



The 1984-85 Miners Strike in Nottinghamshire: If Spirit Alone Won Battles: The Diary of John Lowe

Jonathan Symcox

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John Lowe was at the forefront of the fight for jobs during the twelve months of the miners' strike from 1984-5 as the elected chairman of Clipstone Colliery's strike committee in the largely working county of Nottinghamshire. The dirty war fought by the Thatcher Government to defeat the formidable National Union of Mineworkers transformed him from passive family man into political animal: witness to many disturbing events, he recorded his experiences in a diary so they would never be forgotten. There is the initial confusion and scramble to organise; the London rally which the police sought to turn into a riot; his arrest and fast-tracking through the court system; the legendary pensioner friend 'Sid' beaten black and blue at a police roadblock; unifying events such as Christmas; the slow trickle back to work; and finally, the dreaded day the strike ended – and first harrowing weeks back at the coalface among people he despised.

With the scars left by the dispute still fresh upon him, he reflected upon events both at local and national level. If Spirit Alone Won Battles interweaves his diaries and this reflection is illustrated by an exhaustive collection of photographs, correspondence, court documents and campaign literature.

It is a tale of heartbreak; but also a testament to the unquenchable spirit and stomach to fight of men and women with a just cause.

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