

Fifty-Six: The Story of the Bradford Fire

Martin Fletcher



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Fifty-Six: The Story of the Bradford Fire Martin Fletcher Shortlisted for the William Hill Sports Book of the Year award.

On May 11 1985, fifty-six people died in a devastating fire at Bradford City's old Valley Parade ground. It was truly horrific, a startling story – and wholly avoidable – but it had only the briefest of inquiries, and it seemed its lessons were not learned.

Twelve-year-old Martin Fletcher was at Valley Parade that day, celebrating Bradford's promotion to the second flight, with his dad, brother, uncle and grandfather. Martin was the only one of them to survive the fire – the biggest loss suffered by a single family in any British football disaster.

In later years, Martin devoted himself to extensively investigating how the disaster was caused, its culture of institutional neglect and the government's general indifference towards football fans' safety at the time. This book tells the gripping, extraordinary in-depth story of a boy's unthinkable loss following a spring afternoon at a football match, of how fifty-six people could die at a game, and of the truths he unearthed as an adult. This is the story – thirty years on – of the disaster football has never properly acknowledged.

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