

anywhere near it. Even if there had been the enormous pressure of thousands of bodies thrusting her up against it, it would have been her ribs or perhaps her shoulders that took the brunt of it. Interestingly, her friends reported that Bernadette was holding her bag in front of herself so it seems much more likely that the pressure of the bag against her trunk area was part of the problem. Maybe the crowd pushed it up against her; maybe a friend was squeezing her too tightly in the euphoria of seeing their idol...Maybe...Well there are so many maybes that it was downright irresponsible of the press to claim that she was simply crushed to death. All we know for sure, thanks to the coroner, is there were no bruises on her body (as surely there would have been had she been crushed against the barrier or trodden upon) but the red flecks of blood in her eyes showed that pressure on her trunk had prevented breathing and deprived her brain of oxygen, resulting in the coma from which she never awoke.

And then, of course, came poor Bernadette's funeral. And the press showed their usual degree of respect – buggler all, that is. They put it about that David would attend and, as much as he wanted to, it simply wasn't on. It would have turned it into a circus, a feeding frenzy for media vultures and fans alike, which was the last thing David wanted. So staying away and allowing her a reasonably dignified ceremony was the best thing he could do for Bernadette. Paying our respects by not attending the service itself, we arranged for a very nice wreath to be sent to the family and David personally took a lot of trouble to get the words right that went with it. The media, of course, don't have any such scruples and Bernadette's family had to run a gauntlet of insensitive hacks and a gaggle of fans that had gathered in the hope that David would turn up. I doubt very much that any of them were there to pay their respects! Just to make sure it all went without incident – and to pay my respects privately – I went along

and watched the funeral from a respectful and discreet distance.

The press may have insinuated that David was somehow to blame – which was ridiculous – but in later reports it was some consolation to him that Bernadette's family made it quite clear that they didn't blame him at all. Anyway, I personally, and everyone I worked with in the security business learned a lot of lessons from that awful day's events and kept them in mind in our concert security plans from then on.

Depressingly, not everyone in the business took the lessons of Bernadette Whelan's death to heart – as The Who later found out when several people were crushed to death in the scramble as the doors opened on their gig somewhere in Cincinnati. Yet again the fans had been queuing all night in freezing cold conditions and those at the front were at the most pressure not to relinquish their prime positions. So they hadn't eaten or been to the toilet – they hadn't even moved. They were weak, numb and possibly verging on hypothermia – so when the doors finally opened and the hordes behind them started charging in, their legs and bodies couldn't get moving fast enough. The people at the back hadn't been there as long – and if they had, they'd at least had some exercise, eaten and drunk. So they surged forward, those at the front just crumpled and the rest trampled over them. No one had learnt – and people died.

I'm happy to say, though, that we did take those lessons on board – and that's why there were no tragedies at Queen's massive NEC concert in Birmingham that Autumn, which I believe was the biggest standing indoor gig ever with an attendance of some 12,000. Again thousands of fans had queued all night – and we gave a lot of thought to planning things to take account of their weakened and distressed