# Women in the miners’ strike: Exhibition interview clip transcripts

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## Early days

### Marjorie Simpson, Yorkshire

Marjorie had been hearing about what was happening in the pits for several years before the strike, both from her husband, who worked for the Coal Board as a draughtsman, and from her son John, who was working underground, in Stainforth, South Yorkshire, where they all lived.

Marjorie: 1982 was the start of it. My husband kept coming home from work, and saying he’d not done anything, not done any work, and been playing cards. And I thought, this is weird – he’ll get t’sack, you know! Well I didn’t say anything, and this went on week after week – not done anything, they’d just been messing around, he says, *they won’t give us any work to do*. And, er, I said, *what do you mean, they won’t give you any work to do*, he says, *there’s no work for us to draw anything up, any any new machinery, or any new tools, or anything – they’re just not giving us any work, so we can’t do anything*. Well this worried me, cause we’d a big mortgage. And I was getting really worried, I thought, he’s gonna get t’sack. You know, as you do, you think, there’s gonna be some redundancies here - nobody's gonna pay somebody full wages for two solid years, and er, for 'em to do nothing. Every bone in my body told me there was something gonna happen. And at the same time, John kept coming home from work and saying they haven’t got the right tools to do their job at the pits, and everything, there were no – you know, things were breaking down and not being repaired. So he were complaining about that side of it all. And lo and behold, little did we know what were happening, the government was stockpiling the coal, and running the pits down, so they weren’t viable, they weren’t making any money, and consequently that's why my husband wasn't allowed to draw any new machinery up, do anything, to make it viable - new coal cutting machinery. And that's why, we all now look back and know what were happening, but at the time we didn't - didn't realise what were going off, you see. And, erm, so then, er, came the strike, and that’s when it hit us all.

### Lorraine Walsh and Linda Finnis, Kent

Linda and her younger sister Lorraine were both miners’ wives in the Kent coalfield; when the strike broke out Linda had two children, and Lorraine was pregnant with her first child.

Florence: Can you remember, kind of, what life was like before the strike?

Linda: Yeah, um.

Lorraine: Just very normal.

Linda: Normal, yeah.

Lorraine: And then, then there was all the talk and fear, er, they want to close the pits.

Linda: And they'll lose their jobs.

Lorraine: And then of course, families, people were looking at their mortgages, you know, I was pregnant, my husband was paying the mortgage, how are we gonna, you know, if this did come to pass...

Linda: It was a worrying time.

Lorraine: It was worrying. When it all started to come out, and they were saying how many pits they wanted to close down, and, I think, it's also, you're not just thinking of yourselves.

Linda: That's it.

Lorraine: You're looking at pits up north, you're looking - you know what communities are like, and you're frightened you're gonna, those communities will die, and they are.

Linda: Yeah, they did.

Lorraine: And many communities have died.

Linda: It's never been the same, has it, since.

Lorraine: And you know there will always be people that'll say, 'oh, those miners’.

Linda: It did - greedy, they earn enough as it is, and we used to say, it's not about the money.

Lorraine: Yeah, they said, oh you're getting good money. And - we'd say, yeah but my husband works good hours. He's working nights, he works all different shifts.

Linda: Seven shifts a week.

Lorraine: You know, my brother used to work with water up to his knees, my dad did.

Linda: Terry did.

Lorraine: Yeah.

Linda: Worked in their underpants.

Lorraine: Yeah, because of the heat. My brother's got scars all over his body from accidents that happened down the pit.

Florence: So a lot of anxiety in the period just before the strike.

Lorraine: Oh yes, when we knew what was - you know, you was, you was really worried.

Linda: Well every time you turned the telly on, er, and they'd be talking about it.

Lorraine: And in the back of your mind you think, it's not gonna happen.

Linda: Yeah.

Lorraine: That won't happen. And then when it says we're going on strike, everybody's thinking, oh my god I'm gonna lose my house, cause loads of miners did lose their properties. We were very lucky. Erm, the Nationwide - not Nationwide the other bank, can't remember - they were brilliant with us. They just held the mortgage like that. We were actually living on £16 a week.

Linda: That's what we got.

### Kay Case, South Wales

Kay’s husband was a miner in Treharris, South Wales, and she worked at the same pit as him, in the canteen. As a canteen worker, Kay was a member of COSA, the NUM’s section for Colliery Officials and Staff.

Florence: Do you remember, when the strike began, how you felt, what happened, how did you find out about it?

Kay: Well, obviously I was working in the pit canteen, and my husband was working, and other collieries went on strike before ours […] Yorkshire area. And they'd all come out first, and I thought - oh, hope it gets sorted, you know. Hope it doesn't come to anything. Well eventually it sort of came to the crunch, there was a vote, and for whatever anybody else says, it was voted to come out, and, NUM came out. NACODs was the overmen and firemen, their union didn't come out. And neither did COSA, then. I was still working in the canteen. Um, we thought, oh it'll be a couple of weeks, or, what have you, oh it won't be long. You know, we all had our summer holidays booked, and you know, different things coming up, and we thought, oh they'll be back at work before the holidays, you know, for the summer holidays.

Then of course, the men would be picketing on the gates. Well we wouldn't walk through the pickets to go to work, so we were sort of not getting into work. And eventually our union called us out as well, so we were all out. Still thinking, well I hope it doesn't last too long, cause now we're down to no wages. My son used to go into - mining apprenticeship, the college was still running the course, so that meant even though we had no money coming in we still had to pay for him to go to - er - Ustred, to the college, that was doing the course, we had to give him bus fare every day, dinner money every day, because we want him to continue with the course, thinking the strike wouldn't be long, and this was his future as well. Erm, but it just rolled on and on and on. After a little while the 4 of us in the canteen got together and we said why don't we try and do something to help, because the miners now had been stopped coming on the pit, but they could go in the boy's club, because that was originally funded by them. So they were going into the boy's club, so we said, well why don't we go in the boy's club and see if we can like make sandwiches, and snacks, and different things for them.

F: Was that maybe a few weeks into the strike, or days?

K: Yes, oh a few weeks - a couple of weeks. Not months in, so. So we started doing that, and then a couple of the other wives came, and - helped us.

### Kay Sutcliffe, Kent

Kay was married to a miner in Aylesham in Kent, and helped start a women’s support group for striking miners in the earlier national miners’ strikes in the 1970s; when the 1984 strike began, she and some of the women who had been involved got back together to discuss what they could do to support the miners again.

Kay: It was mainly 74, when we were called Aylesham Ladies Action Group, I think, or something like that, and erm, course after the strike, it waned, like a lot of groups do, because there wasn't anything really going on, but we still had the background sort of organisation of it, and when the strike started in 84, a couple of us actually got together and called a meeting […] And it followed, erm, I think, a programme on the television, erm, and I forget her name now, from Doncaster, erm, but she was on one of them films, erm and - in favour of the strike, and somebody that wasn't in favour of the strike, from Nottingham, and you know, it made us all really really cross, thinking, how can women not support their men, wanting to keep their jobs, and things, and of course, our men, this was only the first week of the strike, our men had gone off picketing, and erm, we got together, initially looking at erm, after speaking to the NUM that were here, they were staying in places where erm, they didn't really have any sort of bedding, blankets, food, anything like that, so we got together, initially, thinking, *oh right, well, we'll see if we can get some blankets, see if we can get some food,*to send up to them - but then at that first meeting, we thought we were only gonna have about twelve people, there was about fifty women turned up, so, it - er - the first opportunity then was to organise a bus, and go on a rally, a march, we wanted to go to Nottingham, and show that we were supporting - but because er Snowdown came under, er, Leicester coalfield, they asked us to go to Coalville in Leicester […] so, we got together with the other pit villagees, and, erm, Betteshanger and Tilmanstone, they they sent, women along. The NUM provided the bus for us, a BBC reporter got on the bus […] and so we were on the news, and, erm, our men were actually up there picketing, so they joined and held the banners to march, and erm, there were people - we thought we were going to have a bit of opposition, but there were people out in the streets clapping and waving, there was only a few women shouting silly stuff at us.

## Feeding and fundraising

### Pat Smith, Yorkshire

At the time of the strike, Pat Smith’s husband was the president of his branch of the NUM in Dinnington, South Yorkshire; Pat became deeply involved in the Dinnington Support group.

Victoria: So you sat around, you had your first meeting, and what - what did you do?

Pat: Erm We decided that we'd try and raise some money. Erm, which is easier said than, done, where do you start? You know, you're in a village that's ... so I think we started with collections first off, to see if we could raise money like that. And, erm ... we weren't doing particularly well at raising money, erm, and one of 't miners kept saying, 'you need to go to London, you need to go to London', and I says 'easier said than done, we've got kids. You know, you go to London!" So eventually, what we did, the money we had raised we funded them for them to go to London, they scrounged somewhere to stay and what have you. But actually getting them there, we funded that. And they started raising money and getting round union branches and things like that, particularly ASLEF who've been absolute heroes and still are to do this day. Erm, and so it did eventually start to lift off. We got involved with other groups, there was a Sheffield Women Against Pit Closures, and Rotherham had a group as well, and they used to collect through all trade unions and what have you, and street collections and then every week they'd have a meeting and you'd go to their branch, and they'd, they'd share out between all pits on the South Yorkshire panel the money that they'd raised. So...it just, it sort of came around from everywhere, we'd ended up with money from all over t'world. And it were just people that got involved, and they used their contacts, and it sort of ricochets, doesn't it? Spreads outwards.

V: So what....In the village then - so you were raising money, and what was that money going to?

P: Right, eventually what we did, erm....we, we started with food parcels and myself and another member of the group we used to  - go  - picket bus used to take us, we used to go down to Rotherham shopping in the big supermarket there, and come back with pallets full of sugar and you know, beans, and all kinds of things. Then there were a local supermarket where we went and bought some other stuff. And we'd got free use of - started off in a little hut on market so they used to have to stand outside, but eventually as winter came on we were able to move into a local club and do it from there and we used to every Wednesday fill a food parcel up, and they'd come and queue and take a food parcel. And then we opened a kitchen in Lyric which is owned by the town council, and we got canteen women to come and do the cooking, we thought 'who better'? You know, they've already got experience of feeding them all, so they used to do the cooking and er, some of women in group used to help be peeling potatoes and things like that and....helping out.

V: So that would have been a seven day operation then? You'd have been doing it every day?

P: Yeah - yeah, we just did one meal a day er that they could come and just get a meal. Keep 'em going.

V: And er then - what kind of size group then were you were having to look after? How many miners? […]

P: About six hundred ish.

V: So that's about six hundred families, then, that were relying on you.

P: I mean, not all, not all of them lived in Dinnington. there were some that lived out in the Sheffield regions that were a bit out on a limb, and they were ones I think that really struggled because they hadn't got that close link to come in and have a meal. Cos the option of getting there wasn't easy you know. So, they were, they were ones that really struggled. Then we had, erm, we had some of single miners - er they didn't get paid anything  - er unless they went on picket duty and got a pound - and one of them said one day, it's great that you're giving us stuff to feed, but we haven't -  we can't clean up, we haven't got any toilet rolls, and you know, sort of things that you don't think of so we then started doing additional parcels for them just so they could come and say, 'I've run out of washing-up liquid, have you got any washing-up liquid'?

### Anne Kirby, Scotland

Anne’s husband was a striking miner in Fife, and she got deeply involved with the strike effort, spending hours every day at the strike centre.

Anne: I started feeling isolated, because he was there more hours than he'd blinkin worked, d'you know what I mean?

Victoria: Was he on picket - was he a picketer?

A: Yeah, he was on the committee, he was on the - so he was there all day, from morning right through to night, and I felt isolated from it. And I thought to myself one day, I thought, you know what, you - it's up to you, you've got to do something - so I just put the kids in the pram, and walked down to see what it was all about, really.

V: Ok, and what was that like?

A: Em, walking in was a bit strange, at first, you know, everybody looking, seeing who you are and all that. It's like walking into a pub at night, and everybody goes, turns a head round to see who's walking in. But em, yeah, strange to begin with, but the kids got fed, and we got fed, and I started asking more questions. And finding my way, sort of what was going on […]

V: So the strike centre, then, where was that?

A: It was er in a big building in Broad Street – it was called Broad Street centre it was the mining - it was a mining er club.

V: And was that far - much of a walk from where you lived?

A: No, it was just - I lived in Broad street, it was just down the road.

V: So, who, who was running that centre, can you remember?

A: Er, the miners, and erm, yeah, erm, cause it was their club, it was ...

V: Yeah, and - so were women getting involved in running that?

A: Erm, in the beginning, the women started - it was like, erm, the men were doing the cooking, at the beginning, and there was a guy in charge, and then - and then h- more women were getting involved, you know, slowly, we - we started you know sort of feeding the men up to go on the picket lines, and taking more - con - more in charge of the centre, more, whereas they - the men were more then, involved in pickets and meetings and organisation, stuff, you know. And then - eventually we got our own committee together, women's committee, erm, which I was the vice chair of […]

V: erm, in terms of your husband, you becoming more involved, in terms of being on the committee, being out and about - was he supportive of that?

A: During the strike he was […]

V: Erm, and in terms of the - your household, at that point, erm, because you were then busy with the strike as well, was your household a partnership, were you having to also - who was doing the day to day stuff?

A: No, I was still doing the day-to-day stuff. As well as doing the strike stuff.

V: Doing the strike stuff as well […]

V: In terms of the public speaking, erm, was that something that was quite daunting at first, or?

A: Yeah, I was a bit shaky, yeah.

V: Did you ever get used to that, or was it always a bit weird?

A: Erm, I think you got used to it, because you were repeating the same - scenario, over and over.

V: What kind of thing would you be telling people?

A: Just basically about the support, about the strike, about how it came about, and why your husband was on strike, and you know, why you felt it would be great and important for these people to support you, to keep the mines open, you know.

### Kim Hickling, Nottinghamshire

Kim was married with a young son when the strike broke out, and her husband was one of the minority of miners in Nottinghamshire who came out on strike. She got involved in Hucknall and Linby Women's Action Group.

Natalie: So obviously you were - you were really involved in these sort of support efforts, what would you do on a more, sort of, day to day basis in the soup kitchen? Were you helping out with the cooking, or did you help out with just more general organisational tasks, or - was it a bit of this, bit of that?

Kim: Mainly sort of to do with food. It tended to be the older women actually who took over the cooking, because they were good at doing numbers, so because it was a tiny, tiny kitchen, erm, they tended to be there, youngs - younger ones like us, we would be taking the plates away and perhaps doing some washing up at the time, others would be upstairs doing the food parcels, it's did - you did whatever was there at the time. Because not everybody could be there every day, so you never knew who was going to be in the food kitchen for a start.

### Maxine Penkethman, Staffordshire

Maxine’s father was one of the few Staffordshire miners who stayed out to the end of the strike. At the time, she had left school, but was still living at home and working in a sewing factory.

Maxine: When the food parcels start arriving - which was amazing, I have to say […] we just had such fun with them, because - we were having them from France for some reason […] because we don't really know what we were getting. And I do remember, we used to love it when the food parcels come. And I remember, we just used to have jelly, for some reason, somebody must have made jelly, some - I think it was like Doreen on the estate. So they were getting packets of jelly, and she was making it, so we were just [indistinct] - what we gonna do with all this jelly - we had just bowls and bowls of jelly coming, which was like really funny, but - obviously we didn't know what we were getting, and I do remember we had this tube, like toothpaste, was what we thought it was, and erm, on it it said 'creme de tashes', and erm, I remember were all like saying, well what is it? It's gotta be toothpaste, 'creme de tashes,' and when we opened it, it was shoe polish! And it was just, it was just so funny, but I just thought - when you look back on that, the French miners, when sending over stuff, were like, people are still proud, so people still want to have shoes that are clean, and I just thought that was really lovely, you know, lovely thing to be sending over. I didn't think about it at the time, we just thought it were hilarious. And, you know, we want some food! Not shoe polish. But it was erm, it was just the most exciting time, when the food parcels came.

### Mary Hole, South Wales

Mary’s husband Den was a striking phurnacite plant worker in Aberdare, South Wales; they had three children, all still living at home; their youngest son was still in school at the time of the strike.

Victoria: So in terms of the family finances, you've got two grown up daughters who are contributing a bit, and a teenage son going through school. How did you manage the fam- the food, and the bills, and things like that, when your husband was on strike.

Mary: He wouldn't go […] to the place down in Aberaman in the hall, to go and collect food. He wouldn't go down there at all, until the las- only once, I think he only went there at the very end.

[…]  My brother in ??, Tony and Barbara, came up with a box of food for us, tins.

I think was it Doreen, his sister

She sent us a lot of food down.

And it turned out then, we used to buy - go to the butchers, Dewhursts in Aberdare, and we'd always, Den would always go in and al- get a lamb, a lamb, and have him to cut it up. […] And I always remember, he went to town for something, I don't know what he went to town for, he was on his own, he was, but he was passing the butchers, and he'd gone there, oh, for years, to this butchers. I was with him sometimes, anyway, and er - and the chap inside who was running it, he stopped him, he waved by hand, called him in like, and he didn't tell him that he was er on strike, or anything, but obviously he knew, and then he said, oh come in he said, and he got a box, and he'd put tins in there, and I think he'd given some meat, and Den said oh [slightly indistinct] but he was quite adamant, for him to have it, because he knew he was such a good customer, always going there, so that was it.

### Liz French, Kent

Liz was chair of Betteshanger Women’s Support Group in Kent during the strike, and travelled all around Britain and abroad to raise funds. The support group ran a soup kitchen and distributed food parcels.

Liz: There were so many rows over food parcels, we tried to - a single lad, would want certain food. A mum with two kids would want certain things, I mean, she'd need the nappies, or the - things like that. Or if it's her wrong week - nobody ever gave a thought to them sort of things, but we did. And - this woman, she came in, and we gave her a food parcel, now there's him and her - nobody else. And she went - that's disgraceful, she went. What am I supposed to do with that? I'd only just come in the door and I didn't deal with it, so I let the girls deal with it, who do the food parcels. And she said, well if you look, there isn't a lot left, you know, and we're trying to keep it, some of it, for the weekend for the lads coming back, cause they used to come off the picket line, and pick their parcels up. And she threw it and walked off. And I go where does she live? So they told me, so I put it in my car and I drove round there […] She went, yeah, they've got more, them that work in there, I've seen them going out there with three carrier bagfuls, and I said, well perhaps they have, I said, but they take em out, because they live in Betteshanger, I said, they probably take em out to the people who can't get in. I said, did you ever think of that? Yeah, well they always get more than us, I'll bet. Look at the size of them. And I said, I said, anyway, I never seen you at a meeting. I said, I see your hubby stood there, I never seen him on a picket line either. I said if he was to go and stand up on the picket line, he'd get three pound a day. I said, but if you choose to sit in your fricking house both of yer, moan and fricking groan about us, who are flogging ourselves to death, I said, carry on, I said, but if you ever come in, and do that again, I said you'll get nothing. Of course, when I got back to the strike centre, I got told off, because don't give em an excuse to go back to work. You really have got to bow to em, because we don't want him scabbing.

## Making ends meet

### Linda Chapman, North East

Linda’s husband was an engineer in the pits, and on strike for the whole 12 months; at the outbreak of the strike, they were living in Washington, Tyne and Wear, where they had a young son, Daniel, and Linda was working 2 days a week as a personnel officer.

Linda: He said, *no, we're on strike, that's it.*And me, like *oh god, what happens now - we're gonna?*[…]I mean, they earned really good money then. I mean, he worked six, maybe six and a half days a week, and I mean he was probably earning 25, maybe 30 grand a year then, it was a lot of money. With bonuses and stuff - not always, but if they hit their targets and things, they would, they would make this big money. And you know I had quite a good job, working 2 days a week, so you can imagine - we'd moved house, we had quite a big house, with a mortgage, we had a car, which we were borrowing money for. And then suddenly I was thinking - *what are we gonna do?*We had an interest-only mortgage, because everybody had been talked into having them, so building society's saying, there's nothing really we can do to help you, because you must pay the interest, otherwise you're - you know, you're gonna be - they'd have to foreclose on you, type of thing, and me just thinking, *I don't know what we're gonna do here.*So my - we said, let's see how it goes, he said, *oh, it'll not last long, they'll sort it out.*But then as things progressed, and we realised it was likely to go on, and obviously, nobody liked Thatcher then here, anyway, and you could see it was becoming this political battle of wills, I said to him, *I'm going to ask if I can go full time, at work,*I said, *I think there's a job coming up I can apply for.*And me being stupid, was completely honest, and, em, I worked in a regional head office then, and remember going to the area director and saying, *I've got to be upfront with you, I'm gonna apply for this job, but I only want it because he's on strike*[…] But d'you know he was absolutely amazing, he said, erm, er, you know, *that's not going to come into it,*he said, *the best person for the job will get the job,*and I did get the job […]

And I worked full time, and I think - for me, at the time, it was a pain, I used - Daniel was 14 months old, I used to, you know, I'd get in - cause you know I worked in Newcastle, and we lived in Washington, by the time I got home, he was like, bathed, ready for bed, I'd get a little cuddle, I'd sit and cry, what am I missing out on, he was having all the fun with him, you know, and I was just like devastated, because we'd always said we'd have this balance, and it was - Martin was really lucky cause he worked shifts, he got to see a lot of him anyway, so it wasn't like, you know, he was a 9 to 5, man out of the house kind of man. So suddenly it was completely changed, and I - I just used to cry […] But the other side of me was actually, *I'm enjoying this, I like work, and I'm really getting into work, I can you know, see how I could progress my career.*

### Alison Anderson, Scotland

Alison was living with her husband and young son in High Valleyfield, Fife, when the strike broke out.

Victoria: Can you remember the strike starting?

Alison: No - not really […] You went on strike in the March […] then I fell pregnant with Hazel, and then we moved house. We had always wanted to move down to a wee village called Culross […] And, we always wanted to move down, and I got a letter saying, on the November, that we c- we had this house, and I thought, oh my god, I want the house, but there's no way we could afford to move down, and er, so the social work gave us their van, and we took the house in Culross and we moved down. But it was all electric. And I never had the money to pay the electric. Because my flat in Valleyfield was a coal fire. So then, down we went on the November, and that's when things were really - got really really hard for us. Because er - because it was […] er all electric heating. And I had a wee boy, I put the heating on in his room, I put the heating on in the living room, and these gas bills were coming, and phw – you know, really fast and furious, these electric bills, and then I got a - one - oh I away and over a hundred pounds then, and I phoned them up and I told them, I can't pay this, my husband's a striking miner. They says, well you've got to pay for it, if you don't pay for it, we'll be out to cut you off. So -

V: And you're pregnant at this time as well.

A: And I was pregnant, yeah […]

So there I was pregnant, we'd got £9.10 a week, because Maggie Thatcher says that we were all getting strike pay, and we never got any strike pay, we never had another penny. So we all had £9.10 a week to live off of. And then after a few months, the social work department came out to the club and spoke to all the miners, and says, look, we will give you food lines, for the Co-op, and em, you don't have to pay it back. So great, so I got £20 every week, food line, and em, what I had to do was, I would go round the shops with my mum, round the Co-op, and we had a calculator, and I would pick up £10 worth, then I would hand the calculator to my mum, and she would pick up £10 worth, we would go to the till, and hand over the £20 voucher. My mum gave me £10, that I paid to my electric, so I still only had the £9.10 a week to buy fresh milk, and bread, and anything else […] And em, then, after the miners' strike, we all got letters telling us how much we owed.

### Carole Hancock, Yorkshire

Carole and her husband Harry still had one daughter, Katherine, living at home during the strike. Harry was a striking miner, and Carole was working for social services as a home help. Living in the city of Sheffield, they weren’t in a mining community, and so didn’t have a local support group; they only got one food parcel over the course of the strike.

Victoria: And were you buying your house, before the strike?

Carole: Y- er- no, no, we were still on rented, before. Because they said to us, you can leave – you can leave your rent, and you can leave your gas and electric, but you will have to pay it all back, and we didn't want none of that, so we managed, to, just, barely, managed to pay t'bills. And I can honestly say we weren't a penny in debt, by sheer going without, just making sure t'kids - well, Karen, by then, had left home […] Katherine was still at school. And it's er - by sheer - I don't know how we did it, I really don't know how we did it.

V: So what did you go without then?

C: Well we cut down on - on - erm, expensive, you know, we always had a decent meal, every day, but cut down - well Harry cut his cigarettes out, for a start, no going for a drink - he couldn't go and have a pint, he wasn't going to spend money on a pint when he knew that it were, you know - we'd have to pool what bit we had coming in. Well we - like I said we coped t'best way we could. We just coped by cutting down and buying cheaper food. All we were more worried about were keeping a roof, so we - we - we just cut down on things just to get through paying t'bills, and keeping things going. If the strike had gone on any longer we couldn't have done it - we couldn't have done it for much longer, because by this time were both at end of our tethers. So we couldn't have coped for much longer, but we coped, and we coped and we coped, and that's all you can say about it, it was coping. By just helping one another, I suppose, and you know, and er just um getting by. But, er, no, it - something I wouldn't want to wish on anybody again.

### Mandy Slater, Yorkshire

Mandy lived in Barnsley, and had been married to her second husband, Roy, for about a year before the strike broke out.

Victoria: Did you know the strike was coming, before, beforehand?

Mandy: I didn't, no, I don't know if Roy did.

V: Right, so was it a bit of a shock?

M: Yeah, it were. Specially when it went on so long. When it started, we thought it'd probably be a few weeks, a month at most. And it went on for 12 months, didn't it, really.

V: So what kind of house were you living in at the time of the strike?

M: Terraced house.

V: Ok, and did you own it, or was it rented?

M: We were - no, we'd got a mortgage, and I were working in Marks and Spencer’s, cleaning, in the morning, and that paid t'mortgage, £28 a month I think it were!

V: Wow, so your work - was that part-time work, or full time?

M: Yeah, I just worked [indistinct] from seven.

V: When your husband was on strike, what was he doing?

M: Well we had a pig farm, well it were a smallholding, not a pig farm, but we had a lot of pigs, and geese and that, chickens. And that were like, in t'back of the house. You know, there were t’house there, and then you walked across and then there were this smallholding, where we had t'pigs, yeah.

V: So was that like a field?

M: Yeah, yeah […]

V: So you had pigs, did you have any other animals?

M: Yeah, we had geese, we had chickens, and then we had some goats.

V: How did you find time to look after all these animals, if your husband was working down the mine, and you were working?

M: Because he did regular mornings - he did regular mornings there. So I used to come home from work, and do t'pigs in the morning, and then when he come home in t'afternoon, he did in t'afternoon, it were lovely [..] V: But how did you cope without your husband's wage, though, how did you manage to - because you had your mortgage […] how did you cope?

M: Because, what Roy did, he'd got some, life insurance, do they call it, and you cashed all them in. […] And er, across the road, t'other side, there's a lot of allotments, and they used to come and get pig […] manure, and they used to bring vegetables, and er then, he used to go and fetch waste bread, at night, when t'shops were shut […] and he used to bring that up, and all t'kids used to wait, cause he used to give em donuts and bread before giving to t'pigs! (laughs).

### Maggie Stubbs, Yorkshire

Maggie was born and grew up in Jamaica, but came to Rotherham to study nursing. At the time of the strike, she was living in Maltby, in South Yorkshire. Her husband was a striking miner, and Maggie was working as a nurse over the border in Nottinghamshire.

Maggie: I remember, although I was still working, and I was still earning, so that wasn't a problem for us, I think it was more because I was also working, I was the wife of a miner, that wasn't a problem being the wife of a miner who was on strike: cause I was working we had food. My concern was the people that I was working with, the communities that I was working with, who didn't have any money coming in. And not only didn't they have money coming in, there was division in some of the families, when father and son fall out, and this fall out, and there was a massive division, which compounded everything else.

Natalie: So this was particularly cause you were working over the border in Nottinghamshire, where it was much more, obviously, divided?

M: Yeah - yes, I was working over in Nottinghamshire at the time.

N: And so, and from your own perspective during the strike […] obviously you still had a wage - your wage - coming in so you were in a bit of a different position weren't you to - to people who had no wages coming in, but was it - was it still a bit difficult, or?

M: For me?

N: Yeah, for you, as - your household unit, you and your -

N: Oh yes, it was difficult, it wa- the bills got paid, but we didn't have the, the extra, you know, we had food, we were alright, but of course with my husband not getting a salary, of course that's gonna make a difference, you know […]

N: You saying he went picketing every day – because he […] wasn't going into the pit every day, did he do more around the home when he was on strike, because he had a bit more extra time?

Maggie: No! What kind of a silly question are you asking me? (laughs) no, he never do things like that, it doesn't change the culture. The wives, they had to do it.

### Tanya Dower, South Wales

Tanya had left school in 1983 and was working during strike, but still living at home in Abercynon, South Wales. Her father was a striking miner, and her mother was made redundant from her factory job a few months into the strike.

Tanya: That year, we were eating - we were eating welfare packages from Russia, you know, that's how stark it was.

Victoria: Can you remember what was in those?

T: Yeah, and we didn't know until we opened it, and it was foul half of it - it was spi- you know, tinned spinach, and god knows, big blocks of cheese, big big blocks of cheese. Erm, yeah. Erm, my dad started making his own wine, because he couldn't afford to go to the pub any more. And my next door neighbour grew vegetables, and so my father - so they would do swaps. So we would get vegetables and we'd give him a couple of bottles of wine for that. So yeah. So it was - and that's what people did, throughout the strike, so nobody had any money, so we did favours. So it was a - very much a bartering kind of system. That anybody who had any skills whatsoever, or made things, or you know, erm, yeah, we would just - do do everybody a good turn. And people - and it was lovely really. You know in the end it was nice, but everybody was poor. Everybody didn't have a bean. And didn't know how long it was going to last for, either, which is the psychological kind of impact of it, was - it was fraught. Was the up- sorry the downside of that. And people were falling out, friendships were being - and, and marriages, and it was qu- that was quite scary.

### Aggie Currie, Yorkshire

Aggie had always taken pride in ensuring her children had everything they wanted at Christmas, but with her husband on strike in Armthorpe near Doncaster, that was impossible in 1984.

Victoria: So what was that Christmas like, then, for you as a family?

Aggie: D'you know summat, they never got a lot, best Christmas we ever had.

V: Ok, how so?

A:Because it reminded me of my Christmases, because whatever they got, it were brilliant, erm. Where - they got - god knows how many presents, because people'll tell you what I'm like, when – even with the grandkids now -

V: Spoil em.

A: Erm, they were so grateful for what they got, you know - erm, and I thought, that's just how I used to be. […] A stocking, two and six in it, and maybe a jigsaw puzzle - we never got a lot, but we were so grateful for what we got. And, me kids just seemed that way when I were a kid […]. And, erm, so yeah, it were the best Christmas we ever had. First time I'd had a chicken on Christmas day!

V: I was gonna say, what did you have to eat?

A: We all got a - we all got a chicken from t'union, you know, erm, and some vegetables, erm, me mam bought me a gateau, so, erm, er, a man called Jimmy Campbell from Liverpool sent me 40 fags, you know, so erm […] I can't remember, but someone got me a bottle of wine, but I don't know who it were, you know, just for Christmas dinner

## Marches, rallies, and pickets

### Rita Wakefield, Kim Hickling, and Wendy Minney, Nottinghamshire

Rita’s husband, her elder daughter Kim’s husband, and her younger daughter Wendy’s boyfriend were all striking miners in Nottinghamshire, and Rita and her daughters all got involved in supporting the strike in different ways.

Natalie: And did you have many direct encounters with the police yourself, as individuals, as women?

Wendy: There was a women's picket, erm, on the Hucknall pit. The Aldi's there now, of course. All gone, but I don't know if you can remember, we - we was on that. I don't know if - I think you were Kim. I don't know. I definitely...

Rita: I can't remember much about it.

Wendy: It was a purely women's picket. And er the police - they was trying to intimidate. Trying to make you stand - stand there - don't stand here, just that feeling that you weren't just going to be left, and I think you must have shouted scab, five hundred times, at the top of your - in fact you were videoed doing it.

Laughter.

N: How big were these women's pickets? Was this just a one off, or?

Wendy: These - they wasn't regular, but there was more than one. You, I think you're talking 20 people, they wasn't  enormous, but it was a big thing to be standing at the front of a pit, with blokes going in on the shift, we […]

Rita: That's what the men said, they said, you'll intimidate em more than what we can. […] No, definitely, they wanted us to do it, didn't they […]

Natalie: And was it scary to be on them pickets?

W: Yes, it was.

R: Yeah, yeah. Something you'd never done, in't it.

W: You'd know they'd been hitting the blokes, with the truncheons, and you just wouldn't put anything past the police, at that time.

N: Did any of the women ever get arrested on them?

R: Can't remember.

W: No, I don't think so. Not that we know.

K: God there would have been uproar.

R: Yeah - no, I can't remember any women being arrested.

N: Did you have a sense that that was something new to do, as a woman?

R: Oh, yeah, yeah. You can't believe it. You think - you know, when you go home, I can't believe that's just happened, you know, yeah. It were all new, weren't it.

W: It was empowering.

K: I've always said it’s the best year of my life. I learned so much, so much. You know.

R: Brings you out of your shell, don't it.

K: It was a real education. In so many ways.

W: It was a nightmare, it was a civil war, but it's something I'm glad I went through.

### Aggie Currie, Yorkshire

Aggie’s husband was on strike, and she became extremely involved in the Markham Main Women’s Action Group, based in the village of Armthorpe near Doncaster. She was arrested fourteen times during the strike.

Aggie: Anyway, after that, I started going on all women’s picket lines. They were good, and still going out all over the place speaking and what have you.

Victoria: So where did you go on the women’s pickets?

 Aggie: It was mostly Nottingham.

 Interviewer: So you went to Nottingham a lot?

 Aggie: Mostly, and, them... I went to Rosso. I was frightened to death at Rosso.

Victoria: Is that Rossington?

Aggie: Yeah. They were bloody crazy them pickets through there.

Victoria: Were they?

Aggie: Yeah, bloody crazy they wa'! And, er...

Victoria: What, in terms of ...crazy how?

Aggie: Well, if any of the lads got arrested, they'd go put through bricks through policeman's, er, coppers', er - what do you call it? Police station's windows and that.

Victoria: Right. So they were quite violent?

Aggie: Yeah. And, er, I thought 'god, if I get arrested here.' I really didn't want to get arrested. And then we done a march through Rosso, and I can remember somebody chucking a brick through somebody's window. Must have been a scab's house. And I thought, 'a babby could have been laid in there!' So I went crazy. I said 'how do you know there wasn't a baby there or an old person there? How do you know?' […]

Victoria: So was there a difference when you went on the women's pickets, were they different, the atmosphere or anything?

Aggie: The women weren't as violent, er, but were more gobby.

### Christina Bell, Yorks/Notts border

Christina’s husband George was President of the Shireoaks Colliery NUM branch. Shireoaks colliery was unique in that it was in the South Yorkshire NUM area, despite being geographically being just over the border in Nottinghamshire, where Christina and George also lived. As a prominent trade union activist, George was very busy during the strike and often away. Christina found herself running the house, looking after the children and George, and going out to work, but she also found time to support the strike.

Victoria: Can you remember, then, you said that you went on - you went on, on some rallies, can you remember, can you tell me what that was like?

Christina: You - it was, it was, hm, I don't know how to put it. You felt like you were part of something, you know, you felt like you were involved in it, and, and you felt like you were erm, you were standing behind your man, you know what I mean, it was, it was, you got involved, you were involved, I mean we used to do em, some of us women used to do like little erm, car boot sales and stuff like that you know, just trying - everybody was trying their best to - to raise funds, because, I mean, there was - the men - there was - the men were bringing absolutely nothing in at all, nothing, you know, so the majority of us women who were working did our best to try and keep things going. Erm, so you did, when you went to these rallies, they - they did say, you know, most of us wouldn't be here if it wasn't for our wives, you know, so they did appreciate what we were doing for them. So you did feel like you were doing something for them, you were helping them out.

### Maxine Penkethman, Staffordshire

Maxine’s father was a striking miner in Staffordshire. Maxine was a strong supporter of the strike, and went on marches and rallies, including a rally in London during which she was trapped by the police. She was holding her baby nephew Steven in her arms at the time.

Victoria: So at this point, what was your view of police?

Maxine: After this rally - cause you did say actually earlier, erm, was there any police, um, er, at this rally, the-the-there was a lot of police.

V: Which rally is -?

M: This was the London one, there was a massive one in London, and this is the one where we were kettled.

V: Ok, yeah, so tell me about that one.

M: Erm, obviously huge rally, there was a lot that went down from Staffordshire, and it was fabulous, absolutely fabulous rally, not - you know, I was really enjoying myself, marching with all these miners, singing, loads of photographs […] And we got to Downing Street, and I had Steven in my arms.

V: Little Steven.

M: Little Steven, in my arms […] But I was carrying him down Downing Street, […] So we were literally outside of Downing Street, I didn't know where it was, but he was like, oh we're outside Downing Street, and kind of you know everyone was booing, and I was holding Steven, and it was great, I thought it was great, you know, we're all stuck, and then you suddenly realised you were being crushed, and it was like a split - it was a split moment, it was like, oh my god, we're stuck, and the police were at either end. And actually you said, was I aware of police violence, and I said no, but there was there - they were charging on horses, and we were, we were kettled for absolutely ages, and I was crushed, and I was holding Steven, and I was scared, it was the first time ever, I've never been so frightened, as I was, because I was being crushed, and I was thinking, it wouldn't matter if I was being crushed but I had Steven, I had him in my arms, and he was - it was the most frightening experience, and we were stuck on Downing Street for ages, knowing that we were only going to Trafalgar Square, we were literally round the corner from where we were ending up, erm, and the police were charging on horses that day […]

V: How long do you think you were in that kettle for? If you had to guess - put an estimate on it?

M: Oh I don't know, it seemed like ages […] it probably wasn't hours. It seemed like a long time, and I couldn't put a time on it. I can’t - we weren't there all day. It wasn't that situation, it was - we were being crushed. And it took us ages to get out, even like, when we did start moving, and the police horses were going up er Whitehall, would be, that side, wouldn't it. Erm, and dispersing people […]

But I was - I was absolutely terrified, absolutely terrified, I really was. That was, that's the only time, er, you know, during it, that - because the rest of it, you just had this overwhelming sense of belonging, to be standing there, to be part of it. But that day, I was - I was terrified, terrified.

### Janie Robertson, Scotland

Janie’s husband was a striking miner in Stirling, and she got involved in Stirling Miners’ Women’s Group. She gave many speeches in support of the strike.

FSB: Can I ask a bit more about your sort of erm, experience on the rallies, then […] can you describe, say, the rally that was held here in Stirling, what the kind of atmosphere was like?

Janie: The atmosphere was really good, it was - we actually walked from the campus, erm, right through - right through Stirling town, erm, right into Annfield, that was where the football ground used to be […] Erm, walked all the way, and there was people lining all the roads all the way, and it was really a big march. They came from Nottingham and everything for the march. Erm, and it was a great atmosphere. There was five – about five and a half thousand people in the park, that day, erm, but until you actually got there and stood up on that - I mean I had spoke before but never to that amount of people, and I thought, 'Oh my god, what am I doing?’

F: Did you have a mic for that?

J: Yes […] They had to come and move the mic for me, because I was so small.

F: Do you remember what kind of thing you spoke about, on that occasion, or on other times?

J: Mainly about - just supporting our husbands, 100% […]

F: what ways do you think that that experience changed you?

J: I think it gave me a wee bit more confidence, than what I had, to actually go for things, and do things for myself, and I - so, if somebody asked me, to get up and do a speech for such and such, I'd probably do it now, because I wouldn't think twice about it, I'd to do that at my work, in the training, take a training course. I would never have done that years ago, never. I was one of them that would just sit at the back of the room and listen to everybody. Never actually got up and gave my opinion, whereas now I'm the first to get up and give my opinion. So it's changed me that way.

### Christine Wooldridge, Yorkshire

Christine was working for the Coal Board in Doncaster, in Yorkshire, at the time of the strike, and had to cross picket lines to get into work.

Victoria: Can you describe for me, what it was like going through those picket lines?

C: Yes, it was awful […]

The initial few weeks was awful, but of course it tapered off. Erm, and we used to have to gather behind Coal House er with- cause the police station was next to the Coal House, with a police guard all the way down, and there were hundreds […]

It was the most horrendous thing, and it was terrifying. You know. Cause all these people baying at you. You know, shouting, spitting at you, throwing things at you. We used to have to wipe ourselves down cause we'd got all spit all over us where we got into - into the, into Coal house. And there were girls that were you know expecting a baby, and they used to say, hope - your baby dies. Horrible - horrible things, er, I think they'd just been so - if you like, worked up, that it - it wasn't them, if you know what I mean. They shouldn't have been like that. But as I say, it did tail off after a few weeks, and there was a hard core that stayed. You know, right until the year, you know, until the strike was over. But you know, people were frightened. It was frightening.

## Nottinghamshire: Divided County

### Colette Butterly, Nottinghamshire

In 1984, Colette was still at school in Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, and her father was a hydraulics engineer supervisor at Crown Farm pit. Though he had come out on strike in some previous disputes, in 1984 he told his family that he didn’t agree with the strike, and wouldn’t support it.

Natalie: So, you started telling me that your dad said, he was gonna work, and you were to keep quiet. So tell - is that, is that - was that the first thing that you heard about the strike?

Colette: Yes, yes, and then, next thing, obviously, we've got these flying pickets coming down from Yorkshire and lots of police from down south, coming up to protect the locals, so to speak […]

All I know is we weren't to say anything, me dad was still working. So strike started, and every day, my dad got on his motorbike, he had a little moped, went on his moped to somebody who - they were all told that as members - as staff - and I've got a funny feeling most of the other workers went in as well, especially at Crown Farm, erm, that they'd got to work - as staff they'd got to work. So me dad, even if he'd have voted to - he'd have lost his job, if he'd've gone on strike, so obviously there was that consideration. But he just said, he didn't agree with this strike, because, er - Sca- the words were 'Scargill was just playing into that woman's hands’.

Natalie: That's really interesting, that's something that that you hear from people.

C: Yeah, so - that he was just - that there was absolutely - he'd made himself into near enough a little mini-dictator, he'd made that job for life, right, in the NUM […] So anyway, but er, so I remember that - to keep quiet. He went every day, parked at this bloke's house, and then climbed over the railway sidings. Now this bloke - this chap, I don't know who this chap was, but this chap's house was further enough down, away from the picket line […] All I know is, this chap lived in a house, and my dad climbed over the railway sidings, to actually erm, get home […]

Natalie: Right, and were quite a few people doing that?

C: Yes. Quite a lot of people were, apparently.

N: Rather than going through the pickets, because of …

C: Yes, yes. Yeah, the trouble.

N: And do you remember the physical presence of the flying pickets and of the police, at the time.

C: Yeah, there was a lot more people around Mansfield than there had been before, you see, em, Crown Farm was near where my school was, so there was a lot more people about. […] I just know - I just remember that I wasn't to say anything, at all, I didn't, and then somebody obviously found out about, me father was going to work.

### Jean Shadbolt, Nottinghamshire

Jean’s first husband was one of the minority of miners in Nottinghamshire who came out on strike in 1984. They had 2 daughters, and at the time, Jean was working for British Coal, in the office at Annesley pit. She, however, decided to continue working throughout the strike.

Jean: I worked at Annesley at the time, and the - the - we weren't - the offices weren't picketed often, but I had to cross the picket line, to go to work, and every time, they were there, somebody shouted, why are you at work, your husband's on strike. And I didn't say - I just used to think, ah- leave me alone. We were told, you know, they couldn't do it now, the office staff were told, if you go on strike you will not have a job to come back to. We were told that. Now, one lad, he worked in wages, he did go on strike, we never saw him again, I mean, he didn't come back. That would be completely - you couldn't do that now, you can't say that to people. But they did to us. And that was one element of it. And the other one was, I suppose, if I'm being perfectly honest - I'd got two kids. I didn't want em to suffer. You know, it was bad enough only having one wage, my wage, which wasn't anything like a miner's wage. But - you know. Why should - this is perhaps the wrong thing to say, the wrong point of view, but why should my girls suffer, if I can go and earn some money. That's how I looked at it […]

Natalie: Did you - did you agree with the strike?

J: I agreed with the principle of it, yes, but […] I know I'm perhaps a lone voice in this […]

I wanted more. I wanted to take the kids abroad. I - we didn't go that year, obviously, but we had been and we went afterwards. I wanted things for em, I wanted to show em things, I wanted em to have things, and I thought, if I don't work, now, we're not going to have anything. I mean, I kept us out of debt, I paid the mortgage. And, it was hard. I mean, the milkman stopped delivering milk, I'm not bringing your milk, your husband's on strike.

Lots of people disagreed with me going to work, and […] I just did.

### Marie Price, Nottinghamshire

Marie’s husband Alan was a miner, and came out on strike for the whole year, placing in him in a minority in Sutton-in-Ashfield, in Nottinghamshire, where they lived. Four of Marie’s sons were working in the pits when the strike broke out. Some supported the strike, and some didn’t.

Natalie: So, Alan came out on strike, so this would have been - was this pretty early - pretty early on then?

Marie: Yeah. And Peter.

N: Ah, so your sons were also down the pit, and all.

M: David, er, Kevin, and Peter, and Mark had just gone into t'pit […] David came out, but didn't stay out, because his wife, was dead against it […] And David came and he says I don't want to go back, mam, but I've got to. Said, well you've got to do what you've got to do. And Kevin never came out. As I said, Peter was solid the way through. I think, I think our Mark came out for a few weeks, and then he came back. But we didn't break the family. I always say, I brought them up to know - to do what they know was right for them. And that's what they did. I didn’t like it, but nothing was going to turn me against the lads.

### Rita Wakefield, Kim Hickling, and Wendy Minney, Nottinghamshire

At the time of the strike, Rita’s husband was a miner; her daughter Kim was married to a miner, and her younger daughter Wendy’s boyfriend was a miner. All three men came out on strike, but in Nottinghamshire, that put them in a minority.

Natalie: What was that experience like of being in a minority.

R1: Heartbreaking

Rita: Horrible. Absolutely horrible. Because when you went about - you know - you'd got nobody to talk to. You was - had you - you know - were just suffering on your own, kind of thing. And er,

R3: Cause you relied on communities, at the time, it was all community. And we all looked out for one another. It weren't just pits. It was your community that you lived in. And you looked after older people, you made sure they were alright, you spoke to your neighbours. And the kiddies played with so-and-so's kiddies, you knew their families.

Rita: It all stopped.

R3: It stopped. Thatcher's got so much to answer for. She killed communities. And that's why we're having so much trouble as we are now. Nobody knows anybody, anybody can think they can treat women or old people like they want, there's no respect, and it was all yuppies, and money. And money spoke, and I'm afraid money doesn't speak because you can have all the money in the world but it doesn't make you happy. As long as you can pay your bills, that's a different thing. Nobody wants that worry. But at the time, it killed the community spirit. So it just - it was heartbreaking.

## Legacies

### Christine Worth, Derbyshire

Christine’s husband wasn’t a miner, but she got deeply involved in supporting the strike in Derbyshire through her involvement in the local Labour Party’s women’s section.

Natalie: Do you remember the end of the strike?

Christine: Oh yes, yes, I remember that ... rally, in Chesterfield.

N: Because that was just - that had been organised - am I right in saying that had been organised before the strike had ended.

C: I think it had, yes, but - the women took it over, sort of thing, because it was a - about - it was about the women's day time, wasn't it?

N: I think it was an International Women's Day -

C: Yes, I think it was -

N: Yeah, which would make sense, because it's the beginning of March.

C: I remember being there, I remember stamping, and I re- remember being a bit scared, because we made so much noise, we were stamping so loudly in this very flimsy football stadium, which was the old Chesterfield football stadium […] I'm thinking *crikey, we're gonna bring this we're gonna bring this stand down if we're not careful!*I remember Scargill saying, *first I've ever been shut up by women, or something.*

N: What were the emotions of that day?

C: Well, it was a bit of mass hysteria, as those things are, you know, a lot of people in a confined space, and it's all over. I wouldn't think the, the shouting and cheering on that day were not the same as the sort of general sadness and sense of - defeat that we generally had. Cause, you know, it was it was difficult to see some of the things the Conservatives did through the 80s. Cause they did, I mean we all blame Maggie, and of course she was Prime Minister, she was leading the thing, but we - the trade unions, and the working classes in general were set back a long way, over that period.

### Caroline Poland, Yorkshire

Caroline’s partner, Dave, was a striking miner in 1984-5, and she was very involved in Sheffield Women Against Pit Closures. Dave took redundancy when his pit closed in 1992, but later that year, the government announced another 30 pits were going to close, and Caroline joined other women in setting up a pit camp at Houghton Main, in South Yorkshire, to protest against the closures.

Dave's pit closed in 92, and he - he was was involved erm, they had an idea of a workers' coop, collective, for - for their pit, anyway, that was - the challenges were too great, cause the coal board wouldn't support them, in keeping the pit open in between, and it started talking about huge amounts of money. So it was all the stuff about him taking redundancy around then, and then, the Heseltine announcement in October, for another thirty pit closures - so that was very much, many of the same women coming back together again, with the same spirit. And a whole load of new women as well. And clearly the whole idea of a pit camp, would not have come without Women Against Pit Closures having operated - we set up a um - being very active for that year, and um, you know, the National Women Against Pit Closures carried on […] And then, the Greenham, and lots of women involved in Greenham, and lots of connections made during the strike, meant that the idea of setting up a pit camp just would not have happened without those 2 threads.

### Aggie Currie, Yorkshire

During the strike, Aggie – who was from Armthorpe near Doncaster – travelled around Britain – and abroad – giving speeches to raise money for the cause. Her husband, a striking miner, spent a lot of time at home looking after their two children.

Victoria: Obviously you've told me about your relationship with your husband, and how that became a much more equal relationship but do you think the strike changed relationships between men and women, on the whole?

Aggie: I do, yeah, I think men, erm, actually started to respect women more […]

V: Right.

A: I do believe […] a lot of miners, they were chauvinist pigs and thought a women’s place, were at home.

V: So what was it about the strike, then, that made men change?

A: Cause they could see what women were made of. That's what made it. We weren't them -silly little giggly women as they thought.

V: What does the word feminist mean to you?

A: Well, I’m not really a feminist.

V: But what is a feminist for you?

A: Feminist to me is, I feel they want everything their way. I don't know why, I might be wrong, I’m not a feminist, I’m a woman, that's got a mind of me own. Er, I've got nowt against feminists, I mean, I’ve never really thought about it to be quite honest.

### Marjorie Simpson, Yorkshire

Marjorie Simpson had a flourishing business in Stainforth, South Yorkshire, before the strike. Her husband was a draughtsman working for the NCB, and her son was a miner.

It destroyed lives and a way of living. Life was pretty good prior to March 1984, we were buying houses and new cars, etc., everybody knew each other, we were happy and content, now no work in the village, most men travel to work, and the young took to selling drugs for money, it is no longer a happy place to live. But we shall survive and overcome this awful time imposed on us by Mrs Thatcher and her government. While they imported coal from abroad telling us our pits weren't viable to mine, they made it unviable by not following - by not allowing new machinery to be designed by my husband and fellow draughtsmen alike in the UK. Watch out National Health Service, is this the next for privatisation.