

Children screamed with terror

SOCCER YOBS ON RAMPAGE

by Cathy Loughran

A DRUNKEN mob of football hooligans terrorised shoppers and children, battled with police and rampaged through Wycombe on Saturday in the worst soccer-related violence the town has ever seen.

Terrified families and small children having a pre-Christmas party at McDonalds, in Wycombe High Street, were trapped as a marauding mob of 200 youths attacked the restaurant, smashing doors, windows and furniture.

Police made 24 arrests for assault, criminal damage, obstruction, drunkenness and carrying offensive weapons, before, during and after Wycombe Wanderers' third FA Cup qualifying match against Chelmsford.

Trouble flared more than an hour before kick-off when fans rampaged through the town centre. At least one policeman was hit by flying bricks, the windscreen of a police van was smashed and vehicles near the bus station were damaged.

And The Gate, just a stone's throw from Loakes Park was closed half-an-hour early by police after visiting Chelmsford fans packed the pub to capacity before the match.

Shame

Wycombe police say they had anticipated trouble and re-inforcements brought Saturday's cover up to a total of 80 officers.

And while Wycombe Wanderers club officials praised the police response, they deplored the so-called "fans" who brought shame and anger to Wycombe at the weekend.

Club secretary John Goldsworthy told Midweek: "Police did an excellent job inside the ground and the segregation of fans for the first time at Wycombe, clearly helped avoid the scale of trouble that marred the Colchester game a few weeks ago.

"What went on outside the ground had nothing to do with football — these people are not football fans, just hooligans."

Police at the hospital end of Loakes Park used truncheons to fight off fans hurling missiles, including fluorescent light tubes and coins.

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A policeman leads a man away from the match at Loakes Park.

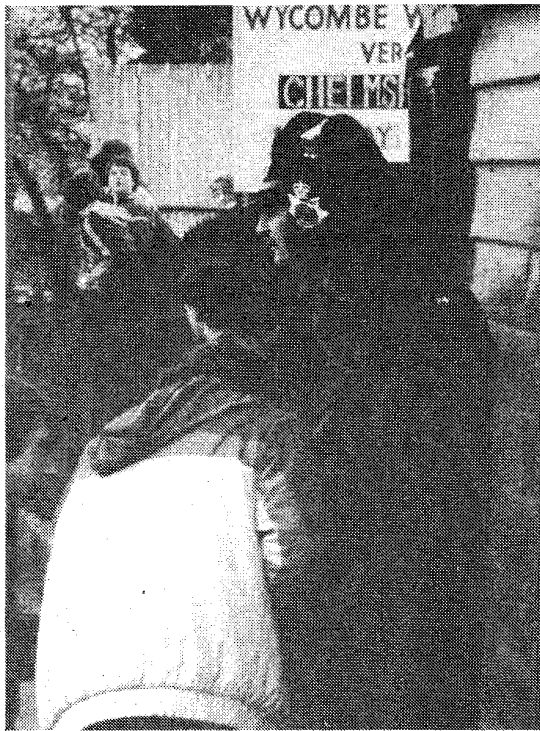
PICTURE: JEFFREY HOLMES

SPORTS SCORELINE TV VIEWERS DID NOT SEE

Police 24, Hoolifans 0



Police prepare to deal with a trouble spot on the terraces.



Police search before the game.

Yobs on rampage From Page 1

Four arrests were made inside the ground, but violence spilled over into town centre streets as coaches were stoned, and a gang of youths rampaged through the Octagon.

At McDonald's, horrified shoppers and screaming children watched helplessly as a gang of first Wycombe, and then Chelmsford fans, burst through the doors, smashing chairs over each others' backs and devastating the packed restaurant.

Mr David Thomas, of Chalfont St Giles had just arrived at McDonald's with his wife, Carol, when violence erupted.

"Security staff barred the side doors to stop the Wycombe mob, breaking through, but the the Chelmsford lot arrived and all hell broke loose. They were smashing each other with everything they could get their hands on," he said.

"I don't mind admitting, I was terrified."

"Little children having their own party in the restaurant were screaming in terror. It was disgraceful."

although £2,500 worth of damage was done to the premises. As a family restaurant we condemn this kind of behaviour outright."

Those arrested — 12 Wycombe and 12 Chelmsford fans — were bailed on Saturday night to appear before Wycombe magistrates on December 16.

Inspector Paul Cook, of Wycombe police, blamed drunkenness

Landlord of the The Gate, Mr Dave Neville, admitted that he was greatly relieved when police closed his pub

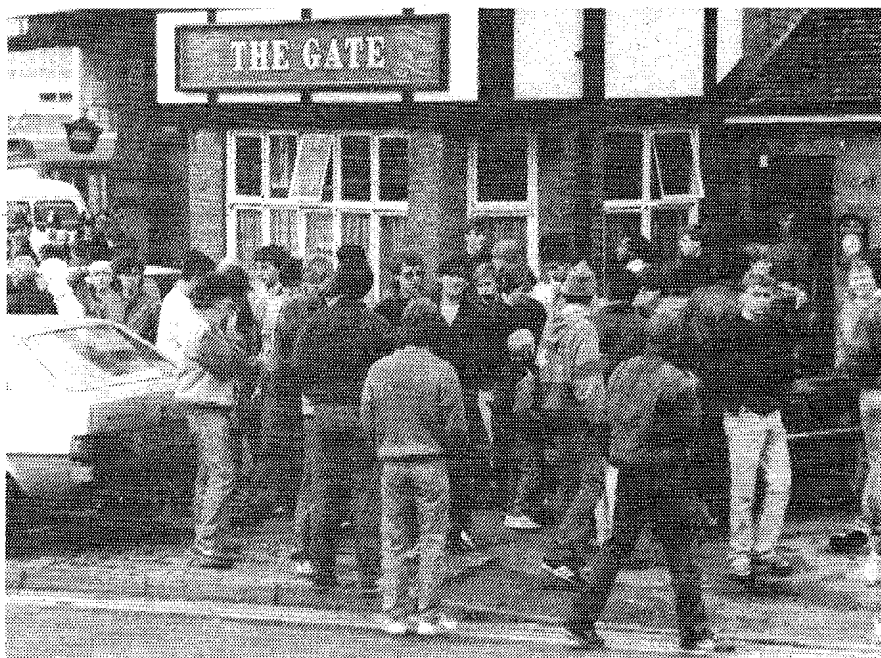
Mr Cook commented: "We were geared up for trouble. I think we coped quite well."

"I've written to the directors of both Wycombe and Chelmsford. I just hope they're proud of the animals who support them," he said.

"Both clubs should be banned from the game for a year, to put their own houses in order," said a furious Mr Thomas.

A McDonald's spokesman said: "The incident must have been very frightening for both staff and customers."

"Our staff handled the whole thing very well,



Crowd gather outside the gate, after the public house had been cleared.

COMMENT

Sentence to fit the crime

TWICE in a matter of weeks, High Wycombe has been subjected to the type of hooliganism associated with big league football clubs.

Both times violence has flared, the matches being played at Wycombe Wanderers' Loakes Park ground have been FA Cup games.

It doesn't take much commonsense to realise that those who cause this type of trouble are not football enthusiasts. And certainly not devotees of Wycombe Wanderers.

They are drawn by the big crowds to cause trouble. Deliberately.

They are mindless, moronic vandals, full of booze, who don't give a damn for their actions.

And what's worse, they're proud of it. If there was any shame over their destructive behaviour, the stigma of a court appearance, and the subsequent punishment, would have the effect society intended it to.

Yet on Saturday, three weeks after the last Cup match, there they were again. Only worse.

Innocent town centre shoppers, mothers with frightened children, watched horror-stricken as yobs went on the rampage.

Not only have these hooligans wrecked property, they have damaged the reputation that Loakes Park has enjoyed — of being a football ground where the family can still enjoy watching a game without fear of becoming tangled with rowdies.

An outraged public will want to see justice when those responsible for Saturday's disgrace appear in the dock.

And they'll want the punishment to fit the crime.

FOOTBALL HOOLIGANS RUN RIOT

FOOTBALL hooligans went on the rampage terrorising shoppers in High Wycombe and causing nearly £3,000 worth of damage.

A running battle broke out between the High Wycombe and Chelmsford fans following the FA Cup match at Loakes Park which attracted about 3,800 supporters.

Inspector Paul Cook said: "There were 20 coaches from Chelmsford full of what can only be termed travelling hooligans. Most of them were under the influence of alcohol.

"There were 24 arrests for criminal damage, assault, obstruction and possession of offensive weapons.

"Two policemen were hurt and

By Alan Cleaver

one fan needed hospital treatment for a head wound."

Bottles, coins, bricks and other missiles were used by fans after the match which Wycombe Wanderers won 2-0. Goals by Des McMahon and Simon Read ensured Wycombe got through to the third round of the FA Cup. They will play York City.

Saturday's trouble started when Chelmsford fans arrived an hour early for the match. Police closed The Gate pub near the ground early.

Police, who had 80 officers on duty, segregated opposing fans for the first time at Loakes Park and there was little trouble during the game itself.

After the match police say

both Wycombe and Chelmsford fans ran riot through the streets.

McDonalds in High Wycombe suffered the most damage when Wycombe and Chelmsford hooligans smashed their way into the restaurant full of Christmas shoppers and children.

McDonalds spokesman Annette Allen said: "Our staff were able to lock the doors but the fans were so irate about this that they dismantled a couple of market traders stalls and used some of the metal rods to smash the windows causing £2,500 damage.

"There were many families in the restaurant at the time and I think it is a poor example to set to young children. I am very saddened by the whole thing."

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MOB TERROR

Wycombe shoppers flee in soccer day of shame

CHRISTMAS shoppers fled in terror as soccer thugs went on the rampage in Wycombe on Saturday, smashing up shops and attacking vehicles.

The drunken yobs struck shortly after 1pm, causing thousands of pounds worth of damage.

Petrified staff and customers at McDonalds in Wycombe's High Street watched in horror as they attacked the restaurant before Wycombe's 2-0 FA Cup second round victory

over Chelmsford.

This was only the second time the club had reached the third round.

Wycombe Wanderers secretary John Goldsworthy said: "We are very grateful to the police for their work inside the ground — they were magnificent.

Hooligans

"Damage was minimal and hooliganism was kept to a minimum.

"But trouble outside the ground becomes a civil matter and everyone in the club is very sad about the scenes in the

town centre. It just seems to be a malaise of this country."

Annette Allen, a spokesperson for McDonalds said:

"They just ran amok. It was a terrifying experience for everyone.

"Security staff bolted the side doors, and the yobs were so annoyed they couldn't get in they ripped down poles from the market stalls and smashed windows.

"There was a children's party going on at the time and it was a frightening ordeal for everyone concerned."

Altogether police made 24 arrests for public order offences ranging from criminal damage to possession of offensive weapons. 12 Wycombe fans and 12 Chelmsford fans were held.

"They were hell bent on causing trouble. We did everything possible to minimise it, but faced with a gang of rampaging hooligans in the town centre, there's not a great deal you can do," said Insp Peter Stride of Wycombe police.

"At the match we were careful to search everyone going through the gates and had more than 80 policemen on duty at the ground.

Innocent

"We were geared up for the trouble and segregated the supporters for the first time in the football club's history.

"People who ran around smashing windows, attacking cars and terrorising innocent people are not football fans, just out and out hooligans."

Before the game fans were seen hurling missiles, including fluorescent light tubes and coins, stoning vehicles and rioting in the town centre.

The Blues continue their cup run with a third round tie at York, currently lying second in the Third Division of the Football League.

Drunken fans raid shops

Early arrivals blamed for mob violence

by NICK SHRIMPTON

THE early arrival of many visiting Chelmsford supporters has been cited as the main cause of the violence and vandalism which cast a black cloud over Wycombe Wanderers' FA Cup triumph.

The town centre became a battleground on Saturday afternoon as rival gangs displayed their moronic mentality in front of terrified Christmas shoppers.

More than an hour before kick-off youths were rampaging through the Octagon, damaging property and clashing with police.

Trouble flared soon after the first of about 15 coaches rolled in from Essex at 12.45pm.

Scores of travelling fans filed into The Gate pub outside Loakes Park after drinking heavily en route.

And by the end of the day police had made 24 arrests

for assault, criminal damage, obstruction, drunkenness and carrying offensive weapons. All offenders were bailed to appear before Wycombe magistrates on Monday.

Wanderers' secretary, John Goldsworthy, argued: "If these coaches had not got there until two o'clock plus, possibly some of the problems in the town might not have arisen."

Smashed

And Chief Inspector Pauline Sydenham, of Wycombe Police, said: "Undoubtedly, along with the so-called local supporters the Chelmsford people had consumed alcohol beforehand. I'm quite convinced that played a big part in their behaviour."

It is understood that the early arrivals were on privately chartered vehicles and not official coaches for which police were prepared.

The worst incident occurred at McDonalds in the High Street, where a 200-strong mob smashed windows and furniture and terrorised customers, among whom was a child's birthday

WANDERERS' CUP WIN MARRED

party group. The damage, estimated at £2,500, was repaired on Wednesday.

Inside the ground it was comparatively peaceful except for coin-throwing and attempts by the Chelmsford contingent to get on to the pitch.

This was largely due to Wanderers' introduction of segregation for the first time, following the terrace scuffles which marred the previous tie with Colchester last month.

Mr Goldsworthy said: "We learned from the Colchester game and we have learned a bit more now as far as trouble in the ground is concerned. If we have another game of this type we can easily improve on what we did this time."

He went on: "We're as sad as anybody else about the damage done in the town, but that's other people's responsibility."

"Some would say that if it weren't for the match it wouldn't have happened, but that's not necessarily so."

"We all know that there are problems with yobbos in the Octagon on most Saturdays."

"It's wrong to blame foot-

ball. It's a social malaise. Unfortunately there has been a lack of discipline in past years and now we're paying for it."

Should Wycombe pull off a shock win at York in the next round, the club could face a dilemma if it lands another home draw.

For financial reasons officials and players would probably prefer to play a major club away, but they could be in two minds if paired with a lesser known team.

"A lot depends on who it is," added Mr Goldsworthy. "We would have to look at the opposition."

"If it was a London club like Chelsea for example, I think I would be running in the opposite direction before the game started."

"But let's say it was Leicester City, that would make us think because they haven't got a bad reputation or a big following."

Miss Sydenham said: "We would plan for whatever eventuality. If Wycombe played at home we would provide whatever is necessary to ensure the enjoyment of the majority."

Stiff fines after FA cup game

COURTS HIT THE ROWDIES' POCKETS

**MAGISTRATES
clamped down on
football rowdies on
Monday with stiff
fines following the**

by JOHN PITT

FA Cup tie between Wycombe Wanderers and Chelmsford on December 7.

Penalties ranged from £200 to £300 for charges of breach of the peace, drunken and disorderly behaviour, and obstructing the police.

Magistrates' chairman Sydney Goulborn spoke of people being frightened and of inexcusable behaviour.

Most of the defendants have pleaded not guilty and their cases have been adjourned to dates in January and February.

Labourer Dale Davis, 19, of Buckingham Drive, High Wycombe, was fined £300 with £50 costs.

Davis admitted a breach of the peace in the town centre at about 5pm, following the end of the FA Cup tie.

Police were called to McDonalds in the High Street where a gang was seen holding pieces of, broken chairs.

A few minutes later about 50 youths were seen approaching McDonalds from Easton Street, and Davis was spotted waving a chair above his head.

Arrested

When they saw the police the group ran away but Davis was arrested at Abbey Way roundabout.

Davis's defence solicitor told magistrates he had never been to a football match before and had left 10 minutes before the end of the game because he sensed trouble.

But when he saw McDonalds being smashed up, he was incensed by what Chelmsford youths were doing to the restaurant.

He was joined by friends and took part in the general melee that followed.

Accounts clerk Neil Potter, of Benedict Drive, Chelmsford, admitted a breach of the peace at Loakes Park football ground. He was fined £250 with £50 costs.

Magistrates were told police officers saw youths charging the pitch at the end of the match from stands occupied by Chelmsford supporters.

Surge

A policeman took hold of Potter, and as he tried to pull himself back over a wall the two men fell to the ground.

Potter said there was a surge from the back of the stand and people spilled on

to the pitch, rather than charged onto it.

Also at the ground was Roy Ellis, of Baddon Road, Chelmsford, who admitted obstructing the police. He was fined £200 with £50 costs.

Ellis was said to have attempted to pull a friend away from a police officer.

Before the match, Anthony Lewis, of White-lands Road, High Wycombe, was arrested for being drunk and disorderly in McDonalds. Magistrates fined him £50 with £25 costs.

Struggled

Lewis, who struggled with a police officer, was heard to say: "It's not my fault, it's the other bastards."

Social inquiry reports have been ordered on Chelmsford man Ian Preston who admitted breach of the peace before the match.

Two gangs of youths were seen approaching each other in the town's Bridge Street car park-area throwing things at one another.

Police heard Preston shout: "Let's get the Wycombe bastards."

An officer tried to arrest Preston but he struggled, eventually pulling both himself and the officer to the ground.

His case was adjourned until January 14.

During the match, Mark Phillips, of Hawthorn Road, High Wycombe, was arrested for drunken and disorderly behaviour. He was fined £50 with £25 costs.

Readers' Letters

Clubs cannot do everything

AS a regular Wycombe supporter I was saddened to hear and read about the trouble caused before the Chelmsford game, but, whilst I sympathise with the people who were in McDonalds when the damage was caused, I cannot agree with the view that it is the football club's responsibility.

For this game, the club tried to prevent trouble inside the ground by segregation

Reader's Letters, The Star, Gomm Road, High Wycombe, Bucks HP13 7DW.

and an increased police presence (at considerable expense), but I really do not see how they can be expected to control people before they enter, or after they leave the ground.

Some time ago, convicted hooligans were made to spend their Saturday afternoons at a police station, to keep them away from normal football supporters.

Perhaps this idea needs to be revived.

If, however, anybody from McDonalds or anywhere else, can think of a practical solution I am sure that both the club and the police would be pleased to hear it and to put it in operation. Can anybody seriously suggest a reason why they would not?

S. Maguire
Mendip Way
Downley

See our good side!

Mailbag

I WOULD like to refer back to your article 'Soccer Yobs on Rampage' which appeared after the Chelmsford FA Cup Tie.

I sympathise with Mr Thomas who was in McDonalds during the rampage.

But in no way were these idiots regular Wycombe Wanderers supporters.

If Mr Thomas took the trouble to come and watch us at one of our league games he would see how well behaved our regular supporters are.

If there's any complaint, it is that sometimes our matches are too serene!

In fact, it wouldn't be out of place for him to bring his wife and family and have a picnic at half-time during the warm weather.

No, Mr Thomas, it's common knowledge that when there is an attractive game at Loakes Park some fans of London clubs delight in showing their animal instincts.

Perhaps if the good people of High Wycombe got off their backsides and filled the ground like the old days it would deter the yobs and leave less room for their antics.

Name and address supplied.

Visiting Cup-tie yobbos fined £600 for violence

THREE young Chelmsford football supporters received fines totally £600 from Wycombe magistrates on Wednesday for their part in the trouble surrounding their team's second round cup-tie with Wycombe Wanderers on December 7.

Robert Bade, 23, of New Writtle Street, 17-year-old Stephen Ellam of Meadgate Avenue, and 25-year-old Brian Motley of Taylor Avenue were charged with having used insulting words or behaviour likely to cause a breach of the peace.

They each admitted the offences this week, although Ellam and Motley pleaded

not guilty at a previous hearing.

The three youths were involved in separate incidents on that Saturday afternoon, the court heard.

Ellam was seen fighting with another youth and lashing out with his foot. When he was arrested, after a chase, he was abusive to a policeman.

Fence

Motley was part of a group of Chelmsford supporters inside Loakes Park that at one time had police drawing their truncheons in an effort to control them.

On several occasions Motley was seen to be shouting and swearing at police, the court was told by John

Pearce, the prosecuting solicitor.

Bade was involved with another group of supporters who were shouting obscenities at Wycombe Wanderers supporters and then stormed a fence separating them, trying to pull it down.

John Dodd, counsel for Ellam and Motley, said Ellam was standing outside a pub, drinking orange juice, when a group of Wycombe fans came along taunting the Chelmsford supporters, the court was told.

Tension

He joined in when his group began to run towards the Wycombe fans, Mr Dodd said, but came off worse

when he was kicked and punched.

Ellam, an apprentice joiner, was fined £150 and ordered to pay £50 costs.

Motley said Mr Dodd, "was carried away by the tension between the rival supporters."

Motley was fined £250 and ordered to pay £50 costs. Bade was fined £200 ordered to pay £50 costs and compensation of £86.65.

● A 19-year-old Wycombe youth was bound over to keep the peace for a year after magistrates heard he was part of a group misbehaving in Abbey Way on the same afternoon.

Kevin Arnold, of West Wycombe Road, High Wycombe was bound over in the sum, of £100.

Rowdy cup tie soccer fans punished

RIVAL football fans involved at Wycombe Wanderers FA Cup match against Chelmsford in December were face to face again on Wednesday.

Stephen Beill, of Culverton Hill, Princes Risborough, and Nicholas Licence, of Great Baddow, Chelmsford, appeared at Wycombe magistrates' court charged with public order offences during and after the Blues' home game at Loakes Road when police made 24 arrests.

Beill, 28, was charged with threatening, abusive and insulting behaviour after he was seen making V-signs during the trouble.

But after the prosecution told the magistrates that Beill's behaviour was "culpable but not serious" he was bound over in the sum of £100 for six months.

His solicitor, Alex Miscampbell, said: "Beill has a good job, did well at school and college and I am absolutely satisfied he will not trouble you again."

Licence, 28, was fined £100 for blocking the path of PC Lee Payne who attended a disturbance among Chelmsford supporters during the game.

Robin Dukes, defending, said Licence had never been in any trouble before.

He said the scene at the time of the offence was confusing. "It was a dreadful day. The police weren't going for Licence but to the disgraceful behaviour of the Chelmsford fans behind him."

The chairman of the magistrates declined to sit on either case because of his personal involvement with Wycombe Wanderers Football Club.

The previous day a former Chelsea football supporter with two previous convictions for causing trouble at matches, was given a suspended prison sentence for his part in the trouble surrounding the cup-tie on December 7.

Leslie McCullough, 26, of Bowerdean Road, High

Wycombe, admitted using threatening words and behaviour in the Bridge Street car park.

He was given a two-month prison sentence suspended for two years, and ordered to pay £55 costs.

McCullough was seen to be a leader of a large group of Wycombe supporters that had had bottles and glasses thrown at them by a group of Chelmsford supporters. McCullough was urging his group to retaliate, said police.

Robin Dukes, for McCullough, said the incident arose from a blatant act of provocation.

A 20-year-old High Wycombe youth, arrested after the match, had a charge of using insulting words and behaviour dismissed by magistrates on Wednesday.

John Pearce, prosecuting, said Paul Farmer, of Talbot Avenue, High Wycombe, was seen to be with youths fighting outside Sandfords after the match.

But police had been advised there was no reasonable prospect of conviction.