

## **Exhibition Wall Text**

### **ONE YEAR!**

#### **Photographs from the Miners' Strike 1984-85**

To coincide with the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1984-85 miners' strike this exhibition looks at the vital role photographs played during the year-long struggle against pit closures, and includes many materials drawn from the Martin Parr Foundation collection.

The miners' strike was one of Britain's longest and most bitter industrial disputes, the repercussions of which continue to be felt throughout the country today. This industrial action against planned colliery closures by the National Coal Board (NCB) began in Yorkshire and was led by the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and its president, Arthur Scargill. The Conservative government under Margaret Thatcher strongly opposed the strike and aimed to reduce the power of the trade unions.

It was a dispute characterised by weaponised news coverage and the many forms of visual media created to sway public opinion. Photographs documenting the events in 1984-85 are exhibited here in dialogue with selected ephemera created in support of the

miners—including posters, vinyl records, plates, badges and publications.

The exhibited works span the full year of the strike and cover a variety of approaches, from photojournalism to photo-montage, as well as more vernacular uses of photographs such as the albums compiled by Philip Winnard, himself a striking miner. Depicted throughout are the infamous clashes between police and flying pickets but also the camaraderie between those on strike and the activities of support groups such as Women Against Pit Closures.

The strike ended in defeat for the miners on the 3rd of March 1985, with most of Britain's coal mines shut down. Forty years on, there has been a failure to reconcile the loss of industry in the areas affected economically, socially and also psychologically by deindustrialisation. The photographs and ephemera materials here show a unique account of what happened during the strike, but also offer a place to reflect on power, community and the relationship between governance, photography and societal change.

The exhibition features works by; John Harris, Chris Killip, Jenny Matthews, Brenda Prince, Neville Pyne, Howard Sooley, John

Sturrock, Roger Tiley, Philip Winnard, Imogen Young and uncredited photographers of original press prints.

Exhibition curated by Isaac Blease