

● Chelsea fans go on wrecking spree after team's defeat

LUTON'S DAY OF SOCCER MADNESS

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The cost

- Arrests: 61
- Injured: 62 (13 taken to hospital)
- Troublemakers ejected from ground: 350
- Broken windows: 50
- Cars damaged: 6



Hooligan Special . . . the Chelsea train is halted at Napsbury where the fans smashed fittings and threw them on to the trackside



Invasion! Luton chief coach Roy McCrohan shakes his fist as hundreds of fans swarm on to the pitch moments from the final whistle.

LUTON was still counting the cost of mindless soccer thuggery today as police told of the battle they faced against the town's worst-ever football violence.

Fury erupted after the Hatters thrashed visitors Chelsea 3-0. Chelsea fans, who had earlier invaded the pitch, rampaged through Luton leaving a trail of smashed windows, damaged cars and injured people.

British Rail said today that Chelsea fans returning home by train caused £1,000 damage to carriages. Trouble was not confined to after the match. On their way to the ground Chelsea fans smashed windows in High Town Road, 19 were arrested when they broke into the ground, and ten minutes from the end of the game play had to be stopped when 1,000 of the London team's supporters stormed the pitch.

This was the blackest Saturday for football violence in Luton Town's history. Last season, regarded as the worst for hooliganism the club experienced, the largest single tally of arrests on match day was 18. This time there were 61.

Police said 50 windows had been smashed after the game, six cars damaged and 62 people hurt.

A total of 350 people were ejected from the ground.

The 104 police and Specials on duty were fully stretched to control the fans during the sickening afternoon of violence and hooliganism. As the fans rampaged their way through Luton after the match one policeman commented: "The town is being smashed up."

People arrested were charged with causing a breach of the peace and similar offences and were released on bail.

The police task was made more difficult because of a bomb threat to the Arndale Centre and a demonstration by coloured youths against the police through Bury Park during the soccer match.

When the game ended the police were unable to prevent sections of the 19,000 crowd running amok outside the ground. Chelsea fans, upset at their side's thrashing, smashed windows in shops and houses in Oak Road and Bury Park Road as they stormed to the railway station.

One woman, visiting Luton for the day, was forced to stand by and watch as her registration car was tipped over on its side.

"I saw the youths tipping the car up and down and gradually turning it over, but there was nothing I could do about it," said Mrs Elizabeth Hollingsworth, who lives at Wwlwyn.

Terrible

"The scenes were terrible. I have never seen anything like it. It was just as though a war was on."

Three police vehicles were also damaged by the thugs. One had a window smashed, another had the wing mirror damaged, and a van door was damaged when Chelsea fans tried to rescue a youth who had been arrested.

Mrs Ruth Marshall, of Oak Road, who was with Mrs Hollingsworth outside her home when the car was tipped up, had a front window smashed by a piece of wood.

A brick was flung through the window of 86-year-old Mrs Mary Vidler, of Oak Road. Another resident, Mrs Betty Winfield, who also had a window smashed, said: "The whole thing was disgusting. I think it is about time football was stopped altogether, or else it should be played right out in the country somewhere where the fans can kill each other if they want to."

During the Oak Road battle a youth was hit over the head with a bottle. Of the 61 injured during the afternoon 13 were taken to Luton and Dunstable Hospital for treatment and two were admitted. They have since been sent home.

Robbery

Near the railway station fans poured into a Pakistani food shop in Bury Park Road owned by Mohammed Rafiq Quraishi. They upturned fruit and vegetable displays and began throwing the food about.

At the railway station police and British Rail officials had to herd the Chelsea fans on to the trains. The fans tossed out lightbulbs, broke windows and tried to rush across railway lines to get at rivals.

On the trip to London rowdiness forced the trains to make several stops. One occurred near St Albans

Bloody, crazy — the day the fans went mad

By STEVE LEE

I STOOD on Luton Town's Oak Road end on Saturday and watched the worst soccer violence in the history of the club — and it was the Chelsea fans who caused the trouble.

It was a bloody, brutal and crazy day. And it posed the inevitable question: How long can British football tolerate this menace?

As soon as I arrived at the ground, I witnessed ugly brawls. There was intermittent fighting at the Oak Road end between rival fans and a "conveyor belt" line of police and the stewards fought bravely to haul out the young offenders.

Just before the kick-off dozens of Chelsea fans spilled on to the pitch to join the massed bank of

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