

March 2014



AWAY FANS MATTER

A FREE FANZINE FROM THE FOOTBALL SUPPORTERS' FEDERATION

THE FOOTBALL
SUPPORTERS'
FEDERATION



NO TO PYRO

Most fans oppose
smoke bombs & flares

TICKET PRICES

The campaign for £20
away match tickets

SAFE STANDING

More encouragement
for supporters of choice



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Kick it Out



LET'S KICK RACISM OUT OF FOOTBALL

The FSF is opposed to all forms of discrimination, and support the campaigning work of Kick It Out.

We encourage all fans to show your support for Kick it Out and its work by downloading the Kick It Out mobile app onto your phone.

WELCOME TO AWAY FANS MATTER

Away Fans Matter is a free fanzine from the Football Supporters' Federation.

The FSF is the national organisation for football fans, campaigning for the interests and rights of supporters.

This fanzine has been produced as part of our Away Fans Matter campaign, which takes up all aspects of the experience of travelling fans.

We know from experience that away fans are absolutely crucial to the atmosphere in grounds: quite often the home fans don't really get going if there's no away support to spark them into life.

Just about all the issues facing supporters have their sharpest impact on those who travel away: changes to kick-off times, ticket prices, standing, travel problems, stewarding and policing issues, you name it. And while attendance figures generally have been rising in top flight football, away attendances have recently declined - that's something we need to put right.

This fanzine gives updates on some of the issues we've been taking up, and there are areas where we've made some progress. But our campaigns are only as strong as the support that we get for them from you, the hard-core away fan.

There are lots of levels at which you can get involved, from signing our online petition on ticket prices, to filling in our away fans' survey after every match you travel to, through to helping with our activities with banners in grounds, attending meetings, even occasionally joining a protest march. Help us to spread the word, get the media on board, create an irresistible groundswell of opinion.

Membership of the FSF is free: you can join instantly online at www.fsf.org.uk, and you can also follow us on Facebook and Twitter. We're here to help if you encounter problems, and we have the ear of the football authorities if there are issues you want to raise.

We're fans just like you, our policies and priorities are determined democratically and we have no-one else's interests at heart other than those of football supporters.

» So get involved and strengthen our cause

AWAY FANS MATTER

Away Fans Matter is the umbrella term for the FSF's campaign work that champions the cause of the away fan, and it takes a number of different forms.

Away fans matter



Away fans are often at the sharp end of some of the worst experiences of watching football in this country – games being moved at late notice, travel disruption, excessive ticket prices, confrontational policing and stewarding

practices – and we want to make sure that the away fan is not in danger of becoming an endangered species, and that we aren't taken for granted.

Away Fans Matter is the umbrella term for the FSF's campaign work that champions the cause of the away fan, and it takes a number of different forms, including:

Twenty's plenty



SCORE

Watching live football is becoming more and more expensive, and in the current financial climate many fans are finding it harder to afford. Increases in the cost of petrol and rail fares make travelling away particularly expensive, and ticket prices don't help.

As part of Away Fans Matter, we launched the 'Twenty's Plenty' campaign. It calls on clubs to agree to reciprocal pricing agreements so that away fans of both clubs benefit from a maximum price of £20 when the two sides meet.

Deals have already been agreed between clubs, and you can read more about it on the coming pages.

Away fans' facilities audit



Alongside gaining fans' opinions on how they are treated, we will be working directly with the Premier League and all 20 clubs to

audit their facilities and approach to away fans. You can find out more about this new project on page 15.

Away fans feedback project



We also want to work with clubs to improve the matchday experience for all away fans, which is why for the last two seasons we have operated the Away Fans Feedback Project.

This survey, completed by thousands of fans following their clubs up and down the country on a weekly basis, collates all those experiences. It covers every aspect of the matchday, from the price of a pie to the condition of the away sector, from the availability of toilets or refreshment kiosks to the attitudes of club stewards and police.

By collecting the data, we can work with clubs and the authorities in an analytical fashion – congratulating them on what they're getting right, and helping pinpoint potential problems that require improvement. The benefits passed on to away fans often feed back to the club's home supporter base, too.



TWENTY'S PLENTY FOR AWAY TICKETS

BECAUSE FOOTBALL SHOULD BE AFFORDABLE FOR ALL...



Fans contact the FSF to vent about any number of issues, from gripes that frankly don't matter ("They ran out of Wagon Wheels at half-time!") to some of the most fundamental fan issues facing the game, like ticket prices.

The reason you're reading this is because you picked it up at a game. It's what makes you different from a passive TV viewer. You create the atmosphere they enjoy, which leads to multi-billion pound TV deals. Clubs should never forget that.

Ticket prices create a barrier for match-going fans in a way nothing else does. If you can't afford a ticket, you can't make the match. Costs soon add up once you throw in travel, food, and the occasional pint (just to be social, of course).

Back in 2012 more than 4,000 fans completed our National Survey with 92% saying ticket prices were too high. The BBC's Price of Football survey also showed the average cost of the cheapest adult ticket had risen by more than five times the rate of inflation.

So last year we launched Twenty's Plenty which gave fans a chance to make their voice heard via a petition which automatically emailed their club and the relevant league. You can still sign it via www.fsf.org.uk/2oplenty.

Last year we marched on Premier League HQ at a protest organised by our affiliates Spirit of Shankly and launched Twenty's Plenty which gave fans a chance to make their voice heard via a petition which automatically emailed their club and the relevant league.

The fight's far from over but since Twenty's Plenty launched clubs as diverse as Barnsley, Cardiff City, Derby County, Hull City, Liverpool, Newcastle United, Norwich City, Swansea City, and WBA have announced reciprocal deals which mirror Twenty's Plenty's key principles.

It was the strength of feeling about the importance of away fans that formed the background to the Premier League's Away Fans' Initiative. That's £12m over three years to make games more affordable for away fans, equating to £200,000 per club, per season.

Clubs have spent their dosh on a range of initiatives so far and, from the feedback we've had, by far the most popular offers have been those which subsidise away tickets or travel. We want to see more of it!

**» Want to help bring ticket prices down?
Then sign the FSF's Twenty's Plenty for Away
Tickets petition.**

Away fans are the beating heart of football. The hardcore. Travelling supporters bring colour and atmosphere to grounds, spend the most money watching their teams and make the most effort to support their clubs. The away fan should not be taken for granted.

Your online signature will show your support for the campaign and trigger an email to your club and the Premier League. Do your bit, spread the word via Facebook, Twitter, and add your name to the Twenty's Plenty petition:

ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS:

"I back the FSF's Twenty's Plenty for Away Tickets campaign and call upon football clubs at all levels of the game to recognise and reward the amazing contribution of away fans by getting together to agree an across the board price cap on away match tickets of £20 (£15 for concessions)."

www.fsf.org.uk/2oplenty



**» Will those TV billions keep flowing if stands look empty and atmospheres stagnate?
Football needs the colour and noise that away fans generate.**



Image by Matty Clarke

**Why football clubs
should back
Twenty's Plenty:**



» Watching live football is becoming more and more expensive and, in the current financial climate, many fans are finding it harder to afford. Increases in the cost of fuel and rail fares make travelling away particularly expensive.

» Some football clubs already go to great lengths to keep ticket prices accessible through promotional deals and responsible pricing. Sadly those offers are rarely shared with away fans. More bums on seats means more pies, pints and programmes sold.

» Reciprocal arrangements are in everyone's interest – if all clubs adopt cheaper pricing for away fans, match attendance will increase and teams would be backed by more of their most loyal supporters away from home.

» Lower prices would help make football more affordable for those on low wages, children, students and OAPs. Football must act now to make sure it doesn't lose the next generation of match-going fans.

» Gate receipts are becoming less important as an overall percentage of a club's income. The Premier League's new media deal generated more than £5bn for clubs. The increase from the last deal alone is enough to knock £50 off every ticket, at every game. Yes, you read that right.

**Let us know about deals
at your club via @The_FSF
or tickets@fsf.org.uk**

QUIZ TIME

It's time to test the old grey matter and while away a spare ten minutes with our football quiz.

There's always a delay and some time to kill on a matchday somewhere – a boring half-time, the traffic jam on the coach on the way home, you know the sort of thing – but we've thought of everything. There aren't any prizes on offer, we're afraid, but see how many you can get from the following. You can find the answers to our teasers on the bottom of page 10.

Question 2



Image by Jim Muttram

Question 4



Image by Chris Turner

Question 10-c



Image by blmiers2

- ① What links Benfica, Crystal Palace, and the Dutch Eredivisie side who play their games at the De Adelaarshorst stadium?
- ② Which former Premier League striker tweeted last year: "What's the point in us English ex-footballers doing our badgers? Never going 2 get jobs."?
- ③ Who were the only unbeaten team at the 2010 World Cup?
- ④ How is 'Offside' by Barry Stroller otherwise known?
- ⑤ Which two countries will be making their first appearance at a 21st Century World Cup in Brazil later this year?
- ⑥ Who said: "I never comment on referees and I'm not going to break the habit of a lifetime for that prat"?
- ⑦ How many sides with the suffix 'City' have played in the Premier League? For a bonus point, can you name them all?
- ⑧ Which English league side's name contains none of the letters from the word 'mackerel'?
- ⑨ Who were the last team to win the top flight wearing stripes?
- ⑩ Three of the following are genuine reasons why players have missed matches through injury. Which one have we made up?
 - a) A power drill-assisted DIY pedicure
 - b) Stretching while decorating the Christmas tree
 - c) Running into a moose
 - d) Yawning in bed

PASSION WITHOUT PYRO



"Man Utd fans set off flares at the Etihad"

It probably won't have escaped your notice that the use of **pyrotechnics** or "**pyro**" (smoke bombs and flares) in British stadiums has been on the increase in recent years.

The last couple of seasons have seen an increase in the use of pyrotechnics or "pyro" – that's smoke bombs or flares – in British stadiums. They've become a hot topic, giving rise to concerns about safety, pretty serious legal consequences for those caught using them, and a bit of a backlash from the majority of fans who don't want them.

We're prepared to accept that most of those fans using pyro are well-intentioned, wanting to liven things up in the stands.

We share many of the concerns about a decline in the atmosphere in grounds, and we don't want a "sit down and shut up" culture to prevail either.

But anyone thinking pyro is the answer has got it wrong, for three main reasons.

First, that regardless of the motivation of those bringing them in, pyro in football grounds presents unnecessary risks to other fans.

Secondly, they're illegal and carry some heavy punishments for those caught using them. Are they really worth getting banned for?

Finally, the feedback from our members – tallying with all other research and surveys – is that most fans don't want them. We want to be able to get behind our team and make a noise, but we also want to see how they're playing, for better or for worse. And with the likelihood of tighter security and possibly reduced allocations, the legal consequences don't just impact on the person setting off the smoke bomb: we could all lose out.

Pyro doesn't improve the atmosphere, and it could end up making it a lot worse.

PASSION WITHOUT PYRO

In recent months there's been a lot of debate about pyros in social media. Whilst there's no doubt that there has been an increase in their use the vast majority of fans simply don't like them.

Numbers game



That viewpoint is backed thanks to a recent survey conducted by the Football Association, Football League, and Premier League.

Of the 1,635 respondents, 87% believed that are dangerous at matches, 86% were concerned for their safety, and 79% consider them to be a health hazard.

The use of pyro might be a relatively new phenomenon in English/Welsh football but there has been a sharp increase in its use in recent years.

In 2010/11 there were just eight incidents across the Premier League, Football League, Football Conference and domestic cup competitions. That rose to 72 in 2011/12 and 172 in 2012/13.

This seems to have created a division among fans and, while those in favour can be very vocal, four out of five fans (78%), said they supported action against flares and smoke bombs.

Their dislike of pyro stemmed from bad experiences such as having their view of a match obstructed (24%) and smoke inhalation (10%).

Two-thirds of parents also said the increased use of pyro was putting them off taking their kids to the game.

What does the FSF think?



We're a democratic organisation and support the majority viewpoint. Most fans don't back the use of pyro whether it's because of concerns around potential injury or blocked views.

Flares can burn at 1,600°C, that's higher than the melting point of iron, and careless handling can obviously result in injury at those temperatures. There have even been cases of flares being thrown by fans in the away end at grounds like Old Trafford and St James' Park.

Smoke bombs burn at lower temperatures but they still aren't safe objects to bring into football grounds. In May a 15-year-old Villa fan suffered lung damage after being in close proximity to a smoke bomb and we're aware of other cases where medical assistance has been sought.

At the end of last season eight year-old Evertonian James Maddocks travelled to Anfield with his dad for his first ever derby. Sadly, his day was cut short after a smoke bomb hit him. He was taken to the St John Ambulance and didn't see a single minute of the game.

In November 2013 Barnet came from 2-0 down against Cambridge United and thought they'd grabbed a winner, only for the ref to disallow their goal thanks to a smoke bomb obscuring the ball as it dropped from the sky.

» No goal.



"A smoke bomb delays play at Brum v Villa in 2011"



The legal consequences of using pyro inside stadiums can be very heavy. If caught, criminal convictions and Football Banning Orders are almost certain.

Pyro and the law



Over in Germany they've had issues too. In the Bundesliga FC Köln's home match against Bayern Munich on the last day of the 2011/12 season was stopped early after black smoke bombs engulfed the pitch.

It's not just arguments around safety or the theoretical rights of one individual to do what they want, balanced against the rights of another to see the match without obstruction.

Whether you like pyro or not, it's against the law and when fans get caught it's the FSF who has to step in and help with legal contacts and advice.

We're here to support fans but we'd rather spend our time on campaigns around safe standing or ticket prices, instead of trying to dig pyro users out of an avoidable hole.

Fans have even been jailed. In February 2013, two Chelsea fans were jailed for 28 days and slapped with six year banning orders after taking smoke bombs into Swansea City's Liberty Stadium.

Pyro – the FSF's view

The FSF does not back the use of pyro at games for three fundamental reasons:

- 1 Popularity, the majority of fans do not back its use
- 2 Safety, pyro use in the UK does not take place in a controlled environment
- 3 Legality, we do not like seeing young fans arrested, banned, or even jailed



» Football Supporters Europe represent fans across the continent, they don't endorse unorganised or uncontrolled use of pyro anywhere.

» FSE does speak up for the controlled use of pyro but only where it is "desired by the supporters".

Dani Wurbs, Co-ordinator at FSE: "Norway and Austria do allow the use of pyro in football but upon initiative from the fans mainly, there are controlled conditions, dialogue, and application schemes in place between fans, fire brigades, police and the club to ensure that pyro is used in a safe way."



1 - Eagles, 2 - Dean Windass, 3 - New Zealand, 4 - The Match of the Day theme tune, 5 - Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Colombia, 6 - Ron Atkinson, 7 - 11 - (Birmingham, Bradford, Bristol, Cardiff, Coventry, Hull, Leicester, Manchester, Norwich, Stoke and Swansea), 8 - Swindon Town, 9 - Sunderland in 1935/36, 10 - b) stretching to decorate the Christmas tree



We've picked up the pieces before, explaining to loved ones why the law has stamped down on their son or boyfriend. Yeah, we're sure he's a nice lad just trying to "bring the atmosphere back" but the Crown Prosecution Service doesn't care about that and they are prosecuting him.

Things aren't about to change anytime soon, either. Policing Minister Damian Green has said the courts should be "dealing in the strongest way possible with fans who still illegally smuggle pyrotechnics into football grounds".

This isn't just about the risks that individuals might want to take though, it's about the consequences their actions have on others.

We already receive a lot of emails and tweets from fans who think they're treated like criminals.

If your club has a bad reputation for using pyro among the authorities, you can guarantee that will lead to more police and stewards at games which can only reinforce that impression. Other people will quite possibly receive firmer policing because of the actions of the few.

Think sniffer dogs, searches on entry, increased filming and stricter security (easy to justify when people break the law). That all costs money and who pays for policing at grounds? The clubs. Who funds the clubs? Fans.

» Pyro could lead to increased prices and cuts in away ticket allocations

For more on the legalities of smoke bombs and fireworks, check out this factsheet

Produced by Alison Gurden, a Barrister specialising in Football Related Legislation



WATCHING FOOTBALL IS NOT A CRIME!



Watching Football Is Not A Crime! monitors police and stewards' dealings with football fans. We aim to work with the clubs and authorities to ensure that all fans are treated fairly and within the law.

"I behave myself at football, so what difference does it make to me?"

The vast majority of fans we help, via advice and legal contacts, have never been in trouble before. We've even helped a serving police officer!

Hopefully you're right and you never need our help in relation to club complaints or legal matters but who knows? One day, you just might...



INFORMING

- Free Lions Magazine
- Twitter @The_FSF
- Facebook - search 'The FSF'



SUPPORTING

- Legal Advice and Support
- International Fans' Embassies
- Case Work and Consumer Advice



CAMPAIGNING

- Local Campaigns
- National Representation
- Football Supporters Europe

Tel: 0330 44 000 44

Twitter: @FSF_faircop

Email: faircop@fsf.org.uk

SAFE STANDING CAMPAIGN



Rail seat area at Hannover 96, Germany

The FSF's Safe Standing Campaign has come an awful long way in recent years. Fans who supported standing at football were once a marginalised voice, ignored by many in the mainstream media, or worse, the subject of clueless articles telling us why we should be grateful for all-seaters.

That's no longer the case. The success of the campaign has given fans confidence to voice their opinion while "below-the-line" newspaper comment sections and Twitter mean journalists spouting the same tired nonsense are held to account like never before.

Better yet our arguments have made real headway within the "football industry". In 2012 Aston Villa became the first Premier League club to back safe standing. Since then Cardiff City, Crystal Palace, Hull City, Sunderland, and Swansea City have all backed our campaign.

In November 2013 a survey by the Mail on Sunday showed that 19 out of 20 clubs "actively support or would consider safe standing, if legislation allowed it, or are open-minded on the issue". The formal backing of 14 top-flight clubs is required for an issue to become Premier League policy.

It might not happen this week, next month, or even next season, but with those numbers in mind it's not impossible to imagine a scenario where Premier League clubs vote in favour to explore the possibility of safe standing areas, just like the Football League have.

In June 2013 the Football League's AGM took place in Vilamoura, Portugal (nice!) with more than two-thirds of the 72 clubs voting in favour of a motion to explore safe standing trials. That led to a Football League consultation asking clubs four questions relating to safe standing.

The results of the survey were revealed at the league's meeting in Derby in February, with 70% of the clubs responding backing safe standing. Chief Executive Shaun Harvey was given an "overwhelming mandate" to lobby Sports Minister Helen Grant.

It's great news for the fans who back the campaign, and while this is further proof that momentum is firmly on the side of the pro-safe standing camp, it doesn't mean we'll instantly see fully functional rail seat areas in the Football League.

The Football League will take their findings to the Coalition Government requesting a change in the law. With the Liberal Democrats already in favour, a general election around the corner and widespread support for safe standing, it will prove an interesting process.

Where next?



As we've outlined, many clubs are coming on board and we need to keep chipping away at that. The Football League's safe standing consultation process is critical and the fallout from that will define many of the campaign's next steps.



Liverpool fans standing on the Kop

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport have also made it clear that it's not only clubs who matter though, saying that it requires "compelling evidence... from all the relevant authorities, including the police" before it will approve safe standing areas.

» Their worries revolve around disorder and security rather than safety.

We would argue that standing does provide a controlled environment for fans below Championship level, there's no reason it can't in the top two leagues either. Match-going fans know that a lot of tension at football stems from stewards' attempts to get fans to sit.

A safe standing trial would give clubs and matchday commanders the chance to properly test rail seats and Aston Villa have already offered to host it. Without that trial how can we provide the "compelling evidence" that politicians demand?



Villa Park - primed for safe standing trial?

What can I do at my club?



» This varies from club-to-club, some are already 100% behind-the-campaign, others back it but the occasional fan reminder does no harm, and some still need persuading. Pop us an email to safestanding@fsf.org.uk and we can have a chat to see what's best – it could be anything from matchday actions, to organising joint letters from fans' groups, fanzines and websites, to gathering club-specific evidence via a survey which we can help you set up.

Women can't stand



» That caught your eye, didn't? We think it's total and utter rubbish of course, but opponents of safe standing sometimes argue that it will make football stadiums less diverse places. They never provide evidence, just anecdotes that patronise half the population. So here's a few stats...

» 85% of female fans who completed the FSF's 2012 Annual Survey said they backed the choice to sit or stand while one in three actually said they preferred to stand, given the choice. 93% of those who preferred to stand cited "better atmosphere" as a reason for this choice. So there.



Girls allowed at London Road

Further reading



Scan here to find out a wealth of information, imagery and argument.



SUPPORTER LIAISON OFFICERS



Supporter Liaison Officers, or SLOs for short, are a relatively new feature on the UK footballing landscape.

Every club in the Premier League club is required to have a “dedicated and identified official” as their SLO. Football League clubs have also agreed to appoint an individual to perform a similar role and “develop further constructive and open dialogue” with fans.

So, what is an SLO?



Simply put, an SLO is a club employee who is responsible for building bridges between the club and its fans. SLOs might communicate fans’ opinions to a club’s board or senior staff members, and should also liaise with stewards, police and counterparts at opposition clubs. They should be the first point of contact for supporters with their club.

Who are SLOs?



In our experience SLOs in the UK have almost exclusively been appointed from within the club.

That’s not to say there aren’t exceptions to the rule, but most SLOs in England and Wales have shared job titles and a background in PR, the ticket office, or customer service departments.

If they’re just another club employee, why the fuss?



At the FSF we’re championing their role because we believe that, properly implemented, it could be a major step forward for engagement and dialogue between fans and their clubs.

It might not surprise you to learn that in Germany SLOs have been a fixture for some time now, and they have proved a huge success.

Most Bundesliga SLOs are now appointed from within the fanbase, giving them legitimacy and credibility among supporters.

Typically they are involved in things like matchday security, travel arrangements and ticket distribution, however it wasn’t always the case, and a lot of lessons have been learned along the way.

As Uefa themselves say, an SLO should be an “advocate of both sides, representing the interests of the club AND those of the supporters”.

The capitalisation is Uefa’s, highlighting the fact that an effective SLO must be more than just a club employee who defends his employers from criticism.

What can we do?



We’d advise all fans and supporter groups to make contact with their SLO – it’s within their job description to ensure they develop good relationships with their fanbase after all.

» You can find contact details for all 92 clubs’ SLOs at www.fsf.org.uk/slo

With clearer lines of communication the club should get a much better handle on the issues facing supporters, and likewise supporters will hopefully get a much better insight into the reasoning behind the decisions that their clubs make.

AWAY FANS AUDIT PROJECT



The remainder of this season will see the FSF embarking on an ambitious project in which we will visit all 20 Premier League clubs.

Unfortunately for us we won’t see a ball kicked in anger, but we’ll be coming soon to a stadium near you on some random weekday morning, armed with clipboards, pens and a garden shed load of questions.

The plan behind our Away Fans Audit is to independently review how each club handles its visiting fans, to highlight best practice, and of course identify areas that need improvement. We will publish a full report of our findings at all 20 clubs during the close season.

So what sort of things will we be looking for?



Part of it will involve sitting down with club representatives and working through a series of questions, but we’ll also take a walk around the away end and areas outside the ground as we establish the reasons why away fans are allocated that particular space in the stadium, and what is done to accommodate them.

And in much the same way as our Away Fans Feedback Projects asks you for your opinions, we’ll be asking the clubs about everything that impacts on you, the visiting fan. That’s not just ticket pricing, stewarding, transport arrangements

and the price of a pie and a pint, there’s a few less obvious potential issues for us to look into, too.

For instance, do all clubs make the full allocation of tickets available with the correct allowance for disabled fans? Premier League rules state that visiting fans are allowed a minimum of 3000 tickets (or 10% of capacity if less than 30,000), but often reductions due to segregation come out of the away team’s allocation.

You may have heard about the Premier League initiative whereby funds were ring-fenced by clubs to spend on away fans. We will be taking a look at exactly how that money has been spent by each club, and what their plans are for future seasons.

» At the time of writing we’re just about to begin the project in earnest, but come the end of the season we’ll have a unique set of data which we’ll publish for all fans to see.

We hope the audit is embraced by fans and clubs as a positive move, and we think it’s an important element in our efforts to improve away fans’ experience at all Premier League grounds.



AWAY FANS MATTER

The **Away Fans Feedback** survey is part of an ambitious project to measure the experience of away fans from the **Premier League** to the Conference North and South. Its ultimate aim is to improve the away fans' experience and encourage more fans to travel and watch their team.

We'd love your feedback on your away trip today, and any others you have made throughout the season, to help us build the data we need to discuss with clubs and the authorities what matters most to away fans, and where they can improve.

**YOU CAN COMPLETE
THE SURVEY AT:**

www.fsf.org.uk/awayfans

