**Against All Odds**

Published by the National Union Of Mineworkers in 1984, this is a collection of poems written by miners and their families during the national miners strike of that year and chronicles the innermost thoughts of the many who suffered.

http://www.leighlife.com/index.php?page=wiki&id=leighlife:tms1984

Read by Santo Cazzati

**Orgreave - Monday 18th. June 1984 (Barbara Brookes)**

We will remember Orgreave and the Summer of '84,

The daily convoys of lorries and

The close packed rows of helmets,

Tight and shielded,

Pushed hard against the massing ranks of pickets —

Bare chested in the early morning sun.

'We support you evermore', they chanted,

Fervent, euphoric.

Arthur, standing his ground,

Pouring strength of will and body into the gathering force,

With them, of them, for them.

The blue ranks parting like the Red Sea,

To let the cavalry through,

Hooves, truncheon and baton,

Against bone and flesh.

Miners have always known the price of coal —

Paid most often underground;

But this time they poured out their blood,

Among the elderflowers and wild roses,

On a dusty road outside the coke works,

In the fight to save jobs and a way of life.

And their anger ripped apart stone walls and concrete posts,

With bare hands —

A people's defence against trained antagonism.

The rush of pounding hooves, and flailing baton blows.

We will remember the weeks of struggle,

In the summer of the long strike.

It has its place in history.

**1984 (R. Colens)**

The year is 1984 and the miners are out on strike,

Fighting to keep open pits MacGregor does not like.

He says that they're not profitable so let us close 'em down,

But we say 'No' and he must go, 'Leave off you yanky clown'.

But I must say and do believe, it's not just this fat muppet

Who's trying to kick us on the dole, for he is just a puppet.

The Tories are behind this plan to close down our mines,

So we must fight, all unite and not cross the picket lines.

For the miners' fight is a fight for all the working class,

'Cos unions are one of the things the Tories want to smash,

And they know that if they beat the powerful NUM,

They'll defeat the smaller ones like the docks and railwaymen.

But never did they realise that we would not be beat,

And stay out for this length of time and keep on our feet.

But with support like that we've witnessed throughout this land,

We will keep on going forward and United We Will Stand.

**They'll Never Smash The NUM (J. McMillan)**

You fools who cross the picket lines,

Spare a thought for all those mines,

MacGregor, with a stroke of pen,

Will see they never work again.

You fools who cross a picket line,

The first to close could be your mine,

Workmates and sons thrown on the dole,

After a lifetime spent working coal.

You fools who cross the picket line,

So blind you cannot see the sign,

MacGregor and Thatcher will do their best,

To see that seventy pits are laid to rest.

So come on lads, let's all unite,

And fight the Tories with all our might,

It's now a case of us or them,

They'll never smash the N. U. M.

**What A Prayer (Sam Thomas)**

The Tory is my shepherd,

I am in want,

She maketh men lie down on park benches,

She layeth me down beside still factories,

Yea though I walk the valley of depression,

I anticipate no recovery,

For she is still with me.

She prepareth a reduction of my wages,

In the presence of mine enemy.

She annointeth my small income with taxes,

My bills runneth over.

Surely unemployment and poverty shall follow,

All the days of my life.

And I shall dwell in my mortgaged or council house,

For ever and ever.

God help us from this iron woman for ever.

**The Strike As Seen By A Wife (J. Davies)**

Heartache, Feelings,

You've nay sin nowt like,

Have wen me hubby was on strike.

His a miner that works at Bold,

Of picket line duty his tales he can unfold,

Up Bickershaw Sidings, thru rain and sleet,

With just cheese sarnies to last aw neet.

It's aw reet fer sum,

With big houses and income.

Parties and blare,

They'd nay giv miners a stare,

They don't care a jack, let um be,

More money fer Tory.

With rent in arrears,

Me hubby's fears —

To be turft out,

And miners in rout.

But as he ses,

Thatcher's had her days,

She's not reckoned wi miners,

Their determination and strife,

To giv aw ar young uns a better life.

To hell wi dole —

Giv em their pits

—And they'll get yond coal.

**The Working Class Are Stirring (Cathy Froggatt)**

I know that I'm not clever,

Logic's not my line,

And I've never even seen,

The inside of a mine.

I didn't win a scholarship,

I haven't a degree,

I weren't so hot at lessons,

And Daddy couldn't pay a fee.

So can someone please tell me,

The reason or the sense,

Of closing pits with coal in,

Or is it that I'm dense?

I've been told its too expensive,

To dig out all the coal.

That it's cheaper to lay men off,

And put them on the dole.

But how can it be cheaper,

To destroy both men and jobs,

And then keep paying millions,

To control the angry mobs.

What sort of woman is she,

The leader of this land?

Does she know what she is doing?

Does she really understand?

Does she think that we, the workers,

Who have made this country great,

Will sit around just waiting,

While she decides our fate?

Lately I have noticed,

There are other folk like me,

Who are starting to get angry,

At all the waste they see.

The working class are stirring,

We think we've had enough.

She's gone as far as she can go,

Now we'll start getting tough.

So I warn you, Mrs. Thatcher

You'd better watch your back,

We'll take no more oppression,

From you or buddy Mac.

You thought you'd beat the miners,

But you've a snowball's chance in hell,

Because you're not just fighting miners,

But the rest of us as well.