a joint decision could be reached and information then passed to the fans. One of the disabled group officials commented:-

"The dissatisfaction with the facilities in Europe generally remains at a high level and information given back to disabled supporters by individual clubs is, for the majority of the time, virtually non-existent."

Currently, the single most important struggle is for a level of transparency of information. All of the fans that we have communicated with feel that the provision of accurate accessibility information will enable them to make the informed choice of whether or not to go to European games. We all appreciate that a good standard of facilities for disabled supporters across Europe will take

time to evolve. Disabled fans are not unreasonable in their understanding of this. To quote a fan 'we need accurate information, the good and the bad stuff, and then we can make up our own minds as to whether we travel'."

Although many European grounds are willing to allow disabled fans access to the stadium, things can invariably prove a bit tricky once inside. Many of the older stadia do not have lifts, necessitating wheelchairs to be manhandled into position. One way for the European clubs to get around this is to put all of the wheelchair fans and their helpers on the touchline. This is obviously extremely hazardous if a stray shot was to come their way. It will almost certainly mean that they are positioned beyond the reach of the roof (if there was one in the first place) leaving them open to the elements. This area is frequently not in front of the visiting fans, leaving them isolated. Arsenal once recommended disabled fans not to travel because they would have been positioned on the pitch-side in front of the home club's most notorious set of supporters.

On one occasion, Chelsea utilised the disabled section at a foreign ground but discovered that there were no disabled toilets. The IFC has learnt that some disabled fans had water confiscated. Another instance was when Manchester Utd's disabled fans arrived at Villarreal and were initially going to be placed in amongst the Villarreal disabled supporters. However, the two clubs thought this may be unwise so the Manchester Utd fans ended up sat in a corridor watching the game through a window.

Disabled Middlesbrough fans had a difficult time in Bucharest. The antiquated state of the stadium made arrangements tricky. Fans in wheelchairs were manually lifted and carried up steps to their viewing position by police officers. Not surprisingly, some found this to be an extremely distressing experience. Middlesbrough also had problems in the UEFA Cup final at PSV Eindhoven's stadium. Their disabled fans were placed on a specially erected wooden platform but it offered a poor view of the pitch. Following last minute negotiations between the various authorities, the fans were moved to a more suitable area. Middlesbrough also had an instance where the only access to a disabled area was by placing boards onto the terracing and constructing a ramp.

Some European clubs do set a good example. When Manchester Utd played Benfica last season, one of their disabled fans was struggling to get a good view at the Stadium of Light so the Benfica officials decided to move him into an empty TV studio where he had an excellent view of the pitch. After the game, Benfica stewards stayed with him until a taxi arrived. This season, when Manchester Utd returned to the same club in the Champions League, the stewards were waiting for him and put him into the same vacant TV studio.

Of course, it might be difficult getting disabled fans into some of these stadia, but the major concern is how they would be evacuated in the case of an emergency. English clubs should be congratulated for doing their best to help disabled fans enjoy the European experience in just the same way as all of the other fans, but it would be even more encouraging to see the European clubs play their part. Too often it seems that disabled fans and their special requirements are not really catered for and that they have to in some way compromise their enjoyment of going to a European match. **The IFC recommends that UEFA gives a greater priority to disabled supporters and make their access to the stadium one of the "A MUST Criteria" and not merely a "C Criteria". Providing additional facilities for disabled fans is also merely a "D Category" for Best Practice.** Improving the mandatory requirements would then encourage the host clubs to at least provide the basic essentials for disabled fans.

It should be reiterated that most of the English clubs felt that the European host clubs did their best to help disabled fans but those supporters were of a low priority when it came to making prior arrangements. However, on the evening of the game, the general impression is that the host clubs would do everything possible to help. The final viewing position may not have been ideal and the facilities may have been rather limited, but in general most disabled fans seemed to end up being able to see the game without too much hassle. The majority of English football fans travelling to a

European match will experience conditions that, by comparison to what they are used to at home, seem a bit rough and ready. There will be poor facilities, poor accommodation and in many cases, a view that is compromised by fencing, netting or being situated in an area of the ground that doesn't offer a decent view. Exactly the same applies to disabled supporters.

APPENDIX

Games and meetings attended by IFC officials

This IFC European Experience Report looked at matches involving English clubs in UEFA controlled competitions; European Champions League, UEFA Cup and Intertoto Cup. When the report got underway, only 6 English clubs remained in their respective competitions. This appendix looks at all of the matches and pre-match meetings attended by IFC officials and gives points that were noted. There are additional notes sourced from information provided to the IFC regarding games that have taken place in previous seasons. The IFC felt these should be included where relevant, to exemplify any long-term issues and concerns.

ARSENAL

Real Madrid v Arsenal ECL match, 21st February 2006

For many fans, this was a game that couldn't be missed. The double attraction of playing Real Madrid AND visiting the Bernabeu stadium meant that the Arsenal ticket allocation sold out instantly and it would be guaranteed that hundreds of Arsenal fans would travel without match tickets.

- Main party of Arsenal fans arrived in Madrid from about noon onwards. No trouble observed. Good spirits.
- Stadium entrance for Arsenal fans opened at 7.00pm (kick off at 8.45pm). Only a handful of Arsenal fans in vicinity.
- 8.00pm, still reasonably quiet in turnstile area, decided to enter stadium to observe policing inside.
- IFC provided with 'go-anywhere' passes. Also in possession of match tickets.
- Body search; orange removed and discarded by stewards; top removed from bottle of water and discarded.
- Tickets scanned on entrance to stadium; 'go-anywhere' passes were deemed unusable.
- Tricky finding seats. Odd numbers on one side of aisle, even numbers on the other. Led to great confusion later when seating area full.
- Seats are conventional type with backs. Excellent view thanks to steeply raked terraces.
- Several people mentioned to IFC officials that when they found their allocated seat, there was already someone sat in it. Those people were also in possession of a ticket for that seat. Obviously forgeries.
- Arsenal section became overcrowded. All gangways full of standing people.
- At front of seating area, there is netting to stop items being thrown onto fans below. Some Arsenal fans insisted on throwing themselves onto this netting. No steward action taken. Netting slightly impedes view.
- Facilities were good. Plenty of refreshments areas and toilets.
- At end of game, as Real Madrid fans left, dozens of pockets of Arsenal fans could be seen around the stadium.
- Fans held back for 25 minutes at end of game. This was expected.
- Exit was controlled and acceptably quick.
- Quick transfer to airport. Took only 1 hour from ground to airport.
- One police spotter commented that he had been struck by Spanish police when he was trying to break-up some disorder. Local police assumed he was an Arsenal fan and part of the trouble.
- Understand that there were no Arsenal fans arrested.

Juventus v Arsenal

ECL match – 5th April 2006

This match was staged at the Delle Alpi Stadium in Turin. It is a modern, futuristic stadium, but is rapidly showing its age and appears neglected. Plans are being made for it to be demolished. It doubles-up as an athletics stadium; hence there is a wide running track between the pitch and the seating area.

- Arsenal fans seated in two main areas. The largest section was spread over three tiers. Segregation provided by 2 metre high steel and Perspex fences several metres apart to create a sterile area.
- Some fans (including IFC officials) seated in amongst Juventus fans. No steward segregation but no sign of trouble.
- Seats are plastic pads bolted onto a concrete terrace. No conventional seats with backs. Many pads were missing and most were filthy due to fans standing on them.
- Arsenal match commander raised concerns about Italian police being interviewed on UK radio stating the Arsenal fans would not be safe inside the stadium. Italian police claimed no knowledge of this.
- Italian police chief admitted awareness of the interview but said that no missiles would be thrown by Italian fans.
- Police control room offers no view of the stadium. Relies upon cameras.
- Italian police agreed to allow an Italian-speaking officer from the Metropolitan force to be in the control room. English-speaking Italian police to join English police spotters.
- Turnstiles for English fans were to be opened at 5.30pm.
- 6.30pm: Still no sign of turnstiles opening, but few Arsenal fans in area.
- Most Arsenal fans arrived in coaches. Searching was polite and quick.
- English police spotters abandoned by Italian counterparts.
- Police control room turned out to be just a recording centre for the CCTV cameras. No senior police officer in attendance.
- Understand that approximately 12 Arsenal fans were mugged on way to ground. Happened in area where Arsenal fans were instructed not to go.
- Some missiles thrown by Italian fans into Arsenal crowd. Arsenal fans moved back from fenced area.
- There were toilet facilities in all areas but there was no toilet paper and were in poor condition. Some ladies said the facilities were disgusting and unusable.
- 3 fires in section of Juventus supporters at end of game.
- Large flags with poles in evidence throughout stadium.
- English police reported that cameras at either end of ground, not working.

Arsenal v Barcelona

ECL Final, Stade de France, Paris - 17th May 2006.

As the showpiece Champions League final, demand for tickets was huge. Arsenal were given 21,500, but anticipated a further 10,000 would make the journey to Paris. Barcelona expected similar numbers.

- There would be 24 aircraft and around 60 official coaches plus an unknown number of additional coaches. English and Spanish fans were being kept apart with planes arriving at different terminals and coaches being parked at opposite ends of the city.
- Many fans would use the Metro system. This was due to close at 00.50...a problem if the game overran.
- UEFA vetoed the use of large screens for ticket-less fans to view the match. They didn't want fans from both sides mixing.
- Gates were due to open at 6.00pm with the game scheduled for an 8.45pm start.
- There appeared to be no trouble in the build-up to the game. IFC officials witnessed no incidents during the afternoon.
- Many fans witnessed trying to buy tickets.
- Ticket tout spotted trying to sell a ticket for €1,000.
- Journey to the stadium was by coach; expected to take 50 minutes but took considerably longer, arriving just 1 hour before kick off.
- No match programmes left on sale.
- IFC official caught up in pushing and crushing outside stadium as police van tried to force its way through a crowd. Situation allowed to get out of control and police only made it worse.
- Congestion at turnstiles. Many fans still arriving in stadium after kick off.
- Long queues at toilets. Appeared to be a lack of toilet facilities. Refreshment areas ran out of water and most food. Only Coca Cola left on sale.
- Game passed without incident. Played in a wonderful atmosphere.
- Exiting the stadium was slow but controlled. Many fans had to walk back to hotels as it was impossible to get onto the Metro system.
- Several fans had their car windows smashed. There was nothing stolen from the cars, so it appears to have been pure vandalism.

BOLTON WANDERERS

Marseille v Bolton Wanderers

UEFA Cup, 1st knockout stage – 23rd February 2006

At pre-match meeting, concerns expressed by FA Security Advisor regarding the area where Bolton fans would be situated. UEFA delegate said he was aware of the concerns but rather shrugged off the suggestion that UEFA didn't seem to be doing much about it.

- Fans in good spirits in central area near Marseille port. Police in attendance but no action taken, merely watching. Good nature between fans and police.
- Ticket touts in evidence but didn't appear to be doing much in the way of business.
- Travelled to the stadium via local bus. Many Bolton fans were also using this service.
- Inadequate signage in area around stadium. Had to ask stewards for directions.
- Entered the notorious 'hangar' building where we were lightly frisked and, after a short delay, were allowed access into the stadium. Seemed to be a large section of fans being held back in the 'hangar'.

- Unable to find seating area. The seating section clearly marked on our ticket didn't exist. Asked stewards who directed us into the main body of the Bolton fans saying 'just sit anywhere'.
- Stood at the rear of the visiting fans area. No seats, just concrete terracing.
- Despite being blatantly used as a standing area, there did not appear to be any crush barriers in place.
- View of one end of ground severely impeded by fences and post.
- Noticed large number of Bolton fans being marched along the touchline into an area adjacent to ours. Irritation amongst Bolton fans because those supporters had a better view than we did.
- When Marseille scored, 18 flares were lit in one section of the home crowd. One flare thrown into back of Bolton goal.
- Tennis balls thrown onto the pitch near the Bolton goal.
- Bolton fans held back for 25 minutes. We were expecting 40-45 minutes.
- Small number of Bolton fans tore down screening in order to gesture towards departing Marseille fans.
- Dangerous exit area. All Bolton fans were funnelled through a single gate which had steps. Impossible to see the steps due to number of people. This could easily have led to someone tripping and being trampled.
- Fans seemed to depart peacefully.

CHELSEA

Barcelona v Chelsea ECL match – 7th March 2006

The atmosphere in Barcelona was excellent throughout the day and everyone seemed happy to mingle freely. There was no trouble witnessed by the IFC officials. Policing seemed very low key.

- Searching was rather sporadic at the turnstile due to the small number of stewards and large number of queuing fans. Some fans were just waved through.
- There were plenty of refreshment outlets inside the stadium.
- IFC officials became aware of problems at Gate 46. At the last minute, Barcelona authorities decided to switch to Gate 51, leaving Chelsea fans unsure of what to do or where to go.
- Riot police seemed to be searching fans coming through this turnstile. The searching appeared to be of a vigorous nature.
- Long queues of fans still trying to get in at kick off time...8.45pm.
- Large numbers of Chelsea fans were scattered around the stadium.
- Following day, met some Chelsea fans who had bought their tickets through an unofficial agency. The tickets were supposed to be together and in the Chelsea section. They were in fact several rows apart and in the Barcelona fans section. The ordeal had been very frightening. The fans had paid £550 each for the trip.

MANCHESTER UTD

Benfica v Manchester Utd ECL match – 7th December 2005

A very special night because of the history between the two clubs following the 1968 European Cup final. Also there was a chance that either of these two clubs could be eliminated from the competition if they lost this match.

- Everything in the build-up to the game seemed to be under control. No obvious violence.
- Public transport was easy to use but directions to the ground could have been better. The stadium lies between two Metro stations.
- IFC official followed dubious group of Manchester Utd fans to a merchandise stall and witnessed each systematically stealing a scarf.
- Searching was patchy. Some stewards were firm but polite; other turnstiles in the 20 minutes period before kick off were without stewards so fans simply walked through. They could have been carrying anything. Entry into the Stadium of Light was trouble-free.
- One IFC official could not get to his seating area. An area between the Benfica and Manchester Utd fans had been covered in netting to form a sterile area. Seats and aisles were therefore inaccessible. When asked where he should go, a steward replied 'sit anywhere'.
- Approximately three quarters of the visiting fans stood throughout the game. No stewards made any attempt to ask fans to sit.
- Due to numbers of standing fans, it was impossible to reach the concourse areas to either visit toilets or buy refreshments.
- Large areas of one Manchester Utd section were empty, presumably because the fans who were trying to gain access to it found their entry barred by the netting.
- At end of the game all fans exited and mixed freely, but the movement of the crowd in the concourse area was extremely slow. Both sets of fans left the stadium via the same route so, potentially, if the fans hadn't been so genial, there could have been a major problem.

MIDDLESBROUGH

As with Arsenal, following Middlesbrough through their UEFA Cup campaign in the 2005-6 season meant attending a second European final. It also meant that the IFC officials could visit those European clubs that don't feature so regularly in the major European competitions. The IFC investigation began in earnest in November 2005 so by then Middlesbrough fans had already made good use of their passports. They had been to FC Xanthi in Greece, Grasshoppers in Switzerland and AZ Alkmaar in Holland. According to the reports handed to the IFC by Middlesbrough FC and the Match Commander, there were several issues. The Grasshoppers Zurich stadium has large areas that are made from wood. The lower decks are similar to the sort of material you would find in temporary staging. The Match Commander noted several areas where there had been burning, probably as a result of flares being thrown. He also noted that below these areas there were storage rooms. He felt that burning material could have dropped through gaps in the wood and into these rooms leading to a serious fire risk.

At AZ Alkmaar there were several security problems. These concerns will soon be resolved because the club is moving to a new ground, however it must be stressed that UEFA had given the go-ahead for this game to take place at the original ground. The Match Commander noted that some of the emergency exit gates from the visiting fans area onto the pitch had been welded shut. There was also a large amount of razor and barbed wire used on the fences. Following the game,

Middlesbrough fans made their way home by various routes. One fan was murdered in Amsterdam, although reports suggest that this was not a football related incident.

All of the above games were in the group stage of the UEFA Cup. Middlesbrough won their group (Group D) and therefore moved into the last 32 of the competition. It was at this point that IFC officials linked up with Middlesbrough FC and began their research.

VfB Stuttgart v Middlesbrough

UEFA Cup last 32 - 16th February 2006

- Tickets and information handed to fans on flight out to Germany. Some information suggested taking a copy of their passport...too late as already on the way.
- Smooth entrance into ground for fans travelling with club. Fans well segregated. Tricky for fans arriving independently. No signage to help with directions. Many Middlesbrough fans milling around, lost. Stewards sent fans in the wrong direction into a dead-end.
- Announcement over tannoy for fans to leave ground due to an emergency. However, announcement only in German so Middlesbrough fans did not leave and were confused.
- Fans stood throughout the game. No attempt to make them sit.
- No problems on leaving stadium.

AS Roma v Middlesbrough

UEFA Cup last 16 – 15th March 2006

This was the 2nd leg of the tie. Roma had won 1-0 at the Riverside Stadium in the first leg. 350 Roma fans had travelled to Teesside. There were no incidents.

Around 3,500 Middlesbrough fans travelled to Italy, many looking forward to the experience of visiting one of Europe's leading tourist destinations as well as the match. Cleveland Constabulary spent a lot of time in the build-up to this game warning fans NOT to make their own way to the Stadio Olimpico in Rome. They strongly recommended that fans used official club tours or ensure that they travelled with a reputable independent firm. Fans were told that they would need to congregate in a safe holding area called the Villa Borghese from where they would board official coaches laid on by the Rome authorities. The journey would only take 15 minutes from there to the ground. Fans would be transported back to the same place following the game. Amongst the usual warnings about what would not be allowed into the stadium, fans were told that loose coins were banned. It was estimated that fans would be held back for about 30 minutes after the game. Middlesbrough FC also stressed that Roma had some 'problem' fans and that the Middlesbrough supporters needed to be careful and not distract the Italian police from their duties.

- IFC officials arrived at their hotel on the day before the game to be informed that the collection time to be taken to the stadium was being brought forward from the original estimate of 6.30-7.00pm to 5.00pm. Many fans unhappy about this and said they would not shorten their day in Rome by two hours. (NB: The tour company, Middlesbrough FC and police reached a compromise of a 6.00pm departure. Many fans were still unhappy about this but later events persuaded them that it would be acceptable.)
- IFC officials visited the centre of Rome on the evening prior to the game. Everyone seemed to be in excellent spirits. Shortly after the officials left, there was a serious incident involving Middlesbrough and the notorious Ultras. The Middlesbrough Match Commander confirmed Middlesbrough fans had been in one of the Rome squares, the Campo de' Fiore, frequenting a bar called the Drunken Ship. They had been attacked by a group of around 40 Ultras. This resulted in several Middlesbrough fans being injured. Three were taken to hospital with stab wounds, one was detained overnight. Early indications showed that the

attack had been well organised and that either flares or thunderflash explosive devices had been thrown into the pub. The Ultras had been 'fully tooled-up', armed with knives, clubs, axes etc. There were reports of oranges with razor blades sticking out of them. Arrests had been made both of AS Roma and Middlesbrough fans. The Match Commander felt that the Middlesbrough fans had been trying to defend themselves from the onslaught. The Middlesbrough officials were rather vague about what had happened but this was not their fault. It had been extremely difficult getting information from the local Rome police and it was proving tricky finding out precisely what had occurred. The Match Commander did confirm however that the owner / manager of the Drunken Ship bar had confirmed that the Middlesbrough fans had been the people who were attacked and had merely been defending themselves.

- The following day, IFC officials returned to the Campo de' Fiore. On arrival it was interesting to note how many Middlesbrough fans had returned to the scene. The Drunken Ship bar had been closed by the police, however all of the other bars seemed to be open and doing a brisk trade. Middlesbrough fans were talking about the incident, several of whom had been involved. One fan claimed that the Middlesbrough supporters were having a good time in the square at about 11.00pm local time. Some were jumping in a fountain. Spirits were high and there was some boisterous behaviour and chanting, but nothing that wouldn't be out of the ordinary. He claimed that the tourists who were also in the square seemed to be enjoying watching the Middlesbrough fans. Other fans that were spoken to at a later time backed-up his claims that the visiting fans were merely having a good time. There had been a police presence in the square but, apart from a few 'quiet words' between police and some fans who were perhaps overstepping the lines of acceptable behaviour, everything had been good-natured. The fans then report that at the same time as the police departed, a TV crew and a press photographer appeared. Within minutes, Ultra fans ran into the square, many of them wearing black crash helmets with scarves across their faces. They had earmarked the Drunken Ship. Middlesbrough fans used tables and chairs to try and defend themselves. Many ran inside the bar. The bar and restaurant owners in the vicinity had tried to calm things down. All Middlesbrough fans we spoke to, both during and after the game, said that they were totally innocent.
- English police confirmed total lack of information from Italian counterparts.
- FA Advisor commented that the incident '*appeared to be an unprovoked, indiscriminate and premeditated attack on ordinary supporters by a group of Ultras*'.
- Mid-afternoon, police circulated bars and ordered that sales of alcohol must stop. Some bar owners agreed while others stopped serving large glasses of beer and reduced them to smaller quantities.
- IFC officials observed street vendors being told to halt alcohol sales. Tins of beer on display were removed. However, once the police departed, the tins reappeared.
- Boarded coach at hotel and taken to Villa Borghese holding area...a large park situated reasonably close to the centre and, allegedly, only a short ride to the stadium. This turned out to be a truly intimidating experience for many fans. The police presence was massive and appeared very strong handed. The majority of police were in riot gear. From the IFC officials coach, it was difficult to see any signage. Fans were being herded into various areas to wait for the buses to take them to the stadium. It was dark and, apart from the scattered standard street lighting, there appeared to be no additional lighting. There did not appear to be any additional facilities for fans such toilets or refreshment areas. Many passengers on the IFC coach were staggered by the number of fans who were being held under what was later described as 'virtual martial law' in sections of the media. Fans were relieving themselves against the wall. Some were walking past with bottles of beer, presumably bought from a street trader or supermarket nearby.
- At approximately 7.00pm, the coaches from the organised tours set off in convoy. This was a truly amazing sight to see. At the front of the convoy were police vans, loaded with officers. Some were leaning out of the windows with batons. One had a police officer sitting on the roof as if in a turret. He was holding what appeared to be a large gun presumably for firing gas canisters or rubber bullets. It was like travelling through a war

zone. One fan on the IFC coach commented that towels should be placed over our heads or that we should all duck down. It was a flippant remark, but you could understand his sentiments. A female fan said that it was enough to put her off going to a foreign away game ever again.

- Entry into the ground was straightforward with friendly searching by stewards, although it seemed rather odd for women to have lipstick confiscated. It should be emphasised here that IFC officials were some of the first to enter the stadium and that no queues had built up. The IFC has since learnt that many fans arrived late after being held inside coaches for over an hour at the Villa Borghese. The journey then took a further hour. Many fans had become distressed.
- Several of the refreshment vendors spoke excellent English.
- Ticket details were irrelevant. Fans went wherever they wished and found what they felt was a satisfactory vantage point.
- Seats did not have backs. All were of the pad variety and were filthy due to previous fans having stood on them.
- Pitch is surrounded by a full size, 10-lane athletics track which makes for distant viewing.
- Dozens of flares and thunderflash explosions in the AS Roma sections of the ground. Several huge flags.
- AS Roma fans broke through the police cordon and charged the fence separating them from the Middlesbrough supporters. Police made half-hearted attempt to stop them knowing that it would be impossible to scale the fence. However, it would have been simple to lob a missile into the midst of the Middlesbrough fans.
- The game ended at 10.50pm local time. Fans were expected to be held back for approximately 30 minutes. A video of a recent Middlesbrough game was shown on the large screens.
- Fans began to exit stadium at 12.35am. The patience of the Middlesbrough fans was exemplary. Large parts of the stadium were now in darkness. Everyone else seemed to have gone home.
- Official coaches began to depart at approximately 1.00am. IFC officials were later informed that the fans travelling back to central Rome were held for a further 30 minutes.
- Coaches travelling to the airport took a long and winding route along deserted roads. IFC officials spoke to the FA Advisor who left the stadium at midnight. He reported everything was very quiet and could not understand why the fans had been kept in for even longer. Concerns for those fans who were leaving the stadium to be taken back to Villa Borghese. Many felt that this would be a magnet for Roma fans as they would know hundreds of Middlesbrough fans would then need to leave there and find their way back to hotels or the railway station.
- At airport, informed that flight was leaving at 1.05am. Odd, as it was already 2.10am.
- Huge police presence at airport. Riot shields and batons were drawn. Fans gave short shrift to police who asked them for a scarf as a souvenir.
- Landed at Durham - Tees Valley airport at 5.15am.
- Many fans commented that the policing had been 'over the top.' Some said they would not be following their team into Europe again.
- The FA Advisor commented with regard to treatment of Middlesbrough fans that *'this was with total disregard for their human rights and wellbeing. The Italian police would have done well to put more emphasis on the management of the troublesome Roma supporters who were behaving well and did not warrant the attention they received.'*

FC Basel v Middlesbrough

UEFA Cup quarter-final – 30th March 2006

Basel is a small, industrial town without too much in the way of appeal. The centre of the town is small with a smattering of bars and restaurants. The weather was also cool and damp so most Middlesbrough fans made their way to an 'English' bar.

- The atmosphere was friendly with most fans having a good time despite having little else to do other than sit in the pub.
- Policing was discreet. The local authorities more or less closed off the area where Middlesbrough fans were and prevented any Basel fans from moving into the area. This worked well.
- Several buses were provided to take Middlesbrough fans to the stadium. Despite some reticence at first, most fans seemed to take advantage of this.
- The stadium is small but modern. Fans were mingling happily outside. Facilities were good.
- As usual at European grounds, your ticket gains entry into the stadium. After that the general instruction was to sit anywhere. There was free movement between tiers within the Middlesbrough section.
- The segregation was inadequate. A narrow strip of netting, approximately 4 seats in width, was placed from the front to the back of each tier. A few stewards were dotted around this. At half time, fighting broke out between the two sets of fans. Something had been thrown and the fans reacted. The IFC witnessed riot police being sent in to calm the situation.
- Exit from the stadium and return to the airport was trouble free.

Steaua Bucharest v Middlesbrough

UEFA Cup semi-final – 20th April 2006

As the Steaua Stadium was undergoing renovation, this game was staged at the Romanian National stadium, known as the Lia Manoliu Stadium. In 2005 this stadium was due to be closed and rebuilt, but no funding was available. Consequently, the state of the stadium certainly reflects this.

- As has happened on previous Middlesbrough flights, information was handed out to fans. One suggestion was to take 3 passport photos, just in case your passport was stolen. Fans were also told that the stadium was open to the elements and that some sort of weatherproof clothing would be a good idea. All of this information was useless for fans who were already sat on the aircraft.
- The atmosphere in Bucharest was good although there wasn't much to entertain the supporters.
- Fans were transported to the stadium by coach and dropped off at a holding area near the ground. Everyone was directed to walk along a muddy, pot-holed track which had fencing down one side to segregate fans. This led to a gate where there were stewards checking tickets. There was no turnstile facility, so tickets simply had their stubs torn off. The ticket was returned to the fan; the stub was thrown onto the ground. There was no counting of tickets.
- Searching of fans was haphazard. One IFC official was searched three times; the other wasn't searched at all. The steps leading up to the seats were broken and irregular. Many were covered in weeds. This was particularly difficult after the game because the area was very dimly lit.
- The only lavatories inside the stadium were four small portable cubicles. They obviously had not been cleaned for ages and the stench was appalling. Most people, including the police and stewards, used nearby bushes to the rear of the stand.

- There was only one refreshment stall, although this amounted to little more than a trestle table. However, as this facility was placed immediately next to the four lavatories, most people decided not to bother with the drinks or sandwiches.
- There was no hold back after the game. Middlesbrough fans left immediately.
- Exit was via the same dirt track which was by now in the complete darkness. There was no lighting at all.
- Transfer to the airport and onto the aircraft was rapid and fuss free.

Middlesbrough v Seville

UEFA Cup final at PSV Eindhoven – 10th May 2006

Middlesbrough were allocated 9,200 tickets for this game. This caused an immediate problem because it would be impossible to satisfy the demand for tickets. (Middlesbrough at that stage had around 24,000 season ticket holders.) The PSV Eindhoven stadium had a capacity of just 32,000 for this match which seems hopelessly inadequate bearing in mind that the recent average attendance since the UEFA Cup final switched to a neutral venue, has been in the region of 52,000.

- Middlesbrough fans found it difficult to find hotels in the vicinity. There was also a problem in that the majority of Middlesbrough flights did not land at Eindhoven airport. Seville flights seemed to be landing there though. Düsseldorf was the most popular place to stay. IFC officials landed at Liege airport, some two hours away.
- Arrangements in Eindhoven were excellent. Fans from both clubs were separated into two parks, although there was plenty of socialising between both sets of supporters without trouble. Police presence was very low-key.
- Many fans were observed hunting for tickets. One Middlesbrough fan wore a sign pinned to his back saying 'Ticket wanted; any reasonable price paid'. You had to admire his initiative.
- The IFC officials were seated in a neutral area and despite arriving just 30 minutes before kick off gained rapid entry without any searching. Middlesbrough fans later reported the searching in other parts of the ground was relaxed and random.
- Stewarding was rather unhelpful. IFC officials, unsure of where their seats were located, asked for directions. It took three attempts to find the right place. Some of the seats were fixed to a temporary-looking metal grid.
- Despite being in a mixed area, the atmosphere was excellent between the various fans. No trouble was noticed.
- The only final irritation was at Liege airport. Despite boarding the aircraft at 1.10am, it did not take off until 5.30am.

THE EXPERIENCE OF ENGLISH SUPPORTERS IN EUROPEAN CLUB COMPETITIONS

2005/2006



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