

## Martin Parr on the Miners' Strike

For those people who did not live through the miners' strike, it is difficult to spell out the scale of this event. It was workers vs Margaret Thatcher and sadly Thatcher won. Despite the lack of ballot from the NUM there was huge support for the miners from every corner of society.

The big puzzle for me was why did I not photograph the people and the activities of this strike? I remember thinking I would just leave this to other photographers. I now regret this, and this is one reason why I am very happy to host an exhibition about the strike.

One reason why photography is so powerful is that certain images will always remind us of any event. These are more effective than film footage for example. I think for the miners' strike the image by John Harris of the policeman on a horse hitting out with his truncheon towards a cowering woman is one such example. We demonstrate in this show, how this image is used in many different forms, from badges to posters. It has become a defining image of the strike.

After the strike the pits started to close and by 2015 there were no deep mine pits left in the UK. The final irony now is that when this government tries to open a new deep pit in Cumbria many people campaign against this. The coal industry has come full circle.

Martin Parr, 2024