

Year 6 Knowledge Organiser

The Mining Strike of 1984: Local History Study



Glossary of Key Terms

Strike	The refusal to work, organised by a body of employees as a form of protest, typically in an attempt to gain something from an employer.
Protest	A statement or action to express an objection or lack of approval to something.
Riot	A violent disturbance of the peace.
Industry	The process of using raw materials to make and sell something: manufacturing, electrical, construction, production, mining etc.
Conservative	A political party of Great Britain.
Colliery	A coal mine and the buildings and equipment associated with it.
Profit(able)	Financial gain: money that is made from something.
Picket Lines	A boundary established by workers on strike, especially at the entrance of a place of work, which others are asked not to cross.
NUM	National Union of Mineworkers
Scabs	The individuals who decided not to strike against the Government and continued to work whilst their colleagues were on strike.

Timeline of Key Events

March 1st 1984: 20 mines announced to be closed through lack of profitability.

March 8th 1984: The Union executive backs nationwide strike action.

March 12th 1984: Nationwide strike action is declared: 81 pits are out of work, whilst 83 are able to continue working.

March 14th 1984: Violent picketing shuts down more mines – 132 pits shut down with 136,000 of Britain's miners on strike (78% of all miners are on strike).

May 29th 1984: 82 miners were arrested for rioting, 62 people were injured. Arthur Scargill – leader of the NUM – led 7,000 pickets. The police were attacked with rocks, bottles, and even potatoes studded with nails.

July 4th, 1984: 3,900 people have been arrested, 2 fatalities and 640 people injured in the strike so far: the police were earning up to £400 a week overtime payment.

November 12th, 1984: 1,200 miners go back to work – 1 week later a further 1,082 miners return to work.

December 25th, 1984: Striking miners celebrate Christmas, despite 9 months without pay.

January 17th, 1985: the rail workers strike for 24 hours in support of the mining industry.

January 21st, 1985: a secret meeting is held between the NUM and Coal board to look towards a settlement.

February 20th 1985: Miners reject peace plan.

February 27th 1985: more than 50% of miners return to work.

March 3rd, 1985: voting takes place to end strike action.



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In 1984, coal was a nationalised industry managed by the National Coal Board (NCB). There were 174 state-owned coal mines in Britain. These collieries employed 187,000 miners. The Government questioned how profitable many mines were. On 1st March 1984, the NCB announced that twenty mines were to close: this would mean the loss of 20,000 jobs. It was estimated that the NCB's plans could result in 100,000 jobs disappearing over the next five years. The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and other unions resisted this. On 5 March 1984, coal miners in Great Britain took industrial action against pit closures. Approximately 165,000 miners went on strike.

Key Figures



Margaret Thatcher

In 1975 Margaret Thatcher became the first woman leader of the Conservative Party. She became the first female Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. Thatcher was in power during the Mining Strike of 1984.



Arthur Scargill

Arthur Scargill was born in Worsbrough Dale, near Barnsley, Yorkshire. His grandfather and father were miners. In 1973, he became the leader of the Yorkshire Area of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and he led the 1984-85 mining strike which ended in defeat for the miners.



Ian McGregor

Ian McGregor was the head of the National Coal Board (NCB). To make the coal industry profitable, he cut jobs and closed pits. This ultimately led to the 1984-85 Miners' Strike, for which no agreement was ever reached. Ian McGregor retired from the NCB in 1986.

What was the impact of the Mining Strike?

Women Against Pit Movement

(WAPC) is a support group that started in Barnsley. A number of women got together to form a network of support for mining families. This included running community kitchens for the pickets and their families and collecting money for food parcels.

Families

The Strike was marked by a determination not to let the side down. Thousands of individuals pulled together as families and as members of a community. This could be seen in the efforts of the WAPC groups and the setting up of communal kitchens, the efforts to feed families and the socials and day trips.

The Aftermath

The miners returned to work in March 1985. Many marched back to their pits with their banners and bands as a sign of their solidarity through what had been a period of terrible struggle and suffering. The miners still wanted to show Mrs. Thatcher's government that they may have lost the battle but they had not lost the war. However, despite further marches and speeches, the NCB announced a plan to close pits. Many miners had run up huge debts in the Strike and the redundancy packages offered a way out. In some areas there was deep animosity between those miners who had stayed out on strike and those who returned to work. For many mining communities there was long-term economic decline. Unemployment was widespread and businesses within the pit towns or villages declined as a result. Many areas became run down and dilapidated.