

1,500 fail to halt coal lorries at Hunterston

By Ronald Faux

Mounted police yesterday forced back militant miners who were trying to stop a convoy of lorries carrying coal from the Hunterston ore terminal on the Clyde.

Five pickets were injured and 65 miners were arrested in the angry clashes as 36 lorries, some with their windscreens protected by metal grilles, roared out of the terminal under police escort, bound for the Ravenscraig steel works 40 miles away.

Groups from the crowd of 1,500 demonstrators, who were matched by an equal number of police, tried to outflank the lines of police

Scuffles broke out, missiles were hurled, and a line of about a dozen police horses moved in. Miners complained that the horses had ploughed through them and that the demonstrators had been unable to escape in the crush.

Strathclyde police later denied allegations that the horses had charged the crowd.

At the Ravenscraig steelworks, scene of violent clashes on Monday between the police and pickets, only a token line of miners watched the first convoy driver go through

A day of action is planned today in Scotland, after which a meeting between union officials is to be called by the Scottish TUC. Union leaders will be discussing the miners' demand that iron ore supplied by rail to Ravenscraig should be halted.

Officials of the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen in Scotland

are keen to delegate any decision on that critical measure, which would cause severe problems at Ravenscraig, to the strike leaders coordinating the action.

● A political dispute began last night over the decision of Chesterfield, a Labour-controlled council, to give £50,000 from its reserves to the families of striking miners

The decision for the one-off payment, which is not a loan, was taken overwhelmingly last night by the council, in spite of Conservative protests, to prevent hardship among the families of about 1,000 striking miners in Derbyshire.

● Another 32 NUM pickets arrested at Ravenscraig appeared at Hamilton Sheriffs Court yesterday. They denied breach of the peace or police assault charges

● Members of the cokemen's section of the NUM yesterday agreed to allow enough supplies into the British Steel strip mill plant at Llanwern.

● The first indications of a possible split among Yorkshire miners emerged yesterday when miners at the Manton colliery in South Yorkshire decided to hold a special union branch meeting on Friday to discuss a possible return to work. The move came after a call by Mr Robert Taylor, a faceworker at the colliery, who claimed that he had received telephone calls from hundreds of workers at the pit wanting to resume work.

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