

# Why I'm still committed to our fight for justice

Kevin Horne, who was arrested and charged at Orgreave, on his work with the OTJC

I WAS a miner at Barnbrough Colliery near to Mexborough, South Yorkshire where I live. I started at the pit from school (New Stubbin) but left after two years and went into the steel works at Park Gate. I was 17 years old when I left the pit in 1966. I did all sorts of work, from factories to building sites, and got married in 1967 when I was 20. It wasn't until 1977 when I decided to go back to the pit.

When the strike came in March 1984, I joined in picketing. We saw for the first time the behaviour of the police under instruction from the government. We were stopped going into Notts, Derbyshire and Lancashire and when we did get

through taking B roads and dirt tracks, the police would smash windscreens and arrest drivers so that the passengers had no transport home and no money to pay any fares.

The story behind Orgreave is that there was a tripartite agreement between the steel union, the rail unions and the miners to provide enough coal to Orgreave to make coke to keep the furnaces alive at Scunthorpe steel plant.

But somewhere along the way the steel unions reneged on the deal and wanted full production at Scunthorpe. So scab drivers were hired at great expense to take coal into Orgreave and take coke to Scunthorpe.



Kevin Horne holds a banner at the IPCC protest in Wakefield. In the last year of his working life he was one of the Doncaster Care UK striking workers.

From just a few pickets and even fewer police, it built up to be thousands of pickets and thousands of police in full riot gear with horses and dogs in reserve, culminating in the so-called 'Battle of Orgreave' on the 18 June 1984 where pickets reacted to a police riot. Police on horseback charged into pickets that were sat talking and eating sandwiches.

The police made over 100 arrests on that day, but only 95 were charged (only the miners) myself among them.

Charges were riot, riotous assembly and unlawful assembly.

The first of these trials happened 12 months later and lasted 48 days before all charges

were dropped when it became clear that the charges relied on false police statements.

I never got my day in court but always thought that the truth would come out one day.

A couple of months after the OTJC was formed I read an article in the *Rotherham Advertiser* and myself and my wife Chris turned up at the Bridge Inn to see what the campaign was all about.

I was still a care worker at the time and couldn't get to all the meetings because I did a lot of night shifts but I decided that the campaign was very serious so I attended as many as I could.

When I retired I had been

asked to do more speaking and push myself forward a bit more. So now was the time to do just that. Myself and Chris went down to Merthyr Tydfil for the weekend to run an OTJC stall and do a speech.

The weekend lifted me and made me volunteer for other things, including TV and radio interviews.

The OTJC has become a large part of my life. We are all still pulling in the same direction and confident that we will one day get the justice we are demanding.

Maybe we need a Labour government to get what we want so that it can fulfil its manifesto pledge for a public inquiry.

Arthur Critchlow tells how he went to prison for trying to help an unconscious Orgreave miner



Arthur Critchlow went to jail for helping an injured miner.

IN the last issue of *At The Coal Face* I told the story of my arrest and injuries at the so-called 'Battle of Orgreave' when I ended up in hospital with a broken skull handcuffed to a copper.

Well, when I was at hospital the doctor said that he would not treat me until the handcuffs were taken off and the officer removed himself from the treatment room.

After my treatment I was taken to Armley Prison in Leeds where I was charged with 'unlawful & riotous assembly'. I wasn't given a solicitor like the other pickets, who were taken to Rotherham magistrate's court.

I was in Armley for 21 days before Mike Mansfield could get me to the High Court in London where I was given my freedom on a split decision by the High Court judges, with a bond which was paid by my pub landlord and other friends. I will forever be in

## A broken skull and three weeks in jail

their debt.

My wife took it really bad while I was in prison. She had two kids to look after on her own without any money and her visits made her feel even worse.

When I got home I was given very strict bail conditions.

I couldn't go within 500 yards of any National Coal Board property, power stations or railways. But in order to sign on at Rotherham police station twice daily, I had to walk past all these.

I had to wait 12 months for my trial along with 14 others. I had to ask for permission to have

time off work to attend Sheffield Crown Court. So I had this hanging over me for 12 months worrying whether I would get life or would I get the sack or both?

But as you may know the trial collapsed after 48 days.

During the trial it became evident that the so-called arresting officers had had their statements dictated to them by senior officers and 31 of these statements were identical.

Ten years later 49 of us got nearly £500,000 in compensation for wrongful and malicious arrests, malicious prosecution and assault. I had a nice little holiday

in Jersey.

Not one policeman was prosecuted for their actions.

Can I ask this question of you? Why did 11,000 men get arrested and given a criminal record overnight, with 188 of them sent to prison? Two men were killed on the picket line without any investigation.

At Orgreave I went to help an unconscious miner. For this I was assaulted, thrown in prison and faced charges which could have meant life imprisonment. Maybe one day the truth will come to light. I hope I'm alive to see it.