

fack families against corporate killers

Samuel Adams 6 years old killed 10th October 1998, at newly opened Trafford Centre, Greater Manchester.

By Dawn and Paul Adams, parents

Samuel was six when he lay dying in his mother's arms at the newly opened Trafford Centre. He was dancing on a stage with seven or eight other children only a few feet from his mother Dawn, father Paul, his 4 year old brother Joseph and his four month old sister Olivia. A heavy railing fell forward onto Samuel crushing him.

The Trafford Centre put out inaccurate information, giving the impression that Sam had been misbehaving and had 'climbed onto some railings which had then fallen on him', as if it had been his fault. This was completely untrue but was widely reported in the local press. The heavy parapet railing had been removed from the front of the stage and placed against a wall at the back. It was extremely heavy requiring 4 or 5 people to carry it. There were very poor procedures in place to deal with such a serious incident, despite the thousands of people who are attracted to the centre at any one time.

From our knowledge because the railing sections were removable, they should not have been made of such heavy material and should also have been stored in a safe place. Each one must have weighed 10- 15 stone (60 to 90 Kg) but it seemed to be standard practice to leave them lying at the back of the stage.

The response from Trafford MBC, responsible for health and safety enforcement, has left us very unimpressed since they seemed entirely ignorant of the CDM Regulations. The Crown Prosecution Service decided there was insufficient evidence to make a manslaughter charge. The Trafford Centre was prosecuted for breaches of health and safety regulations at Trafford Magistrates Court on 4th February 2000 where the maximum fine is £20,000. The magistrate decided the case exceeded his powers and referred it to the Crown Court in Manchester for sentencing on 16th March. Despite a very severe summing up, the Judge only fined The Trafford Centre £100,000 plus £13,000 costs.

Inquest - Accidental death. No Manslaughter charges. H&S prosecution -fine £100,000.



Paul and Dawn Adams, parents