COMMUNITY AND STRUGGLE:
A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF A MINING VILLAGE IN THE 1980s

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ARMTHORPE WOMEN AFTER THE 84/85 STRIKE.

'women's public political action has often challenged not only the ruling class, the invaders or the colonisers, but also the men's idea of the woman's role.' (Rowbotham, 1979:970)

Introduction

I have already outlined the way in which the local political tradition and the collective struggle of 1984/85 encouraged a number of Armthorpe women to engage in a wide range of public activities, which in turn had a major impact in shaping the strike-based community. Women, often accustomed to seeing themselves as atomised individuals (wives, mothers, or 'housewives') were able, through participation in collective activity, to create a new social identity. My aim in this chapter is to investigate the nature and extent of change that the Strike has brought about in the women's lives.

My previous description of the women's role in the construction of the Armthorpe community revealed that the mining women were not a homogeneously privatised or oppressed group. Even prior to the Strike, they constituted, in the words of Pete Gibbon, 'a differentiated group with a wide variety of experiences and range of resources' (1988:254). The dynamic nature of the Strike experience, while undoubtedly encouraging an overall 'collective identity' among the village women, tended, if anything, to increase this differentiation. Among among the 33 women I interviewed there were some who were on the periphery of the Strike community and others who were involved but did not consider themselves fully active. Then there was a group of ten who were very active in the Strike. I describe these women as the 'Strike
activists' and much of my data was generated in the course of their interviews. Inside this group is a smaller core of four who were seen as the leaders of the Women's Action Group and whom I therefore refer to as 'leading activists'. As my thesis is concerned with the effects of collective struggle on social relationships, I tend to focus on the lives of the 'activists' in the Strike's aftermath. The Strike's impact on the less involved women and the implications for their relationships with the activists are dealt with later in the chapter.

I begin the chapter by reproducing the women activists' own evaluation of their Strike experience, their extreme apprehension as the Armthorpe miners voted to end the Strike, and the range of pressures which they experienced after the men's return to work. The women's attempts to maintain the collective identity they had achieved during the Strike continued for over eight months, and provide a necessary backdrop to the more individually-experienced changes in their lives. I describe the efforts of the leading members of the WAG to maintain a collective role and status, their problematic relationship with prominent figures in other village institutions and their eventual disbandment as a formal group.

Coal is Our Life described a situation where coalfield women, due to their exclusion from the central workplace and its collective solidarity, also experienced a segregated and secondary role in many other related areas of village life. Although, as we have noted, women's exclusion from Armthorpe's political and public life was far from total, one of the questions prompted by the demise of the women's Strike institution, is whether their pre-Strike situation was re-established in its aftermath. In other words, did the miners' return to work involve an automatic replacement for women of the Strike-based community with the old type of 'community' with all its hierarchies and segregation?
Armthorpe Women after the Strike

My starting point is the Armthorpe women's involvement in paid employment; it's nature, what proportion of women are involved in it, how many are seeking it and the difficulties they face. My data suggests the Strike has encouraged an increase in coalfield women's participation in paid employment, with one of the causes being an unwillingness among many women to continue to define themselves in relation to an industry which offers them no role (apart from 'miner's wives'). The unsatisfactory nature of most of the jobs 'available', together with the Strike's 'broadening' of their horizons, has also encouraged the women's appetite for education and qualifications.

My next concern is whether there have been any significant changes in the leisure/sociability patterns of the Armthorpe women since the Strike. I outline the balance between home-based and more public leisure activities, contrasting the non-home leisure patterns of the Armthorpe women with those of women living (with Markham Main miners) outside the village. I then investigate whether the Strike experience has resulted in any significant changes in the friendship patterns of Armthorpe women, either between themselves, between themselves and the local miners, or between themselves and people living outside the village. In looking at the nature of these relationships I am, of course, investigating their experience of 'community' in the village, assessing the validity of Bea Campbell's suggestion that, for women, pit villages are communities 'with a hole in the middle' (1986; 254).

I then go on to examine whether the Strike has led to any sustained change in the political attitudes of the leading Armthorpe/Markham Main women. I focus on certain key areas as indicators of more general shift. Using data from interviews and diaries, I describe the women's changed attitudes towards the police, the mass media, National Coal Board management and trade unions.

Finally there is the question of whether changes in women's attitudes have affected their activities. The three areas I investigate are activities
Armthorpe Women after the Strike

in the unions, in political campaigns and in political parties. It appeared to be those women whose Strike experience straddled both local and broader strike support communities that were most determined to remain politically active. Although the problems that caused many of them to drop out of Labour Party appeared to have a local character, I argue that a major factor underlining the women's difficulties was the weakness of the wider, class-struggle based community. Nevertheless the impact of the Strike is still evident: there have been changes in the village's political system which appear to be directly attributable to the more prominent women's role pioneered in the Strike.

Women and the Ending of the Dispute

In Chapter Five I described how the Armthorpe women's initial involvement in the dispute was not as immediate or wholehearted as was the men's. Because of their position in the mining communities, most of the women tended to be less aware of the full range of the Strike's issues and therefore less committed to its prosecution. Even among those who eventually became more active in the Strike, nine out of thirty three (27 percent) were either against the Strike or 'undecided' when it first broke out. This compared with just two out of the thirty three Markham miners (6 percent) who expressed initial disagreement or doubt. However, when asked whether they felt, in hindsight, that the Strike had been justified, this difference had virtually disappeared. Just two of the women (6 percent), one of them the wife of a sacked miner, felt that 'it had not been worth it'. The potential of an industrial dispute to break down sectional barriers and win the commitment of previously uninvolved groups was clearly demonstrated. The Strike which had begun as a 'concern' of the miners had been 'adopted' by the women. It had become their strike.

This growing commitment among women to the dispute was reflected in their attitudes towards the NUM's decision to call it off in March 1985.
Armthorpe Women after the Strike

Whereas only two of the thirty three Markham miners (6 percent) felt it necessary to recall their disgust and anger at being forced to return to work, eight women took the opportunity to describe their total opposition to the decision. One leading Armthorpe activist, Irene, recalling how, just after the Strike, she and a colleague had 'got stuck into' Jack Taylor as he stood surrounded by admirers at the Lord Mayor's Ball explained:

'My ideas on the Strike haven't changed. I still think they should have stayed out. They should have stuck out till they won. If it were left to the women they'd have stopped out.' (Armthorpe: 1W)

Another, whose partner had been forced to quit his job due to ill health, leaving their family's financial position in a critical position, expressed a similar opinion:

'Sometimes I've got mixed feelings. I didn't want the Strike to end. Sometimes when I'm sat here I wonder where are we going to turn to next? What have we done it all for? Then at others I feel so proud to have been a part of it. Even though there were hard times and our marriage's almost split up during and after, I'd go through it all again. During the Strike the women were the backbone, and most of us were for stopping out.' (Armthorpe: 3W)

Another said simply:

'No. It were disgusting, they should never have gone back. I felt it was wrong being sent back like that and I still feel the same way.' (Armthorpe: 19W)

This level of hostility, apparent from almost a quarter of the women interviewed, requires an explanation. It would be mistaken to see it as merely 'brave' talk from the second rank. The women concerned had not merely found themselves in a position of equal prominence, but had been forced to take over major leadership roles, due to the State's incessant hounding of NUM officials. It's true that many of the men were overwrought by the decision at the time. Several women gave me harrowing accounts of how they had broken the news to their partners. One explained:

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'Pete were in bed. I went up and got him up. I just said, 'You're back at work on Tuesday'. He said, 'I'm not'. I said, 'The strike's over'. But he just replied, 'I'm not going back ....'  (Armthorpe: 3W)

While another recalled:

'Mick had just driven back from London and was dead tired. Scargill had been on the T.V. and I told him. He wouldn't believe me. All that sacrifice and no point. I had to swear on our kid's life before he'd believe me.'  (Armthorpe: 11W)

Indeed, the widespread nature of the men’s opposition among Markham miners was clearly demonstrated by their overwhelming vote to continue the Strike until the sacked miners were reinstated.

The Strike had been fought over the preservation of the key local power points which gave the men access to at least some collective control over their lives. Above all, they saw the Strike as a defence of their union (see table 2.7). Their disciplined return to the pits, at least to those pits that were not under immediate threat of closure, symbolised a shift in the terrain and intensity of battle, but nevertheless a retention of at least some control over their lives, due to their collective weight in the coal industry. It was this fact that allowed many of the male activists, despite the apparently glaring reality, to refuse to acknowledge that they had suffered a major defeat.

This was not the case for most of the mining women. Their life prior to the Strike had been marked by their exclusion from the central workplace and all its related roles and institutions. Their frequent confinement to smaller, poorly organised workplaces or the privatised world of home and family was reflected in an experience of powerlessness and an inferior social status. Their socialisation as second class citizens had begun so early and been so thorough that many of the women were hardly aware of it. It took the impact of the Strike to make them conscious of their situation, their oppression and their potential as working class women. It was only during the
1984/85 dispute that they gained a clear public identity, that they emerged, in the words of the Thurcroft NUM banner, 'from obscurity to respect'\textsuperscript{13}. The return to work therefore must have symbolised an ignominious end to one of the most fulfilling periods of their lives and a possible return to 'obscurity'.

Aggie, one of Armthorpe's leading Strike activists, described her reaction to the impending return as follows:

Oh, that were bleedin' murder that. I'd been out picketing most days after the 18th of February - day of the mass demo. I think everybody just tried to go out and keep their mind off it, that we were losing the battle .... The week before we'd heard a threat that the Strike might be over and loads of women from the other action groups phoned me up. Anyway I phoned National up and I got in touch with Arthur Scargill's secretary and she said he was in a meeting. I said 'Tell him from all the Yorkshire wives - I mean every wife in South Yorkshire - that we're not bothered if we starve for another year, we don't want to go back'. That were the message to Arthur Scargill and she said she would pass the message on. In fact when they got me to phone that message through I think I were nearly crying, 'cos I were so upset about how we were going back to work.

And then on the Sunday night, I was supposed to go and lobby the TUC and I didn't go, I just stopped at home and watched the News and then when Scargill came out I was just dumbfounded.... I just couldn't believe it.... I wanted to kick the T.V. in! And I heard all the people shouting, 'We're not going back! ' ....And then from then on my phone never stopped ringing. Supporters from London, Liverpool, all over, they were ringing me up....They started crying, I started crying. They said, 'You haven't lost'. I said 'We HAVE lost! We've gone back on the wrong footings. I could have stuck it another year. Whether you supported me or not, I'd have stuck it ... Anyhow in the end I got fed up with the phone calls and I thought, 'It's alright them phoning me up, its them that's let us down. Why didn't they come out on STRIKE?'

So we had a meeting that night, we women called a meeting, and we were all against ..... and the next day I went to the big meeting, but we weren't allowed at the meeting - women were never allowed at the NUM meetings. Well, actually I wouldn't say we were outside, there was a table stood by the door and there were that many miners in, they couldn't shut the doors, so I was stood on this table and I nearly went through the roof when they voted not to go back. I were that chuffed y'know. I thought, 'We're not going back, we're not going back. Just great y'know!' And I went to London on the Wednesday for the Rates Capping march and all I kept hearing was 'Markham Main's still out on strike'. People were congratulating us and putting money in our buckets, 'cos it had come over the telly that we were still out on strike....

Then we had the meeting on the Thursday and they voted to go back to work. Oh god, that were awful again, y'know. We'd been lifted up on the Monday and been dropped again .... I wasn't allowed in the meeting. I just couldn't believe we were going back. Then the march came on the Friday and everybody turned up for the march. Miners from other pits, even women from the other groups came through with their banners and marched with us. There were thousands on the march. It were a good day, but it wasn't the victory march that we should have had.'

(Armthorpe:3W)
The degree of commitment that had been built up by the leading women activists during the dispute is clearly apparent. It is overlaid by a feeling of total involvement. With the fate of the Strike in the balance, Aggie feels she has a right to phone up 'national' and tell the NUM leadership that 'we [the women collectively] don't want to go back'. As women, they may not have been involved in the decision to start the dispute, or even felt it was their proper concern, but their total involvement in the collective struggle had given these women a collective voice and the right to be heard. In a very real sense, the Miners Strike had become 'their' Strike as well.

The feeling of commitment and involvement are only matched by those of anger and disbelief that the Strike could be allowed to go down to defeat. Gnawing away in the background is the feeling that such an ending is a portent of a return to the pre-Strike situation, where excluded from the pit and its union, the women's main identity was that of a miners' wife or mother. Indeed such a return seems to be symbolised by the women's position at the penultimate NUM mass meeting. The Women's Action Group, although previously consulted by the local NUM leadership, are party neither to the debate nor the final decision. Denied a voice or even a formal right to attend the union meeting, the woman activist with a central role in Strike community is again forced into the role of an 'outsider'. Unable to participate directly, feelings of fulfillment and euphoria are once again experienced at second hand, through the collective strength of the male part of the community.

The spectre of the traditional women's role, standing in the shadows of the men, also loomed large in Liz's account, clashing with their Strike role as equal partners in the resistance movement against the government:

'I knew what were coming that last week. We'd made it possible to stand up to Thatcher. We'd proved we were more stubborn than her. Financially things were really bad, but I reckon we were more stubborn than her. Financially things were really bad, but I reckon most women didn't want a return to work on those terms. It were great when the men voted to stop out, that were brilliant. But then we had no choice but to stand behind them when they voted to go back.'

(Armthorpe: 4W)
This clash of roles was felt especially keenly by those women who had not confined themselves to the more localised, ‘domestic’ Strike roles of food preparation/distribution, counselling or childcare. For women to become conscious of the limitations of their pre-Strike roles and life chances they had to gain a certain distance from these roles. So it was those women who had involved themselves in the less traditional, more ‘advanced’ areas of Strike activity - organising fundraising/picketing expeditions, participating in speaking tours, pioneering twinning relationships - who appeared to have gained the clearest perspective on their situation as women in a mining village, and who were most hostile to a return to their old roles.  

THE WOMEN'S SITUATION IN THE POST-STRIKE PERIOD

Were the women's fears justified? Did the end of the strike signal a return to their former situation? The answer to emerge from interviews, diaries, discussions and observation was both yes and no. The defeat of the Strike necessarily involved a massive curtailment of collective struggle for all those who had been involved in the Strike-based community. Even the miners who returned to work in the pit found themselves unable to sustain any significant level of struggle. Whatever resistance there was had to be carried out on a secretive, individual or ‘guerilla’ basis. It was virtually impossible for the women to participate or even assist in this kind of struggle. At a national level, the aim of the National Conference of Women's Organisations to 'develop a relationship between the NUM and women's organisations at all levels' had centred on the achievement of associate membership for women in the union, but this was voted down at the July 1985 NUM conference.

The return to work brought little respite from the severe financial hardship felt by the mining households. With the dismantling of their ‘alternative welfare state' they were forced to re-enter the market economy,
but in a highly vulnerable position, almost on the bottom rung. With few exceptions, the companies and agencies who had come under pressure from the local Strike community to accept suspension or part payment of individual miner's debts came to seek satisfaction. The union branch, which had played a key role in the postponement of this debt, had become financially dependent on the outside support network and the Yorkshire NUM. With its fundraisers back at work and the NUM in the throes of sequestration/bankruptcy, the branch had to abandon its role as collective provider for all its members and concentrate its attention on those in the most urgent need, the local sacked miners, whose numbers continued to grow in the post-Strike period.  

The Women's Support Group, even more dependent for its funds on the outside support community, was equally hard pressed. The reimposition of the demanding work routine of the pit with its rotating, anti-social shifts imposed a restrictive domestic routine on the miners' partners as well. Responsibilities that had previously been shared by the Strike-based, 'community'; food supply and preparation, childcare, debt management, counselling and morale raising, now tended to devolve onto the shoulders of individual women. With their husbands at work and the collective institutions being wound down, the Action Group's core of leading speakers and fundraisers (all of them wives of working miners) found themselves under pressure to reduce their involvement in the outside support community (which was, of course, going through its own identity crisis). This had a further impact on the amount of funds being channelled through the WAG and further undermined the central position that the women's collective had occupied in the alternative subsistence economy.

Within a matter of weeks, the individually-earned wage packet had reestablished itself as the main source of income among the mining population and the Armthorpe women were coming under pressure to withdraw from their collective operations and return to their more atomised, domestic roles.
Whereas the miners themselves experienced many of their post-Strike problems on a collective basis (even if, at first, they were unable to take collective action as a remedy), this was not the case for the women. The activity which had given them such a powerful collective identity during the Strike had been entirely dependent on the Strike itself. The end of the dispute, involving an almost total curtailment of collective action, threatened to reintroduce not only the resegregation of women and men, but the atomization of women into their individual family units.

It was in these family units that the major financial and other problems were concentrated. In the 'traditional' scheme of things this was, of course, the woman's sphere of responsibility. However with their recent experience of collective activity as the solution to all major problems, many of the leading women activists were loath to allow this atomisation. For those whose Strike experience had made them feel a part of a bigger, ongoing community, the obvious answer to the increasing pressure on individuals was the maintenance of a collective identity among the local women.

**WOMEN'S COLLECTIVE INITIATIVES**

In Armthorpe the women tried to keep this collective identity through four main areas of activity. The first was a direct continuation of their local strike role - attempting to raise funds for Armthorpe's fifteen sacked and victimised miners. The second related to their broader identity as they continued to keep up their links with other groups of mining women through informal contact and through their delegates to the Women Against Pit Closures (WAPC) group in Doncaster. The third was overtly political as eight of the leading activists simultaneously joined the local Labour Party at the suggestion of an established member, Mary Anne Calton (an active member of the WAG, although she had no family ties with the pit). Their most ambitious project, however, had a local focus and could be seen as an attempt to
institutionalise their prominent position in the village community. The WAG decided to set up a community/drop-in centre in the village, which would be open to all, but which would, in particular, act as a major facility for the senior citizens and women in the village.

The women felt there was a real need for such a centre. The lack of a women's centre in a residential settlement of twelve thousand people is hardly unusual, but the total absence of cafés or coffee shops is. Apart from the weekly baby clinic for young mothers, or the pensioners' groups for the more elderly, the sports centre was the only non-licensed premises where women could meet each other. A major source of inspiration for the Armthorpe project was the setting up of a Women's Centre in nearby Doncaster. This was initiated by the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), and housed an inexpensive café where women could sit and chat, as well as a range of cultural/educational activities organised in liaison with the Doncaster WAPC group. (See Appendix 16)

A suitable premises in the village, owned by the District Council, was located and its use was discussed with sympathetic Labour members on the council. Shortly afterwards, Jim MacFarlane, now leader of Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council, informed the women unofficially that the house could be made available to them for use as a community centre. This decision was met with a barrage of vitriolic opposition on the part of three or four leading Labour Party figures in the village, who argued that the premises in question should be used to house homeless families. The proposal was opposed by the Armthorpe members on the DMBC and, rather than get embroiled in a prolonged political argument (with the WAG cast in the role of 'enemy of the homeless'), the women decided to seek alternative (non-domestic) premises.

By May 1985, it was decided to set up a coffee bar/drop in centre at the Gertrude Bell (parish) Hall in the centre of the village. Any profits made
from the centre would be used in order to help the village's sacked miners. The premises were old and rundown, and the women had to undertake a major and expensive redecoration/refurbishment exercise before they could open up as a coffee centre. Despite this, the church governors demanded a rent of £10 per day from the WAG, which placed a crippling burden on the project. The centre opened up every weekday for a period of eight weeks and two or three sympathetic individuals on the parish council began to argue that it should assist in funding the centre.

**Opposition**

In the Summer of 1985 the relationship between the WAG and the sacked miners became very strained when one of the latter alleged a misuse of funds, following the women's refusal to meet what they considered to be an unreasonable request for money. Several prominent Labour Party members on the parish council endorsed these allegations, thereby casting a shadow of corruption over the women and their community centre. At a subsequent parish council meeting, the same individuals proposed a motion calling on the parish council to disassociate itself from the WAG. This was passed by ten votes to one, with one abstention. This decision led to the resignation from the parish council of one of its most prominent members, Mick Varley, who was, as county councillor for nearby Intake, still struggling to bring the police behaviour of the 22 August before the European court.

The allegations of corruption, by anonymous individuals, were carried in the local press and led to a situation where the women insisted on attending the next parish council meeting, which had previously always been closed to non-members. Certain key figures in the local NUM branch came forward to publicly endorse the activities of the women, and no one on the parish council would admit responsibility for the press allegations, which made the extraction of a formal apology or retraction a difficult political
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exercise. Despite their moral victory, severe damage had already been done to the women's already-weakened morale. The ordeal of being forced to publicly defend their activities and reputations from scurrilous attacks from inside their own 'community', having just emerged from a year-long struggle in its defence, acted as the straw that broke the collective back of the Armthorpe Womens Action Group.

Soon after, the public health authorities raised the issue of major structural work that was required at the Gertrude Bell Hall and the community centre ceased to operate. By the end of 1985 the Womens Action Group had effectively ceased to exist. Their final meeting decided to donate their remaining funds to the printworkers who had begun a year-long battle to regain their jobs at Rupert Murdoch's News International plant at Wapping.

The disbandment of the WAG saw the women still searching for other avenues for collective political involvement. Soon after the end of the Strike, eight of the women had joined the Labour Party and although their initial involvement was not a happy experience, it served to encourage the convening of a local, (11-member) women's assertiveness training group which included four of the Action Group's members. Two of these women had been attending women's studies courses at the Doncaster Women's Centre (see appendix 16), and in March 1986, they helped the initiator of these courses, Edna Woodhead (a tutor of the NUM day release courses at Sheffield University) to convene a meeting in the Armthorpe Welfare. Edna described where the initiative had come from:

'The group did not grow directly out of the Strike support group. That had broken up. Some of the women said they'd become more interested in politics during the Strike and they'd joined the Labour Party, but they were finding the meetings very difficult. They knew how the meetings were run and were not afraid to stand up and make a contribution, but they felt that some of the men were putting them down. So they wanted more confidence, they wanted to know how to cope with these things. So I suggested they have a go at some assertiveness training sessions. At first we just put on a couple and they enjoyed them so we put on a few more. We had seven sessions, from March through to July. There were eleven on the register, mostly mining women, but, as I remember, only...
two or three of the leading Action Group members were involved. Five of
them also attended the courses in Doncaster.' (Armthorpe 102AI)

The provision of an open, flexible programme of education, democratically
organised around the women's needs encouraged them greatly. But Edna's general
comments in her 1986 report were particularly relevant to Armthorpe:

'There was a lot of uncertainty amongst groups about where they wanted
to go and what they wanted to do. Some simply wanted to stay together
and retain the new found companionship of the strike. Others wanted to
remain active as a group. They all faced the problem of long-term
direction, but recognised in the project an opportunity to explore and
formulate their plans for the future, either as individuals or groups.
(Woodhead, 1987: 4)

The WAG's collective initiatives had been frustrated. The women increasingly
found themselves pursuing their hopes and aspirations as individuals.

WOMEN'S INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITIES

The majority of the problems experienced by mining families in the
Strike's aftermath confronted them as individuals and the pressures towards
atomisation and privatisation increased accordingly. The backlog of mortgage,
loan and hire-purchase repayments, gas, electric, telephone, rates bills,
renegotiated and postponed by the Strike collective, came pouring down on the
beleaguered families. A very few households, usually those whose women members
had held down reasonably-paid jobs through the Strike, had merely been forced
to exhaust their savings or dispose of material possessions. But among the
Armthorpe men and women I interviewed, the average 'Strike' deficit, (as
distinct from normal, ongoing debts), was £2,420. This scale of debt would
be difficult to tolerate in any working class household. In one where the
largest wage was notoriously insecure, it brought additional pressures, both
on the miners and on their partners, who often had the chief responsibility for
'balancing the books'. Alongside the multitude of financial problems were
others; emotional and physical exhaustion, stress, illness, ongoing court
cases, all of which were once again experienced on a more individual basis.
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Many Markham Main miners and their families, already carrying heavy financial commitments before the Strike, could not cope with these pressures. Several hundred accepted voluntary redundancy, while a smaller number lost their houses or separated from their partners. Others adopted a wide variety of strategies (usually expensive loans or second mortgages) in order to survive the debt crisis. The unavoidable weekly outgoings of many mining families became crippling high. There was pressure on the miner to attend work 'religiously', to work as much overtime as possible and to try to earn the maximum productivity bonus. Although this tended to increase the burden of domestic work on their partners, there was also a premium put on coalfield women holding down as much paid employment as possible.

Women and Paid Employment

Although the recession was still having an impact, in as much as four of the women had lost jobs in the previous eighteen months, there was, overall, a significant increase in the number of coalfield women in paid employment compared with the pre-Strike period. Table 8.1 outlines the major changes that emerged from the interviews with Armthorpe women and women (partners of Markham miners) living outside the village.

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<td>Mar 84</td>
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<td>Mar 84</td>
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<td>Mid 86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Includes women on Community Programme schemes.
Of the thirty three women interviewed, twenty two lived in Armthorpe, eleven lived 'outside' (that is not in-pit villages). The top section of the table refers to the group as a whole, the lower section distinguishes between those living inside and outside the village. Perhaps the most obvious trend was the increase in the number of coalfield women who had found paid employment since the end of the Strike. Despite sackings, redundancies and a retirement affecting five women (15 percent), there was still a fifteen percent increase in women holding some kind of paid employment. This trend stood in marked contrast to that among their male partners, where four redundancies and a Strike sacking had led to a 15 percent reduction in employment (that is rather than 100 percent of their partners being in paid employment, only 85 percent were). Although virtually all of the women without young children were seeking full time employment, few had been successful and, as a result, a large part of the increased employment rate was due to women acquiring one or more part time jobs.

It appeared that the women living outside Armthorpe were more successful in securing work in the Strike's aftermath, resulting in a major 27 percent increase in these women holding jobs of some description. This may have been because they felt a greater need for a job given the lack of local kinship/friendship networks (see below), but they also seemed to have access to a broader range of economic activities. The restricted employment opportunities for women and the low level of post-Strike economic activity in Armthorpe seemed to be confirmed by the nine percent decrease in Armthorpe women whose main job was in the village itself. In order to find employment they were forced to look beyond the village and, as a result, the numbers of village women whose main job lay outside Armthorpe more than doubled.

In Armthorpe, the majority of those with full time jobs tended to be employed in low-paid retail or service industries; shopworkers, schoolmeals, pit-canteen and old-folks home workers. One woman worked in a low-paid...
knitwear manufacturing unit employing ninety shop floor workers (all women), while the other main source of full time village jobs was the equally low-paid food processing/packing industry. This was based in two small units on the eastern edge of the village and involved, in the main, repetitive, back-breaking work.

Traditionally, the most common source of casual, part-time work for Armthorpe women was 'fieldwork'. During the 3-4 month vegetable picking season the demand for labour was so great that not only women, but their children and husbands (taking a break from 'toil beneath the soil') used to be able to find casual employment in the fields. (At nearby Thorne colliery, for example, the 1920's union branch campaigned (unsuccessfully) for a week off work specifically for this purpose). Even in the early 1980's farm machinery was not able to replace human labour in certain tasks, but recent advances in automation had virtually eliminated the demand for casual labour, even at the height of the season. Fieldwork, which was reported as being the most common casual work among the mothers of those interviewed, had been replaced by shop work or bar tending among their daughters. Opportunities for women to find part-time work in local pubs and clubs were, however, rare in 1986, and the employment of Youth Training Scheme (YTS) trainees had made shopwork more difficult to come by.

Outside the village the most common sources of women's employment were the retail and service sectors (shopwork, cleaning hospitals/offices) and the clothing industry in Doncaster, often non-unionised, insecure and low-paid. Some of the outside jobs did, however, seem to offer slightly higher wages and promotion prospects. The only woman who earned more than her partner, employed at Markham Main, worked outside the village, in the civil service.
Apart from earning less money, the women interviewed tended to spend less of their time at work than did their male partners and, although few of them suffered the extreme shift rotation of the miners, their jobs still tended to be more 'irregular', often comprising of a variable number of shorter sessions which could be interwoven around the demands of their partner's shift system, domestic work and childcare. Nevertheless, as more women took on paid employment, and a significant number of miners joined the ranks of the unemployed by taking redundancy, quitting their job or being sacked, there appeared to be a growing convergence between male and female work routines in the locality.

Although the extreme financial hardship was obviously one of the factors encouraging this phenomenon, the women themselves revealed that it was not the only, or indeed the chief one. One of the leading women activists, who had managed to get a temporary job at the pit canteen explained:

'I don't know what I used to do before the Strike. I couldn't stop at home. I just couldn't get back into any routine. Of course we needed the money, but I needed to get out of the house as well. When you're at work you can see things for yourself. It's great getting a bird's eye view of everything. We have a good laugh. The young strikers pull my leg, 'We reckon you fancy us, you can't keep away!' But I've noticed that the atmosphere in the canteen isn't like it used to be. We're always seeing blokes sent home. And the management are right clever, always trying to put the blame on the transferees ... divide and rule. But its still great to be working, I can meet people and we have really good discussions.'

(Armthorpe: **W)

Contrary to the thesis put forward by Goldthorpe and Lockwood (1968a) and others, paid work was evidently valued by this woman on a number of levels. It certainly facilitated a higher level of material well being, and presumably a degree of financial independence, but it also provided a change from the domestic setting and routine, and allowed the woman to see things for herself, to observe and formulate opinions at first hand ('the management are right clever'). Perhaps most important, it allowed her a wider range of social contact, with immediate workmates, the broader pit workforce and others. The young miners' leg pulling has a core of truth. The women did enjoy the novel...
gender relations, the 'mixing' experienced during the Strike. Paid employment is here helping to prevent an immediate narrowing of horizons or total segregation between local men and women: not only can they 'have a good laugh', but they can also have 'really good discussions'.

For Liz, paid employment involved not only a guarantee of much needed social contact but a continuation of her 1984/85 engagement in union activity. During the Strike, she had been sacked from a seven-year job as a cleaning supervisor at an NCB office complex in Doncaster. They objected to her prominence in Strike activities and had forbade discussion of the Strike with fellow workers. She explained what she got out of her other part-time job as a chambermaid in a large hotel:

'I'm a lot more active in the union. I'm in the General and Municipal. Before the Strike I just used to pay my dues and that was union membership. Through my involvement with other unions, I understand what it's possible to achieve. Me and the union rep have long discussions. We've started having meetings at work, we've had four in the last six weeks, and I always pass round one or two copies of the union magazine. I work alongside two other miner's wives. When we have our tea breaks, we always discuss what's going on.

We used to discuss family life, T.V. and stuff, but now we discuss mainly the village, pit closures, the four or five hundred men who are finishing. We're more politically aware, the discussion always centres on that kind of thing, not 'Our Terry swam a mile for the first time' anymore. We're more involved. Before, as long as Maurice got five shifts in, I wasn't bothered. Before, the men didn't want the women involved in their pit talk, but we played such a major role in the Strike, we're now on an equal footing.' (Armthorpe: 4W)

Although the women are still engaged in the same work, a clear broadening of horizons is evident. Prior to the Strike, Liz 'wasn't bothered' with the outside world as long as it didn't impinge on family life. In common with many other women workers, her 'housewife' identity remained in place, even when she was at work (Pollert, 1981:111). During the dispute, the coalfield women ceased to be spectators, relating to the world through the T.V. or their families, and were involved in actively shaping it. Having opted out of her 'privatised' world and been involved in the highly politicised support community outside, Liz finds it very difficult to return.
Armthorpe Women after the Strike

She and her fellow workers have become 'more politically aware', and have forged their own identity. They relate to the world directly, discussing 'what's going on' and the larger issues that are affecting society, including 'pit talk'; closures, redundancies, their effect on the village.

Nor was Liz's involvement confined to the area of ideas and discussion. Her previous non-committal attitude towards the trade unions has been replaced by an active commitment. Having witnessed the potential power of collective action, 'what it's possible to achieve', she sees it as her role to build the level of union organisation and culture. Union activity has ceased to be something alien to her, it has become part of her life.

Although this level of union involvement was still unusual among the women interviewed, other women who were seeking or had already secured a job made it clear that they did not see employment as simply a means to a wage. This phenomenon was put in its context by Shiela, living in Armthorpe, but from a non-mining background:

'I'd say there's a lot more Armthorpe women looking for jobs since the Strike. Don't get me wrong, the women round here always seem to have done bits and pieces of jobs, but now they're looking for proper jobs, careers and stuff, that's the difference. And they're after an education that will give them a chance at this type of job.' (Armthorpe: 19W)

The stress put by Shiela on the type of women's work being sought echoed the 1985 observations of Sandra Taylor, herself brought up in pit villages:

'For many miners' wives, the lack of employment experience and formal educational qualifications, means that the available jobs are often soul-destroying and, more often than not, a negative experience. To them, the idea that a job could be fulfilling, or at least satisfying, would seem absurd. Indeed many women get married as a positive attempt to escape from such employment.....[post-Strike] Many will want to remain involved in community activities and issues, others may seek some form of further education, whilst still others may now wish to seek meaningful employment outside of the home.' (Taylor, 1986:93)

And indeed several of the Markham Main women made specific reference to the 'usefulness' of their job, or to how their real interest lay in a career with some social purpose. Margaret had spent the 25 years prior to the Strike
Armthorpe Women after the Strike

bringing up children and looking after the home. Now on a community programme scheme organizing pensioners' day clubs in the Doncaster area, she suggested:

'A lot of miners have a lot more respect for women. They used to think of women as just being at home. In fact a few of my friends had marriage break-ups due to the male chauvinist attitudes of their husbands. Their attitude was, 'Strike's over, back in the kitchen', but the women just said 'No'.

A lot of women want to get out and do something, a job or a college course. Eventually I'm hoping to apply for a social work course at Sheffield Polytechnic. One thing's for certain, I won't be staying at home!.... Through the Strike and by being at work, I know a lot more women. I enjoy their company a lot more. Our conversations have been transformed. We're very geared up to what's going on in the world. Now we talk over things apart from babies and knitting.....' (Armthorpe: 26W)

The impact of women's public Strike activity on their domestic relationships is clearly reflected in the experience of Margaret's friends. Having broadened their horizons during the Strike, they felt unable to comply with their husbands' expectations, namely that if they had returned to their previous role (as wage slaves in the pit), their partners should do the same in the domestic arena. The effects of Margaret's own involvement with the broader Strike support community are also apparent. Her political involvement and her close contact with women and men with varied educational backgrounds and 'interesting' careers appear to have reawakened her appetite for learning/education. The 'tone' of her statement indicates another of the Strike's effects. Despite its eventual defeat, it served to boost the personal confidence of many of the individuals participating in it.

A reawakened thirst for education was apparent in several of the miners as well. However their return to pit work with its substantial wages made a serious pursuit of this education extremely difficult and undoubtedly this was another source of tension between some men and women. An Armthorpe woman explained:

'I don't seem to be able to settle down since the Strike. I left school early and I really want to continue my education. I think I could. I've got the booklet on Northern College and as soon as we get on top financially, I intend to apply, although I've got to be careful,
because I don't want [****] to feel as if we're growing apart, as if he's being left behind.'

(Armthorpe: **W)

What is evident in all these statements is that, despite the unsatisfactory nature of much of the work available, many of the Strike activists sought paid employment (or education) outside the home as a way of keeping in touch with wider society, developing their potential and preventing their 'broadened' horizons from being immediately restricted again. Their refusal to return to the narrow, privatised roles traditionally ascribed to them in the pit village manifested itself in several other areas of their lives.

Women and Leisure

During the Strike, it was not only the miners who enjoyed an unprecedented amount of 'leisure'.[203] The 'collectivisation' of food supply and preparation, the sharing by partners of childcare and domestic work, together with the frequent 'deprioritisation' of many household chores,[21] allowed many women an escape from their normal routines. For many of the Strike activists, interspersed with the hard work of food preparation, fund raising or twinning was the pleasure of travelling, visiting new places and being treated as honoured guests in the Strike support 'community'. Marilyn described a trip to London with the Women's Action Group:

'We were invited down by Camden Town Council and the Greater London Council. Thirteen of us, ten women and three lads, went down to Swiss Cottage and got put up at this school for underprivileged kids. They had a big spread laid on for us and then took us on a sightseeing tour round London. We stopped off at Covent Garden for the artists and entertainment. Then we had another meal and we all got freshened up and they took us out for a social night in a pub with really good entertainment.....We had a great time. I enjoyed it all; the food, the company, everything. It was great. I'll never forget that trip.' (Armthorpe: 31W)

The paradox of 'having a great time' despite having almost no money, was one that was referred to by several of the women. They obviously enjoyed the experience of meeting different people in strange places far from the village.
The leisure activities available to women in big cities (especially London) were, of course far more varied than those available to them in the village. The 'normal' leisure pastimes claimed by the village women are outlined below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>'Outside' Activities</th>
<th>claimed by</th>
<th>claimed by</th>
<th>Home-based Activities</th>
<th>claimed by</th>
<th>claimed by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Village q</td>
<td>Non vill q</td>
<td>Village q</td>
<td>Non vill q</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinking</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>Television/vid</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Run out/entert</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eating out</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Radio/music</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betting</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Knitting</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pool</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Puzzles</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Callin'</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darts</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Family/kids</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bingo</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Typing/W. P.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polit Meetings</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Conversation</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caravanning</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Phoning friends</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep fit</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Cooking</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cricket</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Baking</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Gardening</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Squash</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Sewing</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Cards/board gam</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geology trips</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Singing (bath)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number Interviewed: 33  
Source: Armthorpe Interview Survey 1986

Unlike the village miners (see table 7.2), a clear majority of the village women's leisure pursuits were home-based. Watching T.V., reading, listening to the radio, knitting, doing puzzles or callin' - all were inexpensive, helped pass the time and could be organised 'individually' around domestic chores or irregular shift patterns. Apart from reading, the outside women appeared less keen on the more 'traditional', domestically-oriented women's pastimes. The lack of local kinship and neighbour networks was reflected in the absence of 'callin', although its long distance equivalent, made possible by the widespread ownership of telephones, was more frequently mentioned.

As with the miners, 'going out drinking' was by far the the most popular outside pastime among women, although a 'traditional Saturday night' sometimes involved 'going out for a meal'or 'having a run out' in the search of entertainment, rather than going straight down the local. The 'outside'
women, often more mobile and with less local 'community' tended to be more frequently involved in these non local leisure pursuits. The village women seemed to be more prominent in their incursion into the world of sport however, with some of the local women's networks beginning to take on a 'sporty dimension' similar to that of the miners.

The acute shortage of money that had been part of the 'way of life' in the Strike community acted as a serious obstacle to all social life in the immediate aftermath of the Strike. As some of the debts were brought under control, a more complex pattern of socialising began to emerge. Table 8.3 outlines the women's description of their 'average' social life in the Summer of 1986. The figures in brackets represent the equivalent male pattern.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 8.3 Leisure Patterns outside Home - Armthorpe/Markham Main Women (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living in Armthorpe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living outside Armthorpe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living in Armthorpe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living outside Armthorpe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No Interviewed: 33
Source: Armthorpe Interview Survey 1986

Again the Armthorpe women's pattern of leisure activities was clearly related to the working pattern of the central workplace. They enjoyed marginally more frequent 'extra mural' leisure activities than the Markham connected women living outside the village, but these were heavily concentrated into the three nights of the weekend, in particular Saturday night. Whereas 55 percent of 'outside women' claimed a regular night out during the week, only 31 percent of village women were likely to 'go out' regularly on one of these evenings.
Armthorpe Women after the Strike

There were other major elements of the *Coal is Our Life* pattern that became apparent in the Armthorpe of 1986. There was a wide gap between the number of non-home leisure sessions enjoyed by the Armthorpe men and women. On every night of the week the Armthorpe miners were more likely to 'be out' in a social setting than were their women partners. This compared with a much smaller gender differential among those living outside the village. Whereas those Armthorpe miners interviewed went out, on average, twice as often as the Armthorpe women, the miners living outside the village went out 'only' 50 percent more often than their female partners! Indeed, on a Saturday night, the 'outside' women actually achieved 'parity' with the men! They also had a marginally better deal on Sunday lunchtimes, which according to Beatrix Campbell epitomize the pit villages at their most 'patriarchal'; the men at the union meeting/club, the women at the cooker (Campbell, 1986:154).

There were also differences in the leisure associates of village and non-village women. Table 8.4 outlines some of these differences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>associate with</th>
<th>Partner</th>
<th>Partner's Family/</th>
<th>Neighbours</th>
<th>Workmates</th>
<th>Strike</th>
<th>Political</th>
<th>Few</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Workmates</td>
<td>relatives</td>
<td>Workmates</td>
<td>ex-w'mates</td>
<td>al assoc</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living in Armthorpe</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living outside Armthorpe</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No Interviewed: 33  
Source: Armthorpe Interview Survey 1986

The hallmarks of the 'traditional' pit village 'community', as described in *Coal is Our Life*, emerge quite clearly in the leisure association patterns of the village women. Apart from their partners, the Armthorpe women tend to rely on relatives and neighbours as leisure associates, but, whereas their own workmates do not often feature as leisure companions (18 percent), their husband's workmates frequently do (45 percent). Although a complexity is added to the tables by the fact that strike friends were sometimes 'neighbours',...
alongside political associates, they do not figure very highly as leisure companions.

For the outside women, although once again their husbands are the main leisure companions, the role of the Strike in providing 'community' in their lives emerges very clearly. Apart from their partner, friends from the Strike were the most frequent companions, followed by acquaintances with whom they shared political beliefs/activity and friends from their own workplace. Unlike the Armthorpe women, their husband's workmates rarely featured as regular companions when they went for an evening out. Even so, lacking access to strong local communities, the outside women reported a greater problem of isolation. They reported fewer friendships with neighbours and less contact with their family and relatives. Two of the women suggested there was no-one, apart from their husbands who they could count on as regular leisure companions. The major difference in the 'communities' of village and non-village women were confirmed by the geographical basis of the leisure associations and their stability over time, which are indicated in Table 8.5:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Associates</th>
<th>Live locally</th>
<th>2-5 miles</th>
<th>over 5 miles</th>
<th>Known 1-3 yrs</th>
<th>Known 3-10 yrs</th>
<th>Known over 10 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Living in Armthorpe</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living outside Armthorpe</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No. Interviewed: 33

Source: Armthorpe Interview Survey 1986

The locality-based nature of the village women's leisure associates is clearly apparent. 86 percent reported their regular leisure associates lived in the village, 27 percent that they lived 'nearby' and only 9 percent 'went out' with people living over five miles away. The residential stability of the village population was also reflected in the length of these associations, a large majority of which were established and maintained over more than ten years. In contrast, the leisure associates of women living
outside the village rarely lived 'locally'. Most friendships had to be maintained over relatively long distances and over a quarter lived at a considerable distance (over five miles away). The absence of a strong local community tended to encourage a residential 'mobility' which, in turn, was reflected in the much shorter lengths of acquaintance reported by the non-village women.

Although the tables confirm the survival of more 'traditional' features in the village women's leisure patterns, there some important changes that are not so immediately obvious. For example, although many women described their regular leisure associates as neighbours, who they had known since childhood, in several cases it turned out that the habit of regularly 'going out' together only stemmed from the 1984/85 Strike (that is the impact of the Strike is concealed). Other changes only became evident in the course of interviews and through observation in the pubs and clubs of Armthorpe. One of the more recent phenomena was the appearance of large numbers of women going out together in self-contained groups. As Sharon put it,

'Yes, there's a lot more friendship between women now. Groups of women go out together more since the Strike. Before the Strike I used to go out with just two, my sisters. Now I go out with six or seven other lasses, my friends. I've a lot more friends now.'

(Armthorpe: 1OW)

Both Armthorpe men and women agreed that it was only since the Strike that this female equivalent of Dennis' 'exclusive group of adult males' had become a feature of Armthorpe's social life. Charlie described the phenomenon:

'Wherever you go you see groups of women out for the night together. They're finding more time have a good laugh with each other, like they did with the men during the Strike. After the Strike women wanted close friendships and to be heard. Wives are going out together all over the place. And if they're going to have a good time, there's no stopping 'em, they'll have one!

(Armthorpe: 50M)

And Sheila, married with three young children, confirmed his analysis:

'Young men, twenties to forties, used to go out and enjoy themselves and ignore their wives. It didn't matter about their wives... but since the Strike, women stick up for themselves more.... If you can't beat 'em, join 'em [laughs] - in the pub! Women are more friendlier to each other. Before
Armthorpe Women after the Strike

the Strike, just 'Hello' and that was it! Now we're more independent. You go out and sit with a gang of women and enjoy yourself!' (Armthorpe: 11W)

This collective women's incursion into pubs and clubs, previously regarded as some of the chief bastions of male privilege, seemed to underline the ongoing impact of the Strike in encouraging its participants to question their previous roles and behaviour. The 1986 observations stood in stark contrast to the reminiscences of some of the older women of the village. Jean, in her late fifties, explained her experience:

'Women weren't allowed in the pubs in Scotland. You were counted a bad woman if you went into a pub, but now the women go in all the pubs and clubs up there. I'd never been in a pub till I came to England. You won't believe this, but I often wondered how the men got their beer in them! I'd have been about 27 when I first came here and I'd never even seen the inside of a pub. Mind you there weren't many women in the pubs down here either. Now the women get out more, have more social life and they get involved more.' (Armthorpe: 18W)

Callin'

Although changes in many Armthorpe women's employment and sociability patterns involved a reduction in the amount of time that they spent in the domestic sphere, it was clear that, on average, women still spent more time in their homes than their male partners did. This was reflected in their claims to a larger number of home-based hobbies and a larger consumption of radio and television programmes (for example they suggested they watched an average of 4.2 soap operas compared with the 1.8 that the men 'admitted' to). It also meant that a significant amount of socialising between women was still carried out in this domestic sphere rather than in Armthorpe's public houses or clubs.

Coal is Our Life described 'callin' (the visiting of relatives, neighbours and friends) as the most popular women's pastime in 1956 and a crucial mechanism for maintaining kin and neighbouring networks. Although only three of the Armthorpe women listed it specifically as a 'pastime', it soon became evident that 'callin' on one another's homes remained a major source of social contact among them. In their interviews, 59 percent of the women
mentioned calling round on friends as part of their weekly routine, and this was confirmed by regular references to the practice in diaries. Not surprisingly, it was the women without paid employment who tended to spend a lot more time callin' on each other and who played a central role in the networks. Sheila, whose mother had died shortly after the Strike, still had her father and three of her (four) brothers and sisters living in the village.

When asked how often she saw them, she replied:

'Every day really. I go round to see me dad every day. Usually I see Margaret round at me dad's or else I go round through the day, or sometimes she comes up here. We've got our Raymond round here most of the time and our Chuck pops in virtually every day. I don't see our Steve that often, perhaps twice or three times a week, I see more of my sister-in-law, Brenda. I see her pretty regular, and we go out together quite a bit.' (Armthorpe: 11W)

Aggie, whose miner father had spent twenty one years suffering from 'dust' and had died during the Strike, had two part time jobs, but still spent a lot of time calling on her family and neighbours:

'I go round to my sister-in-law's quite often, or some nights she'll ring and ask if I fancy going round to her sister-in-law's. I call round to see me mam nearly every day. I spend a lot of time with me mam and me younger sister and her baby, And recently I've been spending a good few nights at me older sister's, she's been decorating and getting ready for the big wedding. I'll see Moira pretty regular and then I've got another friend Cheryl, she runs a pub in the village, I nip in and see her too.' (Armthorpe: 3W)

Jean, her mother, also had a part time job, and apart from having regular visits from her daughters, also had a regular calling network of her own:

'I don't drink or go out to bingo. I've a good friend Jean, a Scots woman from the same village, Blackburn. My husband worked with her man in the pit back haem. He died a year past August wi' a heart attack, God rest him. She comes down at nine o'clock every morning and has a cup of tea wi' me. We'll go away to Sheffield for a day outing every two months or so. Then I spend maybe an hour a night wi' my friend over the road, Mrs. Denman. She lives in Tennyson Avenue and I've been friends wi' her since we came down here in fifty four. Then I've got another friend from Scotland, Mary Houston. We see each other a lot, we're like sisters, us two.' (Armthorpe: 18W)

Calling networks among younger women with jobs tended to be more flexible, having to be fitted in with their work routine as well as their partner's shift pattern. Margaret explained:
Armthorpe Women after the Strike

'I'll call round to me mother's, have a chat and help her out a bit. Probably in the afternoon I'll visit a friend for a coffee... I've got quite a few, so if I know one's doing something, I'll go and visit someone else, or they might come here and visit me. I don't like being on my own, I get bored easily. I have got one particular friend who I visit a lot in the evenings. We do spend a lot of time together. If my husband's on a shift where he is out all night, then I'd go and visit her or she'd come round here. If he's on days he often comes up with me.' (Armthorpe:16W)

And she explained how her calling network tended to be encompass less 'traditional' women's activities:

'On Tuesday mornings we usually go for a game of tennis or squash up at the Armthorpe Sports Centre. Afterwards we sometimes pop in for a drink at the golf club or the Sportsman. Then we have a regular coffee afternoon between about four of us, and then an exercise and a weighing-in session. We take it in turns at different houses, have a coffee and something to eat and then do a workout. We go to a regular keep-fit class on Thursday night and we used to go to Badminton every Wednesday afternoon after work, but then three weeks ago one of the girls had her shifts swapped round so we're still trying to sort out when to go.' (Armthorpe:16W)

Margaret's complex routine provides a good illustration of how activities that used to be recognised as in the male preserve - sports and lunchtime drinking, are now being adopted by women and combined with their more traditional ones - callin' and coffee mornings. Assisted by the presence of a local sports centre, which provided a range of 'non-traditional' sports, the Armthorpe women's encroachment into the world of sport is well advanced. This encroachment encourages increased involvement in other male spheres, such as pubs and working men's clubs. Virtually all of them now have women's darts teams, and some have women on their main darts and snooker teams.

WOMEN'S RELATIONSHIPS

The effects of the Strike on women's 'callin' patterns and the kinship and neighbourhood networks that they helped maintain are best examined in the context of the broader changes reported by women in their local relationships and friendships. All the women claimed that the Strike had had a lasting impact on these relationships. Table 8.6 outlines the responses in more detail:

-395-
What is immediately clear is that the Strike had a major effect on many women’s friendship patterns. The role of collective struggle in demanding closer relationships/interdependency among its participants is clearly illustrated. Ninety one percent of the Armthorpe women interviewed reported an increase in the number of friendships they enjoyed as a result of the dispute. Forty one percent specified that the increase had been a major or dramatic one. Irene suggested:

‘Oh yes, I’ve got a lot more friends, inside and outside the village. There’s been a dramatic increase due to the Strike and what we did. Even since the Strike finished I’ve made new friends. I’ve made friends with other women from other support groups. And from other countries too; they came from Denmark, Sweden, Germany, all over Europe and America. The Strike was brilliant for getting to know different people.’ (Armthorpe: IW)

Outside the village, the lack of strong local communities was reflected in the smaller number of local friendships made by the women activists (27 as opposed to 86 percent in Armthorpe). A majority of the outside women’s Strike friendships were non-local, made with men and women in Armthorpe or other pit villages, who could relate to their situation because they were ‘in the same boat’.

**Politcisation of Friendships**

Table 8.6 might suggest that there had been a straightforward, simple increase in friendships. This was not the case. Prior to 1984, many friendships had existed on a ‘non-political’ basis, that is the political ideas or affiliations of women had not been seen as a major criterion for
judging friendships between them. During the Strike, as their experiences caused the women to become more and more aware of the way that the state was trying to manipulate their lives, the political dimensions of all their relationships came increasingly to the fore. Minor disagreements could often be accommodated in established relationships, but support for the Strike usually provided the 'bottom line', the basis for both 'drifting out' of old friendships and starting new ones. Perhaps the clearest illustration of this phenomenon was the 'disengagement' from friendships with deputies and their wives which was reported by seven (21 percent) of the Markham women. Sheila explained:

'I still feel very bitter towards the deputies. I can't forgive them for what they did, betraying us, letting us down. We used to have a very good friend who was a deputy. Since the Strike it takes me all my time to say hello to him.'

(Armthorpe: 19W)

Dot had had a similar experience:

'We used to have a lot of deputy friends, but none now. I've got a lot more friends inside the village and an awful lot more outside who I keep in touch with and visit. So I've got more friends now than I've ever had before, but I don't think I could ever forgive the deputies for letting us down like they did.'

(Armthorpe: 24W)

A similar process was at work in relations with neighbours and inside families. The criteria around which the strike-based community was shaped, that is, commitment to the Strike, became the key test in judging these relationships. So Margaret, living in Edenthorpe, explained she had established friendships with dozens of local miners, but had also been forced to amend her relationship with others, on the basis of her experience in the JCSG:

'It's not really changed anything with our immediate neighbours... [laughing] If we'd have had any scabs living next door, that would have done!... Though it has in a way, because we've got some miners that live in this road that never did anything during the Strike. They used to come to our community centre for a food parcel, but when it came to doing anything to collect this money in, or go picketing, they weren't interested. So I've definitely cooled my friendship down with those neighbours.'

(Armthorpe: 26W)
This measuring of friendships by the yardstick of involvement in collective activity was not something came easily to the women activists, many of whom had previously considered themselves 'non-political'. The process by which the government strategy (of containment/isolation of the striking miners) forced the creation of Strike-based communities, is well illustrated by changes in neighbouring relationships. Table 8.6 reveals that the overall strengthening of these relationships inside the pit village stood in stark contrast to their weakening outside. Sheila, who lived in a small area of private housing on the edge of Armthorpe, and who was on strike alongside her training officer partner, explained how it was their neighbours who first adopted a 'political' stance towards their involvement in the Strike:

'I'd forgotten I was a working class person. I used to go out to work, but I never really gave it much thought - where I was supposed to slot in. But that Strike brought it home to me, that is the slot where I really belonged. I don't agree with people being labelled that way, but that's the way society is structured, isn't it?

We're really well known on this street, but during the Strike we could walk up and down it a thousand times and only find two or three people that would stop and talk to us. If we were coming down the drive and they were coming down their drive, they'd suddenly think, 'Oh, I've got to go back' - so they didn't have to talk to us. The polarisation was amazing. We experienced this and we thought it was unique, but when we got back to work, we found that it had happened all over. People in the village didn't ostracize us, we got on fine with them, it was just the people in this street.'

(Armthorpe: 19W)

The unprecedented efforts by the state and media to isolate the miners faced their neighbours with a stark political choice: to associate with or dissociate themselves from those involved in a collective struggle against the elected government, the 'enemy within'.

Not surprisingly given this highly politicised situation, the Strike affected not only the number of friendships, but their strength. Thirty six percent of the women interviewed reported that their friendships with other women had undergone a qualitative as well as a quantitative change. Shirley explained:

'We've a lot better understanding of each other having gone through the same experience for 12 months. There was no 'keeping up with the Jones's' during the Strike. Stuff like that was irrelevant. Women talk a lot better...
Armthorpe Women after the Strike

now, we know more of each others' problems, we understand each others feelings.' (Armthorpe: 13W)

Again the (competitive) possession of commodities is identified as a handicap to personal relationships. The cutting off of the striking population from 'the market' for twelve months therefore had the effect of encouraging more direct personal contact and stronger friendships. Several of the women activists spoke openly about the way that prior to the Strike, their subordinate position as women in small, enclosed communities often encouraged narrow or 'petty-minded' attitudes. Irene suggested:

'The Strike's changed me completely. It's broadened my outlook. I used to talk about really boring things; soup, soap and marge. Now I talk about pit, politics and strike with men or women as I feel.' (Armthorpe: 1W)

and Shirley describing how the Strike had not only led to a change in who she visited, but on the typical callin' 'agenda' explained:

'Activists find it very difficult to go back to the small talk. We get on better. We're much closer now. We've all done things for a year that we'd never have done previously. It used to be a casual 'Hello, how's your Jack?', now it's, 'Hello, is there anything going off anywhere?' Now we talk politically among ourselves' (Armthorpe: 13W)

Often, it was their experiences in the Strike support community outside the village that made them aware of the problem and transformed their attitudes. Their distance from the 'enclosed' community allowed them to see the broader political dimensions of their collective activity more clearly.

One of the leading activists, Liz, explained how she had become 'politicised':

'When we met to try and get an action group together at the Welfare, the first thing I said was, 'Although we're on strike we do NOT want to become politically involved!' But the more we went out... to London and Liverpool, the more we had to. At the meetings after you had spoke you'd have questions coming at you, 'What do you think of the present government policy on ....?' and you HAD to have answers and the only way to give answers was to become politically involved. You had no option...... Those who just stayed in the Kitchen were less aware of the outside political situation. (Armthorpe: 4W)
Armthorpe Women after the Strike

Divisions between Women in the Village

Due to Armthorpe's political traditions, assistance from experienced political cadre among the miners and the generally supportive role of the local NUM, there were not the major disagreements and divisions which hampered the work of many other women's support groups (Witham, 1986). Nevertheless, few of the WAG women had previous experience of political organisation or encouraging participation among large numbers of people. With certain women restricted by employment or family commitments there was, inevitably, a tendency towards specialisation. This was also encouraged by the structure of the Armthorpe kitchen, where it had been decided, without much prior discussion, to organize the activity around a fairly small group of virtually full-time women. Certain other women claimed they had felt that they had been 'excluded'. One woman, who had felt restricted to kitchen activity because of her two small children, explained why she had become inactive after two months:

'They kept a lot of women's spirits up and they got through a whole year, so they couldn't have been too bad. I just felt they weren't well enough organised. There were a certain few who ran the kitchen and its finances, and basically it were a three-family clique, everybody else got pushed to the side.'

(Armthorpe: 3W)

Out of the thirty or so women around the WAG, over half were involved in purely local activities, leaving less than a dozen to experience the political 'baptism of fire' in the outside support community previously outlined by Liz. The major 'broadening of horizons' brought about by 'political involvement' outside the village inevitably led to a differentiation between the village women.

One woman who, estranged from her miner husband, had been bringing up her children on the DHSS and therefore had not become too involved in the WAG was very positive when it came to the woman's fulfillment of their more traditional role:
Armthorpe Women after the Strike

'I think they did well in the Strike. They did a lot for the miners, didn't they? Especially for the single lads. If it wasn't for them, they wouldn't have had a meal. They used to stand outside the Shoppers Parade and Lipton's every day collecting money. Not Walton's cos we blacked them....They raised morale...'.

But went on to question the legitimacy of their role in the broader support community:

'....But I didn't agree with the trips to London for a week. They had some trips abroad didn't they... I didn't agree with that. The money could have been spent better.'

(Armthorpe: **W)

A third woman, married to a miner but immobilised by serious illness during the Strike, was more forthright in her criticism. Although she had held a permanent, full-time job prior to the Strike, she appeared to feel the need to defend the 'traditional' mining woman's role. It was as if she felt threatened by the entry of the activists into the public, political arena:

'Not a very good opinion. They did a lot in one respect, they did a lot. They made the meals for the lads and what have you. But it was the miners' strike, not the support group's strike and when they went demonstrating, I don't think they should have done. I think they showed the women up in this village....personally I think they did. I agreed with the side of it where you kept the meals going for the lads who'd been out picketing and the families...Keeping the soup kitchen going yeah, I did think that was the women's side of it, but as for going out and demonstrating and shouting their mouths off, no....There was a lot of people embarrassed about it.'

(Armthorpe: **W)

The potential impact of collective struggle in reshaping the structure of a traditionally-oriented local community can be clearly seen. The women's activities threatened accepted attitudes, segregated spheres of influence and established status systems. The tendency for a resurgence of 'traditional' ideas in the aftermath of defeat is also revealed. Tensions between those that became involved in the broader, more political support community and those who 'stayed in the (collective) kitchen', or did not get fully involved, were exacerbated, leaving the 'political' activists feeling isolated. Among those for whom their Strike involvement acted as a key watershed in personal liberation, the kind of criticism outlined above made
close friendship virtually impossible. This negative side to the
politicisation of friendships was described by Liz:

'Quite a few of the women from the Support Group and those who didn't
agree with the Strike won't really talk to one another now. They'll just
say 'hello' whereas before the Strike they'd have maybe stood and had a
conversation with 'em. 'Cos of things that was said during the Strike.'
(Armthorpe: 3W)

As clearly illustrated in Table 8.6 these tensions and contradictions
had only a minor effect on the general trend, which was towards a major
increase in friendship and acquaintance among women. What they did do was to
help preserve important elements of the Strike-based community, by encouraging
the more radicalised women to maintain more political friendship either with
each other, with local male activists or with activists outside the village.

GENDER RELATIONSHIPS

Men's Attitudes to Women

The general increase in friendships and relationships was not limited
to those between women. It was evident that there had also been a
proliferation of acquaintances and friendships between the women Strike
activists and the local miners, especially the more active ones. This
phenomenon was described by Irene:

'There's a lot of men who really appreciated the work we did, although
there was a few of them, even on the union who seemed to resent that we
were organising things and doing so well. With the other lads who went
picketing we used to get on great. And with them that came for food
parcels, they were alright. Mind you, we used to mess about, have a laugh
and a joke, try to make them feel at ease coming for them.

But we've got a lot more respect now. Before if you walked down the
street and if you knew the men ... if they were bothered they'd perhaps
wave or say "hello". But now they'd call to you over the road or cross
over and make a point of talking. They'd put themselves out to come and
talk to you and ask you how you were going on. We know a lot more of them
and they're a lot more friendly to us.'
(Armthorpe: 1W)

Again there is the assertion that the public activity of women not only
changed their status during the Strike, but has fundamentally altered the
relationship between men and women in its aftermath. The women felt that
Armthorpe Women after the Strike

recognition of their strike role was still reflected in the increased respect shown to them by NUM activists in 1986.

The miners' interviews confirmed the women's impressions. What appeared to have happened was that, in the words of Pete Gibbon:

'Instead of occupying a prominent position only within the female community hierarchy, their role in the strike was acknowledged by their recognition as important individuals by both women and men' (1988:184).

This stood in marked contrast to the pre-Strike situation where, as suggested by Irene, most women would be lucky to elicit a casual 'hello' from Armthorpe miners. Their Strike activity had, it appears, brought about a distinct change in the local culture.

The significance of this change was underlined by the number of Armthorpe women (68 percent of those interviewed) who suggested they had noticed a major improvement in local men's attitudes towards women. Fifty two percent suggested that the increased friendship between men and women appeared to be based on an increased level of respect, especially between those who had been active in the 1984/85 Strike. So according to one Margaret:

'They've got a lot more respect now. Before men used to think that women just stayed at home, looked after the kids and went out on a Saturday night. Just so and so's wife. A lot of women who were wallflowers before showed unexpected strengths and stamped their personality on the world in general.' (Armthorpe: 7W)

This is not to say that any of the women suggested there had been a total transformation. A majority were still very critical of the local miners' attitude. Fourteen percent specifically claimed that the improvement that was apparent during the Strike had been followed by a 'slipback' into the old attitudes as some men reestablished their old, pre-Strike routines. Mary Anne described this phenomenon in the local Labour Party:

'I'd like to say 'Yes, there has been a major change in attitudes', but I'm not sure, from what I see at the local party. Most of the men seem to have the attitude y'know, 'What do they want to go spouting for, women.'
What do they know? They seem to have slid back, on the political front at least." (Armthorpe: 2AI)

While Irene recounted an incident in the back room of the Welfare, involving new transferees from Hickleton:

'We were sat in the bar. Well we always start off in there anyway, and they were right ignorant 'cos Wes had said, 'Come over here and sit at this table', so we'd moved over to talk to them and they sat with their back to me nearly all night.

So I asked Wes, 'What's the matter with them, they're ignorant aren't they?' And they just said to him, 'What's women doing in the Dog End?'

... And I said 'I always come in here.' and they says, 'You shouldn't be allowed.' So I says, 'What difference does it make, women coming in the bar?' 'It's for men.' 'It's never for men. I've as much right to be in here as you! I go on the snooker table, I play pool.'... Now, we're more headstrong than we used to be... we speak 'us mind more.' (Armthorpe: 1W)

The Hickleton miners, arriving as strangers from pit villages where the women have tended to be even more excluded from certain areas of public life, welcomed the opportunity to relate to Wes, a workmate and a militant in the Strike. They reacted to what they saw as 'his wife's' challenging of gender role by forming themselves into an 'exclusive male group' and pretending she didn't exist. They were confronted not only by Armthorpe's less rigid gender stereotypes ('I always come in here'), but also by a woman who, for eleven months, helped organise a 20-strong womens team in the daily feeding of over 500 people (at the venue in question). Brimful of self-confidence, she feels able to 'speak her mind' and confront all their old-fashioned, male chauvinist prejudices - 'I've as much right to be in here as you!' (27)

Women's Attitudes to Men

When it came to the attitudes of women towards men, a higher proportion of women wanted to comment on the change. Twenty seven (82 percent) suggested that there had been a positive change, sixteen suggesting that they were more equal, nine that they were more independent, fourteen that they felt 'closer' to men, and eight that they were more critical of men's good and bad points.
Armthorpe Women after the Strike

Having proved their capabilities in the Strike, the women felt that they should have equal status with the men in a variety of arenas. Their experience in the local Labour Party not only encouraged the organisation of the local assertiveness training course, but to a strengthening of the local women's section and a prominent Armthorpe delegation on the Constituency Women's Council. Eighteen months after the Strike, it appeared that the women were still 'making waves' in certain areas. Mary Anne explained:

'The women are still trying to hold on to the ground they gained, they're not going to relinquish it too easily. They're not going to accept two straight words and bent 'un from the men. They don't sit back and sit quiet like they used to do.' (Armthorpe: 100AI)

Aggie confirmed this by suggesting:

'Women totally believe they're equal now. Women's estimation of themselves has gone right upto the roof. We're more critical and we'll argue more on any point.' (Armthorpe: 3W)

A concrete example of this was given by Sue:

'It's going right back with some of the men. Working in the canteen I can see. I was reading a book about women in the Strike and one of the blokes asked 'What are you reading that for?' and another passed the comment 'Stupid woman'. And I said, 'Oh yes? You never used to slag us off during the Strike, but we're going back to being rubbish now are we?' I wouldn't let men talk the way they used. I'll always speak up for women. We're as good as them. We have a right to talk. And when Irene speaks up, you want to hear her!' (Armthorpe: 2W)

Because their role in the Strike had given women a much higher set of standards by which to judge themselves, it also provided them with a far more rigourous set by which to judge the men. This led to a much more critical appraisal of men who did not stick to their principles. It also led to a closeness to and increased respect for those men who earned it, whether this was their partners or other male activists. So on the one hand, Shiela claimed:

'Women stick up more for themselves than before. We're more equal. We judge men a lot more rigorously 'cos we've got higher standards. Women are fighting their husbands back. I do a lot more. If he used to say something, I'd agree with him, but not now.' (Armthorpe: 11W)

While Joyce suggested:
Armthorpe Women after the Strike

'A lot of women found qualities in the men that they didn't think were there. We were proud of what they did during the Strike, picketing and stuff. And their helping in the house. It gives a much better feeling. There's been a general improvement in family life.' (Armthorpe: 15W)

These quotes once again underline the potential of collective struggle to bring about longer-term change in the shape and culture of the local community. Elements of the Strike-based community were still apparent; strike roles were still remembered and a common set of criteria were used to judge both women and men. This provided a basis for the increased quantity and quality of local relationships, which in turn served to strengthen the local community.

Beyond the Village

The major expansion in women's social relationships was not confined solely to their villages. As was seen in Table 8.6, no less than 45 percent of them specified that their friendships had also undergone a massive geographical expansion. Irene suggested:

'Oh yes, I've got a lot more friends, inside and outside the village. There's been a dramatic increase due to the Strike and what we did. I've got loads in London that I try to keep in touch with, although not very often. And Maggie comes to stay from Hertfordshire. She's says she's still looking for pit helmets, but it's really cos she likes us.' (Armthorpe: 1W)

Whereas Liz emphasized the social 'distance' that her new friendships encompassed:

'Apart from family in Rossington and Exthorpe, that was as wide a circle of friends, well not so much friends as relatives, that we had. But through the Strike, its just brought me loads of genuine friends. It was mainly London with me....I keep in touch with them. You see the type of people that we came into contact with during the Strike, especially in London, were the sort of people that I thought wouldn't dream of supporting us. Like Jenny a schoolteacher......and the girls at NALGO, Debbie and Lorraine, they broke their necks. I mean anything you asked 'em was never too much trouble. We used to go down there on a Monday and say we could do with such and such back home.....and whatever we needed, by Thursday it would be there!

I'll tell you what, I cried buckets during that Strike... not buckets of anger, but.......Like Jenny and Bob. I used to arrive there late at night. They used to meet me in the van and take me home. There was sandwich and a cup of tea ready. They were prepared to sit and listen to me talkin', telling them how things were going on up here...The very first time I met Jenny, I'd never seen this woman from Adam, but she'd turfed
her own son out of his bed so I could have a decent night's sleep, and I
got up the next morning, and there was a cooked breakfast waiting for me
and a door key! 'Use that, you can come in and make yourself something to
eat whenever you want'. The hospitality were unbelievable. Not just at
Bob and Jen's....at George's, he's a councillor for Camden, or at Penny's
... Didn't matter where you stayed in London, that was your home.'

(Armthorpe: 4W)

What is apparent here is the Strike's opening up of a second kind of community
for Liz, with more than a geographical distance from the village and its pit-
centred hierarchies. The close relationships developed with teachers, white
collar workers, city councillors, people who she never 'normally' came into
contact with on an 'equal' basis, seemed to allow her a perspective and a
'yardstick' by which to measure her position and relationships in the village.

As the twinning networks grew in the latter half of 1984/early 1985,
these personal friendships flourished. Established on the basis of common
involvement in a shared political struggle and sometimes crossing national
boundaries, they provided a key link between the local strike-based
communities in the pit villages and the broader miners support 'community'.
For the coalfield women in the bitter aftermath of the Strike's defeat they
acted as a concrete reminder of how they had been a key part of this
community.

They also served as a reminder of how many of them had
experienced a massive 'shifting of horizons' during the dispute. The
maintenance of the intensely personal, independent links with women (and men)
with totally different lifestyles and life chances appeared to keep these new
horizons open for many of the mining women activists. Dot described what these
friendships meant to her.:

'Women are not cabbages any more. Before the Strike we only knew what was
going on in the village. At one time we only had the media's view of
apartheid and things like that, now the village has opened up and we have
different people coming in with different opinions.

I get down to London pretty regular. Last time we went down for the
anti-apartheid demonstration and we stopped with Denise, her and her mates
are all in the S.W.P party. We stopped four days, that were good that
were....We still talk about the Miners Strike and what's going off now.
And when I'm down there, I go down the pub at dinner time and sup pints.
Armthorpe Women after the Strike

It's a different way of life altogether, I think its fantastic, me. I went picketing outside South Africa House in Trafalgar Square. And Wapping. You don't have to get dressed up. Everybody's the same. Don't matter what colour, creed, religion you are. Nobody's got any airs and graces. And these people are all young people. Me and Tex is like the oldest in the whole party. These are young people who are trying to keep up the struggle against the Conservatives. They don't like royalty and things like this. As soon as royalty comes on television, they turn it off! Even if you want to watch it, you can't - they don't mess around! And they all go to college, they're all college people, but they're great. I'm hoping to go down again soon. I want to go to Greenham Common next time.'

Ironically in this 'community', which was so different from that in a pit village, Dot obviously felt 'at home' and able to relax. In one sense her appreciation of the inner-city socialist 'community' reveals the darker side of the traditional 'community' in the pit village, with more rigid mores and standards, and 'everyone living on top of each other' [30]. The kind of principles, the lack of obsession with material possessions and status, which shaped the village community for the duration of the Strike, appeared a more permanent feature in the broader political community. The high level of status which she established during the Strike remained unchallenged. People were judged by straightforward, clearly-understood criteria so that gender, age, appearance and dress appeared largely irrelevant. Social class barriers have been reduced: even though, unlike Dot, they were all 'college people', they were 'great' in as much as they don't use their education to put her down.

I was given similar accounts of long-distance Strike friendships by several of the Armthorpe/Markham women. It was, however, apparent that many of the women activists found it difficult to develop these relationships in the Strike's aftermath. The financial cost in a period of crippling debts, added to problems of childcare, paid employment, overtime working, anti-social shift patterns, communication and sheer exhaustion, all made the maintenance of long-distance friendships something of a luxury. Added to which, these friendships had been established in an atmosphere of collective strength and unity; the joint involvement in a major struggle against a common enemy. The
aftermath of the Miners Strike was marked by a very low level of industrial and political struggle and the rapid disappearance of much of miners support network. With the fading of much of the local Strike-based 'community' being mirrored by the weakness of the radical class struggle-based 'community', it was difficult for women's friendships that spanned the two to grow in strength.

POST-STRIKE POLITICAL ATTITUDES

The major transformation of personal relationships was mirrored by a transformation in women's political attitudes. Thirty (91 percent) of the 33 Markham Main women interviewed claimed that they had become more aware of wider social and political issues during the Strike. Again the strategy of the state in trying to isolate and coerce the pit communities allows us a purchase on this transformation of attitudes. For the women the state's role in the Strike, one of deploying a range of repressive agencies against them; NCB management, the judicial system, anti-union legislation and the DHSS, was symbolised by the sustained police assault on the striking population. Their ability to brutalize the village population without provoking overwhelming public opposition was ascribed to the role of the media. Due to their personal experience, especially on the 21 and 22 August, the Armthorpe women were convinced that, in the words of the Sheffield Policewatch team:

'Public ignorance, indifference and antipathy [was] consolidated by the symbiotic relationship between police and media'

(Kay & Millidine, 1986: 200)

The shift in women's attitudes in these two areas is part of a wider transformation, as can be seen in Table 8.7:
Armthorpe Women after the Strike

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<th>Feelings towards</th>
<th>Policing of Strike</th>
<th>Police of Strike</th>
<th>NCB management</th>
<th>UDM</th>
<th>Trade Unions</th>
<th>Strike Justified?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-committal</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All of the women, without exception, expressed a deep hostility to the policing of the Strike. Carol summed up many of their attitudes when she suggested:

'I detest the police force with such venom that I can't describe it to you. It was barbaric. Not that it was just the Miners Strike. It's been going on for years. It's just that I took a damn sight more notice when it happened to us.' (Armthorpe: 28W)

Margaret, whose son had been injured at Orgreave, summarised the political lesson:

'I must have been very naive before the Strike, but I was brought up to believe that the police were there to help the community. In the Strike they were working for the government against the people' (Armthorpe: 26W)

While another Carol observed:

'You couldn't describe it as policing. It was horrific. It was war. One side had weapons and the other didn't. How do you fight the forces of the state? You don't do you? I didn't expect it to be that bad. I didn't think they would be that violent. I never expected the state to be so blatant. It was nigh on civil war around here.' (Armthorpe: 27W)

Seventy nine percent of the women had had direct experience of this policing, either personally, inside their immediate family or with close acquaintances. The men had, on average, suffered more physical violence. But many of the women had had to cope with what appeared to be a strategic focussing of hostile attention on their sexuality. This was most obvious on the picket lines, where, after initial surprise, the police responded to the women's stepping outside of 'traditional' roles by crude attempts to 'defeminise'
them, constantly using sexual imagery and equating women pickets with socially 'reprehensible' groups such as lesbians or prostitutes/‘slags’.

In order for the police to go onto the offensive against 'the enemy within', they had to adapt this strategy to include all of the women in the strikebound communities. It was, of course, more humiliating for individual women to be subjected to sexual abuse inside the village where their roles as wives, mothers or workers had been developed. Sue described one such incident:

'There was another day I remember, we were coming back from the pit gates, and a van full of policemen came past and I just couldn't believe it. They'd got this money stuck on the van windows and they were showing their money off and going like that [indicates V sign] and shouting at us women to 'eff off', and calling us 'bastards' and 'slags' and 'whores'. You just wouldn't believe the abuse!

And then they were taunting us over the men, running after them with truncheons and saying to us, 'Yeah, look at your men now, running and frightened, terrified of us'. And it was true, I never saw young lads tremble like that. It was about humiliation, humiliation of our men and humiliation of us.' (Armthorpe:2W)

Just as it had during the Strike itself, the endemic feeling of bitterness towards the police appeared to act as an agent which welded the various sections of the post-Strike community together. The attempt to brutalise and criminalise them had only served to encourage an increased political radicalisation.

This radicalisation was clearly illustrated in the women's post-Strike attitude towards the media. Table 8.8 indicates the women's attitudes towards the press coverage of the Strike and subsequent changes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old Paper's Coverage</th>
<th>Action taken, 1984</th>
<th>Post-Strike Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Terrible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non village</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No Interviewed 33

Source: 1986 Interview Survey
The Armthorpe women were slightly less critical of their pre-Strike newspaper's coverage than the men (see table 6.7). However, eighty-six percent considered that it had either been biased or had not given adequate coverage of the dispute. The women living outside the village were more critical, with all expressing dissatisfaction.

On average over half the papers had been cancelled or changed during the Strike and the majority of these changes had been maintained after the return to work. Forty-eight percent had either cancelled their papers altogether (11 Sun, 3 Daily mirror, 1 Daily Star, 1 Guardian) or moved 'leftwards'. Along with their male counterparts, the non-village women revealed a greater determination to change their newspaper readership pattern.

The women's exclusion from the pit was reflected in their lower readership of the alternative, labour press. Eight of the women were regular readers of socialist newspapers (Socialist Worker, Socialist Challenge, Morning Star and Tribune), while a further seven claimed they read them when they could get hold of them. Ten of the women claimed they had kept up their regular readership of the NUM newspapers since the return to work, although this, of course, depended on their partner retaining his job at the pit.

The nature of the newspaper medium; owned by individuals, written, edited and frequently argued over, lends itself to accusations of 'bias'. Television, through its focus on 'real life' images rather than words, encourages a more passive acceptance of its editorial line. Among most coalfield women, with little experience of political or union activity, the image on the screen was easily accepted as reality; 'the News' in particular was almost sacrosanct. Because of this previous degree of trust, the Strike acted as a major watershed. Table 8.9 outlines the reaction of the Armthorpe and Markham women to the television coverage of the Strike.
Armthorpe Women after the Strike

Table 8.9 TV Coverage of Strike. Armthorpe/Markham Women's Reaction (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strike coverage</th>
<th>Surprised by bias</th>
<th>More critical since Strike</th>
<th>Current viewing same more serious</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fair poor rubbish</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village 90</td>
<td>0 18 82 86 82 32 68</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non vill 9</td>
<td>0 9 91 72 91 27 73</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>0 15 85 81 85 30 70</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No Interviewed: 33 Source: 1986 Interview Survey

All of the village women thought that the TV coverage of the Strike had been biased, with 82 percent considering it heavily so. A similar number considered that they had a more critical attitude towards the television since the Strike and 68 percent reckoned that their TV watching had become more discriminating and serious as a result. The women living outside the village were more heavily critical of the TV coverage, less surprised by the bias and claimed to be slightly more discerning in their viewing patterns since the Strike. One of the Margarets from Armthorpe suggested:

'Before the Strike I used to think, 'Well, the newspapers might be biased, but the camera doesn't lie.' Well that turned out to be the sickest joke, 'cos they really used it against us. It was like two separate worlds, living in the real one and seeing another on that [indicates TV set]. The police knew they could do anything they wanted to us and the television would cover up for them.'

(Armthorpe: 7W)

Margaret’s description of her previous naivety was repeated in several of the women’s interviews. Their involvement in a year-long political struggle against the state had allowed them a clear insight into the role of the police and media in a class society. It also revealed how the two were connected. The belief that the partisan stance of the media had encouraged the police in their violent excesses recurred in several interviews. As Liz put it:

'What did I think of the TV coverage? It’s unprintable! [laughs] Just rubbish, just thoroughly disgusting. The police had a free hand. There was one reporter, Chris Curtin of the BBC who tried his best, but from his own admission, all his reports were heavily censored. BBC, ITV... even Channel Four were in the government’s pocket. It was diabolical what went on.

(Armthorpe: 4W)
The extent of radicalisation of women's attitudes in other areas is indicated in Table 8.7. An increased awareness of industrial/mining issues reported by 85 percent of the women reflected itself in a widespread sympathy for the sacked lads and a unanimous hostility to both the UDM and the pit closure programme. When it came to attitudes towards the NCB management, the bitterness was again overwhelming. Although 'only' thirty (91 percent) of the women suggested they felt hostile to the Coal Board because of the Strike (compared with thirty two - 97 percent - of the miners), this figure concealed a much greater shift in attitudes. Whereas only four (12 percent) of the men described their pre-Strike attitudes as trusting or non-committal, twelve (36 percent) of the women recalled non-committal attitudes or suggested they could not recall having an overall 'attitude' towards the NCB prior to the Strike.

Twenty two of the women considered they were more 'pro-union' as a result of their Strike experience, although twenty five of them described themselves as 'pro-union' in total. Again a highly political attitude towards the strike was revealed in the replies to the question 'Do you feel the Strike was justified?' Thirty one women (94 percent) replied in the affirmative, with the other two arguing that they felt the miners had been 'right' to strike, although the defeat and its aftermath had made them bitter.

The depth of radicalisation among the women was confirmed in a negative sense as well. Only rarely does a major dispute go down to defeat without those affected seeking solutions among a stock of ready-made easy scapegoats. In all the interviews, even in the open sections on solutions to unemployment and deprivation, the popular scapegoats were conspicuous by their absence.
POST-STRIKE POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

Was this major shift in political attitudes among women reflected in a similar increase in trade union or political activity on their part, or were their fears about a return to 'political obscurity', expressed towards the end of the Strike, justified?

Of the twenty five women who described themselves as 'pro-union', only nine were actually trade union members themselves. Only three of these claimed that they were 'active' in their unions, and only two felt they had become more active in the post-Strike period. These figures have to be seen in the context of the women's employment situation described previously. Although twenty five women (76 percent) were involved in some kind of paid employment, twelve were confined to part time/casual jobs, and two were on a 1-year Community Programme scheme, leaving only eleven women in 'regular', full-time employment.

Given this employment situation, nine members is a high proportion of the total number. Two other women claimed that they were in the process of joining a union, and a further two that they had made enquiries about joining the union, but without success. When asked about union activity, two of the union members claimed they had tried to get more involved, but had been unable to discover the time and venue of their branch meetings. Unlike the NUM branch which met frequently and regularly in a prominent, local place, most of the unions to which the women belonged appeared to have infrequent meetings in distant venues. However, as one of the women who was already active in her union pointed out, another reason for women's lack of involvement was that the politics and activity in their unions would probably seem very uninspiring to those whose appetite had been 'whetted' by the Miners Strike.

Similarly the objective situation in the labour movement appeared to have a major impact on the women's involvement in other political activity.
This is indicated in table 8.10 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORGANISATION/ CAMPAIGN</th>
<th>Joined &amp; Left</th>
<th>Joined</th>
<th>Left</th>
<th>More Active</th>
<th>Less Active</th>
<th>Members</th>
<th>Supporters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trade Unions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anti-Apartheid</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.N.D</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trades Council</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women Against Pit Closures</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacked Miners</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Troops Out Move</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Labour Party</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialist League</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communist Party</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Member of neither political party or campaign</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No Interviewed: 33
Source: 1986 Interview Survey

During the Strike, the most active and outward going women had gained access to a very different type of 'community', the broader support network, based on the political and labour movement, with national and international dimensions. Having become an essential part of a large, intensely political collective and seen its potential for change, it was very difficult for them to return to their pre-Strike roles or fit neatly back into their old place in the traditional mining community.

In March '85, with the collective struggle in the coalfields reduced to a series of small scale, atomised guerilla actions, the recently-established position of women in the pit and support communities came under threat. Their prominent Strike roles; providing physical and emotional sustenance to the members of the local community, acting as ambassadors in the outside support community, defying the police and court injunctions, all these were put into question by the return to work. In this situation many of the women activists struggled to discover a new role for themselves in the wider class struggle community. As Liz put it:
Armthorpe Women after the Strike

'A lot of women returned to their previous roles. It was easier for those who worked in the Kitchen, who came down to cook food and make sandwiches, to revert back to their old roles. But not for me.' (Armthorpe: 4W)

The fruits of this struggle are indicated in Table 8.10. The 'membership' of campaigns is obviously difficult to quantify, but a 'broadening' of political involvement among a minority of the women is clearly apparent. Even among the twenty (61 percent) who were not formal members of an organisation or campaign, eight specified that they were a lot more interested in what was 'going on'. Among the others, continuing activity in support of the sacked miners was combined with activity around the News International printers, anti-apartheid boycotts, CND and Northern Ireland. Twelve of the women mentioned activity in just one or two campaigns, but three were heavily involved in a whole series. The activity that most clearly reflected the women's continuing commitment to the 1984/85 support 'community' was their financial and physical support for the sacked printers at News International, Wapping. Although, unlike in nearby Thorne, there was no printers support group set up by Armthorpe women, the Doncaster Women Against Pit Closures group organised delegations and five of the women interviewed had been down to support the printers' pickets. Two days after an extremely violent picket (3/5/86), one of the women recorded in her diary:

'10 p.m. My friend Linda rang up. She and her husband had been at Wapping with us and she'd rung to ask if we'd seen the news coverage of the Saturday night picket... I decided that whatever [miner partner] said, if he goes to Wapping again, I'm going to be with him, and next time I go, I'll be prepared.

....[following day] Escape to the pub with Linda and we talk about Wapping and the police. We decided to each write a letter calling for a public enquiry into what happened last Saturday night, but as we didn't know who organised public enquiries, we're going to write to our M.P.'s instead.' (Armthorpe Diary, May 86)

The low level of industrial and political activity meant that activity in these campaigns tended to fluctuate greatly. Underpinning the women's involvement, and more easily quantifiable was their membership of political parties.
Armthorpe Women after the Strike

Of the eight Armthorpe WAG members who had been 'recruited' to the local Labour Party by Mary Ann Calton in March 1985, only two remained active eighteen months later. According to the three lapsed members I interviewed, this was not because they had not taken their membership seriously. Initially, they had been regular attenders and two had accepted nomination as school governors. But they all reported feeling 'out of place' at the Labour Party meetings. One of the women, who had let her membership lapse, explained:

'Several of us joined the Labour Party and we were right interested at first. We used to go down to all the meetings, cos we knew we had a lot to learn. But this Labour Party is badly divided. There's too much bickering, with two families excluding everybody else. I got the feeling we weren't welcome. They used to argue for ages over silly things, the agenda, the minutes.... bureaucracy. Then it was all about who was going to be put forward for this job, who was going to be the candidate for some election or other. I wasn't learning that much and at the finish I was glad to get out, to be honest.

There was a better feeling at the Ladies Section meetings, but even there I felt out of place. They were into really little things, but we were used to dealing in hundreds and thousands of pounds.... we couldn't think small. We seemed to be going right back to the beginning.'

(Armthorpe: W)

The WAG women had, in fact, joined the local Labour Party in a period of unprecedented turmoil that was to continue unabated for eighteen months. May 1985 saw the Armthorpe's first woman town councillor elected, a reorganisation of the 'women's section' at ward and constituency levels and, after a six-month suspension in 1987, a major reorganisation of the Armthorpe ward which brought to an end the dominance of the two 'family cliques' and a transformation of the parish council. However, with their Strike experience fresh in their memory, this was of little comfort to the WAG women. They had joined the Labour Party with high hopes; to learn, to be developed politically, and to engage in serious political activity. On all these points they were disappointed. At national level, it was a period of renewed rightward drift, of consolidation of the 'new realist' leadership and witch-hunts against organised socialist groupings who had been prominent in the Strike support community. The role of certain prominent Labour Party members
Armthorpe Women after the Strike

of the Parish Council in prosecuting the attack on the integrity of the Armthorpe Women's Action group acted as the final straw.

The two WAG women who maintained their membership (along with Mary Ann Calton) preferred to attend the women's section meetings. The women's section increased its membership quite significantly after the Strike and indeed, partly due to the activity of the WAG women, it became an important force in the attempt to revitalise the women's council at constituency level. The Armthorpe delegation was considered to be the strongest in the constituency.

Another key figure in this work was a member of the Doncaster Women Against Pit Closures Group, an ex-member of the Joint Communities Support Group in Edenthorpe, who had joined the Labour Party during the Strike as a supporter of the Socialist League. Drawing inspiration and support from the Socialist League group in Rotherham, she had remained active in the Armthorpe Labour Party, but, like the ex-WAG members, she was feeling very disillusioned with it by the end of 1986. Another two non-village women had become more politically active on the periphery of the Socialist Workers Party. In terms of party activity, the remaining movement, among those interviewed, was negative. An Edenthorpe woman (COSA ex-striker) reported she had become less active in the Labour Party and a long-standing Communist Party member reported that she had resigned in January 1986, in protest at the national leadership's treatment of Frank Watters and other respected militants.

As with the men, many of the women expressed a concern with the disparity between their political radicalisation and their political activity. Not surprisingly, it was these women, who had promised themselves and their outside supporters that they would never again assume their passive, non-political roles in the pit village, who found it most difficult to 'drop out' of political activity. As indicated previously, their attitudes retained a
strong radical core, but their lack of ongoing involvement in the kind of collective struggle that produced it was already beginning to take its toll.

Conclusions

I have argued that the local political tradition, the Conservative government's strategy of containment and isolation of the miners and the leading role of radical socialists in the village Strike operation encouraged the formation of a certain type of local Strike-based community and its close involvement with the broader, politically-oriented support 'community'. One of the features of these communities was that the old divisions and hierarchies of the pit village, of job, sex and age were rendered largely irrelevant. Commitment to the collective struggle became the key determinant of an individual's position and status.

A major casualty of this process was the traditional segregation of the village life into the female 'sphere' - domestic, privatised and of secondary importance - and the male sphere - workplace based, public and generally accorded much higher 'esteem'. As the collective struggle became more intense, the 'miners' wives' were forced to develop a public role and a public identity. These, in turn, became a key element in the relationship between the local and broader, politically-based, support communities. The most prominent women activists, as important agents in relationship between the two communities, were forced to clarify their political ideas, developing a collective analysis and a collective voice. A significant number of women, for the first time in their lives, were forced to come to grips with the reality of strikes, trade unionism and class politics, not as spectators, but as central participants. In this sense, the 1984/85 Miners' Strike played a similar role to that described by Lenin in his account of the 1905 Russian revolution:
Armthorpe Women after the Strike

'A specifically proletarian weapon of struggle - the strike - was the principal means of bringing the masses into motion....only struggle educates the exploited class. Only struggle discloses to it the magnitude of its own power, widens its horizons, enhances its abilities, clarifies its mind, forges its will.' (Lenin, 1964: 122)

The potential of collective struggle to 'clarify the mind' and 'forge the will' was illustrated by the way that the women's initial ambivalence towards the Strike was transformed into a resolute opposition to the return to work. Having only recently struggled to throw off their inferior social status and become partners with the men in the struggle for control of their lives, the defeat of the Strike posed a severe threat. In reality, the post-Strike pressures on the women towards atomisation and a return to their old roles proved to be very significant. The old shift and work patterns were reimposed and the leading activists found themselves constrained by domestic and other responsibilities.

The women's post-Strike activities have to be viewed in the light of these pressures. For example, I have argued that the significant increase in the number of women engaged in paid employment, has to be understood, not merely as a response to severe financial hardship, but as a refusal to accept post-Strike confinement in the domestic sphere. Involvement in a waged relationship was seen as important in securing a position in the world of trade unionism and collective political activity. The women's seeking of more fulfilling and socially useful work, or the tentative steps towards further education that would allow embarkation on such careers, are also essential parts of the same process. The Armthorpe women's more equal participation in the 'man's world' of paid work was also reflected in similar trends in the arenas of leisure and sport.

The persistence of elements of the Strike-based community were visible in other areas; the widespread politicisation of attitudes, the strengthening of the kinship and neighbourhood networks, the increased number
of friendships and acquaintances between the women themselves, between the women and the local miners, and between the women and their supporters outside the village. The strengthened political element in these post-Strike relationships also caused the leading activists to associate with each other, rather than with those who had been less fully involved in the Strike and its politics.

The activists' appreciation of the value of their collective identity was reflected in the series of initiatives they undertook in order to preserve it; in their involvement in Women Against Pit Closures, in their work for the sacked miners, in their collective entry into the Labour Party, in their establishment of the community centre in the village and in their sponsorship of an assertiveness training course for local women. The women continued to seek for collective activity which would allow them some control over their environment and a continuing involvement in the wider, political community. However their collective identity had been forged and shaped in a period of intense class struggle and, in each of their initiatives, the women were confronted with the glaring reality that the defeat of the Miners Strike had signalled the rapid ebb of this struggle and the political community based around it.

This led to a fragmentation of women's activities. Excluded from the NUM, some women became more active in their own unions and the trades council, others became involved in 'campaigns', while several decided to join the Labour Party. Their experience in the latter illustrates the way that the weakness of the political community took its toll in virtually every area. The women joined the Labour Party despite the role of its national leadership during their 1984/85 struggle. Seeing it as the only realistic political alternative to the Tories, they hoped for political education and development. The hostility from a section of the local Labour Party establishment and the behaviour of the national leadership (committed to rewriting the history of
the 1984/85 Strike in order to strengthen its crusade for 'new realism') served to disillusion the women.

As a result, the post-Strike experience of Armthorpe women was very different from that of the women in post-1926 Mardy, where through their membership of the Communist Party, they were able to preserve much of the cultural and political life of the 'lockout' community - despite the closure of local pits and severe unemployment (Macintyre, 1980). In Armthorpe, only a very few exceptionally committed women, sometimes drawing strength from 'outside' socialist groupings, survived their experience in the Labour Party. Eighteen months after the end of the Miners Strike, although the widespread political radicalisation of ideas was still apparent, the potential of the women for collective political activity had not been fully realised. Nevertheless, their Strike and post-Strike activity did have an important effect in shaping local political institutions. Both the parish council and the local Labour party were opened up and made more democratic, with other women following the example of the mining women. Women not only became a force at a grass roots level, they were elected into positions of local political prominence.

My aim, in focussing on these areas, has been to illustrate the way in which, through their involvement in major collective struggle, the women have brought about changes, not only in their own attitudes and activities, but in the way that other men and women relate to them. So although the defeat of the Strike brought a reimpleision of the division of labour, the market and other everyday routines, I suggest the women's experience of solidarity, closeness and struggle during the Strike has left a deep impression on them and on the local community in Armthorpe.
Armthorpe Women after the Strike

FOOTNOTES

1. Whereas two sacked miners regretted the Strike, both suggested it was to 'good purpose', 'The cause was right, it was definitely justified'. The sacked miner's wife was less able to separate the cause from the effect: 'They didn't really get anything to justify it, did they? It was just like prolonging the inevitable.' (Armthorpe: 13W)

2. See Appendix 14, advertising the mass demonstration, Monday, 18 February, which witnessed the women's official take-over of the responsibility for organising 'mass' picketing.

3. Many miners' union branch banners echo this theme of emergence from the bowels of the earth in order to take up a position of prominence in 'overground' society. The Thurcroft banner inscription is also found on the flyleaf of an excellent oral history of the Thurcroft Strike experience, see The People of Thurcroft (1986).

4. The ease at which many of the kitchen women returned to their previous roles was illustrated by the difficulty I had in gaining access to them and getting them to agree to be interviewed. The early part of the interviews were also rather difficult, with the women displaying a nervousness and a reticence about voicing their opinions. Only later in the interviews did they start to 'open up', revealing the full impact of their strike experience on their lives. The women who had played a key link role between the local and broader strike communities were easy to locate, very willing to be interviewed and confident in discussing the Strike on a variety of levels.

5. Much of the early struggle was focussed on 'getting rid of the scabs'. The NCB selected special assignments for them, allowing them to work in well-lit areas, close to supervisors who were supposed to 'protect them'. Nevertheless I was told that the NCB seemed more interested in using them as a weapon against the militants than actually protecting them. The strikebreakers were subjected to persistent harrassment, many went off work 'sick' and within a few months had either left the coal industry altogether, or been transferred to other pits (usually in Nottinghamshire). As invariably happens when workers are prevented from overt collective activity, there was a growth of covert resistance, involving withholding effort, misuse of materials or minor acts of (non-dangerous) sabotage.

6. The National Conference of Women's Organisations held in November 1984 in Chesterfield established six objectives:
   1. to ensure victory to the NUM in their present struggle to prevent it closures and protect mining communities for the future
   2. to further strengthen the organisation of women's groups which have been built up during the 1984 miners strike
   3. to develop a relationship between the NUM and the women's organisations at all levels.
   4. to campaign on issues which affect mining communities - particularly peace, jobs, health and education.
   5. to promote and develop education for working class women
   6. to publicise all the activities of the National Women's Organisation at all levels.

The associate membership the women were seeking would have allowed them to attend NUM conferences and participate in educational events, but not have speaking or voting rights. Although the right-wing areas were very much against the granting of associate membership, certain left wing area leaderships such as South Wales also campaigned against it. Ther were
also fears that such a major change to the NUM's constitution might give area leaderships an extra reason to support a breakaway union. It was a Yorkshire Area amendment which eventually ruled associate membership out at the July 1985 Conference. The decision caused a lot of anger among both Armthorpe women and men. The Armthorpe NUM branch was in favour of the women having associate membership.

7. This was because of the state's strategy of indefinite postponement of trials. As Lois Christian pointed out: 'Criminalisation is at its most effective....when a final determination of guilt or innocence can be avoided' (1985; 135). Although there were more than a score of Armthorpe miners awaiting trial as the Strike finished, only four were convicted of 'serious' offences, so the number of sacked miners rose from eleven to fifteen.

8. During the Strike, several of the Armthorpe WAG used to attend the Doncaster coordinating meetings. Afterwards they tended to rely on a single, official delegate to the WAPC group. The problems of the latter were described to me by one of its organisers: 'The women's support group that we set up when the JCSG folded eventually merged with the Doncaster WAPC. We've done a lot of different things. We've been involved at Wapping, helping the sacked miners, different initiatives from different parties. But it's been an uphill struggle. Some groups have closed altogether. Getting the women together now is a struggle. Aggie is virtually carrying it on her own in Armthorpe.' (Armthorpe: 26W)

9. Not that there was a proper café at the sports centre, but after swimming I often used to see small groups of women having a chat over a plastic cup of coffee from the vending machine.

10. Jim MacFarlane's 1955 connection, as an NUM militant at Denaby Main, with the militant wing of Armthorpe's population is described in chapter three.

11. Mick, an ex-miner and ex-deputy suffered a great deal during the strike. His sons were miners and one of them got sacked. His struggle to expose the 21/22 August police brutalisation of the village population before the European court ended when, after the abolition of the South Yorkshire county council, it was explained to him that he would have to bring the complaint as an individual, rather than a representative of the community. Mick was one of the Labour Party members who, along with Mary Anne Calton, did a great deal to try and make the local Labour Party branch hospitable to the women from the WAG.

12. This was, of course, a major step forward in terms of formal democracy at its most local level. (The newly-elected Communist Party councillors, Bill Carr and Sam Cairns achieved a similar openness in the nearby Thorne Rural District Council twenty five years previously)

The clerk to the parish council, Frank Pratt, also resigned in protest at the way the council was being used in a vendetta against the women. A year after the incident, one of the only parish councillors to defend the women suggested that the affair had acted to open up the council: 'It's a completely new kind of parish council now, completely transformed with new blood and a totally new attitudes.' (Armthorpe: 100AI)

13. What I asked people to do was to calculate how much backlog of debts they faced due to the Strike. If anything, the average of £2,420 is an underestimation, as on the few occasions that the informant made a written
list of all the smaller, Strike-related debts, the totals ended up much higher.

14. It was very difficult to calculate exact numbers in these areas. The housing market in Armthorpe was at such a low ebb that often the estate agents did not even bother to erect signs, making it virtually impossible to consult them as to the reasons for houses being vacated. The NCB management were not forthcoming over the number of redundancies from Markham Main, and I could see no way of discovering how many people's marriages had broken down. In the course of my research, I came across five people whose marriages had broken up after the Strike and three who had lost their houses.

15. As one woman suggested:
   'He doesn't like working any overtime, and neither do I, but we need the extra money that it brings. It's bad enough him working shifts, but when he stops over the kids hardly ever see him, and we never seem to do anything together now.' (Armthorpe: 12W)

16. Several activists voiced criticism of the media for its suggestion that beer consumption had carried on without interruption during the Strike. Although many Armthorpe stewards and publicans dropped the price of beer for miners, they reported a major fall off in business and serious financial problems during the Strike.

17. This was the same phrase that Anna Pollert encountered among the women tobacco workers in Bristol (1981:208). She explains its significance in terms of a defensive shield against involvement in 'bigger' issues, over which they felt they had little or no control. In other words it was part of the distinctively working class culture summarised by Paul Willis: 'not generally one of celebration and mastery. It basically one of compromise and settlement: a creative attempt to make the best of hard and brutalising conditions.' (1978:107)

18. This was illustrated by the large number of Markham miners who had applied to go on the three year NUM day release course in Sheffield. No fewer than ten (30 percent) of the 33 miners had put in for them at the time of their interviews.

19. The occupation of part time or poorly paid jobs by their women partners obviously compounded the problem. Of the two interviewees that had left the coal industry to take up full-time education, one was single, the other had a partner with a well-paid job in the civil service.

20. I use the word 'leisure' here in the more 'active' sense of time spent in an enjoyable activity, rather merely 'non-working' time. If leisure is defined as merely the absence of work, then housebound women or young unemployed would enjoy a far greater quantity than working miners, whereas I believe the opposite is usually the case.

21. Fourteen (42%) of the women suggested they had 'done a lot less' during the dispute. Forty weeks into the Strike BBC Radio's File on Four carried an interview with some Armthorpe women, one of whom suggested: 'Well we're no longer ignorant miners wives. I mean before we used to be at home, kitchen sink and what have you, tea on the table when they come in from work. Now we get ready to go on the picket line ... I love it. I love going on the picket line ... I can't even tell you the last time I made a bed...' (Woodhead, 1987:1)
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22. The blank looks that I sometimes got when I posed the supplementary question, 'Do you have any leisure activities outside the home?' illustrated the problem of 'leisure' for people with no money. I was forced to tackle this problem by posing another - hypothetical - supplementary question, 'If you did have any money to spare on leisure, what would you do with it?'

23. That there is some truth in Campbell's observation was illustrated in one young miner's comments:

'You get a lot of women complaining about the swearing in the bar on Sunday lunchtime. Well I don't object to them being there although some do, but if you go in a bar on a Sunday lunch, you've got to expect a bit of bad language, haven't you?' (Armthorpe: 64M)

However the observation was made in the light of a definite women's 'invasion' of what used to be an exclusively male preserve. If Campbell's arguments were still accurate they should have been borne out in the situation of my miner informants, who frequently attended union branch meetings. But some of their partners joined them in the Welly after the meeting had finished, while others were reported as 'out' visiting family or friends.

24. This illustrated the learning process involved in doing field research in strange counties. It took me some time to understand that 'Chuck' was a derivation of a specific name, Charlie, rather than a Yorkshire way of addressing people in a friendly way.

25. The tendency of extended Armthorpe families to live close to one another in the village was a key factor in strengthening the Strike community. With so many local people 'involved' in the Strike or aware of at least some of the issues, the different generations saw it as 'natural' to bind together in support of strikers. There were a couple of accusations that relatives had not done enough to help, but few of parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, brothers or sisters disagreeing with the Strike and therefore doing nothing to help. The situation of fundamental political disagreement, obstructing a strengthening of family relations was more common among those miners living outside the village. Because there was sometimes a feeling of deep disappointment and hurt, I had to be sensitive in trying to get people to describe this inner-family conflict in any detail.

26. I was given several different estimates of how many women formed the central core. The length of the Strike, and the pressure on women to try and secure some kind of paid employment, meant that there was, in any case, a variation. The most common estimate was of a kitchen team of about twelve with another seven or eight women doing other jobs; sandwiches, food parcels, advice. Unlike many other areas there were no major divisions or any significant decline in the number of women active at the Welfare.

27. The male chauvinism of certain Hickleton miners was not going unchallenged in their 'home' villages either. The Thurnscoe women reported similar battles and not a few significant victories. This was brought home to me vividly on my first visit to Thurnscoe's Coronation Club. I had accompanied three Armthorpe miners across on union business and I was introduced to some of the Hickleton miners, sitting with their partners in the main hall at 'the Coro'. The first question we were asked was,

'Where are your wives, why haven't you brought them with you?' followed by a few select words on how the coalfield women were no longer prepared to see each other 'left out of things' any more.

28. The Doncaster Labour Party Women's Council consisted of delegates from the various local wards' womens sections. It has got a fairly long history, but had more or less ceased to function before the Strike. It was re-
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established after the Strike and one of its organisers, Edna Woodhead, explained the role of the Armthorpe women as follows:

'It's not gone too well really, it's got a bit bogged down. Armthorpe have got the best representation there. They have got the best, most consistent delegation, they're definitely a solid group. There's Diane Williams, Lyn Suckling, Aggie, Peggy Schofield, Mary Anne and Margaret. As you can see they weren't all leading figures in the WAG, but the Strike connection's definitely there.' (Doncaster: 102AI)

29. For example, there were arguments over the right of individual miners to 'sell jobs' after twelve months of collective sacrifice to save them. Perhaps because there was still an open pit in the village, and the damage that pit closures could do was not so apparent, the debate over voluntary redundancies did not appear to generate the same degree of intensity as it did in Thorne. (see Appendix 21).

30. This frequently encountered phrase and others like it, 'living in each other's pockets' (and less polite ones!) illustrated how, although the local people were aware of the advantages of pit village life, they were also aware of the negative side; the lack of privacy, the pressures to conformity etc. As one Armthorpe woman explained to me, 'You have to watch what you say around here. Gossip is the chief form of entertainment and it can get quite nasty' (Armthorpe:##W) 'Callin' (pronounced with a short 'a') was also described in these negative terms (i.e. vicious gossip) by several of the women.

31. The problems associated with maintaining the support groups for any length of time after the Strike was finished is illustrated by the paucity of written accounts: their histories end abruptly with the return to work. In the Birmingham Support Group, I came across three main proposals for continuation: to keep it going to raise money for the victimised miners, to maintain it in order to support other strikes as and when they occurred, or to preserve it as a type of political forum which would unite the left. None were particularly viable and the group ceased to function by mid-1985.

32. I had to limit people to giving their verdict on a single, pre-Strike newspaper. So, for example, I had to take the first option when Dot replied: 'Daily Mirror, rubbish, Morning Star, excellent!' Because the Strike led to such changes in readership patterns, I would have otherwise become embroiled in endless calculations and few conclusions.

33. As previously outlined the majority of miners had their socialist newspapers delivered at the pit. Certain newspapers (Morning Star, Tribune) could be ordered through the newsagents, but some, like the Socialist Worker, were only 'available' on a Saturday afternoon in the centre of Doncaster, and others, such as the Socialist Challenge or Militant were very difficult to get - apart from postal subscription.

34. This seemed to be confirmed in their description of their viewing patterns. They tended to watch more news programmes and documentaries, while their intake of soaps was significantly lower (an average of 2.8 rather than 3.9).

35. Among women, possible 'targets' might be 'blacks' or 'immigrants'.

36. This figure includes the Socialist League 'supporter', also recorded below. This is because the strategy of deep entry involves revolutionary socialists in full commitment to activity inside the Labour Party. The individual concerned is seen as an active, valuable member of the local
party, and, unless expelled, there is little likelihood of her leaving the party.

37. Jean Elwick did not have any immediate connections with Markham Main and therefore was not a prominent figure in the WAG group. She had lived in the village, and been a member of the Labour Party for a considerable time. She worked at the Doncaster Royal Infirmary two and a half miles away.

38. Because of the dominant position of the Labour Party in local politics, its nominations for parish council were crucial. After the six month suspension of the local branch in 1987, several influential figures were disciplined. This meant that the people who had caused most of the trouble for the women were also removed from the parish council. This development, which was welcomed by virtually all the Labour Party members I spoke to, was another which resulted from the women's activity. (Armthorpe: 100AI)

39. Mary Gethin, chairperson of the women's section for thirty years, explained that the group used to have around forty members, but: 'it gradually diminished till we had just about twenty, mainly the older ones, the younger ones just went straight into the main party. After the last strike we got about ten in from the Womens Action Group. They were full of fire after the Miners Strike, but not now, the fire cools down. I'd say we have about five still left in the group, but overall its grown more than that with other women joining since the Strike.' (Armthorpe: 86SC)

40. This was reported by a non-Armthorpe organiser of the council, Edna Woodhead. See footnote 28.

41. Although Frank Watters eventually won reinstatement to the CPGB, resignations of long-standing CP members over these issues reached significant proportions. Paul Mackney describes the phenomenon among South Wales miners in the Midlands: 'All the Maerdy miners but one who were in the Communist Party and based in Birmingham or Oxford have since resigned from the party because they felt the Eurocommunists were "careerists.... more concerned with their own political views and ambitions than concentrating on winning the strike." This was not just a question of personalities, it was also a question of strategy. Alun Jones, Vice-Chair of Maerdy lodge, a miner for 30 years and a communist party member since he was 17, thinks: "The infighting in the C.P. had a drastic effect. I was disgusted with the attitudes of some people. (....) they did honestly disrupt the movement that was going full steam ahead...Arvon Williams was one. George Rees, Kim Howells."' (Mackney, 1987:115)
Chapter Nine

UNEMPLOYED YOUTH AFTER THE STRIKE

'The boy brought up in any one of these families is typically destined to be a miner (....) To take his place in the community, to share the continued friendship and co-activity of his boyhood friends, a young man cannot for long stay outside of mining...'

(Dennis, Henriques, Slaughter, 1969: 176):

Introduction

One of the functions of 'community' in a village where the central fact of life is coal production is the socialisation of younger generations into the attitudes and roles required by the coal industry. In previous times, the majority of the village youth were destined, at an early age, to enter either the world of wage labour in the pits, or of the domestic servicing of that wage labour. The close nature of mining communities, with several generations of families living in close proximity, meant that traditions of family life tended to be absorbed and reproduced by the younger generations.

In this chapter I investigate whether the pit village can be described as having any major function in the socialisation of local youth in the late 1980's. I contrast the growing exclusion from work, experienced by many of the young villagers, with their involvement in the 1984/85 Strike. I investigate the extent of this involvement and the factors which encouraged it. I go on to explain how the involvement of the young unemployed in collective struggle had an effect on their status in the local community and outline its lasting impact on their attitudes and relationships.

In the second part of the chapter, I describe the enormous financial problems faced by the young unemployed and the way these effect their relationships with one another, with members of their families, and with other
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Armthorpe inhabitants. I argue that the position of both unemployed male and female youth, excluded from the world of work, encourages a significant narrowing of their physical and social horizons - a tendency to withdraw from the network of social relationships that make up a local community. This occurs in various fields and leads not only to a lack of social contact with the rest of the population (and a consequent 'invisibility' of the unemployed), but severe strains on their relationships and the emergence of 'anti-social' behaviour.

In Armthorpe, the participation of the young unemployed alongside other sections of the population in the 'community strike' of 1984/85 served to reinforce other features of the village community which counteract these tendencies towards privatisation. Despite their lack of resources and their exclusion from the pit, the male youth in particular feel themselves to be 'part of the community'. Finally I investigate the impact that their Strike involvement has had on the political attitudes and activities of the village's young unemployed.

Pre-Strike Situation

Coal is Our Life described a situation where the village youth, both male and female tended to leave school early and go into paid employment. Sometimes there would be sufficient parental pressure to keep the young lads out of the pit for a time, but the lure of high wages (relative to most other young manual workers) and pressures from their village peer group meant that, at a very early age, the majority of school leavers would end up applying for jobs at the local mine. Likewise their comparatively high wages encouraged 'courtship' and marriage at an early age. The village 'lass' tended to 'get a job' on leaving school rather than 'beginning a career'. The 'natural' cycle would have her 'courting strong' and married to a miner in a relatively few years. The lack of satisfactory contraception, the physical demands of the mining household and
the relatively high wages available to young miners would encourage her to quit paid employment soon after such a marriage.

There were, of course, modifications in this picture by the late 1970's/early 1980's. The significant growth of unemployment outside the mining industry (virtually all the major industries in Doncaster reduced their workforces drastically during this period) increased the 'attractiveness' of coal mining jobs. However the shrinkage of the mining workforce meant that fewer and fewer applicants were taken on by the NCB. In Armthorpe, as in other mining villages, the old tradition persisted so that the local school leavers whose fathers worked at the pit could expect to be taken on before 'outsiders'. Nevertheless the annual intake of local school leavers dropped considerably from an average of over sixty in the early 1970s, to thirty seven in 1979 and down to only twelve in 1983 (See Appendix 17).

Another significant development in the early 1980's was a massive reduction in the (already limited) career structure for young miners. Many of the youngest recruits were unable to undertake their face training (their passport to the higher-paid underground jobs) while other young miners, having successfully completed their face training, were kept from the face by the constant influx of experienced faceworker transferees from closed or 'rationalised' pits. The Markham Main training centre, which served all the pits in the Doncaster area, was closed completely in October 1985.

This shutting off of young male access to mining jobs obviously had an effect on the attitudes, life chances and expectations of the young women in the villages. During the 1960's and early 1970's, the previously mentioned improvements in education, contraception, job markets, social security and physical mobility had tended to offer the women a broader area of 'choice' in their lives. By the end of the 1970's their traditional 'option' described in Coal is Our Life was, in any case, becoming less and less available. After 1983
none of their male peer group had any chance of becoming a miner. These changes in circumstance, combined with changes in attitude, meant that the paid employment secured by young women on leaving school was no longer necessarily regarded as a short-term 'stop-gap' prior to their 'true fulfillment' as the financially dependent wife of a miner.

By March 1984 there was another year of young Armthorpe school leavers waiting to join the rapidly-lengthening, 400-strong Markham Main 'list' (Armthorpe 56M). Instead of being subjected to recruitment campaigns at their school and youth club, all the village's young males were being threatened with complete severance from the staple source of employment in the community. Even those at the top of the waiting list had to watch their chances recede due to the NCB's pit closure programme. Long-term unemployment, effecting both lads and lasses had, virtually overnight, become a fact of life for the younger generations of the village's mining population.

The Strike Experience

There appeared to be three factors which caused the unemployed's experience of the Strike to be a vivid and fulfilling one. Firstly, the presence of a local union branch and a range of related institutions provided a firm basis for a Strike community, enabling the miners to involve sections of the village population outside their own immediate ranks. Secondly, the class-based political tradition that had been developed within the Markham Main workforce militated against 'sectional' attitudes and resulted in a cohesiveness that was experienced beyond the workforce itself. It was this political tradition that inspired the open appeal to the unemployed and other sections of the village population to participate as equals, to regard the 1984/85 Miners Strike as their dispute. Thirdly, the physical presence of the pit and its obvious importance as a source of power for the local population, allowed even those without jobs at the pit a tangible focus for activity and involvement. So, for
example, the police action on the 22 August in occupying the village and humiliating its inhabitants in order to 'regain control' over the pit, gave a concrete meaning to the NUM's slogan of protecting 'jobs, pits and communities'.

The young men were the first to become active. Encouraged by local rank and file activists, around fifteen became involved in picketing activity, at the pit gates and, to a lesser extent, in the flying picket teams. Their involvement was made easier because several of these teams consisted mainly of young, local miners; their peers. The eight or nine young women, who became active in April/May, were initially involved in food preparation and distribution. As with the men, they later became active in a wider range of activities; food collection, meetings and local fundraising trips (outside the village). In the case of both young men and women, the size of the Strike operation was very important. In many Yorkshire pits, both provision and picketing operations were organised on such a small scale that not only the partners of miners but the miners themselves felt unable to participate (Winterton & Winterton, 1989: Ch 3). This was appreciated by some of the unemployed themselves. Steve:

'There were no half measures here. We had a lot going on and everybody was welcome to join in. There were even Rosso [Rossington] lads coming over here to picket with us, cos they didn't let everyone go at Rosso. Not many went picketing, nowhere near as many as Armthorpe. A lot more would have gone if they'd been offered the chance. The unemployed lads over there had no chance.'

(Armthorpe: 42YU)

The opposite was the case in Armthorpe. From early in the dispute, a small but significant number of young unemployed became, in effect, an essential part of the Strike community. Their activity and skills were acknowledged as valuable and they were allowed access to the collective resources of the Strike based community. Although they usually refused to 'take advantage', they were entitled to regular meals in the Welfare, to the standard picketing expenses, to legal representation and help with fines from the local NUM or Women's Action Group. Some of the regular picketers used to attend the local NUM pickets.
meeting. Mark, eighteen, with no immediate family connection to the pit, suggested:

'I'd say there were about fifteen of us who were really involved with the picketing and stuff early on. I was one of the night sentries up at the pit. We'd get up there every night about eleven or twelve o'clock and picket till six in the morning. Then we'd come back down the Welly, have sommat to eat and then go back and do another couple of hours. They treated us just like one of the lads, we got dinners and tea and coffee and stuff. The miners and the women were always glad to see us. I suppose there were a few on the dole who felt a bit funny about getting involved, but when the police came in, all that changed.'

(Armthorpe: 41YU)

Just as the state (via the DHSS) played an important role in forcing a collective identity on the coalfield women, the police occupation of the village on the 21/22 August assisted in firming up a clear 'strike identity' among the local unemployed. Prior to this date, whether they became involved or not depended largely on personal friendships with the strikers, but when the police brought the conflict 'onto their doorstep' the distinction between striking miners and Armthorpe unemployed became blurred. Along with the miners wives and women supporters, the unemployed women were abused in their homes, while along with the miners, the young men were hunted and beaten in the streets. Several of the young unemployed men suffered assault and arrest on that day, with others being picked up in the police round-ups that followed. Kev, twenty years old at the time, explained:

'I'll never forget that first day when we got chased. Previous I'd been picketing in Notts a few times and at Orgreave a few times. But that day in Armthorpe, it were diabolical. They marched this one lad up the road and his head was just battered to pulp, he were a right mess. And they just stuck him in a police van, threw him on the floor like and wouldn't let anybody help him. One bloke tried to help him and all they did was to punch him, belted him all the way across to the other side of the road. There were people getting beaten up all over the village. That's when I started from really, that day. Just to see what happened to that lad.'

(Armthorpe: 36YU)

Having had a front line role forced upon them that day, many of the youth involved were unable or unwilling to relinquish it in the aftermath. The number of unemployed with a regular involvement in the Strike increased significantly.
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From the initial core of fifteen, the numbers involved in the various strike activities rose to thirty or forty.

There were other factors which encouraged their involvement as the Strike wore on. They discovered, for example, that their lack of money and material resources (their exclusion from 'the market'), a prime cause of 'low' status in the pre-strike community, was largely irrelevant in the Strike-based one. One of the foundations of this community was a collective acknowledgement of the lack of individual resources. With the government trying to starve the miners into submission, a significant portion of the village population, including some of its most 'prominent' figures, steadily became worse off than the unemployed themselves. The unemployed found themselves in the unprecedented position of being able to treat their penniless, striking mates to a pint, or to help out their 'employed' parents when 'the Giro' arrived. Roy explained:

'I hope one day, when I've got some money like, I'll be able to say, 'Come on dad, let's go for a pint.' He's been really good to me, so I'd like to help him. We helped 'em in the Strike. It wasn't a lot of help, we weren't in a position to give them that much, but they appreciated it. It were right comical. One minute we were down in the doldrums and had got nothing and then next minute, we were right well off and had more than anybody, and then it went back again after the Strike. It were funny though, helping people out like that.' (Armthorpe:36YU)

This contrast between the Strike experience and their pre- and post-Strike dependency was referred to by several of the unemployed.

As important as the financial role reversal was a growing realisation among the unemployed that material possessions were of secondary importance in the Strike community. Their ability to do something useful, to help other people, outweighed their severely limited material resources. They recalled the Strike as a time when they felt part of 'the community', when they had had something to contribute to it and when its other members had acknowledged this contribution. A twenty one year old male explained:

'During the Strike we all needed each other, we all shared things between us. We had to stick together. If me and [###] did owt,
everybody would get to know right quick. There was a closeness, everyone were right friendly." (Armthorpe: YU)

Being in a position to 'share things' is clearly only the starting point. This young man had been active in all the various Strike roles identified by the Wintertons; as a picket, flyer, saboteur and persuader (1989: 102), as well as a helper around the kitchen. Unlike normal times, when he pursued a severely limited range of individual activities without anybody 'taking any notice', during the Strike he was constantly engaged in collective activities which were approved of as being for the good of the community. Among his peers and others whom he respected, he became a 'leading activist', someone who could be counted on in a tight situation. His activities, his skills and talents were discussed by 'everybody', he had become 'someone' to be talked about.

**POST-STRIKE SITUATION OF UNEMPLOYED YOUTH**

It was the economic situation of the young unemployed that appeared a key factor in shaping so many other parts of their lives. Their early teens were often years of growing impatience with financial dependency on their parents. One of the main factors in their decision to leave school early was their desire to escape this dependency, to be able to 'make their own way' (that is, to do things and make plans without constant reference to their parents' financial situation). Paul Willis discussing this phenomenon among working class 'lads' suggests:

'One should not underestimate the degree to which 'the lads' want to escape from school - the transition to work would be better termed the 'tumble' out of school - and the lure of the prospect of money and cultural membership amongst 'real men' beckons very seductively as refracted through their own culture.' (Willis, 1979: 100)

**Financial Dependency**

The reality of life on the dole for many Armthorpe youth was, of course, somewhat different. In a very real sense their financial dependency on the DHSS or YTS reflected the way in which the state defined so much of the rest
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of their lives. It kept them at a fixed, barely adequate level of subsistence. It required them to do certain work/training in return, while prohibiting them from other educational options. And it ensured that they were unable to escape from continuing dependency on their parents. Of the fourteen young unemployed people interviewed, with an average age of just over twenty, nine were still living with their parents. Andrew reported:

'I don't go out during the week very much and if I do, I have to resort to borrowing...usually off my Mum, then I'll either pay her back, or do the odd job for her.' (Armthorpe: 35YU)

Neil outlined a similar dependency:

'I only get £47.50p a fortnight on the dole, but I'm living with me Mam, and me Dad helps me out with the odd ten or twenty quid.' (Armthorpe: 38YU)

While Paula, whose mother is divorced and also out of work, suggested:

'We pool our resources off the dole. I get £36.80p per fortnight and occasionally £3.00 from babysitting. We might get a bit from the car boot sale, but mostly I have to borrow from me Mam.' (Armthorpe: 40YU)

The independence of those living apart from their parents is also severely constrained. Ken, just married to Louise, explained their financial situation:

'We're more or less permanently in the red, there's nowt for luxuries. Like for this birthday party, we can't afford booze, so we're having a four pound kitty. Louise's mum helps us out a lot. I repay her by doing her car for her.' (Armthorpe: 37YU)

While Diane, married to Roy and with a small child, explained their problems:

'It's very hard to live an independent life, when you're dependent on people around you so much. That's a big thing in our life. We depend now on Jean and Bert [Roy's mum and dad] mainly. That doesn't mean we take them for granted, we don't. They accept it, we accept it and nobody pulls any punches over it. We go over to stop with them most weekends. It's become a regular habit since we've been married. Because they're local, it's handy, we don't need to worry about busfares or anything.

We have a lot of side assistance from the family. I mean a lot. Not just...... it's becoming a regular pattern. Where we used to go through on a Friday because we were short, now it's becoming Thursday or Friday and last week I told Roy to tell Jean we'd be through on Wednesday next week!... [Roy: 'At bill's time, we have a difficult time, but me dad and mam don't mind helping. Like me dad gave us some of his redundancy money to help us out with our debts and...'}
Rather than discovering financial independence on leaving school, the young unemployed found themselves locked into a fortnightly cycle of dependency, debt and boredom. In this respect, their diaries were even more revealing than their interview replies. So Andrew, who had left school only a month previously, recorded on the 2 May 1986:

'Got up at 9 a.m. and had breakfast. Being on the dole with no work I did what I do every day of the week. Tidy up, watch telly till 12, make dinner for Sarah and Jamie [younger sister and brother]. After dinner go swimming for three hours, have tea, go to bed for two hours or so. Today I met Joanne at 7 o'clock and we walked the streets, just messing with some mates. At 10.30 p.m. left Joanne and went to talk to some mates on our fronts. Went in at 11 o'clock and went straight to bed.'

(Armthorpe Diary, May)

Paula, who left school twelve months previously, also describes a routine that is circumscribed by a lack of financial resources:

'My boyfriend Michael, like myself, is on the dole and so we spend most of our time together, although we can't go out to many places because we don't have a lot of money (...) Michael and I set off to go to my brother's house in Intake. We go there a lot because there isn't a lot to do during the evenings. We walked, as the bus fares are too expensive now. It took about 35 minutes to walk there. When we got there we watched television and made some arrangements for tomorrow night, as we always go out together on a Friday. Usually Friday night is the only night we can all afford to go out.'

Another break in the monotony consists of a 'shopping' trip to Doncaster:

'Ve walked around town and do some window shopping. We hadn't come for anything because neither of us had a lot of money, but I enjoy walking around town as it passes a couple of hours away, which is what you have to do when you are signing on the dole because you don't have a lot of money to spend on yourself. I used to go into town quite a lot during the week, but I can't see myself going in so often, now the bus fares have gone up.'

(Armthorpe Diary, May)

On the rare occasions that Paula went into town to buy things for herself it was usually for one or two less expensive, carefully-budgetted items. If she went into a cafe for a meal, this usually consisted of a chip butty and a drink,
Unemployed Youth after the Miners Strike

(wheras her favourite meal was a salad). If she called in at the fish and chip shop she invariably bought just chips or chips and peas. Both she and her mother agreed that they felt their unemployed status most when they were in the shops:

"The people with jobs'll be getting steak, chocolate cakes and stuff, while we're just picking up a packet of plain biscuits." (Armthorpe: 40YU)

What is evident here is the particular pain of 'poverty' in the midst of 'plenty'. The increasing penetration of everyday life by 'the market', via advertising and the mass media, made it impossible to escape 'the web made up of commodity goods and commodity services (...) except through partial or total abstention from social life as it now exists' (Braverman, 1974: 281).

This observation is particularly relevant for unemployed living in a mining village. A variety of observers have noted the tendency of miners to be 'free spending': to justify the time spent underground by intense activity in the above ground marketplace. Even in 1986, with so many debts hanging over their heads, when young Armthorpe miners decided to buy something, they invariably started their search near the top of the range. I used to feel slightly nonplussed by the way that they used to describe their cars, music centres, clothes or other commodities purely in terms of their high cost. Often this involved them chalking up debts running into several thousands of pounds. The wage relationship was vital for this practise, with credit being granted on the basis of a substantial weekly income and many of the transactions being carried out through the pit shop. Some miners I interviewed drew less than half their wages after all their pit shop payments had been 'docked'. Many of the older miners were very worried by this tendency to live on credit. Eric suggested:

'There ought to be a strict limit on the amount of credit the young lads can get at the pit shop. I know all the proceeds go to the old age pensioners, but they can pick up H.P. so easily they can spend the whole of their life worrying about debt problems.' (Armthorpe: 15MYU)
Unemployed Youth after the Miners Strike

This was an accurate observation, many of the young miners spent a lot of time worrying about debts. The unemployed, however, did not focus on the worry, they just saw the ownership of brand new, expensive commodities, which they could never afford.

Although Andy also spent a lot of time "walking around town, looking at things I can't afford", his family circumstances were slightly different. Often just a few days into the fortnight, his DHSS money had been exhausted and he had to borrow money from the other members of his family if he was to 'get out of the house'. According to his diary during one of the non-giro weeks in April he was forced to borrow £5 from an (unemployed) married sister, £5 off his mother, £3 off a (YTS) sister, then another £5 off her and finally £5 off his third (married and working) sister. The cycle of dependency was obvious. As he ruefully admitted, on borrowing the final £5:

'...by the time my dole comes I won't have much left, and then it'll start all over again.'

(Armthorpe Diary, April 1986)

The spreading of his borrowing was not accidental.

An unavoidable result of the unemployed's dependency was the strain it placed on the other members of their family, especially those with some kind of a job. All the unemployed I interviewed were acutely aware of this. As Louise put it:

'It's wrong for parents to be expected to keep you. I only get £36.80 per fortnight to live here.... it goes up to £47 per fortnight when I reach 21. If you're on the dole you're expected to stop at home and not have kids..... Even if me and Pete finished, I'd move out from here. Why impose on my Mum and Dad? I feel a drain, a burden on them.'

(Armthorpe: 45YU)

Virtually all those interviewed tended to adopt similar 'tactics' to Andy in order to mitigate the effects of dependency on their family relationships. Because of the variations in their fortnightly cash cycles, they were sometimes able to borrow small amounts from each other (that is, fellow unemployed). They then tried to 'spread the load' between the various members of their family and
Unemployed Youth after the Miners Strike

avoid borrowing large sums, preferring to ask for small amounts, even if this involved borrowing in installments from the same person. Sons, in particular, seemed reticent of borrowing heavily from their father, even if, as was usually the case, he was the main wage earner in the household. Although on the one hand this seemed to confirm the 'special' relationship between young men and their mothers observed by Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter (1969:242), it also suggested that a direct approach to the main 'breadwinner' involved an over-painful underscoring of their much-resented dependent status.

However indirect or subtle the dependency, the presence of unemployed adults in the household seemed to contribute greatly to the stress on the resident wage earners. The fewer wage earners there were, the more the pressures were apparent. Realizing how much damage unemployment and all its associated problems could inflict on their children, their parents often admitted to spending a lot of time worrying about what would happen to them. Rex, his son and his daughter both unemployed, explained his concern at the former's exploitation on YTS schemes:

'My lad went straight from school onto the dole. He's been on two of these schemes now. The first one he was working for a car repair scheme. He was dead interested, even worked Saturdays for nothing and he ended up spraying cars on his own. Till he found out how much they were charging for his slave labour - two or three hundred pound a time for the commercial vehicles and he was getting £25 a week! Pathetic isn't it. He never went no more. The other, a plumbing scheme, was a total waste of time for him. No real training, just slave labour with no job at the end of it."

(Armthorpe:54M)

His fear was that this could easily lead to criminal, or anti-social activities:

'I was disgusted. I detest these schemes, but he took all the decisions on his own bat. I used to think, 'At least it gets him out of the house.' My main worry is that he'll get totally bored and start hanging about in one of these groups that go housebreaking and stuff. It's all down to boredom and no money. Young lads need enjoyment, regular work and enjoyment, which they're not getting round here.

(....) Over the last four or five years, there's more theft generally, and I'm not going to say it's all young 'uns either, but I'll put it down to unemployment. And I suppose I'd do the same myself, it's all part of life, survival, isn't it?

Then on top of all that, there's been a big increase in the amount of drugs knocking about. If they start using them and they've no money, they go out and pinch instead. It's unemployment that puts the kids and their parents under so much pressure, it fragments the community. It's
the main thing I worry about; hoping that my son and daughter will be able to get decent jobs, so they can settle down to a normal life. It's a bleak outlook if they ever get married and have to live on social security." (Armthorpe: 54M)

In the aftermath of the Strike, when miners' wages were often inadequate to meet even their own immediate needs, this pressure from out of work 'dependents' or relatives often 'tipped the scales', causing elderly, middle aged and even younger miners to volunteer for their redundancy. Miners who had planned to continue working till they reached retirement age decided to 'take the payoff' in order to clear their own and their children's debts, prevent court cases, house repossessions or nervous breakdowns. Diane described the effects of the pressure on her mother and father-in-law:

'They had to pay back bills double, and all their kids had even bigger problems. Because Jean ate so little during the Strike, she can't eat normally now. Bert seems to be tired out all the time. He seems angry. He's easily upset. He's at the end of his working life now. He hates redundancy, he wanted a proper retirement. Now he's redundant against his wishes, and I think he feels,"Who's left behind to do what I were doing?"...He's saying to himself "When are the working class going to stand up and fight for what they won in the past?" You'll hear him say, "Well I'm disgusted!" a lot, or "What disgusts me .." - and it's not just a matter of what he doesn't like; what's happened to him and what's happening now really does disgust him." (Armthorpe: 46YU)

This clearly illustrates how the heavy burden placed on working class families by their young unemployed members was accentuated by their general economic exhaustion of the post-Strike period. Despite their 'spreading' of borrowing and their determination 'not take advantage', the financial problems of the unemployed set up a chain of pressures and counter-pressures. With the recent failure of collective strategies (the strike to preserve jobs), miners were forced to turn to purely individual 'solutions', while some unemployed considered more illegal, and sometimes anti-social, measures. The pressures on the jobless therefore tended to feed not only into their families, but into the wider 'community' beyond.
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ACTIVITIES OF THE YOUNG UNEMPLOYED

This financial hardship and dependency on state and family often meant that the unemployed youth's horizon's became very limited in the physical /geographical sense too. None of those interviewed owned their own car and only one, whose boyfriend was a working miner, had regular access to one. Again the key role of the state in deciding the parameters of the unemployed's 'community' was evident, with Paula's complaint about the government-imposed rise in South Yorkshire's busfares being echoed by all of the young unemployed. Despite the large amount of 'free' time available to them, they tended to spend most of it inside the village and, as a result, their friends and acquaintances were often limited to other village inhabitants.

There was another sense in which this narrowness of physical horizons was evident. With their lack of money compounding their joblessness in excluding them from several of the more public arenas of village life (shops, pubs, social, sports and other clubs), they tended to spend a lot of their time at home, in their room, or in several cases, in bed. As a result they tended to become far more 'invisible' than other sections of the population.

'Earners'

All of the unemployed I talked to were 'on the lookout' for work. With 'regular', (that is long-term, legal) jobs being virtually unobtainable, this work tended to consist of the more temporary, casual variety. The opportunities for this type of work, although still severely limited, seemed more available in Armthorpe than in Moorends (see Chapter 12). With a larger proportion of the village population still in employment, there seemed to be more money in circulation and more opportunity for activity on the periphery of the economic system. So according to Kenny:

'You can sometimes find the odd bit of work. Like there was this bloke who wanted sommat doing to his car and he'd been quoted £100 in the
Unemployed Youth after the Miners Strike

village. We just offered to do it for £20, me and me mate.'
(Armthorpe: 37YU)

Another one of the young Armthorpe lads explained:

'I spend a lot of time drifting around the village, just going round looking for a bit of work, just looking to see if there's anything going on, see if I can earn a few quid... Sometimes I go round the markets or auctions with Dad, looking for things to buy and resell. It's mainly that, buying and selling, or sometimes ripping it off.'
(Armthorpe: **YU)

Whether or not 'ripping off' was resorted to, most of these 'earners' tended to be 'on the fringes' of legality as well as being 'on the fringes' of the local economic system. Louise and others pointed out that even when the goods and services provided were 'legitimate', the constant fear of being discovered by the DHSS meant that contracts, insurance, job security and employment rights were all non-existent. A 'Catch 22' situation was evident, where the more appealing the work was (that is, lucrative, long-term or regular), the more dangerous it became for the unemployed to engage in it. If they were to become involved in any kind of economic activity, it had to be irregular, out of public view and 'unnofficial', that is untraceable.

A partial exception to this, at least in terms of its relative 'openess' was the car boot sale, which, by late 1986 had become a regular feature in the lives of many of Armthorpe's young unemployed. Unlike the traditional jumble sales, second hand or charity shops, boot sales not only allowed the unemployed to buy things they needed at more 'affordable' prices, but they gave them access to legal, if petty, economic activity, which allowed them to supplement their income without having to fear major repercussions from the DHSS.

Leisure Activity

For employed people, leisure is often defined by the absence of work (that is, it's what they enjoy when they are not working). To many of those who
have not experienced enforced worklessness, it appears that the unemployed must enjoy a large amount of leisure. With many of the young unemployed in the villages, the exact opposite appeared to be the case. Without work activity to act as a defining agent and without a reasonable income to develop them, their leisure pursuits were fewer and more limited, as shown in table 9.1 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Outside Claimed by Women</th>
<th>Outside Claimed by Men</th>
<th>Home-based Activity</th>
<th>claimed by Women</th>
<th>claimed by Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drinking-pubs/clubs</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Watching TV</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Knitting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snooker</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Listening to Music</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betting</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Visiting friends/rel</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darts</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Studying</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stock Car Racing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Reading catalogues</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>'Sitting'</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Weights</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No interviewed: 14

Source: Armthorpe interviews & diaries 1986.

Compared with the miners' (table 7.2) or the older women's leisure pursuits (table 8.2) those of the young unemployed were fewer, less costly and (especially among the young women) more home-based. The avoidance of heavy financial commitment, whether through high membership fees or overheads, meant that the unemployed were effectively prohibited from participation in a large number of sports. So unlike the miners, none of the unemployed were members of local golf, fishing or training clubs. A similar picture emerged with regard to team sports (football, rugby, cricket) where there was a pressure to conform to group standards. More popular among the unemployed were sports that they could enjoy on their own. Walking and swimming were the most common, although even these were only mentioned by three (21 percent) of those I interviewed.

Armthorpe is, of course, better equipped than most villages with swimming pools. The main one is part of a modern indoor sports centre and the unemployed are generally allowed free entry on production of their U.B.40 unemployment cards and completion of a form. However their 'inferior' unemployed
status (having to show their dole cards) was further underlined by the fact that this access was only allowed on weekdays during school term time. So, on weekends, bank holidays or during the Summer months for example, the concessions to the unemployed were automatically withdrawn. Perhaps their awareness of this inferior status helps explain why, even without the pressures of work, shifts and the rest, the unemployed were only slightly more likely than other sections of the village population to go swimming on a regular basis.

The problem of participation was further underlined by the example of the most costly sport I discovered unemployed involvement in - stock-car racing. Although I interviewed three stock-car racing fanatics, only one was able to participate directly in the sport, this being made possible by his sister's boyfriend, a prominent stock car racer, who allowed him to race in his cars. Kev, one of the other stock-car fans, explained the economics of the sport:

'I used to do stock car racing. I still would if it weren't for my money problems... There were eight of us that used to go out every Sunday all over, Brampton, Scunthorpe, Cleethorpes, Rufford. Cars can cost between £30 and £70 each. Each one of us would have a car. We used to hire a car transporter or put them all up on trailers. The entrance fee used to be about £5 for four races. We used to do all the work on the cars ourselves but 'it still used to cost us over £50 per week. We used to put the money into a communal cash box.' (Armthorpe: 36YU)

With this kind of regular outlay there is a premium on regular and substantial income. Four of the eight in Kev's team were Markham miners and their wages were vital to the collective effort. This was shown by the developments in June 1984:

'The Strike stopped us dead in our tracks, it finished us off. Dad had no wages, so Ken were giving half his wages to Mum. We sold the cars, tackle, trailer..... a lot of gear to raise cash, so we ended up going on the pit gates.' (Armthorpe: 36YU)

A similar consideration applied to the non-sports leisure activities of the unemployed. Hobbies which involved 'travelling', a high capital outlay or a significant degree of regular financial expenditure were avoided. So pastimes that are still popular among miners; pigeon and dogracing, outings to football matches or race meetings, were beyond the reach of most of the unemployed. It
Unemployed Youth after the Miners Strike

was the staple miners' pastimes outlined in Coal is Our Life, that, according to the interviews and diaries of the young unemployed, constituted their favourites in 1986/87. Eleven out of the fourteen young unemployed listed drinking/pub crawling as one of their favourite leisure pursuits although one probable change from 1956 was that drinking was cited as a hobby by more young women than men. A more segregated pattern emerged with betting, which was mentioned by only two of the unemployed male youth.  

The unemployed's participation in these pastimes was, however, of a very different order to that of miners or other employed workers. Their diaries revealed relatively infrequent visits to both pubs and bookies, and a capacity to eke out very small sums during these visits. When they did go out, it was more often to the local pubs and clubs, rather than to those in Doncaster, which were the favourite haunts of the young miners, but which involved added expense. Whether in compensation, because they suffered so much from boredom, or because it took up 'drinking time', when they did go out for an evening, they tended to conduct extensive tours of the local pubs. Often alcohol consumption appeared a secondary consideration in the pub 'crawl', with the main purpose being socialising and bar games. Alcohol consumption rates were very variable, usually low and sometimes non-existent. Andy, who had the fullest social life among the young men interviewed described this phenomenon in one of his diaries:

'Shaun arrives to go for a game of snooker at the Welly. Had a glass of orange and two bob in the snooker light, all I can afford for this afternoon. Beat Shaun 52-36 at snooker, playing for the 70p I owed him.

Back home, nobody in. Father in bed getting ready for the night shift. I put the record player on - my favourite group, the Stranglers. Dad gets up and goes round to the bookies for a bet, moaning that I'm playing the records too loud. I'm not listening to him. I've not had a bet this week yet, I'm saving what money I have for Friday night out with the lads.'

(Armthorpe Diary, April 1986)

The pub-based sports cost relatively little to participate in. The 70p bet is only meaningful in the context of the unemployed's finances. It would not buy a pint, but it would pay for a couple of glasses of orange (Welfare price, 20p) and an hour on the snooker table. Andy's weekly subs as a member of his local's
Unemployed Youth after the Miners Strike

Snooker team were just 25p. There were few transport costs and few extra 'overheads'. Back home, there is conflict with 'the breadwinner'. Dad, faced with the prospect of a nightshift and thwarted in his attempts to sleep by Andy's (cheap) home-based leisure, has the option of 'escape' to the more expensive, public leisure situation of the bookies. Andy is forced to prioritise between pub and bookies.

Financial considerations help explain the predominance of highly privatised pastimes in table 9.1. From their diaries a majority of the unemployed's time appeared to be spent on domestic chores, reading, watching TV, listening to music or just walking the dog. Young men as well as young women often 'called' round on each other for a chat, a coffee or a smoke, but much of the time they spent in their rooms on their own, playing records, listening to the radio or just sleeping. Although the routines of the Armthorpe unemployed tended to be more varied than those of their counterparts in Moorends, their 'horizons' were still narrow and under constant pressure to become even more constrained. So a fairly typical day in Andy's diary read as follows:

'8.30 a.m. Got out of bed, washed and dressed and had tea and toast. Waited for the rent woman, paid her, got my coat on and went to the job centre. 45p bus fare. (Last week it was 10p to town, now it's 45p because of the loss of the GLC and Met County Councils). So I'll be going only once or twice a week to the job centre and that will cost me £2.

Not many jobs to do at the job centre. Looking for a fitter's job or anything to do with electricis. Had a walk round town looking at things I cannot afford. Cancelled my trip to Spain with the lads. I tried to save some money each week, but it's almost impossible on £55 per fortnight dole money. So the lads will be going without me. Not too happy about that. Still, having a night out at Brid (Bridlington) for Micky's 21st birthday. Bed and breakfast, so I'd better start saving now.

12.00 p.m. Arrived back home for my dinner (pie and carrots and potatoes), sat down, watched the News and Falcon Crest till 2.30 p.m. No money to go playing pool this afternoon, so had an hour in the bath and a shave (hate shaving). Laid in the bath listening to the radio.

4.00 p.m. Had my tea (egg and chips) watched the indoor bowls and a few other things on T.V.

5.00 p.m. Went to my sister's. She is married with a baby on the way, expected in November. Her husband's unemployed. He's a painter and decorator by trade. Went round to borrow a £5 for tonight and the rest of this week.

6.15 p.m. Back home, just gone upstairs to get ready for tonight. Old man gets up, moans 'cos I've got the light on in the bedroom. Doesn't matter, he'll moan about anything he can find and even things he can't.
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He's not going to work tonight. Don't know why. I never ask him 'owt anyway.

11.45 p.m. Been out to the club. Seen that group again. Just as good. Sorry for the writing, I'm pissed up. Lads took me out, bless 'em, I'll see 'em right. Too pissed to write much. Bye Bye.' (Armthorpe Diary, April 1986)

Like Andy, several of the unemployed were aware of how narrow their horizons were and tried to prevent them narrowing any further. So two young women listed 'studying' as one of their leisure activities. Carol was registered for three O-levels at Doncaster Technical College in order to qualify for training as a state registered nurse. Although coping well academically, she was being excluded from her courses due to the high numbers registered and the cutting back of resources. Her ambition was to qualify as a nurse and then train as a midwife, only then starting a family with her boyfriend/future husband, a Markham miner. But despite all her determination and her efforts she admitted:

'I'll probably end up as a State Enrolled Nurse, that'll be it. You only need two O-levels, but even then there's a two years wait for that. The Tech door is closing fast on me. I might still end up in a few years time married with 2 kids!.' (Armthorpe: 39YU)

Although none of the young men were involved in similar courses, one of them listed 'serious political reading' and another 'politics' as an interest. It became clear in the interviews that this acted as a form of self-education which they regarded as a necessary antidote to their constricted horizons.

Despite these efforts the reality for most of the youth in the village was that their activities reflected their severely limited and narrowing opportunities in life. Rather than their days being taken up with 'hobbies' or leisure pursuits, they were often preoccupied with filling in, or 'wasting' time. Inexpensive, privatised pastimes; reading, watching TV, listening to music or the radio were the staple activities for a large majority. A great deal of time was spent in the bath, or working on their personal appearance, especially prior to a 'night out'. The women also seemed to spend a lot of time doing domestic work, cleaning and tidying not only their rooms but the rest of the
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Three of the women mentioned knitting as a pastime, another said she spent a lot of her time "just sitting" while another was not alone in suggesting one of her main pastimes was "sitting and dreaming with the catalogue, looking at things that I'd like to have, but can't afford" (Armthorpe: 40YU). The young males spent less time on domestic chores and more time outside the home with their mates, looking for 'earners' or just 'messing about'. So Kenny, recently married, described a typical week as follows:

'Most of the week I'll just stop in, or find our Neil and doss around the village... We've stopped going racing. We've stopped going out. We used to go out together a lot. We've stopped doing everything we used to....Ideally, I'd want a family. But we wouldn't start a family like we are now, we just couldn't do it.' (Armthorpe: 37YU)

RELATIONSHIPS OF THE UNEMPLOYED

These kinds of privatised activity patterns obviously had an impact on the relationships of unemployed youth with other inhabitants of the village. In this respect Armthorpe presented a far more complex picture than that of Moorends. Although the previous five years had witnessed a major increase in unemployment in the village, Armthorpe had started from a lower base of youth unemployment (19 percent compared with 26 percent, see Appendix 7) and there was still a smaller proportion of the population directly affected by it. Of the male youth leaving school prior to 1982, a proportion had been able to get jobs at the local colliery and these generations seemed to find it easier to develop their boyhood friendship networks into what Coal is Our Life described as 'exclusive groups of adult males' (Dennis, Henriques, Slaughter, 1969: 212). With a significant number of the group earning a regular wage (even if excluded from the highly paid jobs at the face), the unemployed members of the group could be 'looked after' on a fairly regular basis.

The 1984/85 Strike also seemed to have had an major impact. It was, of course, precisely these generations of young miners that provided the Strike's most active 'shocktroops'. Their unemployed peers, aware of the issues and often
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with their names close to the top of Markham's waiting list, were receptive to the invitation to join their friends in strike activity. The result was the establishment, or reinforcement, of many close friendships, involving miners, unemployed and others, who had shared months of front line activity and hardship together.

Andy's experience provided a good illustration of this. Having had his name down at the pit since 1982, he spent the first eight months of the Strike becoming increasingly bored and frustrated, working in a Blackpool nightclub, sending money home to his strike-bound family in Armthorpe and joining his mates in strike activity while 'on holiday'. Quitting his job after a row with 'the boss', he spent the last four months of the dispute picketing with 'the lads':

'I was an honorary striker. I was up dead early and I'd spend all day on the lines or in the Welly. There were plenty of young kids up there, those who didn't work or who didn't even have family or friends in the pits. All the unemployed were honorary miners and strikers. It was role reversal, with the unemployed helping the strikers out with drinks. There were no problems with being an outsider.' (Armthorpe: 35YU)

So, although he felt his unemployment restricted him in other ways (for example it prevented him getting involved in 'owt serious' with his lass), it did not exclude him from equal status among 'the lads' that he shared the Strike experience with:

'The lads are good. Most of them are miners or working. They come round and lend me money. They've got an easy attitude, they're not bothered when they get it back.' (Armthorpe: 35YU)

His diary was a testament to this and revealed an extreme degree of solidarity between the young males, employed and unemployed. This was clearly shown in the entry for Sunday 20 April:

'7.15 p.m. Arrives at the Welly. Most of us already out. Went round the other pubs in the village for an hour, then back to the disco at the Welly. Sat in usual seats, everybody knows we sit in a certain place so nobody usually sits there. Everybody has decided to cancel their holiday to Spain. They said that if any of the lads could not make it, none of them would go, so we will probably have a week some place in England....' (Armthorpe Diary, April 1986)
This degree of solidarity between employed and unemployed was not so evident among the younger generations. None of them had had any opportunity of getting a job at the local pit, and consequently a much smaller proportion of them tended to be in paid employment. This meant that there was an insufficient financial basis for the younger unemployed to participate in the type of traditional 'male group' activity that, for example, 22-year-old Andy did. When they did participate in 'collective' activity they were often restricted to the 'messing about on street corners' variety - separate from that of the employed sections of the population.

Another important factor was that those that were in employment tended to be thinly spread in a variety of jobs outside the village. Social and other activity with their peers and workmates therefore involved leaving the village for the pubs and clubs of Doncaster, making the formation of village-based employed/unemployed peer groups even more difficult. And, with no miners in their ranks, this generation had been less heavily involved in Strike activity. The ones that had become involved had often been integrated into the slightly older groups of miner/unemployed strike activists. So although 1984/85 saw the younger generations of unemployed/school students involved far more in the mainstream of the 'strike-based' community, its aftermath revealed a growing distance between the younger unemployed and other employed sections of the village population.

**Family Relationships**

The family, in its ideal form, is an institution which, by encouraging close relationships between its various members, should be able to counteract this phenomenon of separation/isolation of the young unemployed. But although I discovered many family relationships which were very close and caring, the effects of unemployment were still apparent. The authors of *Coal is Our Life* suggested it was very difficult for mining men and women to develop deep,
rounded relationships, given the divide between their 'worlds'. The stark
divisions in activity, experience and opportunities between employed and
unemployed family members seemed to take a similar toll. Youth unemployment in
Armthorpe appeared to exacerbate the thorny problems that school leavers often
have in establishing a new relationship with their parents, in asserting their
independence and adulthood. Their continued and seemingly endless financial
dependency made it virtually impossible to make long-term plans for the future,
their 'immaturity' being made permanent by their poverty. However much they kept
their material demands to a minimum, by remaining in their parents' household
they felt they were imposing an unwarranted 'burden' on them. Lynn suggested
that she spent a lot of time thinking about the future, but not in the sense of
making plans, rather a constant 'wondering' if she could move out and cope:

'If you have kids on the dole, people put you down. When you're
unemployed you're under a lot of pressure to stay at home and not have
kids. I spend a lot of time thinking about the future, wondering if I
could move out and cope. It'd be great if me and Mark could live
together, but even if we can't, I'm am going to move out. Me Mam and
Dad are great, but I don't feel right about living with them. They've
got enough on their plates without me living here till I'm thirty.
They've never said anything, but I still feel I'm a burden on them.
It's not right, is it?'  (Armthorpe: 44YU)

The way in which youth unemployment tends to cut across the 'natural'
development of the parent's life cycle has already been touched on. These are
people like the Zap workers at Nichols and Beynon's Riverside plant, who have
lived their lives:

'on the fringes of the colour supplement world. (...) The world of
television and advertising: a Bounty Bar world of sea, sunshine, sex,
indolence and happiness. An impossible world with no real substance but
which just could be a possibility if they struck it lucky and won the
pools.'  (Nichols, Beynon, 1977:195)

Key to reconciling the harsh reality of their working lives with the 'fantasy'
world is the ideology of sacrifice 'for the future', especially that of their
children. After an extended period of nurture and self sacrifice, their
childrens' entry into the world of adulthood is supposed to pave the way for
mature, rewarding relationships with both partner and offspring. It is also
supposed to herald an era of self-indulgence, when resources are freed for long-
cherished plans and aspirations. A precondition of this is the entry of the
children into the world of work and financial independence. Their entry into the
twilight world of unemployment brings only disappointment and frustration.
Instead of the parents enjoying a new-found freedom, planning for their
retirement and witnessing the success/happiness of their children and
grandchildren, they find themselves involved in a seemingly endless struggle in
order to allow their 'grown-up' children to meet even their most basic needs.
They are forced to watch helplessly as the objects of their sacrifice are
reduced to 'sitting and dreaming' on the fringes of the mail order catalogue
world! Hopes are replaced by fears.

None of this provides an ideal basis for a mature relationship between
parent and offspring. Often their lack of finance makes it extremely difficult
for the unemployed adolescent to develop any involvement in the pastimes of
their working parents. Lacking the resources to 'keep up' with their father and
mother, they can respond by 'withdrawing' and separating themselves off, leading
in certain circumstances to a complete breakdown in understanding between
children and parents. As Andy reported in his July diary:

'6.15 p.m. (...) Old man gets up, moans 'cos I've got the light on in
the bedroom. Doesn't matter, he'll moan about anything he can find and
even things he can't. He's not going to work tonight. Don't know why. I
never ask him 'owt anyway.'

The yawning gap between them makes communication between father and son too
difficult. Forced to live in his parents' house, Andy has become accustomed to
seeing himself as a source of constant irritation to his father.

Relationships Between the Unemployed

One of the reasons why the young unemployed seemed to 'stick together'
was that they saw this as a method of protecting their own and each other's self
estee. Even with the strongest of characters, their lack of opportunity,
resources and success in life inevitably took its toll on their self-image. Their awareness of how other, employed sections of the population see them is regularly enforced, especially in brushes with 'authority'. So Lynn recorded in her diary for 8 July:

'I went to sign on. Then they sent me over to the careers office, which is sickening 'cos they talk to you as if you sit on your backside all the time. They never actually offer you any help, just criticism. Then back to the dole to prove you've been to register, it's a lot of running around for nothing.' (Armthorpe Diary, July 1986)

With the state playing such a major role in the negative definition of community among the young unemployed, any behaviour on the part of its agencies which underlines their low, dependent status is seen as provocative and hurtful and is therefore deeply resented.

The young unemployed suggested that, between themselves, there tended to be more understanding of the pressures and problems they faced. This empathy seemed to be largely based on the things they had in common. These ranged from specific experiences; standing in dole queues, 'waiting for the giro' and surviving the 'lean week' of the fortnightly financial cycle, to the more general; dependency, low status, similar lifestyles and restricted horizons.

Their mutual understanding was not, however, matched by their resources to assist each other. Unlike the miners who not only shared similar problems and lifestyles, but through this sharing had opportunities to change them, the unemployed were, as a rule, denied access to any of the power points which affected their lives. The lack of a significant basis for any collective struggle to change their situation underlined the difficulties of mutual assistance and tended to encourage an atomisation, even among the unemployed population themselves. This phenomenon could be seen more clearly among the unemployed population in closed-pit villages like Moorends, but was beginning to appear among the youngest generations of unemployed in Armthorpe as well. One of the 22-year-olds gave a personal account:
'With our age group, we've always been part of the community. Everybody's prepared to help you if you need help in any way. Some people say that things have gone down since the Strike, but I don't think so, I think it's better now than it was before. I've got to know a lot more people, I've got more friends. It's more of a community.

But I don't know about the ones who have just left school. I've got a cousin [***], eighteen. When he gets his giro, he's straight into the pubs in Donny and gets drunk and then he's skint within three days. He hasn't got any mates who are miners, or any mates who are working even. I think he feels a bit left out in the village. He just dosses around with idiots in Donny. Hangs around the Arndale, doing nothing, getting dizzy with the dropouts. He's got tied up with drugs, hitting them. I reckon he doesn't want anything else. Everybody's tried to help, but he doesn't want help.' (Armthorpe:*YU)

Along with this atomisation, the unemployed reported an increase in anti-social behaviour. They said there had been an increase in petty theft, and during my field research there was an instance of purse snatching in the village, the first that any of my informants could remember. The incidence of crime in the village was still very low, compared with that of Doncaster or the big cities. It was also very low compared with some of the pit villages that had suffered pit closures since the Strike. Many people still left doors unlocked as a matter of course. But the increase stood in stark contrast to the year of the Strike, when anti-social behaviour was reported to have virtually disappeared from the village.

'Close' Personal Relationships

All the problems and contradictions that were present in the general relationships of the young unemployed tended to manifest themselves in their more intimate, 'personal' ones as well. A relationship with someone who was in employment brought certain obvious benefits (more financial independence from parents, increased access to material comforts, leisure and security), but it also brought problems. Among young jobless women, it seemed to result in a reinforcement of their 'traditional', stereotyped role as domestic dependent of a male breadwinner. Unlike the majority of their mothers' generation, many of these women felt a great pressure to enter into long-term relationships without ever having had a 'proper' job or experienced the financial independence that
this could provide. Among jobless men the local strength of traditional gender stereotyping seemed to lead to equally serious problems. They often felt themselves under pressure to ‘keep up’ with their employed partner, engaging in a futile struggle to ‘match’ not only her financial status, but that of her (employed) male peer group.

Not that these problems were confined solely to ‘mixed’ relationships of employed and unemployed. They also affected relationships in which both parties were out of work. It was apparent that the more unemployment narrowed the horizons of the young women, the more it seemed to reinforce the traditional domestic and childcare roles in them. Lynn described one of her days as follows:

'I got up at 1.00 p.m. and sat watching telly then I cleaned both bird cages out. Changed their water and food, then hoovered up. I made the fire but it went out so I left it out. Then I sat down, had a fag and watched ‘Country Practise’, ‘Trapdoor’ and ‘He-Man’. Then I went upstairs, made the beds, hoovered the bedrooms and bathroom and washed the bath and sink out. Then I started ironing and tidying the room up. I put all the ironed clothes in different piles, then took them upstairs and put them away.

9.30 p.m. I got ready to go and see Mark, it was cold and raining but we were too busy talking to think of the weather.

1.00 a.m. I got in and had something to eat, had a bath and watched ‘Music Box’ until 4.00, then I pulled all the plugs out, let the dog out, put him in the passage and went to bed.'

(Armthorpe Diary, July 1986)

The boredom and tedium of the young unemployed’s routine (indicated by their predilection for staying in bed till the afternoon) is obvious. Given the emptiness of their lives, it was not surprising that, even at eighteen or nineteen, unemployed women found themselves spending a lot of time looking after babies for their elder sisters or friends. So despite Carol’s determination not to let babies get in the way of a nursing career, her diary entry for 7 May was one of several concerning her niece, Leah:

'I introduced our Leah (niece) to Wayne’s family. They all adored her and kept wanting to hold and talk to her......Leah is not shy and is very advanced for a 3 year old, which the family thought was brilliant...All the conversation was about our Leah.'

While another 18-year-old similarly described a part of an otherwise monotonous weekly routine with evident enjoyment:
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'12.10... When I arrived home I found my brother's wife was there with my niece. She usually calls on a Thursday as she goes to the baby clinic in Armthorpe... Anyway I fed my niece, [****], for her and then we decided to go to the clinic.

1.50... Arrived at the clinic which was enjoyable because a lot of my friends who have babies were there. Nearly everyone I know is either pregnant or already has a young baby.' (Armthorpe Diary, July 1986)

Two months later, the same young woman opened her diary with:

'10.15 a.m. Got up and went downstairs. Before I go on I had better fill you in on what happened towards the end of last month, so you will understand later on. I found out from my doctor that I was 11 weeks pregnant. It took me by surprise, but now I have got used to the idea. Anyway I got up and went downstairs, my mum was up but my brother was still in bed. My mum made me a cup of tea.' (Armthorpe Diary, September 1986)

The surprise pregnancy was the result of an established, and ongoing relationship, but the unemployed status of both parties meant that there was no necessary connection between motherhood and marriage (which the young mother did not want), or even cohabitation.

The pregnancy was clearly not planned, but the young woman's matter-of-fact acceptance of it seemed to reveal more than the passive fatalism that unemployment seemed to encourage among many of its young victims. The 18-year-old mother-to-be seemed to typify the young 'girls' described by Bea Campbell in 'Wigan Pier Revisited' who:

's are going it alone not only because they happened to get 'caught out', but because it is an alternative to aimless adolescence on the dole.' (1984: 66)

Having a baby or 'becoming a mam' can appear to give young women a purpose in life, an adult identity, a status other than that of 'unemployed dependent'. In the words of one of older unemployed women interviewed by Campbell:

'It's part of becoming a member of the community instead of just a reckless teenager. You don't need a job, when you're a mam. When you're a mam somebody needs you.' (1984: 66)

Pregnancy also appeared the answer to some of the practical difficulties involved in becoming an adult. In discussing his own housing problems, 22-year-old Ken explained:
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'You've got to be married or be a single parent before you can get a house. Some girls feel that a baby is important for setting up a home. If you're not married or pregnant there's no way you can get a council house.'

The result was, he explained, that:

'Young girls, and I mean young, young girls are getting hitched and having babies, or just having babies anyway. Gettin pregnant at stupid ages. There's that many in Armthorpe, its ridiculous.' (Armthorpe: 37YU)

So with their lack of choice apparent in virtually every other area of their lives, unemployed women still had some element of choice, of control in this one, their fertility.

Other unemployed young women (namely those who still hoped for other possible options) inevitably felt under a lot of peer group pressure to adopt this more traditional 'womens' role'. Some were determined to resist. Despite the pleasure she gained from looking after her sister's young child, Carol observed in her diary:

'Wayne really likes our Leah and I know he would give anything for children, but if he wants them, he will have to find someone who is prepared to give up their career and become a 'boring' mother and housewife, because I am not. Not until I have qualified for nursing at least, which will take about four years.' (Armthorpe Diary, May 1986)

The fact that it was far more difficult for the young unemployed men to slip into their 'traditional' role (of 'provider'), did not prevent them from having related problems. Even when a young man had an unemployed girlfriend and many of their peer group were also unemployed, the persistence of the 'male breadwinner' stereotype could prove a major obstacle (among a host of others) to a fully-'fledged, 'serious' relationship. As Andy put it:

'I can only afford to take my lass out one night a week. You can't go out for a meal or to a nightclub if you're on the dole. It restricts you that way. That's why I don't want 'owt serious at the moment. I can't have 'owt serious at the moment, not while I'm on the dole.' (Armthorpe: 35YU)

The insistence of the Department of Health and Social Security in enforcing this model of male provider/female dependent was another major obstacle to claimants
establishing mature relationships with one another. Rather than acting as the 'provider', if a man set up a home with his girlfriend/partner he drastically reduced her income, making both their lives a lot more difficult. In fact the only way he could actually assist her to become more materially independent (that is, to set up her own home) was to 'provide' her with a baby and then disappear from the scene. One 20-year-old, living with his parents and therefore separated, apart from extremely regular visits, from his 'girlfriend' and their young baby, explained:

'We have to claim separate from each other. We just wouldn't get enough money if we were seen to be living together, about twenty pounds less. It'd be great to live together properly but we talked it over and decided this was the only way we could afford to look after the baby. Hopefully if I manage to get a proper job, we'd be able to settle down properly.' (Armthorpe: YU)

This 'catch 22' situation meant that it was virtually impossible for two young unemployed people to plan for, or admit to having, a mature, adult relationship with each other.

The 'alternative' to a locally-based, shadowy, illicit relationship could of course, involve even greater separation, with one of the parties (usually the male) going in search of employment outside the area. This was an option that was repeatedly mentioned by the Moorsnds unemployed (see Chapter Twelve). It seemed to reveal something about the strength of the Armthorpe 'community', and the position of the unemployed within it, that none of the fourteen people interviewed listed this as a serious option. However with their other options so seriously limited, it appeared that, in the area of personal relationships as in those of careers, education and leisure, the horizons of Armthorpe's unemployed youth were narrow and under constant pressure to shrink further.
The political attitudes of the young unemployed constituted an area in which the 1984/85 Strike might be expected to have had a lasting impact. It was, however, an area which brought unforeseen difficulties. The more 'privatised' existence of the young unemployed meant that they lacked the social interaction which would encourage them to develop more rounded, tested political opinions. Many of the unemployed seemed loath to admit to having attitudes or opinions, either because they felt they had not considered the question fully (and therefore risked appearing 'stupid'), or because they were afraid of having their attitudes queried by 'an expert'. This was a similar phenomenon to that encountered by Elizabeth Frazer in her interviews with working class schoolgirls in London (1988:353). Only by posing the questions in less direct ways, or relating them to their own situation did I encourage the response rate illustrated in the tables below. Even so, there were more refusals of opinions than in any other Armthorpe group, with the lack of confidence appearing most marked among the young women. However even the latter tended to become more forthright as the interview progressed and revealed, underneath their reticence, significant shifts in their political attitudes. These are indicated in table 9.2:

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<th>Table 9.2 Post-Strike Attitudes - Armthorpe Young Unemployed (%)</th>
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Source: Armthorpe Interview Survey 1986/87

An average of 79 percent of the Armthorpe unemployed suggested that the dispute had made them more aware of what was going on in the coal industry.
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(72 percent of the women, 86 percent of the men). Nearly all those who suggested they were more aware claimed that their main source of information was personal contact with Markham miners. This put those with working miners as relatives or friends at a clear advantage, and so, not surprisingly, it was the older generation of male youth unemployed that seemed to be most aware of what was going on in the pits after the Strike. As Kev explained:

‘Yes, I get most of my information from my mates when we go out drinking. People are still on about it, and what's going on now. I never really used to bother, but now I take an interest. I'm learning more and more as I go on.’ (Armthorpe: 36YU)

Although this might have contributed to the similar gender differential when it came to attitudes towards the NCB management, the tone of the lads' answers seemed to suggest the Strike experience itself was more important. Although an average of 72 percent claimed that they felt hostile towards them, six of the 'lads' were extremely hostile compared with only four of the 'lasses'. Leaving aside the initial host of expletives, several, both men and women were quite specific in their criticism:

Andy: ‘I hate 'em. Ian MacGregor, he was just an American trash import. They've got no compassion whatsoever. Haslam is just going to do a P.R. job, he doesn't give a shit about the miners. All the NCB managers, they're being ruled from higher up. It's the law of the jungle.’

(Armthorpe: 35YU)

Steve: ‘They're mainly concerned with economics. They don't care about the communities they're destroying. They don't have to live in them, do they? MacGreggor was brought in to do a job and now he's signed off with a golden handshake. Their only concerns are the Government's policies.'

(Armthorpe: 42YU)

and Sharon: ‘I hate them. Before I wasn't really bothered, but now I hate their guts for what they have done and what they are still doing to people round here.’

(Armthorpe: 43YU)

None of these people had ever worked in the coal industry, nor had any direct contact with NCB management. The strength of feeling and precision of analysis had clearly emerged due to their involvement in the Strike.
Attitudes towards the Police

The question, 'What's your attitude towards NCB management?' required that the young unemployed venture opinions on 'industry', where they had little or no experience. NCB management were beyond their normal circle of social contact. This was not so with the police, and, in this area, their attitudes were held more confidently and more uniformly. When asked, 'What did you think about the policing of the Strike?', there was a negative response from every one of the young people interviewed, with men and women equally strident in their criticism. So Andy replied:

'Policing? Is that what you call it? It were just mayhem! Disgusting and the young 'uns were the worst!.' (Armthorpe: 35YU)

and Ken:

'Crap! I were totally against it. They brought that many into the village. Met and Manchester, they were the worst. I was expecting it to be rough, but not as many or as bad as it were. That day in the village, its the first time I've seen that many together. They were just animals!' (Armthorpe: 37YU)

Paula related her personal experience in some detail:

'Terrible, crap, it surprised me. I used to get really scared, cos I used to get chased more times than ... I always used to be the one right at the back, cos the others seemed to know just when to run and I didn't!

That first day when they had all these roads barricaded, they were driving the miners into the woods where they had more police barricades and dogs....they dragged one lad out of the park where they'd beaten him up. And one bobby said,'He hit a tree with his head.' And he was pouring with blood and he must have been bleeding to death for fifteen minutes before they'd call the ambulance and all the women were standing round and getting more and more angry and shouting at the coppers and they just kept saying,'He'll stop bleeding when all the blood's run out '. It were terrible!' (Armthorpe: 40YU)

Four of the young women were concerned to point out the blatant 'unfairness' of the policing as well as its brutality. So Carol observed:

'They were too brutal. It were the Met police especially, they're trained in rioting. It was very unfair, taking six cops to arrest just one man. If there'd been less police, there'd have been less fighting and less conflict.' (Armthorpe: 39YU)

and Sharon:
Crap, wasn't it? I didn't think they were right at all. It was awful some of the stuff that was going off. They were hitting people and expecting not to be hit back. And just taunting us all the time. Calling us names and trying to wind us up so they could arrest us.'

(Armthorpe: 43YU)

Again four of the young women drew attention to the sexual component in the police's abuse of the local population. One policeman's attempt to underline the extreme power differential by stressing his sexual 'authority' was described by Paula, who was only sixteen years old at the time:

'That afternoon, when they'd barricaded all the streets off and stuff, I had to go out. I always take my goat for a walk on the lead. And there was one copper who shouted across the road at me, 'How much were your goat?' And it took me by surprise, so I just said, 'He cost a fiver' and he shouted, 'And how much do you charge?' Just like that!.... I felt so angry. And he chucked this right big apple across the road to the goat, and I slung it right back and said, 'You can stuff that too!'

(Armthorpe: 40YU)

This type of sexist affront was of a different order to that described by Pollert as being used to underline authority relations in the women's workplace (1981:142) The humiliation suffered by themselves and their mothers left a deep impression on the young teenagers. Lynn described her experience:

'I was going up to the picket line to find out what had happened to Mam and these riot coppers stopped me. I says, 'I want to come through' and they just said, 'Fuck off home, or we'll arrest you.' Anyway I eventually got through to me mam and some other women and the coppers were crowding them in against the wall and calling them names - slags and sluts and stuff like that. I'll never forget that.....'

(Armthorpe: 44YU)

This antagonistic relationship between the police and the unemployed youth appeared to be one of the most enduring 'legacies' of the Strike. One Armthorpe youth suggested:

'It didn't surprise me what they got up to during the Strike. I hated them from the first day. In fact I never liked 'em in the first place. They're just bastards. Bullies in uniform.'

(Armthorpe: 44YU)

These personal views were supplemented by stories:

'Me and me Mam were walking from me Grandma's the other day and this cop came out of the cop shop and he went like that [pouting lips as in a kiss] to me. And I just looked at him and said, 'Pig'. Like under me breath but so he'd hear it. And Mam said, 'He might not have been here when the Strike were on!' And I says, 'It doesn't matter, they're all
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the same! ' [Mother intervenes in interview: 'But when's the bitterness going to end? '] [Daughter] 'It can't, can it?' (Armthorpe: 40YU) and by more general observations,:

'There's a lot more trouble with the police. The youth are a lot more rebellious, a lot more resentful to them. In fact there aren't many youngsters who'll even talk to the police. Even my little brother, he's only four and even he calls them 'pigs'!' (Armthorpe: 43YU)

'Things are getting worse between the young 'uns and the cops. If there's a gang of them they'll throw things at them and call them 'fascists'. They're a lot more political.' (Armthorpe: 42YU)

This last observation was repeated by several of the young interviewees. The hostility to the Coal Board management and the police seemed to reflect a more general hostility to those in authority and this in turn formed part of a significant political radicalisation among the young unemployed. This was revealed in the reply of one 22-year-old youth:

'The Strike hardened up my hatred of the pigs, although I never liked 'em anyway. I didn't like Margaret Thatcher before, I hate her now. My attitudes have changed a lot. Nobody likes or talks to the police. The young 'uns all seem to be more aware. There's a bitterness there now. Anybody in uniform or authority, we won't talk to 'em.' (Armthorpe: 36YU)

Having felt part of a community, positively defined by their collective interests and activity, the young unemployed evidently felt resentful at having to return to a situation where their lives were defined (negatively) from above, by those in positions of authority or 'the state'.

Attitudes towards Trade Unions

The politicisation of the young jobless led to an increased awareness in number of areas. One of these was the area of collective industrial organisation, of trade unionism (See Table 9.2). Six of the men and four of the women suggested that the Strike had made them more aware of the unions, while all seven men and five of the women described themselves as 'pro-union'. As only three of those interviewed had ever had personal experience of union membership, this was a remarkably high figure. In the same way that Pollert's women tobacco workers saw the union as 'part of a man's world' (1981: 165), the unemployed saw
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them as part of the world of work, from which they were automatically excluded.

The Strike had merely given them a grounding in the basics of trade union theory and practise. So while a majority knew they were definitely 'for them', their lack of first-hand experience made them hesitant in commenting on them. Andy:

'I think unions are a good thing definitely. The Strike showed that. I've never been a member of a union. If I got another job, I think I'd join, if I could. If you're not a member you can only have a point of view.'

(Armthorpe: 35YU)

and Kenny:

They do a lot more than what I thought they did. There were some problems in the Strike with the leaders, they didn't show enough strength towards their members. But others were very good. They'd arrive at the Welly with all the food and money they'd collected. You definitely need a union, they're there to help you. I'd say everybody should join if they can.

(Armthorpe: 37YU)

The key importance of a wage relationship in providing access to collective activity is again indicated. As the period of heightened struggle passed, the constitutional boundaries of the union became less permeable. The unemployed's exclusion from the wage relationship again excludes them from direct involvement in the union, leaving them in the role of spectators who 'can only have a point of view'.

The extent of their support for institutions that they are excluded from reveals how the Strike had strengthened the pro-union culture of the village. This, however, indicates other problems, of how exclusion from a waged relationship can also imply exclusion from other areas of political activity in a strongly union-oriented community.

Attitudes towards the Media

There was a significant growth of awareness when it came to the political role of the media in the society. The changes in attitudes are outlined in table 9.3 below:
Five of the women (71 percent) and six of the men (86 percent) felt that the T.V. coverage had been biased against the miners. Although all had seen news coverage of the Strike, the other three felt that they couldn't say whether it had been biased or not. This was a high proportion compared with the other groups interviewed and illustrated the problems associated with a heavily 'privatised' existence. Having grown accustomed to relating to 'outside' events in the role of passive spectators, they apparently found it very difficult to adopt a generalised critical stance to the TV coverage. In response to the question, 'What did you think of the TV coverage of the Strike?', one twenty year-old woman merely replied:

'There was a lot of it. I used to watch the news and it was very interesting, seeing what was going off.' (Armthorpe:37YU)

A majority of the remainder admitted that they had been surprised at discovering systematic television bias for the first time. Kenny suggested:

'Yes, it surprised me. Before the Strike I always thought that the news were O.K. It was only when I went out with the lads picketing that I saw what was really going on. The version they put over weren't the reality. And if the reporters were asking questions, they were always talking to the police, never the pickets. I'm a lot more suspicious of the News now.' (Armthorpe:37YU)

A critical attitude towards newspapers and in particular, their coverage of the Strike, was more widespread, as indicated in table 9.4:


Table 9.4 Press Coverage of Strike - Armthorpe Young Unemployed Reaction (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old Paper's coverage</th>
<th>Action taken</th>
<th>Post-Strike Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Rubbish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No interviewed: 14

Source: 1986 Interview Survey

Only eight of those interviewed had actually bought their own paper prior to the Strike. Nevertheless all had access to one and 93 percent were critical of its Strike coverage. However, relative to the miners and the women activists, there was a smaller number of young unemployed who were severely critical of 'their' paper. Although their frequent dependency on other people's newspapers made it difficult to measure the change, it appeared that a smaller proportion had chosen to cancel their paper, and less of them changed papers during the Strike. There was also less attempt made to shift 'leftwards' in the Strike's aftermath.

A partial exception to this was provided by the pre-Strike Sun readers. Of the three pre-Strike copies of the Sun being read by the young unemployed (two of them women), all were cancelled in the first few weeks of the Strike (two transferring to the Daily Mirror, and one to the Daily Star). Three (21 percent) of those interviewed had cancelled their daily newspaper, one because of their content, two because they couldn't afford one.

Changes in Overall Political Attitudes

These changes in attitudes; towards police, media, trade unions, as well as a growth in awareness of gender and race, seemed to constitute an important radicalisation, a development of a general political consciousness among several of the Armthorpe youth. Although hampered by a lack of confidence
in their ability to use political and, particularly, class concepts, they themselves started to describe this politicisation, this growing 'awareness'.

This emerged clearly in the latter part of their interviews, both in their evaluation of the Strike, and in the more open sessions on whether the Strike had changed them or their lives. The findings outlined in Table 9.4 suggest that, even eighteen months after a bitter defeat, they considered the Strike experience to be an important part of their lives.

Table 9.5 Evaluation of Strike Experience - Armthorpe Young Unemployed (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strike Justified</th>
<th>Personal Experience</th>
<th>Outcome affected future prospects?</th>
<th>Growth in Polit Awareness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>+ive</td>
<td>-ive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>7</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

There was a unanimity among the unemployed that the nature of the Strike, in defence of jobs, justified its occurrence, regardless of the hardship and the eventual outcome. The statements which accompanied this support tended to emphasize the political importance of the Strike. So Kenny suggested:

'It were something they had to do, show that we weren't going to sit back and take it in the neck. It showed Thatcher and co that we weren't going to take the crap without a fight. If they hadn't come out, it would have been a lot worse than it already is.' (Armthorpe: 35YU)

The strong personal identification with the Strike illustrates how the extremely sectional consciousness encouraged by unemployment was being overlaid by broader class considerations. This was also illustrated by the replies to the question, 'If the Strike had been won, do you think it would have made a difference to these [own and other's] prospects?'. Of the eleven that replied in the affirmative, eight chose to emphasize the broader political implications (although five of the men and three of the women's 'partners' had their names on the Markham job list). Diane suggested:
Unemployed Youth after the Miners Strike

'If the miners had won, she [Margaret Thatcher] would have been out quick. It would have made a big effect across the working class, people would be optimistic rather than pessimistic. It would have brought a major change.' (Armthorpe: 46YU)

This development of a wider consciousness was confirmed by the number of unemployed who claimed a growth in their political awareness as one of their gains from the Strike. Most of these claims were made in response to the final open question, 'Would you say that the Strike has changed you as a person?' and by this time several of the unemployed who had initially refused to budge from monosylabbic replies had developed an enthusiasm and a fluency around the issue.

So Kenny claimed:

'It's made me think what Thatcher and that can do. I don't know a lot now, but before I didn't know nothing. I'm more politically aware than before. I've got a much better head about me.' (Armthorpe: 37YU)

and Lynn:

'The Strike opened my eyes. It's made me more aware of what the miners went through, what mining's all about. I didn't realize there was all the politics and unions behind it. I thought it was just men going down a hole in the ground. It's made me more politically minded. And it's nice to see so many strong women around, although personally I've always been strong on women's rights.' (Armthorpe: 44YU)

The enthusiasm that the young unemployed showed for discussing changes in their political attitudes and awareness seemed to be, if anything, greater than that of the adult miners and women activists. It was as though this was one part of their Strike experience that could not be 'taken away' from them in the aftermath. The overwhelming majority considered the Strike to have been a positive experience, in lives which tended to be short on such experiences. Their Strike experience appeared to help them to define their problems and improve their self-image. By having a broader, more political understanding of their predicament, they seemed more able to rid themselves of a lot of the self-blame that unemployed people often take on themselves. So Kev could claim:
Unemployed Youth after the Miners Strike

'I'd go through it all again. It changed me. I learned and learned and learned. I realized what they were fighting for. It were hard at first, but as time went on I got to know more. I realized what they were fighting for.' (Armthorpe: 36YU)

And Carol:

'Everybody got something out of it. Everybody got an experience. It showed that the working class weren't going to be pushed around. We've been pushed around for years. The Miners' Strike stopped all that for a time. It took the miners to get everybody else up off their knees, like the teachers. It matured my attitudes to life, and to working life especially.' (Armthorpe: 39YU)

As individuals most of the unemployed had a deeply pessimistic attitude towards the future. They were beset by problems with no solutions. The spark of hope and confidence that they gained from their brief involvement in collective political activity is evident in the above quotes. Instead of being constantly 'pushed around', the working class, including the unemployed, got 'off their knees' if only 'for a time'. Although their direct involvement in the struggle only lasted a short time, it played an important role in changing their view of the world and giving them at least some sense of identity.

The Unemployed and 'Community'

In the first eighteen months after the Strike, very little of this change in political attitudes had been reflected in an increase in political activity. Unlike the older women, none of the young unemployed had joined the Labour Party. Although two of the men and one woman had become readers of a political newspaper, only one man had joined the political organisation which published it (the Socialist Workers Party). Neither was there any major involvement of the unemployed in major political campaigns, such as Anti-Apartheid or the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. There appeared to be a series of obstacles to the young unemployed joining these organisations; lack of confidence, lack of resources, and, of course, lack of a wage relationship that would provide them with experience of collective organisation and workplace struggle. As in the areas of sport and leisure, the more 'atomised' existence of
the unemployed seemed to make them reticent about becoming involved in disciplined activity.

But it also seemed that the nature of their Strike involvement did not encourage such involvement. During their interviews it became apparent that the Strike activity of most of the young unemployed had been confined to the local strike 'community'. Although some had gone 'flying' or done local fundraising, the focus of their activity had been the Armthorpe pit 'gates', the Welfare and the village. In a sense their experience had been similar to that of the women who worked every day in the kitchen. Unlike a substantial core of NUM and Womens Action Group members, the unemployed did not play a key role in linking the local community with the wider political one. Due to their social position, their lack of experience and confidence, many of the unemployed had felt unable to establish and secure a position in the wider class-based community.

In other words the 'community' that the unemployed won access to, due to their Strike activity, was the local, village-based one. Although the institutions around which the local Strike-based community had been constructed (picket line, WAG, kitchen, woodyard) disappeared at the end of the Strike, there was a tendency among the unemployed to hold onto their Strike-based status and relationships. This phenomenon emerged clearly during the interviews and is illustrated in Table 9.6:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is there local Community?</th>
<th>Was it Strengthened by the Strike?</th>
<th>Do unemployed feel part of Community?</th>
<th>Did Strike effect this?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No interviewed: 14  
Source: 1986 Armthorpe Interview Survey

Two of the women and a twenty year-old man insisted that there had not been a community in the village prior to the Strike. Sharon explained:
Unemployed Youth after the Miners Strike

'Before I didn't feel it was a community. It emerged during the Strike and its kept up since, not as good as in the Strike, but still there.'  
(Armthorpe: 43YU)

While Paula, who felt that there was no longer a community in the village, suggested:

'Yes, there was a real community during the Strike, we were all involved then. But now they've got a job and we haven't, we can't mix, we can't go into town with them. There's a separation between the unemployed and the miners again. Michael's brother wouldn't even lend him a fiver the other day. You feel it most in the shops. The people with jobs'll be picking getting steak, chocolate cakes and stuff, while we're just picking up a packet of plain biscuits.'  
(Armthorpe: 40YU)

This slip back from the Strike-based community was picked out as important by five of those interviewed, four of them women. They appeared more susceptible to the repenetration of market forces into everyday relationships. Carol suggested:

I don't think the unemployed feel part of the community. Everybody else is working and has got money and stuff. We haven't got anything. We just look at what they've got, compare and feel sick if you know what I mean.  
(Armthorpe: 39YU)

The near-unanimous sense of 'belonging' reported by the men, could obviously be attributed, in part, to the continuing 'male orientation' of the pit based community. However, as I have explained with regards to the youngest generations of unemployed, there were definite limits to the extent that 'maleness' could act as a passport to 'community'. Strike activity was a more important factor. The young men interviewed had been more heavily involved in the Strike-based community and, from diaries and interviews, it appeared that they found it much easier to maintain the status and friendships they had established during the Strike. This led to a confidence when they talked about feeling 'part of the community'. As Kenny suggested:

'It's a lot better now. Before the Strike there was no place for us really, we were on the edges. There were a lot of people I didn't know or didn't talk to. During the Strike, everybody was helping one another out. We used to walk into the Welfare, find out what was going off, jump in a car and be off. Didn't matter if they were a complete stranger. The miners were good before, but it got a lot better during the Strike. We've got a lot more friends now.'  
(Armthorpe: 37YU)
Unemployed Youth after the Miners Strike

It was due to their activity in the Strike that the men gained equal access to the local community. By taking advantage of the openings provided by the Armthorpe tradition, they had become 'honorary strikers', and been seen as an essential part of the Strike community. Kev explained:

'People are still on about things we did during the Strike. I was one of the lads, and I suppose I still am. When I'm around town with Roy and the others, people still think I work at the pit. Even in the Welfare, miners often ask me, 'Which shift are you on?' or 'Whereabouts do you work?' I just tell em I'm on the list, and they just say, 'Oh aye', cos they know that the list's a thousand miles long.' (Armthorpe: 36YU)

This was the situation eighteen months after the end of the Strike. The unemployed's lack of involvement in the local work situation was mirrored by their lack of involvement in the broader trade union and political communities. Their lack of resources even impinged on their ability to socialise with the working miners in their peer group (leaving Kev, for example, wondering whether he could still count himself 'one of the lads'). It was their role in the Strike where they had been equal and shared fully reciprocal relationships, which underpinned their status in the community. The unemployed continued to enjoy unprecedented generosity:

'The lads took me out, bless 'em. I'll see 'em right'

but there was little possibility of them being able to reciprocate and, at the end of the day, the intense solidarity actually served to underline their dependency:

'Everybody has decided to cancel their holiday to Spain. They said that if any of the lads could not make it, none of them would go. So we will probably have a week some place in England. [my emphasis]

(Armthorpe Diary, April 1986).
CONCLUSION

One of the primary functions of the traditional mining community was to socialize its younger generations into the roles required by the coal industry. The steady reduction in the mining workforce due to cutbacks in production and rationalisation involved an increasingly severe exclusion of young men from the coal industry. Together with the growth of mass unemployment in the late 1970's and early 1980's this contributed to a major increase in the numbers of young jobless in Armthorpe. In this chapter I have described the role of unemployment in marginalising the jobless youth from the work-based community. I have illustrated how it confines them to a state of dependency, not only on the state but on their parents and friends. In severely restricting their activities and relationships, joblessness makes it impossible to plan for the future, effectively preventing them from embarking on the adult stages of their life cycle.

The unemployed youth not only suffer a lack of work-based social contact. Exclusion from the wage relationship tends to prevent involvement in other forms of collective activity and can lead to a severely privatized existence in the areas of sport, leisure, cultural and political life. Lack of resources and lack of control over their lives serve to further sap their confidence, cutting them off from the pit and union-centred community and turning them into what Henriques described as 'socially isolated and culturally condemned human beings' (Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter, 1969: 10).

The strategy of the Armthorpe Strike leadership, of placing the dispute in its broader political context, was aimed at mobilising the maximum number of people on a non-sectional basis. The constitutional boundaries of the NUM were made permeable and the young unemployed, along with other sections of the population were encouraged to see the miners' fight as their own. Armthorpe's political tradition of maximum mobilisation of union and community
resources facilitated widespread participation in what became, effectively, a 'community strike'. For the young unemployed, whose social relationships were, in normal times, largely shaped by their dependency on the state, this participation in a community that was centred on their own collective interests and activity acted as a watershed in their lives. By focussing on the need to protect the central workplace, its union and the union-centred community, the Strike drew many young people, who had seen themselves on the margins of that community, into their first experience of collective struggle. The role of the state remained important. The occupation and criminalisation of the village population, far from separating the young unemployed from the striking miners, only served to draw more of the local unemployed into activity.

There were other aspects of the Strike community which appealed to the unemployed. All pervasive 'market' relationships, a key excluder of the unemployed in 'normal' times, were rendered largely irrelevant. The premium placed on personal attributes such as commitment, resilience and loyalty allowed the young unemployed to develop new skills, new roles and a new status in the community. Their 1984/85 experience had a major impact on their attitudes and relationships, introducing them to the previously 'closed' worlds of collective organisation, the labour movement and class politics.

As with the Armthorpe women, having earned a higher status through their involvement in struggle, the young unemployed were loath to relinquish it. On a social level, the Strike's consolidation of miner-unemployed friendships into something approximating 'exclusive groups of males' allowed some unemployed to overcome problems of lack of resources and 'privatisation'. Despite their ' politicisation', the unemployed were less successful in sustaining their involvement in the world of political activity. Like many of the Armthorpe women, virtually all the unemployed had felt unable to secure a position in the wider class-based community during the Strike.
Unemployed Youth after the Miners Strike

As a result, the major development in political ideas had not been reflected in a similarly major increase in political activity. This lack of participation had an effect on the status of the unemployed within the post-Strike community. At the time of the interviews, few of the unemployed doubted that the Strike had either created or strengthened the community in the village. More (especially women) were uncertain as to whether they had a place in this local 'community'. Dependent on national state agencies (DHSS, YTS) for their livelihood, the unemployed have very few local focal points around which to organise a sustained collective struggle. Only by fusing their own sectional interests with the broader issues faced by the organised workers movement do they allow themselves the possibility of effective mobilisation. This was indicated in their interviews, where the most optimistic of the young unemployed were the few that had established firm links with this 'alternative community'.

Steve argued:

'I definitely don't regret the Strike. I just regret the outcome wasn't different. I regret the failure of other workers to give the miners the full support they needed. If they'd have come out on strike, we'd have won easy. I also regret the effect it's had on other workers. They've taken only the negative lessons from the Strike and ignored the positive ones. We lived for a full year against the power of the state and won solidarity inspite of it.'

(Armthorpe: 42YU)

and Kev:

'It changed me. It got me more politically aware of everything. The Miner's Strike and what's happened since then. It made me realize I'm a working class person same as them, 'cos before I didn't know what I was. It's changed my attitude towards other people. My only regret is not getting involved earlier and not being political enough at the beginning of the Strike. I'd have put a lot more in and got a lot more out.'

(Armthorpe: 36YU)

Excluded from direct participation in the trade union/political activity of the Armthorpe NUM, the young unemployed were far more reliant on political organisations which could fuse unemployed and trade union struggles with broader political ones. The weakness of the class-based political 'community' in the
aftermath of the Miner's Strike meant that many of the young unemployed, who had become active during the Strike, reverted to political passivity.

If the Armthorpe unemployed's Strike experience reveals the potential of collective struggle in strengthening community, this post-Strike experience of a weakening of community indicates the accuracy of Henriques' previously-mentioned prediction. Excluded both from participation in the ongoing industrial struggles at the pit, and from collective political activity, several of the unemployed had experienced a 'slip back', a weakening of community, a renewed pressure towards isolation and atomisation. If this is the case where there is still an open pit in the village, what are the implications for pit villages without a pit? The process by which the closure of a central workplace encourages the disintegration of 'community' will be investigated in the next three chapters, which outline the story of Moorends.
Unemployed Youth after the Miners' Strike

FOOTNOTES

1. The authors of *Coal is Our Life* outline this central paradox. The insecurity of pit work might be expected to encourage miners to save 'for a rainy day', and Dennis and his colleagues did note the tendency of miners to avoid leisure activities that required a consistently high income. However the spending of so much time in an unpleasant and dangerous environment also encouraged miners to 'live life to the full' and expect 'the best' when out of the pit. This was exemplified by the mining families' regular consumption of expensive (tinned) foodstuffs and the amount of custom they provided for the travelling salesmen or 'packie men' (1969:200,235).

   I witnessed the same phenomenon in 1986 and 1987. Despite the massive debts of the miners, there were still a large number of salesmen knocking on doors, although the 'asking price' of their offers had grown considerably. The number and size of the deals that my mining friends got into used to take my breath away. If I (on an ESRC research grant) felt slightly 'out of it', the young unemployed must have felt they inhabited a different planet from the 'free-spending' miners.

2. The apparent abstinence of young women from betting was more marked than among the older women (see table 7.2). As two of the three Armthorpe women were rather circumspect about their visits to the betting shop, perhaps there were more than 14 percent of the total who engaged in this pastime. One factor in explaining the age differential is the younger women's acute shortage of funds. All the older women who 'admitted' to regular betting had part-time jobs and therefore a 'significant' income independent of their partner.

3. I conducted a small number of interviews with miners and their partners in Thurnscoe. They all commented on how there had been a major growth of petty vandalism and anti-social behaviour among the youth since Hickleton Main had been closed down two years previously.

4. This caused me some concern. Very often a knock on the door would be immediately followed by a friend or neighbour coming through it! That was the way many Armthorpe people operated. A woman who had moved into Armthorpe thirteen years previously explained the phenomenon:
   
   'A lot of miners and miners' families just walk into each others houses without bothering. They just hop over the fence and through the door. My sister was blasted when people used to come into her house and put the kettle on. Her husband used to do the same in our house when he first met her. We weren't used to it, we'd look on, gobsmacked' (Armthorpe:6W)

   Having been invited to live in miner's homes in various parts of the village, I was not about to start informing them about how they had to start locking their doors and windows! However, apart from my invaluable recording equipment and other meagre, but essential possessions, my field trips always witnessed an amassing of a large pile of confidential diaries, tape recordings and interview notes. The loss of these would, of course, have proved catastrophic. In the event my worries proved unfounded. Burglaries were few and far between in the pit village parts of Armthorpe.

5. Although this area was not covered in any of the interview schedules, eight Armthorpe informants mentioned it as a feature of the Strike experience. Limited amounts of vegetables and fuel were 'liberated' from nearby farms and coal merchants (the NCB policy of sacking those who raided pit stocks made the latter particularly vulnerable), but I heard no reports of 'thieving' from each other.
Unemployed Youth after the Miners' Strike

6. With the women, it was those who had not been so highly involved or who worked in the kitchen, who were more reticent about venturing their opinions on 'difficult' or 'political' issues. But all three major Armthorpe groups; miners, women and young unemployed, were far more confident in expressing opinions than their Moorends counterparts.

7. In a sense this was a tale on its own. Nine of the fourteen interviewed (71 percent) tried not to think about the future, while a further two admitted that thinking about it only caused them to worry. A similar number described a yawning gap between their hopes and expectations, while eleven of the fourteen did not feel confident in suggesting any remedy for their situation. One of the unemployed suggested: 'When I get bored and I start thinking about the future, I end up getting suicidal. So I just think hours and perhaps days ahead. Never any more. I can't afford to hope for much really. If I thought much ahead, I'd probably end up committing suicide'. (Armthorpe: **YU)

8. Only one of the young men had joined CND in the aftermath of the Strike. This did not mean that the remainder were unconcerned about these issues. The unemployed decorated their diaries with anti-Murdoch stickers, wore CND badges and discussed the politics behind the lyrics of certain songs. Although Billy Bragg had already proclaimed 'Wearing badges is not enough', the importance of this badge-wearing should not be underestimated. It was in a sense, their equivalent of joining the organisation, involving a personal commitment. The level of financial and organisational commitment that the unemployed imagined was required by membership of these campaigns was outside their range.

9. In using this term, my aim is to suggest the very close bonding described by Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter, rather than the total exclusion of women. As mentioned in previous chapters, there was still a significant element of segregation in Armthorpe leisure activity. It was not unusual to see (exclusive) groups of young women out for the night and enjoying each other's company. Alongside the 'exclusive' groups, there were mixed groups who seemed to relate to one another on an easy, egalitarian basis. One difference was that the purely unemployed groups (more often women) tended to be of a fairly small size, while those containing miners tended to be larger. This centred on the difficulty faced by unemployed people in buying large rounds. Even when they arrived with employed friends or relatives, the unemployed would often gravitate towards unwaged companions, who consumed less drink and who would not expect them to 'join a round'. There was thus a complex set of politics involved in buying an unemployed person a drink. If I met one of my diarists or other informants in a pub, my offer of a drink usually bought the request of a 'half' (they had apparently 'sussed' the level of ESRC grants!). However, having bought the unemployed person (outside my group) a drink, I would later have an 'extra' drink delivered to me away from the larger group (usually at the bar or on the way back from the dance floor).

In those exclusive male groups of miners and unemployed, the miners would 'cover' for their unemployed colleagues, essentially taking it in turns to buy extra rounds once they realised they were 'hard up'. Paying busfares or entrance into Doncaster clubs was a different matter and the unemployed would keep some money back for this purpose.

10. The removal of these local focal points of political activity among the unemployed were one of the reasons the state removed all responsibility for providing unemployment relief from the local boards of guardians. See Chapter Four and Macintyre (1980: Chapters 3 and 4)

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PART THREE
MOORENDS

The main body of the thesis has been concerned to demonstrate how, by encouraging the establishment of industrial and political organisation among its workforce, a major workplace can provide the basis for a close-knit, dynamic community. I have looked at the issue of unemployment in the context of its effects on a section of the younger population. In the third part of my thesis I turn my attention to what happens to the local community in a mining village when the pit and union branch which gave rise to its existence are closed down.

I have divided the story of Moorends into three sections. In Chapter Ten I describe the sinking of Thorne Colliery and the establishment of a pit village on the edge of Thorne Waste. I outline how the construction of the village was undertaken by Pease and Partners of Darlington in order to attract a stable workforce with the skills that would enable them to exploit the rich Barnsley Bed seam. The attempts of the coal-owners to construct a certain kind of community were countered by the efforts of the miners to establish a very different one. I explain how the history of Moorends took a dramatic turn with the NCB's 1956 decision to suspend coal production at Thorne Colliery. I describe the ways in which the protracted suspension had an increasingly severe impact on village life. In spite of the persistent efforts of the miners who continued to live in the village, the closure of the pit and its union branch increasingly deprived the village of its central focus for 'community'.

As in the case of Armthorpe, the 1984/85 Strike gives us an opportunity to measure the strength of the local community and witness the processes through which collective struggle shapes it. The Moorends Strike experience, described in Chapter Eleven, stands in sharp contrast to that of Armthorpe, where major union and political resources were fused to provide the
basis for a 'community strike'. Although the Moorends strike-based network did manage to sustain the local strikers, the scale and nature of the village population's participation was of a very different order. The severe lack of human and material resources also inhibited members of the local strike community from sharing their experience with 'outside' supporters.

In Chapter Twelve I enquire into the nature of people's lives and relationships in the Strike's aftermath. In 1986/87 the unemployment, that had plagued Moorends since the pit closure, had reached a very high level. In examining the situation of the miners, their partners and the young unemployed in the village, I ask whether the basis for 'community' has been completely eroded.

This section is not intended to constitute a parallel community study to that of Armthorpe. It's purpose is to demonstrate, albeit in a negative way, the importance of an open pit and union branch in the creation of 'community' in a pit village. It is therefore very much a secondary study. Although the smaller number of interviews and diarists was not unconnected with the size of the village and its Strike experience (see Appendix 1), it nevertheless causes me to be cautious about claiming statistical representation. However, I believe that the rich qualitative data generated by the fifty six interviews is indicative of important trends, at least among those sections of the village population who are still involved in the mining industry.
MOORENDS—THE HISTORY OF THE PIT.
THE UNION and THE VILLAGE.

The Bolsheies are leaders, I do not want,
They maketh me behave myself in the branch room,
But resolutions I will not pass
They maketh me have cheaper light,
   Also a Price List
They leadeth me on the path of honesty,
For their name's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the village of wrath and scorn,
I will fear no evil,
For thou art with me, oh Pease
And thy puddings comfort me.
Thy police and thy summonses protect me.
Thou prepareth a Club for our comfort,
Even in the eyes of your victims......

Last psalm of the Puff-Scab, Thorne Butty Squasher No 12, 28 June 1929.

Introduction

In this chapter I outline the history of Moorends up to the 1984/85 Strike. I describe how the pit was sunk and the nature of the workforce that was attracted to it. I explain the complex development of the mineworkers' union, which, although it came to play a central role in the lives of the local population, had, initially, to overcome much greater problems than its counterpart in Armthorpe. I then describe how Moorends village was established and how its networks of social relationships were shaped by the coal-owners, the mineworkers, their families and their union. I go on to describe the development of the close-knit village community, which thrived until the the closure of its pit in January 1957.

Having outlined the controversy which surrounded the 'temporary suspension' of mining at Moorends, I investigate its impact on the economic, social and political life of the village. I describe how the union branch came
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under threat due to its members' dispersal throughout the Doncaster coalfield and how this in turn, fed through into a variety of other village institutions, fundamentally weakening a community which had had the miners' collective organisation at its centre. I describe how the colliery closure seemed to encourage a temporary strengthening of Moorends' radical political tradition, resulting, for example, in the election of Communists into prominent positions in local government for a period.

Although in the process of analysing the development of Moorends I will draw out comparisons and contrasts with Armthorpe, it is in the 1984/85 Strike experience that the strengths and weaknesses of the local communities in the two villages become most apparent. A central aim of this chapter is therefore to provide the necessary historical background, in order that the more recent experiences of the Moorends population can be seen in their proper context.

Moorends Prior to Pit-Sinking

Moorends is a much smaller village than the modern Armthorpe. It lies thirteen miles to the North-East of Doncaster (ten miles north of Armthorpe along the M18 motorway). Its population at the time of the 1981 census was 5,322 (which included 1,287 children). One and a quarter miles to the south lies the larger and older market town of Thorne (1981 population: 11,470), seven miles to the north lies Goole, both settlements owing their existence to the water transport network around the Humber estuary. Moorends is built on the edge of an extensive piece of moorland known as Thorne Waste, which is itself part of Hatfield Chase. The whole of this area was permanently under water until the seventeenth century when a Dutchman named Vermuyden supervised a major drainage operation. In 1900, Moorends consisted of a couple of farms and 'a small colony of Dutch people... employed in peat cutting and numbering 439 in 106 houses without a water supply or a proper sewerage system... the sewerage
discharges by the side of the public footpath into an open ditch where it forms a stagnant cesspool emitting at times offensive effluvia which can be perceived at some distance.' (Woodhead, 1987: 7)

The Sinking of the Pit

Thorne's status as the 'youngest' pit in the Doncaster coalfield owed a lot to the exceptional length of time it took to complete the 'sinking'. Having begun their first drilling operation at Micklethwaite Farm in 1904, the Thorne Boring Syndicate eventually located the rich Barnsley Bed seam in early 1908 at a depth of 918 yards. They immediately sold out their 9,000 acres of mineral rights (see Appendix 10) to the Darlington-based company of Pease and Partners, who had extensive mining interests in County Durham plus an involvement in steel, engineering and railways.

The sinking of two shafts was begun in October 1909. The technical problems of mining coal at depth were exacerbated by the local geological factors, most notably the presence of a series of permo-triassic rock layers, non-coalbearing and heavily laden with water. The German engineering firm, Thyssen's were brought into execute the sinking and adopted a variety of strategies to overcome the water problem, including the freezing of water round the shafts and the development of special drainage collars. The loss of German expertise due to the First World War and problems with the freezing technique, meant that the sinking was suspended between 1914 and 1920, when it was resumed by a local firm of engineers, Cementation of Bentley, Doncaster. The size of the water problem meant that it was only in March 1926, that sinking was completed. Even then, after seventeen years and the loss of twelve lives, the severe water problem prevented the exploitation of the Barnsley Bed and it was the High Hazel Seam (or 'Kent's Thick' as it is known locally), at a depth of 868 yards that was eventually mined.
It was in 1924, when the sinking first reached its primary target, the Barnsley Bed (or 'Top Hard') Seam, that Pease and Partners decided to build their village. Loans and public subsidies were negotiated and consultations were begun with the Thorne Rural District Council on the rateable value and the extent and cost of a sewerage system (to cover both the new village and the old town). Pease and Partners, having set up a brick manufacturing yard along with the pit, established the Thorne Housing Association Ltd. which aimed to build between 200 and 250 houses in the first year and 250 per year up to a total of 2,000. This target was later scaled down to 1,800.

The pit's workforce grew rapidly: in 1925 there were 460 employees, by 1926 1,169, by 1927, when they started turning coal in volume, 1,480. The numbers continued to grow for the next three years, reaching their peak at 3,396 in 1931, after which the economic depression took its toll and they fell, averaging 2,250 for the remainder of the thirties. The miners' houses were constructed rapidly and were occupied as soon as they were completed. Miners used to queue for their keys at the colliery office, housed in the old Micklethwaite farm house. As with Armthorpe, the early Moorends was far from a model village at this stage. Harold Swift, who arrived late in 1926 described his experience:

‘There seemed a lot more builders than pitmen. There must have been at least twenty men working on each house. It were laughable. It were taking just over a week to to build the houses. We were lodging not a hundred yards from a street that they hadn't started to build, yet in six weeks, our house was finished and we were flitting in. We used to joke that if they'd got the foundations in at the beginning of the shift, they'd have the roof on before the shift ended.

There were no proper roads built. Wembley Road was just being built in December 1926. There was that much mud and water that lots of people would take off their stockings and shoes off and paddle to work. Nobody blacked their boots, they just had to wash them. They were afraid the pit would be flooded out so they built a platform around the shaft.'

(Moorends: 151 SC)

The house building programme went to schedule during the 1920's, so that in 1930 there were 1,261 inhabited houses in Moorends and 1,360 a year later.

Unemployment and short time working then caused a slowdown in the increase, so
that by 1934 there were only 1,403 inhabited houses. By this stage a majority of Thorne Colliery miners were living in Moorends. From his research of the South Yorkshire Miners Welfare Fund location books, John Woodhead, a historian of the local coalfield, has calculated that by 1932, there were 2,170 Thorne Colliery miners living in Moorends, that is nearly 65 percent of the total workforce (Woodhead, 1987: 9).

There were several factors which meant that, as in the case of Markham Main colliery, Thorne's workforce was extremely 'cosmopolitan'. The indigenous population was very sparse, and many of those locals with an appetite or aptitude for pitwork had already been attracted by the opening of Hatfield (1916) or Armthorpe (1924). Some of the pit's workforce came from the North Eastern coalfields, the home base of Pease and Partners. Others came from the West Yorkshire coalfield, from Lancashire, Wales and Scotland. But a large number came from the Midlands coalfields; Nottinghamshire and, more particularly, Derbyshire. One of the reasons for this was that Pease and Partners had employed a Derbyshire undermanager, Jack Eastwood, to run the pit.

Unlike Markham Main which drew its core workforce from Bulcroft, a Doncaster pit in the same combine, many of Thorne's original workforce were brought in by Eastwood from Derbyshire. Of equal importance to the personnel was the work/payment system that Eastwood and his overmen introduced into Thorne: the butty system. The pervasive influence of the 'little butty system' in all areas of a miner's life; earning potential, working environment, union organisation and above-ground relationships has already been touched on in Chapter Four. It was 'a type of work organisation entirely antipathetic to the tradition and culture of miners and mining communities' (Goffee, 1978: Ch5).

The essence of the system was that the buttyman, appointed by the undermanager, was able to negotiate a confidential piecework contract with management, covering coal extraction and ancillary tasks in one or more of the
stalls allocated to him. After he (or his agent, the 'monkey puff' [54]) had 'hired' workers from off the pit bottom market for one or more shifts, he would be responsible for supervising their productive employment. At the end of the week, the butty would receive payment according to how much coal had been cut and, without having to disclose the earnings of the contract to the men employed on it, would pay them out on individual rates as, where - and sometimes when - he saw fit. [55] A collier's opportunity to earn a reasonable wage therefore depended not on the collective effort or collective bargaining position of his team, but on his individual relationship with the butty (and, through him, with the management).

The period of the workforce's major expansion, in the late 1920's, meant that many of the miners who were seeking employment had suffered victimisation as a result of their union activity during the 1926 General Strike and lockout. Many of these came from the Notts and Derbyshire coalfields where the strength of buttyism and the establishment of George Spencer's breakaway union, had made it very difficult for Miners Federation men to operate. Although the employer's 'blacklist' ensured that some of these men were also refused employment at Thorne, [56] the urgent need for experienced pitmen meant that a considerable number managed to get taken on. One of these, Bill Carr, who was to play a leading role in the later shaping of the Moorends political tradition, described the phenomenon:

'The blacklist at our pit [the Maria, Newcastle-on-Tyne] was operated ruthlessly. No mercy was shown by the coal-owner - or even expected by the miner. Yet the locked-out men were rated among the most highly qualified, conscientious pitmen in Britain. The men who had returned to work during the lockout formed the basis of the new man-power in the industry. They were mostly raw, and had little idea how to cope with geological conditions in the primitive mining of those days. (...) My uncles had similar problems and in 1928 we left the North for the new Yorkshire coalfields, where we joined, at a new Thorne Colliery, hundreds of colliers from other areas of Britain, who were also victims of the blacklist.' (Carr, 1976: 350)

The employment of experienced union activists from the various coalfields and the enforcement of buttyism and related work practices was an explosive
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combination. This was illustrated very clearly in the early history of the Thorne miners union branch.

THE BUILDING OF THE UNION

On Sunday, 16 August 1925, twenty one Thorne Colliery miners organised a meeting at the North Eastern Hotel and resolved:

'That this meeting forms itself into a Branch of the Yorkshire Mineworkers Association, according to the rules and regulations thereof.'

(Thorne YMA branch minute book, 1925)

They went on to elect a president, secretary, treasurer, delegate and two committeemen, and thus established the Thorne branch of the YMA. The major problems that the union, with its initial membership of 64 miners, had in the underground organisation of its members will be referred to later. Due to the major delays in getting volume coal production underway, and, of course, the long 'interruption' caused by the 1926 strike and lockout, the 'above-ground' role of the union in defending the basic health and welfare of its members, tended to come to the fore. These were also the areas which are most clearly recorded in the branch minute books. As Woodhead pointed out, 'consciousness of accident, injury and violent death figure high in the awareness of miners' (1987:14) and among the branch initiatives undertaken in the first twelve months, there was a strong emphasis on establishing a collective response to these problems. Among the early welfare initiatives were the following:

* the appointment of a family doctor for the miners. Having approached all the local doctors to discover their attitudes and fees, a Doctor Walker was chosen to treat the miners and represent their interests in matters of sickness, accident and compensation.

* the collection of contributions to the Doncaster Infirmary scheme/District Mineworkers' Infirmary Building Fund (2d per week for men, 1d for boys).

* moves to set up a branch Sick and Accident Fund (weekly subscriptions; one shilling for men, six pence for boys, with a ten shillings per week benefit in case of death).
more optimistically, moves to establish a penny per week fund to provide
branch members with a pension in their old age.

* the organisation of a delegation to persuade the Thorne Rural District
Council to conduct an investigation of the village sewerage system, which
resulted in the company having to make further improvements, while the council
agreed to provide local families with supplies of disinfectant (many of the
new houses were overrun with bugs).  

* the negotiation, with the colliery management, of ten days holiday (three
with pay) per year.

* the elementary response of organising collective assistance for the
dependents of miners who died in the pit. The first minuted example was a levy
of two shillings per man for the widow of William van Hoof, a sinker killed in
No. 2 shaft. After this the branch organised collections/levies for every
fatal accident, whether it happened at Thorne or other Yorkshire pits. The
branch minutes also mention collections in response to major accidents in
other coalfields. As the management would only agree to levies when the dead
man was one of their employees, the collections were usually taken by union
men in the pit yard. In February 1926, for example, a shaft accident killed
six men requiring a shilling to be levied off every Thorne miner over a period
of six weeks. (Thorne YMA branch minute book, 1926)

Because of the serious geological problems and the non-production of
cost, the YMA gave dispensation for limited development work to be carried out
at Thorne Colliery in 1926. Nevertheless the provision of welfare became the
increasingly dominant concern of the branch over the seven month strike and
lockout. The dispersal of the workforce in Thorne and surrounding villages, and
the rudimentary nature of the Moorends settlement caused even greater problems
than those faced in Armthorpe in terms of organising a 'community' of strikers.

A variety of tactics were adopted by the fledgling Thorne YMA branch.

There were regular marches of miners through Thorne and Moorends.

There were appeals and levies organised to set up two soup kitchens, one in
Thorne and a smaller one in the Moorends Hotel. The YMA branch, with its
small membership and very few accumulated funds, was eventually forced to send
letters to the business men of Thorne, asking for help 'for the men who have
stood loyal to the Federation during the lockout (Thorne YMA branch minute book, 1926). The local education committee was approached with a list of school-age children who needed food, deputations were organised to the local Board of Guardians to discuss relief for destitute families and to the colliery management to get permission for miners to riddle Moorends tiny pit tip for coal. When it came to providing safety cover at the pit, the union negotiated for men with five children below the age of fourteen to be given preference, with a proportion of the safety pay being contributed back into welfare activities. As the lockout continued and mens boots wore out, the branch set up a boot workshop which organised repairs or replacement. Mary Ann Rollason, whose first husband had died of shock on seeing his brother killed in an underground accident, had just remarried and moved into lodgings in Thorne. She had kept a diary during the strike and, although it had since been destroyed, had a clear recollection of the hardship and deprivation endured:

'There was a workhouse near the shipyard that a lot of people had to go into, and there was a pawn shop in Fingle Street, where we pawned nearly everything we had. We even pawned my husband's war medals during the Strike. The miners' wives set up a soup kitchen, we used to take a jug along, get it filled up and bring it back for the kiddies. The miners and some of the women and children used to march with their banner through Thorne and upto the pit at Moorends, although there wasn't much up there, of course. (Moorends: 153 SC)

Despite these efforts, November saw an increasing drift back to work and the number of union members was reduced drastically. Of the 257 miners (22 percent of the workforce) who were union members in June, only 46 (a mere four percent) remained in membership as the YMA sanctioned a return to work in December. Membership was slowly rebuilt in the aftermath of the defeat, but it took nine years before a clear majority of the pit's workforce was unionised. One reason for the slow growth of union membership was the impact of the butty system at the colliery. The breaking of the power of the butties became the priority of the YMA militants at Thorne. The union branch continued to be the main agency through which miners and their families attempted to improve and gain control of their above-ground lives and welfare, but as coal
from the High Hazel seam began to be mined in volume, this struggle became closely interlinked with the one to organise the collective strength of the miners underground.

Goffee (1978) has outlined three main reasons for the management favouring the butty system in this period. It relieved them of the burden of having to organise detailed 'supervision' over a large, undisciplined workforce. It encouraged rapid but flexible growth in the mining workforce, despite the instability inherent in pit sinking on a 'greenfield' site, and, most important, it maximised output while minimizing cost. The undermanager could rely on the butty to act as a small boss, pushing production in each stall, while keeping capital outlay to a minimum. In effect he could demand piecework effort for little more than day wages. He could also use the butties and the unregulated labour market to police the workforce and penalize any miners who they considered were getting 'out of line'.

The working of the butty system tended to blur the lines of class identity and cleavage in the coal industry. The implications for collective militancy and organisation were obvious. Instead of the men combining in opposition to the pit management in order to win or improve an established price list, their energies tended to be directed into more narrowly-focused, personalised relationships (either cooperative or conflictual) with particular butties. Also, because most butties were capable, experienced pitmen, they also tended to gain prominence in the local union branch, making collective opposition to buttyism very difficult (this despite the fact that virtually all the MFGB unions were formally antagonistic to the butty system). This appears to have been the case in the early years of the Thorne branch.

The struggles to break the power of the butties underground and in the branch room were, of course, closely interlinked and organised simultaneously. The conflict was especially fierce in the last few years of the 1920s when the
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pit and its workforce were expanding rapidly, and when the foundations of the local trade union/political tradition were being shaped. The militants, organised round a core of Communist Party members and their magnificently-titled pit bulletin, the Thorne Butty Squasher (see Appendix 19), campaigned around three main issues:

* the winning of a price list, based on the 'all-throw-in' system, whereby groups of workers would be able to determine their collective earnings and ensure an equitable shareout.

* the introduction of a satisfactory checkweigh scheme, with an elected /accountable union checkweighman and a motte system that would be proof against manipulation.

* the introduction of a priority/seniority system that would prevent the victimisation of union militants by butties or management.

The very basic nature of these claims indicated that the union had been largely ineffective and the incumbent leadership were accused of either profiting from the butty system or being 'in the pocket' of the management/butties. The militants made it quite clear that in order to prosecute a successful fight against buttyism, the butties and their allies would have to be driven out of the branch leadership. The first of a series of breakthroughs occurred in the June 1928 elections when all the old YMA officials and a majority of the branch committee were thrown out of office (Woodhead, 1987: 15).

A key figure in this process was Alwin Machen, a 27-year old Derbyshire miner who had arrived at Thorne the previous year (1926), via Markham Main. He was elected as branch secretary as part of the militant/communist slate, and quickly acquired a reputation as a scourge of the butties. He began to gather evidence on all the men who had been victimised or moved out of good stalls for asking to see the note and confronted the butties head on at the weekly branch meetings, forcing one to resign from office and others to fade from prominence. He then investigated the possibility of members who had
suffered wage loss through the butty system being able to sue the
butty/chargemen. A minute of the 11 August 1928 General Meeting notes:

'That the men who are financial members who have been robbed in the 56
and 60 stalls shall individually prosecute and we as a Branch will back
them in their prosecution.' (Thorne YMA branch minute book, 1928)

A court case became unnecessary. The chargemen backed down and paid the men the
money owing to them.

Despite the new branch leadership's efforts, victimisation of
militants continued to occur. Machen himself was victimised on three occasions,
once on 1st May (1929) while undergoing an operation. The union organised a
ballot of the workforce which came down heavily in favour of the 'All Throw In'
system, and this led to a short, but effective, anti-Butty strike. The strike
was accompanied by the arrest and fining of pickets, with the union paying their
fines. Eventually, on 7 June 1929, six months after negotiations had begun, a
full price list was won by the main body of underground workers. The price list
contained several important features including the following:

- All men working at the coalface being over the age of 21 years and
  having at least two years experience of coalface work, shall share
equally in the earnings of the stall.

- No more men to be sent to any stall than will allow at least five
  yards of face per man.

- Working in water: a) where men cannot work without getting wet owing
to having to work in water, they shall be paid 9d per shift. b) Where
men cannot work without getting wet owing to water running from the
roof: Is 6d per shift.'

The benefit of the price list was immediately apparent. A letter from 'a miner's
wife' appeared in the Butty Squasher two weeks later:

'My husband and I have only been a few weeks at Thorne and the most he
ever drew at the pit was 10/6d per shift. This week-end, after he shared
out under the All Throw In, you will never guess what he brought home.
Actually 15/6d per shift. That was an eye-opener for us. How the Butties
have been robbing our menfolk. My husband and I want to express our
heartiest congratulations to the Communist Party and militant workers of
Moorends whose organised effort smashed the Butty System. (....)
A very satisfied
MINER'S WIFE' (Thorne Butty Squasher, 28/6/29)
The price list victory was soon followed (in July 1929) by the election of the Communist candidate, the sacked Alwin Machen, as Thorne's first union checkweighman. Other improvements effecting both underground conditions (such as travelling time agreements) and above ground life (such as home coal agreements) followed. One retired miner, Tom Sheppard, a Welsh collier with experience of the 'Notts' butties, suggested:

'When I arrived here in 1927 it were very rough. Especially working under the butty system. Some of them butties.... what a despicable set of men! It was after Alwin Machen organised the anti-butty strike and was elected secretary, that was when things started to get better. The union made Thorne as comfortable pit to work at as any in the country. The management would still keep coming, putting yardage on the stints and attacking the price list, but after those first few years, we had a strong union at Thorne. (Moorends: 152 SC)

Those accused by the communists of being 'gaffer's men' did not disappear. They mounted a rearguard action, which included the production of a leaflet, the 'Communist Squasher' and the holding onto influential positions on the Welfare and Sick & Medical Committees. Nevertheless by the Autumn of 1929 the left had won positions of leadership in the branch which they were to maintain virtually without interruption for thirty two years.

THE SHAPING OF THE VILLAGE

I have already argued, with reference to Armthorpe, that the relationships in the pit village tended to reflect those inside the pit. This was equally true in the case of Moorends, built by Pease and Partners. The early village demonstrates clearly the potential of the company-constructed settlement to evolve into an almost 'total' social system, through which the company could regulate not only the work situation, but all other aspect of the lives of its workforce and their families; economic, political, religious and recreational. The company did not simply own the pit, the brickyard and the houses, but most of the shops and virtually all the 'public' premises in the village. The initial strength of the butty system was mirrored by their influence in the early pubs and clubs; in particular the Moorends Hotel (known locally as 'Uncle
Arthur's' after its first landlord, Arthur Wilson), the Miners' Welfare and the British Legion. The internal cleavage and conflict in the pit workforce was reflected in these local institutions.

It was over the nature of the Miner's Welfare Institute that the battles raged most fiercely. The first 'Pit Club' was transferred from Orchard Lane to the former colliery offices at Grange Farm. These were, of course, owned by the company and housed other institutions dominated by the employers; the Pit Doctor's surgery, the Saint John's Ambulance Brigade and the Women's Institute. It was eventually resituated, with financial assistance from the coalowners, in custom-built premises on Marshland Road. The opening was presided over by the company chairman, Bert Pease, otherwise known as the first Baron Gainford (created 1917). The question of management influence in the Institute was a recurring one. Les Bembridge, whose father was one of the early Moorends communists, explained:

'The union wanted it to be for the recreation of the miners and their families, but early on it was an institution, a meeting place for all the geffers at the pit and the buttymen. And they used to have a special room called 'the boxhole' and that's where they used to converse; the deputies, the overmen, the management, the buttymen and all that crowd and they'd work out their strategy for the coming week. The boxhole is a place down pit where the deputies and overmen sit, but there was always a room in one or two of the pubs that got nicknamed 'the boxhole' cos of what went on there.' (Moorends: 154 SC)

In contrast the Communist Party tended to hold their meetings in members' houses because of the trouble they used to have in booking public rooms. Landlords like Arthur Wilson, a leading 'independent' on the local council (alongside Mr. Knox, colliery engineer, Major Hoyle, colliery agent, and Colonel Fowler, colliery sales agent), threatened them with proscription if they attempted to sell the Daily Worker or Butty Squasher in their pubs (Butty Squasher 44, 15/8/30)

There was another major struggle to get Pease and Partners to relinquish direct control over the sports and recreation facilities at the pit. The union eventually forced its way onto the company recreational scheme.
insisting that the recreational facilities be given over to the Miners Welfare Scheme (thereby allowing the miners more control of them). The employers did not relinquish their grip with good grace. In June 1931, as the independents on the council were trying to get the local Miners Welfare Fund to contribute to a war memorial park in Thorne, Lord Gainford was demanding in parliament that the Miners Welfare Fund be scrapped altogether! (Butty Squasher, 26/6/31)

As the left gained control, direct intervention in village life by the union branch increased. The YMA launched campaigns for Moorends to have its own ambulance, for a permanent school to be built for Moorends children, for improved accommodation at the Thorne Labour Exchange and for a week off for potato picking. It used the consumer muscle of its membership in threatening the Meadow Dairy Company with a boycott unless they allowed their employees to join a union. It backed Mrs. Walker ('their' doctor's wife) for a seat on the County Council, it paid the wages of the Thorne miners who sat on the Board of Guardians at the Doncaster Infirmary, and it lobbied the Thorne Rural District Council with a petition to improve the quality of Moorend's water supply.

In 1929 the union threatened to use its industrial strength as part of a (successful) campaign for the company provision of cheap electricity for all houses in Moorends. In 1930, as short time working became a serious problem, it endorsed the findings of the local Medical Officer of Health who reported that 'the rents of the houses are, on the whole, too high for the wages earned by the miners' (Woodhead, 1987: 10) and demanded a reduction in them. A plebiscite at the pit voted overwhelmingly for strike action over lower rents and individual wage slips, but, according to the communists, the branch leadership refused to organise it (Butty Squasher, 19/6/31).

In another effort to compensate for the severe effects of short time working, Thorne YMA proposed a work sharing scheme to the pit management, designed to take the best possible advantage of the unemployed insurance benefit
rules. The union slogan became 'five weeks' work and one week's dole', with Machin arguing that this would allow 300 men and boys to be given work at the pit, producing 'more Comradeship, Solidarity and Security.' (Woodhead, 1987: 18).

Having improved the Home Coal Agreement, the union then set up their own Home Coal Scheme to ensure that the correct supplies were delivered regularly and at the convenience of the scheme's members. This was of major importance to the miners. Tom Sheppard explained:

'The lead-in used to be done by a private enterprise, George Sargeson's Coal Merchants. He used to make deliveries up to eleven o'clock at night. It was nowt to wake up at half past four in the morning, when the pit buzzer went for the six o'clock shift, and see a bloody ton of coal outside your front gate what had been put there the night before. Or even more heartbreaking when you'd done a hard day's work at the pit, when it was off the pick point and shovel, and you used to come down the street and see a bloody ton of coal laid on the bloody pathway outside your house...two buckets a time carrying it in. It used to be heartbreaking. After the union set up the Home Coal Scheme, all that finished, they used to deliver it regular... straight into the coalhouse.' (Moorends: 152 SC)

It was not just through these practical measures that the union helped its members to gain more control over their lives outside the pit. As in Armthorpe, it played a key role as the village began to build up its particular 'culture'. The branch leadership initiated union recruitment drives, known as 'organisation weeks', sales of the MFGB paper, the Miner and encouraged the growing union membership to wear a union badge at all times.

The union-centred community had its own festivals, as distinct from religious or remembrance day parades. The tradition of Mayday and Miners Gala day parades around the village, led by the Thorne branch banner, was established. The union organised much of the sports activity in the village, culminating in an annual Moorends inter-club gala. The union leadership, and Alwin Machen in particular (who had started work at Shireoaks pit at thirteen and who had educated himself through the National Council of Labour College (NCLC) courses), were very keen on providing adult education in Moorends. In 1930 seven branch delegates were sent to the NCLC conference in Sheffield and the Welfare Committee, still not very friendly to the 'communist' branch
leadership, was informed that 'a class has been set up for tuition in the Social Sciences under the auspices of the NCLC'. The committee were asked for a grant towards the course members' expenses (YMA branch minute book, 1930).

The community that developed was marked by a high degree of economic and social activity. A cooperative society was set up, quickly followed by a large cooperative store. There were two cafes, a coffee shop, a dairy, a wide range of shops and a thriving market. Apart from the Welfare Institute - the upper floor of which was used for meetings, lectures, slide shows and education programmes, by the mid 1930’s there was a cinema, three clubs, two public houses, three churches and a public library. Both men and women commented on the strength of the community. Sammy Simms, an ex-Thorne Colliery miner (retired from Markham Main), explained:

'Yes, you should have seen the coal that was shifted on a Sunday dinner in the Moorends pubs! People made a point of seeing each other. If a miner was sick, we'd organise collections and help pay off his bills. It was a very tight community - you knew everybody. You couldn't go in the wrong house, people were that friendly. There were little spots at the end of the road where we'd congregate and talk. We had that many things in common with each other.'

(Moorends: 149 SC)

and Mary Ann Rollason suggested:

'I really liked it, living in Moorends. There was a nice few of us worked on the land. I remember I had one of my daughters on the breast, and my mother had her youngest and she used to feed hers and mine. The farmers used to hire me as a ganger. You'd get ten shillings a week for picking, but a pound for being a ganger.

It was a lively place then alright, there was always something going on. Everyone was really friendly. There was no keeping up with the Jones or anything. We used to get together round each others homes and play cards regular, Sunday nights especially. On Saturday nights, I'd go out with Jack. They'd always have turns on in all the pubs and clubs. And it was good for the children. There was the Majestic picture house and all the clubs used to run trips out to the seaside. All the youngsters went free, but their parents had to pay. The clubs did a lot for us really.'

(Moorends: 153 SC)

Political Traditions in Moorends

The village also had a rich and vibrant political life. Both Communist and Labour parties established a presence from the earliest days and, as in
Moorends - the Pit, the Union & the Village

Armthorpe, the union played a full role in the broader political community. The pit bulletin provides an indication of the breadth of the political tradition encouraged by the communist miners. In every issue there was a report on other British workers struggles, and in many of them, there were reports on industrial or anti-imperialist struggles abroad. In November 1927 Thorne YMA elected its first six delegates to the Thorne Labour Party, and later went on to provide several of the leading members, councillors and officials at constituency and divisional level. In the early period there was a close working relationship between the communists and left-wing Labour until this was made impossible by the CPGB's adoption of the third period line of 'class against class'.

The substantial roots that the Communist Party had sunk in mining villages and union meant that communist miners provided some of the most determined opposition to the internecine strife advocated by the Comintern and the national party leadership. Throughout 1929 a struggle was waged in the local and area party by prominent Thorne communists, which mirrored Arthur Horner's national struggle to prevent the labelling of the MFGB as 'social fascist' and the setting up of communist breakaway unions along the lines of the United Mineworkers of Scotland (Francis, Smith, 1980:167). The purging of Horner from the central committee in 1929, and the denunciation of all MFGB unions as 'social fascist' was followed in the Summer of 1930 by the expulsion of Machen, Willis Bowler and other leading Moorends communists from the party.

The Communist Party stood its first council candidates in March 1931. At this election the 'independents', including Arthur Wilson and several members of pit management, again won a majority on the Thorne Rural District Council. But after 1934 the Labour Party tended to win all the Moorends seats, until the late 1950's, when the village started to elect Communist Party councillors as well. Machen eventually joined the Labour Party and was elected to the parish district and county councils. As in Armthorpe, the village women played a significant role in the political life of the village. The Communist Party was
particularly keen to encourage them in political activity. In September 1930 one of their women members argued in the pit bulletin:

‘One outstanding feature in the recent struggles is the militancy of working women (...) They have been active in the co-op and Labour Party, but mainly on the social side of the movement. Working women are the chief victims of rationalisation of industry and are now coming forward to do their bit with the men.

THEY TAKE THE FRONT LINE IN PICKETING
THEY GO OUT COLLECTING
THEY ARE LEADING DEMONSTRATIONS
THEY ARE BEING CAST INTO JAIL FOR THEIR MILITANCY
THEY WERE THE FIRST TO REALIZE THE POLITICAL ISSUE OF FORCING THE PUBLIC ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE BY DEMONSTRATIONS
THEY HAVE ALSO BEEN INVOLVED IN RENT STRIKES
And given a fighting lead, housewives, unemployed and factory women will rally to the CHARTER DEMANDS and show plainly that, once having taken the path of struggle, they are not to be won away by any words or inducements.

Jean Rodgers (Butty Squasher, No 53)

This conscious encouragement of women's involvement also had an impact on the local Labour Party. There was a strong women's section which nominated it's own candidates for local council elections. Although several women were prominent alongside the YMA members, two in particular, Martha Lloyd and Edith Swift, were leading figures in party and council over several decades.

The Communist Party membership in the village which had been substantial (with over fifty members) until 1930, declined after it expelled Machen and other leading pit militants. It retained between thirty and forty members but, due to its record of activity in the pit and the village, won the respect of a much larger section of the population. Moorends soon gained a reputation as one of the reddest villages in the Doncaster coalfield, with prominent communist figures such as Will Gallagher and Wal Hanningtom drawing large crowds at outdoor village meetings. There was a branch of the Young Communist League and the Friends of the Soviet Union in the village. As in the case of Armathorpe, the union branch saw itself as having a direct input into the broader political 'community'. This is clearly illustrated by the resolution that it sent to the 1929 MFGB conference:

‘That this Conference, taking into consideration the stagnation of the basic industries of this country for a period of eight years and the failure of all capitalist remedies hitherto applied, declares that
capitalist schemes for rationalisation, whether undertaken on the
initiative of individual groups of employers or with the assistance of
the State, leave the burdens of capitalist parasitism untouched (...) It
therefore condemns the trade union representatives who reported
in favour of State stimulation or rationalisation in the basic
industries instead of socialisation. This conference (...) declares
itself in favour of the socialisation of the basic industries of mining,
iron and steel, engineering, ship-building, road and rail transport,
cotton and woollen textiles without compensation and with workers'
control.' (Thorne YMA branch minute book, 1929)

By the time of the Second World War, Thorne had established itself,
alongside Armthorpe and Edlington, as one of the most left-wing branches in the
Yorkshire Mineworkers Association. Alwin Machen gained a national prominence due
to his bitter attack on Herbert Spencer at the first (1944) NUM conference and
left the pit in 1945, having been elected as Yorkshire Area NUM's compensation
agent. Bill Carr joined the Communist Party on his return to the pit, having
served in the Air Force during the war, and spent 1946 and 1947 studying at
Ruskin College, Oxford. At the end of the course, he was offered a well-paid NCB
job at Hobart House, their London headquarters. He refused and returned to the
pit.

In 1952, Machen was elected as Yorkshire NUM President and, in the
same year, Carr was elected as the Thorne NUM delegate. The radical left
established a firm control over the Doncaster Panel and began to make inroads
into the leadership of the Yorkshire NUM, previously considered a bastion of
collaborationist 'mineworker politics'. The 'fruits' of this incursion were to
be witnessed in the emergence of 'pit politics' into a wider arena, at first in
the 1955 Yorkshire strike (see Chapter Four) and later in the unofficial

The involvement of the union branch in the broader political movement
was demonstrated by their invitation to Nye Bevan, embroiled in a major, inner-
party row over German rearmament, to address a public meeting in the Miners'
Welfare. The speech was recorded and duplicated by a local Workers
Educational Association member, and only after a substantial pressure from the
national Labour Party and union leadership did the Thorne branch agree to withdraw the tape from sale.

The Closure of the Pit

The presence of a large pit in Moorends appeared to stimulate economic activity in nearby Thorne and several large enterprises, employing mainly women workers, were attracted into the area. By the early 1950's there was a lace factory, a wool mill, a clothes factory and a large electrical engineering plant (AEI/GEC), employing over 1,000 workers. There was also an increase in the demand for homes and, in the early 1950's, a new miners' housing estate was built on South Common, Thorne (half a mile from Moorends, with a new industrial estate in between). Upto 1956 there had, of course, been a buoyant demand for coal. When, in the Summer of that year, the NCB announced in the press that they were going to close the pit, it came as a bombshell to the local population.

The Coal Board insisted that the closure was only a temporary measure (of eighteen months to two years) while they tackled the long-standing water problem. This was indeed growing more serious, as the original drainage system installed by Thyssens showed signs of failing and the shaft lining was beginning to break up under the pressure. The major safety factor involved meant that the local NUM had little option but to concede the cessation of coal production while contractors from Cementation attempted to 'patch' the shaft with a 100 metre long cement 'collar'. Although the water problem was a serious one, many Moorends miners (on and off the union committee) felt that the 'real' reason for the colliery's closure was it's workforce's well-deserved reputation for militancy. Ironically the nationalisation of the coal industry had placed the miners in a weaker position in relations to NCB management than their previous one to the private coalowners, who had been heavily dependent on Thorne coal production. Many of the 2,200 colliers felt that, despite their protestations to the contrary, the National Coal Board management were only too happy to see the
the Thorne branch of the NUM disappear, with its membership dispersed around
the Doncaster coalfield.

The area management's behaviour did nothing to allay these suspicions.
Rather than place large groups of Thorne men at nearby pits, they decided that
there should only be a limited number of them allocated to any single pit.
Because of the numbers that wanted to work at the nearest pits (Hatfield - five
miles, Armthorpe and Askern - ten miles) relocation was eventually decided by
lottery. Coal production at Moorends was gradually wound down and, on 1 January,
1957, the tenth anniversary of nationalisation, the pit was handed over to the
contractors. Apart from the 100-man maintenance and home coal team left at
Moorends, all the men were transported daily by NCB busses to the eleven other
Doncaster pits, some of them twenty miles away. Some of the older men could not
face the prospects of travelling every day to a strange pit and left the coal
industry. Others tried to get used to commuting to new pits, but gave up after a
dfew weeks or months. Within six months of pit closure almost two hundred of the
Thorne miners had left the industry (Thorne RDC Report to Robens, 29/9/67)

The miners that continued in the industry faced different shift
patterns, payment systems and conditions. They tended, however to take many of
their Thorne 'attitudes' and work practises with them, and despite problems of
geography and time, many soon became prominent in the union at their new pits.
This process was accelerated by the NCB's 1958 announcement that they intended
to replace the cement collar with a metre-thick steel one, which would take a
further two years to install.

Despite the suspension of coal production, the local union branch and
its associated institutions, (Home Coal, Sick and Death Benefit Society, Miners
Welfare Comittee, sports and cultural clubs) attempted to maintain their
operations. But as time passed and it became obvious that Thorne's closure was
both long-term and part of a general NCB strategy of capacity reduction, this
became more and more difficult. With over 95 percent of its members transferred into other branches and unable to organise collective activity in order improve wages or working conditions, Thorne NUM entered an extended 'twilight' period. In 1967 it launched a political campaign to get the pit reopened, but the Labour government insisted that it could not dictate to the NCB management. A 1967 village delegation received an assurance from Lord Robens that the only question concerning Thorne's re-activation was when it would happen. (Delegation report, 29/9/67) Despite consistent lobbying, over the next six months the NCB's attitude towards an immediate re-opening appeared to harden.

In April 1968 the NCB combined an offer of rehousing in 'open' pit villages and £100 transfer allowances with a threat to remove free transport and withdraw the men from the village's coal (distribution) warf. Of the almost 500 Moorends residents approached, only two accepted the NCB offer. Although this demonstrated a remarkable cohesion on the part of the village community, it was clear that the colliery's re-opening was not imminent and the Thorne NUM branch was finally closed in 1969. The majority of those related institutions which had survived since the 1957 closure went into a serious decline or disappeared altogether.

**Post-Closure Political Developments**

The closure of the pit and demise of its union branch did not imply the immediate disappearance of the Moorends' tradition of radicalism and militancy. In the early 1930s, the Communist Party had initiated and played a leading role in the Moorends Tenants' Association. Not surprisingly, in the campaign against rent increases in 1957 and 1958, it was Communist Party militants who emerged as the tenants' leaders in Moorends. The Tenants' Association had 488 members with over 280 attending important meetings. (Carr, 1958). In 1957, Bill Carr, along with Percy Riley (see Chapter Four), took the NCB to court over excessive rent levels and led the mass refusal to accept
the new tenancy agreements. In May 1958, as the campaign came to a head (leading to the recovery of £250,000 pounds for NCB tenants), Carr, by now NUM delegate at Bentley Colliery (15 miles from Moorends), was elected as the Communist Party candidate for the Thorne Rural District Council. Through their activity in the rents campaign the Communist Party recruited thirty new members, more than doubling its 1957 membership. One of these was Sam Cairns, an ex-miner, who had been radicalised by his wartime experience in Egypt and Yugoslavia (where he was dropped behind German lines to fight alongside the communist partisan forces). Cairns, by now a local coal merchant, took a leading role in the rents campaign and joined the Communist Party at the same time. Three years later, he was elected as the second Communist councillor.

It appeared that many of the Moorends inhabitants, faced with attacks on their standard of living, the worsening of their daily work routines, and reduced access to the institutions that had given them some control over their lives, were willing to consider more radical political alternatives. The Communist Party, the chief advocates of grass-roots collective struggle as a means of allowing working class people control of their lives, were the main beneficiaries. It was as if, through the heavy communist vote, the working class community of Moorends was expressing its desire to protect itself and its hard won gains, despite the removal of the previous 'arena' of collective organisation and struggle.

The initial election of Carr and Cairns, which left them holding the 'balance of power' on a council of ten Labour and ten 'Independents' proved to be far from a temporary phenomenon. By 1967, they were topping the poll. Cairns was elected with substantial majorities from 1961 until his premature death in 1971, Carr from 1958 through to 1974, when ill health prevented him standing. During this period they won a reputation for incorruptible and unshakable defence of the interests of the Moorends/Thorne working class. They insisted that all meetings of the Thorne Council be opened up to the public and the press.
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(Carr, 1961: 36). They campaigned tirelessly for the building of more and better council houses and, equally important, the fair allocation of those that were built. They also campaigned for the provision of better facilities in the locality. Retired miner, Sammy Simms recalled:

'I used to look up to the CP councillors, Bill Carr and Sammy Cairns. They worked that hard, they really used to put themselves out. They helped everyone who knocked on their door. They fought the rent increases in the fifties and they did more good for the community than all the rest. It's not been the same since we lost them two.' (Moorends: 149 SC)

and Harold Swift agreed:

'Bill Carr... He were a topper that man. He were a communist like Alwin Machen used to be. He could have joined the Labour Party and walked into the Commons as an M.P., but he wouldn't. I only ever voted against Labour for Bill Carr. I couldn't help it. He was the most honest man I ever met. He would not change his spots, no, a great man.' (Moorends: 151 SC)

A new public library was opened in Moorends in 1963. Another example of a communist/left Labour initiative was the 1964 campaign for a public swimming baths in Thorne. Two left Labour candidates in the forthcoming local council elections, John Pickering and Johnny Weaver, were feeling 'under pressure' from the communists. They decided to launch a campaign for an indoor swimming baths by organising a petition round the village on Easter Monday. (Moorends: 156 SC) The Communist Party heard about it and launched their own petition on Good Friday. They then made it a central part of their 1964 campaign with the slogan 'Build Baths for the Children' (Kahn, 1981). The ambitious project soon won local endorsement but was then quashed by a government department headed by Keith Josephs. After a first local delegation had failed to get him to reverse the decision, it was left upto Cairns and Pickering to organise a second visit and convince Josephs of the need for government subsidy. They succeeded and the large indoor swimming pool was finally opened on the south Common in April 1968.

Even though local problems were growing steadily, the breadth of the Moorends political tradition remained apparent. While the Communists hammer
away on the issue of pit closures and the problems they caused (see Appendix 20), their concern for the local community was always combined with a concern for the wider national and international class-based community. Their role was indicated by Carr's claim that:

'The lefts and others on the council have taken part in national demonstrations with the council's support, on unemployment and on deputations to Lord Robenson local pit closures. The Labour left also win, in their own Labour Party wards and constituencies, progressive decisions on prices and incomes, Vietnam, Rhodesia, Greece... ' (1961:35)

and by the local press report on the death of Cairns which asked:

'Will Thorne Council ever again discuss the conduct of the war in Vietnam?'

The Communist Party continued to maintain a high profile in the village. In the early 1970s, there were forty four members 'on paper' although most of the *Morning Star* sales, campaigning and leafletting were carried by a much smaller core of cadre. Sam Cairns' premature death and Bill Carr's giving up of political activity, due to increasingly serious health problems, was a serious blow to the Moorends branch. It was, however, serious health problems among the next generation of party cadre that saw a major fall off in activity in 1977 and 1978. Unlike Armthorpe, the decline of the Communist Party was not accompanied by the establishment of a radical alternative. By the early 1980's local Communist Party activity was virtually non-existent, the Thorne-Moorends branch had ceased to meet, and membership had undergone a massive decline. At the onset of the Strike, there were only two miners still in membership, one in Moorends, the other in Thorne.

*A Community in Decline*

In contrast to the partial stimulation of political life in the village, the closure of the pit contributed to a serious decline in the economic, social and cultural life of the inhabitants. Thorne Colliery and its union branch had played an anchor role in the village community, encouraging the
development of a large number of interlinking institutions and participation in collective activity around them. The pit, the union branch, and the associated institutions had formed an axis around which much of the village life centred.

The pit closure, the widespread dispersal of men on a variety of shifts in different pits, the lengthening of an already exhausting working day - all served to discourage collective activity and multiplex role playing between members of the village population. Very soon after the 1957 'suspension', the Thorne men came under pressure to become members of other NUM branches, to contribute to other Welfare schemes, insurance clubs and charities. The closure of the local union branch and the lack of financial contributions to the Thorne Miners Welfare Scheme caused the links, that had been fought for so hard in the 1930's, to be broken. There was a rundown of many of the pit-based sports and cultural clubs, and eventually the extensive Welfare recreation grounds had to be handed over to the council. The Miners' Welfare Institute, although maintaining its old name, changed its constitution and became a working mens' club, independent from the control of the local miners or their union.

Other clubs, with falling membership rolls, found it difficult to maintain a full range of activities or entertainments, modernize or expand their premises. As unemployment rose in the late 1970's/1980's the survival of the Moorends clubs was put in question, with one, the Buffaloes Club being forced to close, reduce its premises and reopen as a small public house. At the time of the 1984/85 Strike there were virtually no local institutions had direct links to Thorne Colliery or its former workforce (as a collective body). The one exception was the Thorne Home Coal Scheme, which continued to operate, under its elected trustees, from the coal warf inside the pit yard. The dispute interrupted an NCB attempt to make fundamental changes to the Scheme, which would have made its continued operation untenable and forced its eventual closure.
Although the impact of pit closure could be traced in these day to day effects on the life of Moorends,, it was, perhaps, most graphically illustrated in the major disputes which swept the mining industry in the early 1970's. Although a considerable number of miners who lived in Moorends were active in these disputes, their activities were channelled through the eight or nine union branches centred on the pits where they worked. There were no major NUM meetings or rallies, very little involvement of local women in strike activity and no establishment of a strike centre in Moorends. This did not mean that there were no political repercussions. There was a growth in Communist Party membership, including Ann Nichol, one of the village's Labour councillors, who joined the party in the middle of the strike, claiming:

'Only the Communist Party has the willingness, understanding and courage to lead the workers through the stormy times ahead'  
(*Morning Star*, 5/2/72)

The pit's closure contributed to a sharp increase in the rate of unemployment. Whereas in 1956, 5,007 (67 percent) of the Thorne RDC adult male population had been employed in the coal industry, ten years later only 2,494 (44 percent) were. In August 1967, when the national unemployment rate stood at 2.4 percent, and the Yorkshire coalfield average at 3.3 percent, the Thorne-Moorends rate was 9.2 percent. (*RDC Report to Robens, 29/9/67*) The following year the rate grew to 9.8 percent (693 men and boys, 223 women and girls). The uncertainty over the colliery's re-opening meant that:

'the Council could not wholeheartedly concentrate its efforts to attract male employing industries for fear of causing the re-opening to be put off because of shortage of labour.'  
(*RDC Report to Darling 27/2/1968*)

In the 1970's and 1980's the industrial and economic activity in the area went into a steady decline. One by one, the area's traditional industries and those which had been attracted more recently, closed down or moved to areas of industrial growth. The Moorends brickyard (initially set up to supply the pit), AEI/GEC, the woolmill, the lace factory, the boatyard, the local brewery
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and several food processing plants all closed down. Mining subsidence was seen as a major obstacle to attracting heavy industry while:

'commercial developers [were] naturally unwilling to commit large sums of money to create shopping facilities whose home market may suddenly move away towards new and expanding collieries, or become unemployed, or at best be only able to obtain employment on a very low wage level'

(RDC Report to Robens, 29/9/67)

Throughout these years the local unemployment rate remained among the worst in South Yorkshire and Britain. Both men and women suffered from the rundown in economic activity. Many of the Moorends men who had left coalmining in order to find jobs in the steel or construction industries found themselves made redundant from them. The impact of the recession was dramatic as is shown in table 10.1:

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<tr>
<th>Table 10.1 Unemployment Trends - Thorne Local Employment Office &amp; National</th>
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<td>Numbers and Percentages Unemployed (July)</td>
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The Thorne LEO of course includes the mining estates on Thorne's South Common and outlying rural villages where the levels of unemployment were even worse than in Moorends. Nevertheless severe unemployment, especially among young schooleavers, became a 'fact of life' in the village. This experience of unemployment was different to that of the 1930's, when short-time working and pit layoffs had been part and parcel of the 'community experience', something shared by the majority of a population dependent on a single industry.

Shared poverty and hardship could, and did, act as a spur to collective attempts to diminish its effects or find a solution. As I will illustrate in Chapter Twelve, individually-experienced, long-term dependency on the state tends to have a very different effect on a local community.
An unemployment rate three or four times the national average brought problems in many other spheres. There was an increased turnover among the Moorends population. The NCB's role as the village's chief landlord (which had provided the basis for the collective struggle against rent rises in the late 1950's) was 'frozen' from 1968[437 and was severely reduced after 1976, with most of their houses being taken over by the council and a small proportion being bought at a discount by the occupiers. There was little incentive, in terms of convenience or peer-group pressure, for young Moorenders to become miners at a distant pit. As the younger miners moved out of the village, either to be nearer their new pits or nearer new jobs in other industries,[443] they tended to be replaced by council house tenants from other areas, non-miners and, increasingly, unemployed people. The inhabitants with direct connections with mining therefore tended to become older and a smaller proportion of the village population.[453]

The prolonged undermining of the community in Moorends was also reflected in the physical appearance of the village. The severe decline in the recreational and social facilities which had been pointed out to the NCB and government by Johnny Weaver, a local councillor, in 1967 (Reports on RDC Delegations, 1967), had not been arrested by 1987. Apart from the impressive pit top buildings dominated by the giant, modern headgear, there was little evidence of new building, development or expansion in the village. It appeared as though the village had been 'frozen' in its 1950s boundaries and appearance.

Public buildings and amenities were few and in a shabby state. The majority of shops showed little sign of expansion or modernisation. There was a significant number of shops that appeared to have been shut down for a considerable length of time and many of the ones that were open were very old-fashioned, poorly fitted and sparsely stocked. There was a large proportion of shops that entailed low capital expenditure, such as hairdressers and second hand shops. Two food supermarket chains had branches in the village, but these
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were relatively small with a limited range of goods. There were no new clubs (there had not been a new one built since the pit was shut down) and the established ones had an old-fashioned, slightly run-down appearance. Their levels of activity and entertainment did not compare with the pubs and clubs in Armthorpe.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has outlined some of the historical processes involved in the construction and destruction of 'community' in Moorends. Although the sinking of the pit provided the basis for a close-knit network of social relationships, I have described how, from the earliest days, there was a fundamental conflict over the nature of this village community. The coal-owners, their agents and their undermanager, seeking a moderate, malleable workforce, attempted to regulate not only the working hours, but other aspects of the miners' lives - economic, political, religious and recreational. The key institutions around which their 'community' was constructed were the manager's office and butty networks at the pit, the 'independent' group of councillors, the Church of England, Women's Institute, St. John's Ambulance/remembrance day parades and the 'boxholes' in the pubs and 'their' pit club.

The communist and socialist miners sought to involve the local population in a very different kind of community. Having undergone a baptism of fire in the General Strike and lockout of 1926, they constructed their own institutions and sought, through an ongoing collective struggle to wrest control of their working and non-working lives from the coalowners. Industrial action and grass roots political organisation in the Communist and Labour parties allowed them to undermine the butty system and gain control of the local union branch. The setting up of a variety of local institutions, and the 'taking over' of others, provided a network of locally-controlled power points around which a
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strong local community was constructed. In every area; work, leisure, health and housing, collective organisation provided the means by which the miners and their families could gain control of their lives.

Although the closure of the pit led to the eventual closure of the union branch, the local population continued to be involved in collective mobilisation in order to protect the quality of life in the pitless village. With the weakening of the local union branch and related institutions, the local community strengthened its links with the broader, class-based one, represented in particular by the Communist Party. Although the economic life of the community went into decline, campaigns against high rents, for the provision of public ammenities, for the re-opening of the pit, all helped to preserve the village community and its radical political tradition for many years.

However unlike Armthorpe, where the NUM branch added new institutions (pit shop) to the range of established ones, the destruction of the Thorne union branch led to the disappearance of most of the democratically-controlled institutions around which the mining community had been built. Despite the efforts of the inhabitants, the community declined in strength, becoming increasingly resourceless and increasingly atomised.

I have already outlined a few of the hallmarks of this 'community decline'; the low level of economic activity, the lack of public ammenities, the rundown of leisure institutions and the generally delapidated state of most shops and houses. However the extent of the decline in the once-thriving, dynamic community was most clearly illustrated when it was 'put to the test' by the national dispute of 1984/85. In the next chapter I outline the nature of the Strike experience for miners and mining families in Moorends, the pit village without a pit.
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FOOTNOTES

1. Due to the size of the area that Vermuyden was responsible for draining his importance is recognised in all the local towns and villages. There is a street named after him in Moorends itself. The continuing Dutch involvement in drainage and waterways explains the small Dutch colony at Moorends at the turn of the century.

2. Like the Markham family, the Pease family's industrial interests expanded rapidly in the latter half of the nineteenth century. A key figure in this process was Joseph Pease, who along with his children was a member of the Society of Friends (Quakers). The Pease's interests were (initially) largely centred in Teeside, in iron-stone mining, iron and steel and the North Eastern Railway. Under the influence of Joseph Whitwell Pease (M.P), Pease and Partners ceased to be a family firm and became a limited liability company. The firm still maintained the 'Quaker' attitude towards industrial relations, arguing that owners and men could work in partnership, and that although owners had definite responsibilities to 'their' work people, the men had a responsibility to allow 'the market' to operate freely. J.W. Pease was in favour of trade unions as long as they did not:

't meddle with prices, that were best regulated by the laws of supply and demand.... The Master was obliged to give the highest price for labour, according to supply. Men ought to think about this and consider whether Trade Unions were doing them any good at all meddling in the market for labour' (Durham Chronicle, 15/1/1875)

The early history of the Pease family's involvement in coal mining and in particular their construction of three pits and villages in the Deerness Valley is outlined in Robert Moore's book, 'Pitmen, Preachers and Politics' (1974). By the time the construction of Moorends was being considered, Joseph Whitwell's grandson, the last Lord Gainford, Albert F Pease, had left his Quaker origins far behind and become a pillar of the establishment. From 1921, the annual general meetings were repeatedly reminded that the men's main responsibility was to maintain the profitability of their employer. For example, in 1923, he commented on the unreasonableness of 'his' miners:

'I can not understand the great reluctance of the men to work slightly longer hours which would inevitably increase the rate of wages... I can not see why they object to working an extra half-hour when they have nothing particular to do with the time.' (Quoted in Moore, 1974: 91)

3. The necessary development work then had to be carried out (dispensation was granted by the MFGB for work to be carried out both down the pit and on the nearby recreation grounds during the 1926 dispute). Volume coal production only began in 1927.

4. This again illustrates the international nature of the coal mining industry. The delightful name 'monkey puff' presumably referring to the organ grinder/monkey relationship is an elaboration on the basic title, 'puff' which, in turn, is an abbreviation of 'puffler', the French name for a mining supervisor.

5. The monkey puff was invaluable in allowing the bigger butties freedom to engage in other activities. One of the ways that the butty system impressed itself on the above-ground local social system was the buttymen's frequent doubling of roles as publicans, shopkeepers or (housing) landlords. If the butty was a publican then he would often arrange to pay out in his own pub, with his workers being able to buy drinks on credit while waiting for their wages. Most Moorends landlords were tied up in relations with the butties. (It was widely reported, for example, that the Winning Post (1935) was built...
on the ill-gotten gains of its buttyman owner.) But they tended to be less blatant about it than their Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire counterparts. Tom Shepard explained his personal experience:

'It was terrible under the butty system. If you filled twenty tons, you still only got eleven shillings - day wages like. Some would pay you twelve shillings and act like they were doing you a favour. Butties sweating blood, a despicable set of men, servile tools, they should have all been thrown down the pit. At the Nag's Head in East Kirkby, the landlord never put his foot down the pit in his life, but he had two stalls and on a Friday, he'd have all the men drinking their wages before they'd even got them.'

Because they could leave the puffler to supervise the stall, the butty would often not be seen during the week and sometimes would disappear with the money at the weekend, leaving the men without wages. (Moorends: 151 SC)

6. One of the most prominent local militants refused work was Jack Parkin, a victimised communist who lived in Stainforth. Pease and Partners may have been better advised to take him on. As well as running a local pool hall, in which he gave the promising school students and young miners a political education (while their pool-playing mates had free games!) he also ran a printing press. On this he produced the local communist pit bulletins, Thorne Colliery's Butty Squasher and Hatfield's Sylvester Rebel.

7. Machen had a passion for self-education and had taught himself shorthand which he used at meetings. The Thorne minutes books become much more interesting in June 1928 when he took over responsibility for writing them. He was also scrupulous over their maintenance and, as a result, there is only one book missing from the collection deposited at the Barnsley NUM headquarters.

8. With the level of accident, injury, sickness and death so high in the industry, compensation was a crucial issue for miners and their families. Tom Shepard described the clash of roles between company and miners' doctor:

'My dad died when I was 14½. He was pinned up against the wall by a tub of coal, it got him right across the stomach. I was right beside him when it happened; me and my mate heaved the tub off him - like horses - and carried him out of the pit. He recovered a bit like, but his insides were badly damaged and they had to catheter him. He died soon after the accident.

We used to have a big Irish doctor, Doctor Fahey, and he said 'I'm confident that your father's death was caused by the pit injuries. Put it in the hands of the union.' The following day a limousine pulled up outside the house and the pit doctor came in and opened up the old man for five minutes in the front room.

And they timed the inquest so it was the same time as we were lifting my father from the house, they wouldn't change it! Dr. Fahey put up witnesses, including my brother, Bill, and the coroner ripped into them. Then as our doctor was about to give evidence, the pit doctor who had carried out the autopsy arrived and the clerk of the court held Fahey back while the two pit doctors gave evidence, saying my dad's death was down to natural causes.

Then our doctor got up and said 'I'm convinced that death was caused by the pit injury' and the coroner just ripped into him. 'Do you, a common G.P., paid for by the miners, feel you are qualified to question the verdict of the medical specialists we've just heard?' Fahey was a huge man, 6 foot 2 inches tall and the coroner left him 4 foot nothing. There was no way he was going to win any compensation for my mother.'
9. This was connected with the village's multi-faceted water problem. Because Moorends had been 'thrown up' on poorly-drained marshland the bugs used to breed in nearby pools/drains and then infest the houses. (Moorends: 154 SC)

10. This was a hotel frequented by the local agents and officials of Pease and Partners. The landlord, Arthur Wilson, allowed the miners and coalfield women to set up a soup kitchen by the side of the hotel, which soon became known as 'Uncle Arthur's'. The element of paternalism implicit in the name was probably not accidental as 'Uncle Arthur' along with various members of pit management, was a key figure in the team of 'independent' councillors who dominated the local council till the mid-1930's. He had frequent rows with the communists, as he tried to ban sales of the Daily Worker and Butty Squasher from 'his' public house.

11. By 1935, 69 percent of the workforce were paid up union members. In 1936 membership shot up to over 90 percent and remained there. According to John Woodhead, these were the best rates in Yorkshire. (Woodhead, 1987: 9).

12. The butty was often responsible for providing picks, shovels and other basic equipment. For the undermanager, this had the advantage of making the butty very keen to prevent misuse or waste of tools/materials. (Goffee, 1978: Ch 5)

13. One example was that of the small Kent coalfield, which was being developed at the same time as Armthorpe and Thorne. The Kent Mineworkers Association had an official policy 'the constitution and rules of the association are against the butty system and therefore all the powers of the association must be directed against this pernicious system' (KMWA E.C. minutes 1928). But in Snowdown and Betteshanger in particular, this policy was 'winked at' by the union officials who, as experienced colliers, were usually butties themselves.

This led to a situation similar to that at Thorne where the early KMWA branch was 'a union in name only'. Union membership was very low and Ellison, the Derbyshire manager, like 'Black' Jack Eastwood, not only imported the 'Derbyshire system' into Snowdon Colliery but two hundred 'trusted' Derbyshire miners who were soon awarded contracts as butties. Ellison was frequently heard to proclaim 'I'm the union around here'. (Goffee, 1978: 327) As in Thorne Colliery, it was those with an political commitment to egalitarianism and a strong grass roots union organisation (in particular, the Communists), who were key in the breaking of the butty system in Kent.

14. The communists responsible for compiling the Butty Squasher used to meet weekly on a Sunday evening to discuss the contents. The bulletin was very consistent appearing at fortnightly or weekly intervals. The earlier copies, when Machen was a key figure, tended to be far more interesting and accessible than those which followed in 1930/31. This was illustrated by the coverage of the major price list victory in 1929. The Butty Squasher of 28 June 1929 argued:

'If the price list is kept to, it will not be because the Thorne Junkers, like English "gentlemen", keep their word. It will be because the Communist Party and the Y.M.A branch are strong enough to compel them to keep it.'

Less than two years later, at the height of the third period, the Butty Squasher was denying the union had any role to play in winning the pricelist:

'In their [Machen and Bowler's] YMA election manifesto they state that they have taken a leading part in every progressive movement of the betterment of the social life in Moorends village.

So we therefore point out to our readers that this is a misleading statement and a deliberate lie. The bureaucratic policy of the YMA has been against all progressive movements for the betterment of the workers.
Moorends - the Pit, the Union & the Village

WHO WAS IT THAT SECURED THE SMASHING OF THE BUTTY SYSTEM?
Was it not the Communist Party?
True the Y. M. A. signed an all-throw-in pricelist. But who was it
that rung this concession from the Boss?
The COMMUNIST PARTY !' (Butty Squasher, 20/3/31)

15. This was the token which miners had to attach to their tubs in order that the
company and union weighmen would know from which stall the coal had come. The
possibilities for abuse were extensive, and this added to the premium placed
on having an incorruptible, principled and forceful checkweighman who could
be relied on to defend the men's interests.

16. I was unable to establish a clear account of Machen's early association with
Markham Main. Machen (from Clowne, Derbyshire) was travelling with Willis
Bowler (from Cresswell) who as a fellow Communist, later became prominent in
fighting the butties at Thorne. When Bowler was victimised (for 'militancy')
in the early 1930's, an ex-Armthorpe man stood up at the meeting and argued
that he was not going to come out on strike in defence of a man who had come
to Armthorpe to 'blackleg' in 1926! (Moorends: 151 SC) Apparently the claim
was not denied by any union men on the platform. Whether the accusation had
any substance, or whether, as is commonly believed, Machen and Bowler arrived
in Yorkshire as union militants remains an open question.

17. He was victimised three times in all. On one occasion it took the personal
intervention of Lord Gainford (Bert Pease) to prevent an anti-victimisation
strike at the pit. After Machen's 'victimisation while undergoing a serious
operation', 95 percent of the men voted to send him back to the pit as their
elected checkweighmen, leaving the company no direct legal sanction over him.

18. Although the management objected strongly to the election of two victimised
communists, Machen and Bowler, as checkweighmen they could do little to
prevent them taking office. The election of a further two victimised
communists, Blood and Kewen as subweighmen caused a long-running dispute as
the management tried to prevent them carrying out their work. As the Butty
Squasher commented:
'According to the Checkweigh Act the men can elect any person they
desire to represent them as checkweighmen or sub-weighmen (whether they
work at the colliery or picking cocoa nuts in Timbuctoo !'
(Butty Squasher, 15/11/29)

19. As in the case of the working miners' newsletter during the 1984/85 Strike in
Armthorpe, the attempt to produce a moderate's newsletter only got them into
deeper trouble. The assumed author of the 'Communist Squasher ', a man named
Metcalf, was immediately challenged to a debate over the issues raised in his
bulletin, which he refused. His apparent siding with Pease and Partners
ensured his removal from the branch committee the following year.

20. Moore describing the construction of series of 'model' villages in the
Deerness Valley in the 1860s and 1870s, suggests:
'The institutes and schools were built' by the owners also; not only
were all these buildings paid for and formally opened by the owners,
but built with seggar from the local mines. Every brick in the house
in which a miner lived was stamped ...'Pease'... The workers and
their families were entirely dependent on the coal-owners and the
villages were, in effect, "company towns"' (1974: 81).
Although I did not get the opportunity to look at the inside surface of the
bricks of the old Moorends' pit houses, they were all produced in the Pease
brickyard and I suspect they too have a 'Pease' stamp on them.
21. The Communist Party were, of course, antagonistic to the glorification or celebration of workers' involvement in the 1st World War. The British Legion, along with Remembrance Day parades, war memorial parks and statues were all part of the local social system encouraged by the employers, in which they played the prominent part. The remembrance day parade, for example, was led by the pit's manager or undermanager, leaving from outside his pit yard office and finishing at the church. Pease and partners were alleged to be major benefactors allowing the rapid construction of the British Legion Club, which was opened in 1931.

22. These were, of course, key institutions in the employer-dominated networks of social relationships, and were therefore given space at the old colliery offices. Their equivalent in the union based local social system were the miners' doctors surgery, the union parades and the women's sections of Labour and Communist parties.

23. This was, of course, the club referred to in the Butty Squasher poem quoted at the beginning of this chapter. The construction of the spacious brick building at a prominent site on the main road through the village was obviously seen by Pease and Partners as a prestige project which would allow them some control over the men's recreational, political and union activities. In comparison to the miners' houses, the 1929 construction was carried on over many months, allowing the Communists ample opportunity to label it a glorified 'box hole' for the butties. The Butty Squasher poem, which is written in the style of Machen, ends:

>'Thou prepareth a Club for our comfort,
Even in the eyes of your victims.
But alas the curse of Bolshevus is upon us,
Surely Weller [manager] and Eastwood [undermanager] will
Back me all the days of my life,
And I will dwell in the house of Pease
for ever and ever.

Amen. (Butty Squasher, 28/6/29)

24. Ten issues later the Butty Squasher (5/8/31) returned to the issue: 'Though a plebiscite has been taken and the workers practically to a man signed in favour of strike action nothing of a practical character has been done. This is exactly what the communist party told you would take place because you will remember that the T.U. officials refused to form a joint committee of action composed of trade unionists and non-unionists, employed and unemployed, women and youths, which is the only way we can successfully organise to win.' Although underpinned by the ultra-left strategy of bypassing trade unions via 'councils of action', this passage again reveals the major importance the communists gave to mobilisation of other sections of the village population.

25. One of the arguments the Communist Party tried to use to discredit the expelled Machen in the eyes of the militant miners was his insistence on boosting this 'social fascist' paper of the 'social fascist' MFGB. (Butty Squasher, 15/8/30)

26. Every year the Butty Squasher would concentrate its fire on the hypocrisy involved in the employer's 'celebration' of Remembrance Day. So the 15th November 1929 edition observed: 'Among those who took a prominent part in the parade on Sunday were members of the management of Thorne Colliery. Let us examine their idea of 'freedom'.

A man in their employ served in France with the Contemptables in 1914 till 1918, being wounded twice. This man has twice been victimised by these representatives of the owning class, robbed of the right to
work, his wife and kiddies going short....

What had the man in question done to merit their displeasure -

Was he an indolent worker? - No

Had he robbed them in any way? - No

What then had he done to have his lamp stopped? He simply claimed that

FREEDOM for which we were supposed to have fought - to think as he liked

and express those visions which were the outcome of those thoughts...

Vindico

27. In the twenty copies I managed to 'secure', there were articles concerning events in India, China, Australia, South Africa, Russia, Germany, France, Italy, Ireland and America.

28. My informants suggested that, in this period, four Communists were expelled, although several others left as a result. Harold Blood, a sub weighman, was the most prominent pit man that remained, and he was used by the CP in their strategy of endless public debate with Machen, most of the latter apparently won. A letter in the Butty Squasher of 15th August 1930 opened with the following:

'Being present at Moorends during the debate between Comrade Blood and A. Machen, I was surprised how easy the audience seemed to swallow A. Machen's statements, that he had not deserted them and he was still fighting on their behalf.'

After repeated references to Machen's betrayal of the miners due to his involvement with the 'social fascist' YMA, the writer, an A McKnight ended his very long letter with a challenge to Machen to debate on the subject:

'Can a worker be a servant of social fascism and a servant of the workers at the same time? or can a servant of the workers carry out the dictates of Social Fascism, and at the same time be of service to the workers? (...) The acceptance or rejection of this challenge can be received by H. Blood'

suggesting that the would-be debater was not a local miner. Indeed the problems of the Communist Party were illustrated in their change from a local contact address (Machen's!) to a variety of Sheffield ones.

29. This speech was apparently part of the CP/Labour Left's attempts to win Yorkshire NUM's support for Bevan's candidature for Labour Party treasurer. (Kahn, 1981: 58)

30. The geographical isolation of Moorends-Thorne, on the extreme North Eastern edge of the coalfield meant that many of the men had difficulties reaching their new pit's branch meetings on Sunday morning. The branches in which the Moorends miners played a prominent role were the closer ones of Hatfield, Askern, Bentley, Edlington and Armthorpe.

31. This was, for the period, an unusually 'generous' offer for short-distance transfers. In a sense it was a forerunner of the standard transfer payments that were introduced in the late 1970's.

32. The few remaining NUM members working at the closed colliery were transferred to membership of the Hatfield branch five miles away.

33. Misallocation of council housing is, of course one of the standard components of local council politics. In a small village, with clearly defined boundaries and a geographically stable population, 'everyone' has family or friends on the housing list, and knows when different families registered for a house, what their needs are etc. Any misallocation is immediately noticed and can quickly lead to accusations of corruption.

This was part of the story given the post-war housing shortage in Moorends. Johnny Weaver, a left-wing Labour Party member, later councillor:
When I got married in 1949 we had to live in rooms, there was a shortage of housing and a six year waiting list. There was a lot of cold war hysteria against the communists, but Bill Carr was showing the corruption of the Labour Party, which was a closed, cliquish organisation at the time. There had been 50 prefab built after the war, and the allocation of them was corrupt, the village could see that the allocation was all wrong' (Moorends:156 SC)

Apart from leading the campaigns against rent increases, the communists campaigned for the building of old folks homes and bungalows. They also took up electorally 'unpopular' issues. In 1961, for example, they were approached for help by 23 caravan families (ex-travellers) threatened with eviction from their village site. They took a petition around the village and won several hundred signatures in defence of the caravan tenants, before taking the issue before the Thorne RDC and winning a guarantee of no evictions from caravans before alternative housing was provided.

34. According to Marie Cairns, partner and comrade of Sam's for thirty years, the achievement of the second councillorship allowed Carr and Cairns to insist on debating all kinds of far-reaching issues that are not usually discussed on a rural district council.

Cairns (1918–1971) was, in general, very fit and a keen sportsman. However he had suffered from thirteen attacks of malaria while in the army and suffered his first heart attack in 1965. Nevertheless his death at the age of 53 came as a shock. (Moorends:150 SC)

35. The few Moorends miners that were still heavily involved in the unions (for example Johnny Weaver) tended, by this stage, to be active in the higher echelons of the area NUM. Given the falling level of union involvement among younger Moorends miners, it was not surprising that they did not become heavily involved with the Collier or its main initiator, the Socialist Workers Party.

36. The Thorne member was more in touch with the Communist Party than was the Moorends member, but neither were anywhere near as politically active as they had been in the 1970's (Moorends:134M & Thorne 171M).

37. The damage that extra travelling did to miners' health was a recurrent theme in all the Moorends and Thorne interviews. Many of the older miners were unable to withstand the extra strain so when Bill Carr confronted Lord Robens he:

'staressed the problem of travelling, especially for middle-aged miners and pointed out that the young men were extremely cynical about the future in the industry and were not encouraging their children to enter it.' (Thorne RDC Delegation to Robens 27/9/67).

Len Bembridge explained:

'The pit closure broke the tradition of mining in Moorends. It's not a pleasant job, but you stick it if there's a pit in your back yard. When you've got to wait for buses and travel that extra hour every day, it's a killer. It prematurely aged the Thorne men no doubt' (Moorends:154 SC)

38. Ray Sissons suggested that the average membership in the three Moorends clubs was around 1,000. An enthusiastic expert in this area, Ray suggested that, at
this level, they might all face major financial difficulties, but suggested that the Moorends club life had survived remarkably well given that the pit had been shut for so long. :

'For a little village with a closed pit, three pubs and three clubs is quite remarkable. Some villages, when their pit's been shut down, have lost the lot, all the clubs and even some pubs.' (Moorends: 155 SC)

39. In the aftermath of the Strike the trustees of the Thorne Home Coal Scheme were anticipating a unilateral decision by the NCB management to close the local scheme altogether and either 'buy out' local miners with an entitlement or allocate them to another pit's scheme. (Moorends: 148 SC)

40. These figures are taken from the Thorne RDC's report to Lord Robens (29/9/67) They allow three conclusions to be drawn. Either there was some manipulation of statistics in order to emphasize the effect of closure on the mining population, or the constituency used by the council to calculate its unemployment figures had been changed (I could find no evidence of this) or the 'male industrial population' had fallen from 7,473 in 1956 to 5,668 in 1966, involving either a very heavy emigration from the area or an increasing proportion of the adult population becoming economically inactive. The latter explanation appeared to be supported by the 1981 census statistics, which show a large proportion (42.7%) of the Moorend's adult population economically inactive, with retired and permanently sick accounting for 13%.

41. This report was drawn up by the South Yorkshire County Council as part of its campaign to have the geographical regions around Thorne and Askern defined as a rural development area. The case for government assistance was very similar to the arguments of the rural district councillors fifteen years earlier: '3,608 people are currently unemployed in Thorne LEO, 2,516 males and 1,092 females, out of a total workforce of 9,174. This represents a percentage rate of 39.3%, almost three times the current national average of 13.5%'

42. The 'collective' nature of the experience came out clearly in the interviews. Tom Sheppard explained:

'When things were slack we'd all stand on the doorsteps and listen for the pit buzzer telling us whether there was work or not. When the pit played, everyone had to stop off work. If the pit played one or two days, everyone in the village would know about it,' (Moorends: 152 SC)

43. In 1967 the NCB asked the council to build an extra 250 houses in the village. It then cancelled two hundred of the order, moving 38 mining families into the fifty that the Thorne RDC had completed, and leaving twelve empty, their rent paid directly by the Coal Board. The burden of the high interest payable on this unwarranted borrowing was one of the issues raised by the council delegation to the Minister at the Board of Trade (27/2/68)

44. According to local informants, the favourite non-mining jobs were in the construction and steel industries, where there was a lot of activity in the 1960's and early 1970's.

45. In the 1981 census, retired people made up 11 percent of the population. As most of the village's houses were built for young miners with large families, there was a need to build more suitable accommodation for them as they grew older. There was an old folks home built in Moorends and a number of old folks' bungalows, but the majority of housing for retired miners and partners/widows was constructed in nearby Thorne. This meant that many of the older mining population moved out, not only from their old pit/council houses, but from the village itself. They were often replaced by people with few, if any, direct connections with mining industry.

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Chapter Eleven

MOORENDS — THE STRIKE EXPERIENCE

'We didn't get many outsiders coming through Moorends. One day, Jim Moores from Hatfield NUM brought these two London journalists round to talk. And he said 'How about a cup of tea?' And I knew I was out of tea and coffee but I went in the kitchen and dug out some used tea bags and put em under a low grill to dry out, hoping they might be alright. Anyway I went back to talk to the journalists and a bit later Cath came running in shouting, 'No, did you know you've got burning tea bags under your grill?' Well I can laugh now — but I nearly died then!'

Maureen Walsh, Moorends Womens Support Group.

Introduction

I have already noted Warner and Low's observation that 'It is when all hell breaks loose and all men do their worst and best, that the powerful forces which organise and control human society are revealed.' In the situation of Armthorpe, we saw how the collective struggle of 1984/85 acted on the pit-centred local social system to create a very strong and dynamic Strike community. In this chapter, I describe how the miners and the mining families living in the closed-pit village of Moorends experienced the twelve months of the 1984/85 Strike. I demonstrate how the onset of a major crisis, involving a substantial minority of the village's population, revealed the damage that had been done to the community by twenty eight years of pit closure. The lack of a close-knit, union centred community ensured that there were major differences in the Moorends Strike experience, compared with those in nearby, open-pit villages.

I outline how these differences can be observed from the earliest days of the dispute, in the extremely low level of Strike activity among Moorends miners and in the severe difficulty experienced by the Moorends women as they
Moorends - The Strike Experience

tried to set up an alternative welfare network/community. I argue that the decline in the Moorends community and its political traditions are clearly illustrated by the way that even the most elementary collective activity had to be 'encouraged' by 'outsiders'. Although this collective activity succeeded in creating an identifiable strike 'community', unlike the one in Armthorpe, it was marked by the very small numbers at its core and the paucity of provision for the strike-bound population.

Alongside these differences, I outline several similarities with Armthorpe; the close relationships between strikers based on their commitment to the struggle, the emergence of women at the centre of the Strike community, the development of a strike culture and an inter-generational solidarity, revealed in the intense involvement among a few of the school students and unemployed youth.

Although the Moorends activists were extremely resourceful in coping with major problems, I describe how the weakness of the pre-Strike local social system, lacking collective resources, institutions and power points, continued to shape their experience throughout the dispute, preventing the emergence of a 'community strike'. Sectional divisions in the working class population (between miners and non-miners, employed and unemployed) although lessened, constituted a much greater problem than in Armthorpe. Women and young people, whose Strike experience was largely confined within the village boundaries, appeared to be particularly vulnerable to a level of pressure and isolation that would not have been tolerated in Armthorpe. The police were able to be far more 'selective' in their criminalisation of Moorends inhabitants, with their brutalisation of strikers not provoking the 'community response' from the local population that was witnessed in Armthorpe.

I explain how the weakness in the local strike community had a double significance in that it seemed to constitute a serious obstacle to involvement
in the broader national/international strike support community. Again this appeared to effect the Moorends women in particular whose 'restriction' in the village did not allow them to get a clear perspective on their overall situation, or allow them the space to 'shift their horizons', to work out new ideas and roles for themselves. I suggest that one effect of this was the relatively marked maintenance of gender roles, with the men 'enjoying' a wide range of activities in the broader strike community, while the women remained heavily restricted to locally-based domestic roles.

I draw attention to the above factors not only because they allow a clearer understanding of the Moorends Strike experience but because they illustrate the process of community decline and reconstruction which I will analyse in greater detail when I investigate the post-Strike community in Moorends.

Preparation and Early Strike Activity

In the previous chapter, I described the widespread dispersal of the Moorends miners over a variety of pits and shifts. In this situation it was very difficult to estimate how many working miners lived in the village in March 1984. Although the initial estimate of the Strike activists was less than two hundred, this had to be revised upwards during the Strike to over 300 (Moorends: 106W & 136M) Although this constituted a significant minority of Moorends two and a half thousand economically active adults (see Appendix 7), their contact with each other was limited by their dispersal and the lack of any institution which brought them together as miners. Without a pit or a union branch to act as a focal point, few miners maintained regular contact with each other - except those who travelled on the same bus. Among the miners living in the village there were virtually no union activists² and, consequently, there was little preparation for the Strike.
There was, for example, no attendance at the February briefing meeting in Barnsley, no campaign, meetings or agitation in the village around the issues of imminent pit closures, privatisation or the South Yorkshire strikes. Only those Moorenders able to get to the special branch meetings at Armthorpe, Hatfield or Askern etc. were fully aware of what was going on. These problems persisted in the first few weeks of the strike. As money ran short, it became more difficult to arrange transport across to distant open-pit villages and sometimes the journeys proved fruitless with the Moorenders discovering poor organisation, insufficient picket transport and therefore lack of useful 'involvement' at the other end. Only a relatively few pickets, confident of financial subsidies for their cars, went out on a regular basis with teams from Hatfield and Armthorpe. As a result, there were only a few Moorends-based miners involved in the initial flying picketing expeditions, which were crucial in 'setting the agenda' for the first half of the Strike.

The feeling of isolation was partly broken by an initiative of the Hatfield Main NUM in the third week of the dispute. They sent a loudspeaker van around both Thorne and Moorends summoning their Hatfield membership to a meeting in the 'Labour Rooms' (the old village library, a double-fronted section of a terrace of small shops facing onto Moorend's sole roundabout, the 'Bullring' or 'Circle' - see Appendix 18). Other miners, seeking information and involvement, were at first refused admission, but were then invited to attend by the Hatfield NUM officials. It was agreed that Hatfield NUM, as the nearest branch, would take both Thorne and Moorends 'under its wing' and provide hired transit vans, petrol money and picketing expenses in order to encourage the organisation of picketing in the two villages.

For the next three or four weeks picketing was virtually the only strike activity in Moorends. Small teams of pickets were rostered and set up outside the two entrances to the redeveloped (but still non-producing) Thorne colliery. Their main function was to stop the teams of outside contractors
employed in ongoing development work at the pit. One vanload and three or four carloads of pickets would go out 'flying' on a daily basis, arriving at the Stainforth Welfare at 3 or 4 a.m. and being directed to a specified destination in 'Notts', Derbyshire, Lancashire or the South Midlands. As there was little or no trouble on the local picket lines during this period, any strike organisation or mobilisation in Moorends came via initiatives from outside the village namely the strike-based communities in Hatfield or Armthorpe. This was the case when it came to the provision of food and other welfare.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A STRIKE 'COMMUNITY'

Provision of Food

The Hatfield Miners Welfare in Stainforth had, like Armthorpe, begun by providing all its pickets with a cup of tea, then 'sarnies' and soup, and, by mid-April, was providing full meals (People of Hatfield, 1986). There was little demand for such communal, picket-based catering to be set up in Moorends. The village was situated on the north eastern edge of the Doncaster coalfield, well off the main picketing routes, and the village's 'flyers' were being fed at Stainforth and other open-pit strike centres. The idea of separate Moorends and Thorne 'kitchens' emerged from a meeting initiated by the Stainforth women activists (People of Hatfield, 1986). The half dozen women from Thorne and Moorends who attended the meeting decided that two separate kitchens should be set up to cover the 'twin' villages. When the food kitchen (or 'soup kitchen' as the Moorends strike activists referred to it) was eventually set up in late April, its main aim was to provide meals for the pre-school children who, along with their mothers, were the main victims of government-inspired destitution.

With very few suitable venues available, they eventually got permission to use the small changing room/pavillion on 'the Rec' (recreation ground), one of the very few miner-initiated resources, which, via the Thorne RDC. was still at the disposal of the village population. With Hatfield NUM only
able to give a small amount of financial support (it was, by this stage, involved in four kitchens) the Moorends women were forced to raise virtually all their funds themselves. As was initially the case in Armthorpe, their instincts led them to concentrate their efforts in the area they were familiar with, to rely on the local resources of the village itself.

They began by going round all the local shops, where they got a fairly good response. The majority made donations although some were less than generous, claiming that they didn't need the miners' custom. Only very few (three or four) shopkeepers refused support outright. The women also went on regular door to door collections around the village, where again they discovered a good response, especially from the retired miners and their families. In the evenings they went into the local pubs and social clubs where they held regular raffles. When they began the operation they had no idea of how many people they would have to feed. They anticipated, at maximum, a hundred, but they ended up feeding around 200 every day. The facilities at their disposal were, compared with those in Armthorpe, Hatfield or even Thorne, extremely rudimentary.

The massive workload of finance and feeding was carried by very few women. There were some twelve women involved initially, with weekly meetings being held in each other's houses. Unlike Armthorpe or Hatfield, these women's meetings were, in effect, the only regular, strike-connected meetings held in the village. The fundraising routine was extremely demanding, time-consuming and barely raised sufficient finance for the growing feeding programme. A couple of the women got full-time or part time jobs, and two others were reported as coming under pressure from their husbands to restrict their support group activity. One of them who insisted on continuing was Elaine, who explained:

'Quite a few other girls dropped out, one by one. I reckon a couple were pushed back into the home by their husbands during the Strike. We used to have quite a few rows [laughs] ... little niggly things mostly. Billy was out every day, from two or three o'clock, picketing with the Hatfield lads. I was down the kitchen with the women's support group all day, every day from ten in the morning till half three, when the kids come home from school. I used to take Andrew down to the kitchen with me. He was six months old when the Strike started and I took him for as
long as I could, till he started crawling and it were that cold on the floor down there. That's when the arguments started, when Billy had to have Andrew [laughs] ... He were tired out and he had to look after Andrew for me, you know. And I wouldn't give me support group up and he wouldn't give his picketing up.

[Billy, playing with the baby: ‘I didn't mind having him, but when you've been up since two in the morning and been chased round the country by the cops, you end up tired out!’]

'We took him all over. In fact we used to set off with the pram round the village collecting. And we'd have the pram bottom and pram top full, we used to end up carrying Andrew and fill the pram up with everything we'd collected...[playing with Andrew]... He's laughing, he thinks it's funny. But it weren't, Mo had to carry you, and you nearly wore her out!

And then some of the men used to come to the kitchens and take him down the picket lines, y'know at Thorne gates, in pram with his little picket hat on and take him for an hour. (...) Some of the women who come to the kitchen for their dinner, they'd take him for a walk for an hour, while we'd get main rush over with. 'Cos when you opened at one o'clock, we'd be jammed packed.' (Moorends: 108W)

As the Strike wore on, the workload became larger and larger without any major input of material resources. The core of highly committed people was small and there was very little division of labour. The collection of money and the running of the kitchen came to rest on fewer and fewer shoulders. By the middle of the Strike there were only eight women centrally involved in the Strike operation, working on virtually a full-time basis.

One result of this was that the Moorends women activists did not have the time to do much fundraising outside the village. Elaine explained:

'We had to do a lot of local fundraising. We mainly relied on our own village. We used to go out knocking doors. It used to be very hard and we'd sometimes get abuse. Then we went in groups and did raffles in clubs. I used to do the raffle in the Social on a Friday night.

As for money out of the village, we wrote to everybody. We hadn't enough support really in the village, for what we needed. There weren't enough of us in the Kitchen to go out fundraising and run the Kitchen as well. You were talking about six women, whereas some of the other kitchens had twenty. We more or less wrote away to people for money. We went to Hull docks one day - me, Mo and Cath. We had a good day out there with the dockers. They took us to a warehouse and spent a fair bit on us. Three hundred pounds worth of food, and clothes. That was the only big trip I remember though. (Moorends: 108W)

As a result the Moorends strike community participated in very few independent fundraising initiatives, on its own behalf, outside the village. It was as though the decline of local community and its political traditions served
to reinforce each other in preventing the village from involving itself fully in the wider trade union and political community. Some of the men went on fundraising expeditions to London and elsewhere, but, as these trips were organised by the Hatfield or Armthorpe NUM branches, the funds raised were not channelled directly into the Moorends Kitchen.

Provision of Fuel

The provision of fuel proved a major problem for the Moorends strikers and their families, especially later in the strike when the colder weather set in. The Thorne Home Coal scheme, based in the old colliery yard, continued to supply some fuel to the retired miners (this last remaining 'facility' from the old, open-pit days was to be an early casualty of the NUM's defeat in 1985). The Hatfield strike committee supplied some wood to its members and Armthorpe did likewise, but there was no collective initiative to set up a woodyard in Moorends. As a result, as well as a lot of people suffering severely from the cold, leading activists had to combine their more specialised roles with long hours spent foraging for wood or digging for coal.

Meeting Other Hardships

There were major problems with most of the other areas of Welfare. Forced to rely heavily on the scarce material resources of a closed-pit village, and with virtually no collective facilities (such as a Welfare Institute) at their disposal, the Moorends strike activists had a permanent struggle on their hands just to keep their tiny kitchen open. Although they agitated for the open pit union branches to supply their Moorends members with food parcels, and helped in the distribution of some of them, there was no possibility of them being able to make up their own.

The strike 'community', unlike that of Armthorpe, was never sufficiently strong to provide expert advice and assistance in key areas, such
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as legal, financial and social security matters. Some Moorenders were forced to seek such assistance from their working pit villages, while many just struggled on and suffered an extreme form of hardship. Provision for strike babies and young children was made a priority, but human and material resources were in such scarce supply that major needs, such as help with major bills or unexpected accidents, were impossible for the village organisation to meet. There were no union-centred institutions, such as the Miners' Welfare, Death and Divide Society or pit shop which could act as collective barriers to individual hardship. The Strike-based community had so few reserves that it was only in the final month of the strike that the women's support group decided to open their own bank account!

MIDDLE AND LATER STRIKE EXPERIENCE

The major turning points mentioned in the Armthorpe experience also proved important for the Moorends miner activists, but were less so for the Moorends women. There was no support group involvement in the flying picketing that had such a profound effect on Armthorpe women (or indeed Thorne women, see Appendix 21). Whereas the male activists were subject to some extreme brutality on picket lines, none of the women experienced this at first hand. There was, for example, no question of the women being present at Orgreave to witness police dogs being loosed on one of the village's leading activists or another being badly trampled on by police horses and then arrested for obstruction as he refused to move off the road.

These and other incidents were well known among people who were active in the strike, but because the number of people involved was very small, their impact was less than in Armthorpe. When the women were first mobilised onto the picket lines, it was again at the initiative of open-pit village activists, in order to defend their pit and community. When Hatfield NUM sent loudspeaker vans around Moorends to inform people of the (21 August) Hatfield
occupation by police, large numbers of women, unemployed youth and retired miners responded by 'dropping everything' and going over to join the Stainforth protest riot.

Later, in October, when the police moved into Moorends in force, their symbolic taking over of a non-producing pit served merely to underline the weakness of the strike based community. Although the collective Strike activity had strengthened the local community considerably, it was still too weak to mobilize large sections of the local population or call on reinforcements from the broader strike-support network. Unlike Armthorpe, where they had to face a well organised and hostile community, the 150-200 police involved at Moorends executed a carefully planned but limited operation, only finding it necessary to 'occupy' the area immediately around the pit. Although their presence led to a stepping up of the intimidation and criminalisation of the strike activists, because there was no 'community' response, they were not forced to brutalize large sections of the village population.

The Role of the Soup Kitchen

The Moorends strike experience was essentially a very hard, 'grinding' one. With Hatfield NUM providing £90 per week, Armthorpe £20 and other pits (with a Moorends connection) virtually nothing, the women had to work very hard to meet the constantly increasing demands on their meagre resources. Even though it could not lay on the range of services that open pit village strike centres could lay on, the 'kitchen in the pavillion' became a central part of the strikers' lives, being a place where people got the latest news, sat and talked over everything, personal problems, events and issues. It was the place where people could go for 'marriage guidance', where the needs of strike babies were catered for, where strikers and their children could 'take refuge' from the cold. Maureen described the struggle the women had in maintaining even the most basic welfare provision:
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A lot of people were coming down with colds and things. They'd no heating at home. In the soup kitchen itself at the old recreation ground, we'd got two little heaters which were no good anyway. But when snow were on the ground, it got very bad for 'em at home and the only hot dinner they got was at the kitchen.

There were a lot coming down with colds and quite a few were getting bad boils and things like that. There were a lot of people what were ill. We all stuck together, and if there were fuel at one house, someone had got a bit more wood, then we'd all go round to that house, and if we'd got wood they'd all come round here, y'know. Things like that were good, cos all that community spirit were coming back. We were all in the same boat and we all needed each other. (Moorends: 106W)

Involving Other Sections of the Village Population

As the Strike continued the women succeeded in persuading some of the local farmers, shopkeepers and traders to increase their support for the kitchen. The club raffles raised a lot of money, with the prizes often being donated back to be re-raffled the following week. One shopkeeper spent all her spare time baking so that the Womens Support Group could organize cake stalls and raffles. The local Church of England vicar, Father John Twistleton (who joined the local Labour Party during the Strike), organised raffles and fundraisers in order to make donations to the kitchen. The chip shop gave preferential treatment to striking families and sent all its unsold food upto the local pickets at the end of each evening. The Labour Party held monthly raffles for the WSG. Old age pensioners attended afternoon bingo sessions at the house of a WSG member for prizes donated by local shopkeepers. A young woman Strike supporter, Liz Dawes, not noted for her quietness, managed a whole two hours sponsored silence and thereby raised £44 for the kitchen. These were the kind of small local initiatives that kept the kitchen going.

Moorends was a strike-community with a much lower profile than the one in Armthorpe. Although the Moorends Womens Support Group made their own banner, the women had little opportunity to display it around the village. Unlike Armthorpe, and indeed, unlike the 1926 lockout, when the miners' parades had become a feature of life in Thorne and Moorends, there were no regular meetings, rallies or demonstrations in the village. Neither was there the initiation of a
news bulletin, such as the Tannoy, in order to keep the village population informed or encourage their collective involvement in strike activities. It was left to the kitchen, alongside the pit gate picket lines, to get the strike message across to other members of the village population.

The kitchen had not been set up for this purpose and was not therefore particularly well equipped for the job. Apart from the chronic lack of physical resources, there had been neither discussion nor policy decision on the involvement of other sections of the village population in strike activity. Neither, with most of the men's activity focussed around the Hatfield strike centre, was there a union leadership which could initiate or 'sanction' wider community involvement in Strike activity.

As a result the Moorends Strike operation was not particularly 'open' to a major involvement of non-miners. The retired miners and their partners were very generous, but even they did not have the same levels of collective organisation as their Armthorpe counterparts. A small number of young unemployed, usually from mining families, put in long shifts alongside the 'regular' pickets, but in general the unemployed youth were not integrated into the strike operations in the same way as they were in Armthorpe. Paul, twenty years old and unemployed at the time of the Strike explained:

'The strike seemed to bring people together in the village, closer, more solid. But only a very small minority of the unemployed really felt part of it. There were some. One lad, Eddie, sat in the picket shed all night, every night, but the majority of unemployed, no. I'd been picketing one day and one of 'em says to me, "What have you been picketing for? You don't even work at the pit!" He just didn't understand what it was all about.' (Moorends: 120YU)

There were only some ten to fifteen unemployed youth and school students who were regular attenders at the local picket lines. They used to help collect wood and would sometimes spend all evening listening to the pickets. Lorraine, then a sixteen year-old student at Thorn Grammar, used to go up with a local picket, Roy Stanger even though her parents thought it 'was no place for a young lass'. She described her experience:
'We began to realize what the village was for and know all the people in it. It was nice to see how people were coping. It was different. There was always something entertaining going on. Especially when you were sat up by the pit gates with the pickets. Some of the tales they could tell you! It was better than reading a fairy tale book! They used to sit there bragging about what they'd do if the cops came. When they did, they ran like the rest of us.' (Moorends: 122YU)

The main encouragement for the collective involvement of the unemployed came from the nearest open pit village, Stainforth. On a couple of occasions, just after their involvement in the 21 August (Stainforth) riots, large groups of young unemployed began to turn up at the Moorends pit gates in order to abuse the police stationed on them.\textsuperscript{22} Because of the vulnerability of the older, regular pickets on the gates and the fear of police reprisals against Moorends Strike activists, the 'kitchen women' felt obliged to ask the youth not to show up in large groups, but to help the strike effort on an a more individual basis.\textsuperscript{103} This discouraging of militant, collective involvement obviously had its greatest impact on the large number of unemployed who had no direct family connection with the Strike. As a second (unemployed) Paul explained:

'I didn't really bother much during the Strike. My friend's dad was a miner at Hatfield and his mum and his dad used to tell me what they were doing. It really kept them busy, the Strike did. But nobody really asked me to get involved, except for them. They said I should go down the gates ... but I didn't bother. It'd have been different if I'd have been a miner, but I didn't feel it was my place really.' (Moorends: 127YU)

Paul's feelings of exclusion and inferiority are apparent. With his identity defined negatively from above, by the state, he feels he has no right to 'get involved'. Even when invited by a friend's father, he hesitates, feeling he has no 'place' in the Strike community. Unlike Armthorpe there is no central, local institution that can mobilise and focus sufficient political pressure to allow the unemployed to shake off their atomisation and passivity. Societal pressures and in particular the lack of the crucial wage relationship ('if I'd have been a miner') encourage Paul to stay away, not to 'bother' with what he realises is a very important event.
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Twinning

Given the lack of delegations to outside labour movement bodies, fundraising tours and political 'connections', when the 'twinning' networks developed in the latter stages of the Strike, Moorends was not very prominent in them. The few links with the organised labour movement that they did manage to establish proved very important. There were the Hull dockers, a Doncaster rail union branch and a Labour Party branch at Beverley, Leeds. All these delivered substantial assistance; the Doncaster NUR used to send the kitchen £50 per fortnight and the Beverley Labour Party laid on a grand evening out for the Moorends activists, which proved a great boost to flagging morale.

But the weakness of the local strike community meant that the Moorends activists were not in a good position to reciprocate this generosity or build on these links, either politically or socially. As with picketing, the lack of 'twinning' experience was not evenly shared throughout the Moorends strike community. Some of the male activists were heavily involved in Hatfield's major twinning network. 'Cockney' Jim gave an account of his twinning experience:

'I was fundraising in Bradford, Sheffield and London. In the early part of the Strike I was fundraising and then picketing and doing meetings as well. You can't speak at a meeting if you haven't been on the picket line for five days. They wanted to know what was happening at that time. So I made myself ill over it... I was exhausted and I had to pack in the meetings for a spell. (....) Later on we were twinned with that many unions. We had links with some of the Camden Council unions and we were given an office in the town hall to organise from. We did all the different unions; ASLEF, NUR, council worker meetings, anti-rate capping meetings. But we didn't just do union meetings. There were socialist meetings, Militant meetings, gay and lesbian meetings, the lot.

I got to know some really good people. I stayed in Scotland for two weeks and Nottingham for one, and made some really good friends there. Then there's Noreen, who I stopped with in London. She's been up here and I generally give her a phone call and see how she's going on. She's a home help with Camden Council. She put up three or four Hatfield lads, week in week out, for the whole of the Strike. She used to give us an early morning shout, and then a slap up breakfast every day. And the best dinners I had in the Strike was when I was down there. I couldn't believe it - steaks, chickens, everything..' (Moorends: 140M)
Moorends - The Strike Experience

As with the Armthorpe activists, the Moorends men did not merely value their links with the broader strike community because they provided a break from the pit village, new friendships (or hot dinners!). They were seen as adding a new dimension to the strike, encouraging them to develop their politics and play a part in the broader community of struggle. Jim went on to describe this effect of the miners' involvement in the outside political community:

'One of the most amazing meetings I was at was a Revolutionary Communist Party one. A Kent NUM leader was the main speaker. I was with another Hatfield lad, Maurice. We call him the tin miner, 'cos he's Cornish. He's a big, gruff bloke, and he wasn't involved at all before the Strike. He got up and was talking about the persecution of the miners... at the road blocks and on the picket lines.

Anyway there were some black people around the meeting and he got on about the rioting in Bristol and basically he said, "I couldn't believe that the British bobby would do a thing like this. I thought it was the blacks. Through the news, and the media I was ignorant, and to my black comrades here, I apologize for my ignorance." And then he just sat down. My mouth just fell open, it was brilliant! I couldn't believe it of Maurice.' (Moorends: 140M)

Given the role that twinning played in transforming ideas and attitudes, the lack of involvement among the Moorends women was obviously important. Totally engaged in the herculean task of meeting an ever-increasing demand for local welfare, the women had no time to engage in twinning relationships with 'outsiders'. This meant that they were rarely required to analyse the political context or significance of their activity, never required to put the politics of the Strike across to a non-coalfield audience. Tied into a daily routine of local fundraising and kitchen work, they were unable to achieve the geographic or social 'distance' that was so vital for getting a clear perspective on their position as women in a pit village.

Unlike several of the leading Armthorpe women who were able to use their social and political relationships in the broader support community as a yardstick to judge their 'domestic' situation, the Moorends women rarely spent more than a few hours away from the village. Although the women were at the centre of the local strike community, and their status rose accordingly, there was no systematic challenging of their domestic/support role, no stimulus that demanded an overhauling of their attitudes and relationships. The lack of a
collective political perspective was recognised by several of the women. Cath suggested:

'We saw our role as raising the morale among the women, keeping them going when they just felt they couldn't go on. We also stood up against the men and asked them, 'Well, why aren't you out on the picket lines? It's your job as well'... I don't think our support group was as active as a lot of them. A lot of the others took it political wise as well. We took it more as a community role ... to keep together like.'

(Moorends: 107W)

Cath was, herself, a very political person. But in this statement there are echoes of those less-involved Armthorpe women who accused the activists of over-politicisation and over-assertiveness, of going far beyond their 'support' role. Implicit in Cath's statement is an acknowledgement of the weakness of the militant political tradition that Moorends was famous for. It was as if the less political stance was a price that had to be paid for community-wide support.

This strategy was successful at one level. Several 'outside' strike activists, especially in neighbouring Thorne, commented on the feeling of unity and closeness in Moorends during the Strike, while several of the Moorends women echoed Mary's suggestion that:

'Our women's group was pretty placid compared with others. We only ever had one major argument as I remember.'

(Moorends: 110W)

Although the lack of major political debate inside the group may have prevented 'political' divisions between the activists or between them and other village women, it did not encourage the involvement of non-mining political women activists. Neither did it prevent antagonisms developing around less 'political' issues, such as allegations of corruption. The lack of internal political debate was also one of the factors which discouraged the women's involvement in the broader support community, which, in turn, increased their dependency on a community that was extremely short of resources.
There was one ‘twinning’ link that the Moorends women were far less reticent in developing. That was the local one with the Hatfield/Stainforth strike community. The men were, of course, virtually daily visitors to the Stainforth Welfare, but whenever the women felt in urgent need of having their own morale lifted, they used to head across to Stainforth and meet up with some of the Hatfield activists. The Moorends miners’ children also benefitted from the Hatfield connection, going out with them on canal barge and other day trips. As the strike continued and life got harder, these rare breaks became more and more important.

*Community under Siege*

In early Winter, even before there was any strikebreaker in the village, there was an early-morning police invasion of Moorends. People awoke at 4 a.m. to discover groups of police, armed with truncheons, chasing pickets through their back gardens. Maureen was a witness to the 'picket hunt':

“I just heard a noise in my garden. And I thought “What the heck’s that?” and I opened the window and there were three lads lying in our garden here. They said, “Police is chasing us! ”, I says, “Come down backs and get in shed!” [Gordon: “It was just an early morning change of pickets. There wasn’t even a single scab in the village. And these seven riot vans drove up to the picket lines looking for trouble!”]

‘Gordon and Stuart had to dive off the road, they were layed low in a garden on Wembley Road. The riot cops just jumped out of the vans and laid into the pickets. There was one badly injured on the top road, hit with truncheons on the head. They got a lad in Garden Road, and Martin Rowlands was copped and arrested. Elaine opened back door to see if she could find a bit of firewood, cos the baby had woke up with the cold and she found six lads hid in the garden! She nearly had an heart attack! They were watching us all the time, to stop us getting wood or coal from the tips, ‘cos they'd stopped us going on the tips by then.’

(Moorends: 106W)

Shortly after Moorends discovered it had a strikebreaker, Bert Walton, who worked at Hatfield and lived in Alexander Road. Apart from a permanent guard on his house, the police presence in Moorends increased dramatically, with marked and unmarked cars being stationed all around the village (which has no police station)\(^{142}\). Regular foot patrols began backing up an enlarged force of police at the pit gates. Pickets who had previously been able to treat the
village as some kind of a haven from police surveillance and harassment found themselves, their partners and even their children being watched, stopped and questioned. Activists could expect to be stopped and questioned outside their house, on the local picket line, or as they came out of the pubs and clubs. Some were beaten up on the picket lines and there were even clashes with local policemen inside the pubs and clubs.

As the numbers of strikebreakers in the village increased so did the efforts of the strikers to discover their identity. Any gathering of miners tended to attract the attention of the police. Gordon explained how they attempted to avoid surveillance:

'It were around November or December time. There was nowhere in the village that we could meet in private, so I said, "Round our house six o'clock, Sunday night." And we had this meeting about having lookouts of a night around the village, watching for scabs going to work, and we all fixed places that we were going to watch from. And not only did the police seem to know about where we'd decided on, but the following Sunday we had a cop car parked outside our house from half five till half seven. They were spying on us all the time...'

(Moorends: 136W)

The women also came in for their share of police attention. When the first strikebreaker was bussed into Thorne Colliery, the women stopped work in the kitchen and joined the 130-strong demonstration of local and Hatfield pickets outside the pit entrance. Margaret:

'We'd got the dinner ready so we thought we'd go to. When the police went into action it were terrible to see; kicking people, booting them up the backside, calling us all kinds of names - effin' scavengers, scroungers, all sorts.'

(Moorends: 109W)

Having broken up the demonstration, the police forced the women onto the recreation ground, swearing at them and telling them to go and cook their 'scrounged meals'. When dinner time arrived they attempted to stop people from entering the Rec in order to reach the food kitchen. Margaret again:

'They tried to stop people getting through to the kitchen, so we had to bring the mayoress of Thorne up and she went and told them, 'You can't stop these people, this is a public right of way!' But they certainly tried their best. They kept on all the time at people 'Go and get your scrounged meals!'

(Moorends: 109W)
Along with the more overtly sexist abuse, this attempt to belittle the miners as scroungers seemed to be a conscious policy of the police. Maureen described some of the other problems they had with 'the Met':

'I was in the kitchen full time. We had a bad crack down there y'know. People kept breaking into that place and they weren't taking food, they were throwing it about. Sabotage really, they'd turn all the fridges off and stuff. We got there Monday and everything were bad, thrown all over the place. That upset us, that knocked us back to the point of, well, that's it - call it a day. That happened two or three times. We never found out who it were. There were slogan's wrote on the inside walls - "Ratepayers are paying for all this" and stuff. I used to be woken up at one or two in the morning when they'd heard something down at the pavilion, them pickets stopped quite a few break-ins.

One of the nights it were done, were when we'd had a scab gone in at Thorne pit. There were probably three or four hundred police there. And it was straight across field from the pit. To be honest with you, although we couldn't prove it, we thought it was the police. They burned the picket huts down, and everything, but we couldn't prove it you see. And if you tried to talk to them felas, you got nothing but abuse. I remember I said to Cath one day, 'You catch more with sugar than you do with vinegar, I'll talk civil to these guys.' 'Cos normally I wouldn't talk to them ... I shan't repeat what they said to me. Terrible, the language!

And when these Metropolitan guys were around, they'd always be trying to stir the lads up. They'd be shouting to them as they come for their dinner in the kitchen, "Go and get your scrounged meals!" and they were calling us dirty names as well, 'cos we were cooking meals. That were the Met. they were devils!. And some of the women with young kids they were being put off so we had to put up a big notice saying, 'Ignore them, we're fighting for jobs!' (Moorends: 106W)

This was not the first time that Maureen and other Moorends women had seen 'the Met' in action. They had witnessed horrific scenes on what was supposed to be peaceful lobby of parliament in London on 7 June 1984. They were forced off Westminster bridge by a series of mounted police charges and saw several miners severely beaten about the head, body and 'between the legs' by police truncheons. Maureen:

'It weren't policing. It was war. When I was confronted in London I thought I were at war with somebody. And when they charged them horses I just could not believe it. It were just, "There's someone with a sticker on ", and bang! "let's hit him on the head ". It were really terrible. They weren't human beings were they?' (Moorends: 106W)

While on the same demonstration, the Moorends women also witnessed the incident where uniformed soldiers in an unmarked white transit were photographed as they shadowed the demonstration. Although the soldiers called in the police who
The Strike made the people at school more aware. Me especially [laughs] I used to be shy, but I started talking a lot more. That's when I found out that the teachers didn't want you to bring up the issues. Most of the teachers wanted to keep the subject out of the school. They used to try and make a joke about it - how I was going to be the politician of the class and stuff, but it were serious for us.

The thing was they never used to talk about job prospects, about whether you wanted to go to college, or a scheme or whatever, and they never talked about the Strike either. There's something wrong there isn't there? ... But we used to talk about it all the time anyway.'

(Moorends: 128W)

Other pupils of Thorne Grammar were even more unfortunate. Lorraine, a daughter of a prominent strike couple in Moorends, found herself in serious trouble due to the activities of a teacher whose hostility to the miners strike approached the level of a personal crusade. At first it was a constant goading of the miners' children with references to how the miners were a disgrace and how lucky they were that they had a good police force to protect them. The miners children, who were in a small minority, refused to be browbeaten and used to try and engage him in debate (they also used to enjoy cutting up his copy of the Sun when he left it lying around!).

He then began bringing in one of the local policemen, a P.C. Collins, who instead of visiting the class once or twice a term, as was 'normal', began to visit it once a week! Lorraine described his attitude:
"He used to think he were a star. He used to walk in and say, "Teenagers today are nought but bastards!" One day Collins walked in and just said, "Miners are just daft, cos they're bound to lose!" and I stood up and said, "We'll win!". He says, "Oh, you're very sure of yourself, aren't you?" - dead sarcastic like. Anyway I was going to have the last word, and just 'cos he were losing the argument, he threw the board duster at me. He made the excuse that it just slipped out of his hands, but it didn't.

He was always telling stories about how stupid and thuggish the miners were. He was just trying to make the miners' kids feel stupid in front of everyone else. Another time in the middle of an argument, he boxed my ear!' (Moorends: 122YU)

After this second incident, whenever P.C. Collins walked in, Lorraine walked out. The long term costs of this resistance were significant. The teacher concerned threw Lorraine out of one of his lessons due to her alleged insolence and then put her 'on report', consistently marking her down as badly behaved and therefore deserving of suspension. In her attempts to avoid his lesson, Lorraine and a fellow resister used to misbehave themselves in the previous lesson (whose teachers could not understand what was causing the transformation) and were confined to 'the Black Hole' (an isolation-punishment-store cupboard) for a fortnight.

An extremely bright student with a previously outstanding record in English and Maths, Lorraine then began 'twagging' it from school in order to avoid the hostile treatment and punishment. Keeping her parents in the dark about all this, she used to spend all her spare time in Thorne, at the kitchen or on the local picket line where she 'felt wanted'. Her younger sister was also given a very hard time by some of the teachers. With her pre-exam school year a complete disaster, her exam results were very disappointing and any thoughts of staying on at school for further qualifications disappeared. As she visited the school in order to collect her results she was confronted by the teacher in the corridor who taunted her with, "What do you think of your miners now?" Apart from showing the tenacity of the children concerned, the fact that this kind of treatment could go on without provoking major protest action, by the students or
parents, appears to reveal the weakness in the Moorends Strike-based community, relative to, for example, Armthorpe.

**Ending the Strike**

The inability of Moorend's strike 'community' to forge major links with the national strike support network meant that, as the strike went on, the hardship increased greatly. As the long-awaited cold weather finally arrived in January and February, the shortage of fuel became acute. Strikers went down with colds, flu, and other illnesses. People had to resort to desperate measures in order to provide themselves with any heat. With all dead and waste wood stripped from a wide surrounding area, telegraph poles were 'removed' in the middle of the night to provide firewood and deep snow had to be cleared in order to riddle tiny lumps of coal from the already exhausted tip. Decent clothes and shoes were also in very short supply. The Moorend women set up a makeshift shoe repair service in which the Weetabix boxes were put to as good a use as their original contents had been! Maureen recalled the accommodating reply of one desperate striker seeking a second hand pair of shoes, who when asked, "what size do you take?" replied "Sixes, sevens, or eights".

Christmas itself was not as bad as many strikers and their children had feared it would be. There was a Christmas party and presents for the children but it was still much, much harder than Christmas in Armthorpe. The first few months of the New Year were especially hard and bitter with the number of strikebreakers in the village increasing to seven and a growing realisation that the strike was going to end in defeat.

Moorend's isolation was underlined by the loss of the picketing/hired van as the Yorkshire NUM funds were finally cut off. Even in the last days of the Strike, the members of the Moorends strike community were unable to share in the collective defiance of Armthorpe and Stainforth. The Moorends miners had to leave the village in order to march back with their separate union branches.
women did not travel with the men, but stayed in Moorends. The kitchen closed down a week later and the following day, the council sent workers in to gut it, prior to renovation.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have shown how, apart from some obvious similarities, the strike experience in Moorends was of a very different nature to that in Armthorpe. The decline of the village's community, indicated in the previous chapter, became very apparent when a significant minority of its population were confronted by a major and prolonged collective struggle. The beginning of the strike for 'jobs, pits and communities' found the Moorends mining population lacking any collective identity or organisation.

I have illustrated the role of collective struggle in the reconstruction of a local 'community' involving the strikers, their families and their supporters. Just as the severity of the state offensive made the construction of such a community necessary, the weakened state of the local political tradition, the lack of collectively controlled institutions and the paucity of communal resources delayed its establishment. It eventually required the intervention of 'outside' agencies (from neighbouring open-pit communities) to provide the catalyst and the resources around which the strikers could organise their collective identity.

The task of constructing a struggle-based community in a village where the central focus of collective organisation has long been removed, was one that was fraught with contradictions. Lacking the collective resources that were available in Armthorpe, the men were forced to channel much of their activities into other strike centres, the women to accumulate the barest essentials for a 'soup kitchen' around which the Strike community was built. This geographical
and gender separation in 'spheres of activity' clearly reflected the 'traditional' divisions imposed by the labour process in the coal industry. The men travelled to engage in hazardous activity, the women remained behind to fulfill a support role; balancing the budget and providing physical and spiritual sustenance. Desperately understaffed, the women felt compelled to stay in the kitchen, refraining from wider political debate or involvement.

The toleration of this role separation, the emphasis on 'community welfare' to the detriment of the more political dimensions of the strike operation, the evident weakness of the radical political tradition, all these factors led to a very different type of strike-based community than that established in Armthorpe. It was a less dynamic community, organising collective provision, and therefore collective activity, in far fewer areas. It was a community built around the unceasing activity of a much smaller core of overburdened activists, providing a service to a large group of passive strikers.

This active/passive type of interaction was reproduced in the relationship of the strike-bound community with the rest of the village population. The 'sectionalism' which was tolerated in the strike community's core reflected deeper sectional divisions in the village population. Twenty eight years of pit-closure had led to a situation where the village lacked the physical and political resources needed to mobilise its population in a 'community strike'. Without a union branch to provide the initiative and the focus for collective political activity, the Moorends activists were unable to develop a strategy which could involve the young unemployed, non-mining women or political activists, leaving the majority of the village population in the role of passive supporters, or merely spectators. It was, of course, this type of passivity that the government strategy depended upon, and the resultant weakness of the 'community' was revealed by the ease with which the police intervened
locally to intimidate and brutalise strike activists, without provoking a collective response from the rest of the village population.

Finally I have attempted to illustrate how this local 'isolation' of the strike activists was paralleled by the isolation of the Moorends strike community from the broader political and labour network. I have explained that this lack of 'participation' was experienced far more acutely by the women than by the men. It contributed to the harshness of their Strike experience, to their constant shortage of material and human resources. It also contributed to the 'limited' nature of their Strike experience, denying them the outside stimulus and challenges that encouraged a personal development, a 'shifting of horizons' among so many other women strike activists.

I believe that the failure to implant the local strike-based community in the broader, Strike support community also contributed to a greater transience in the Moorends community than that experienced in Armthorpe. In the next chapter, I investigate how this community, constructed in reaction to the specific conditions of the 1984/85 Strike, survived once these conditions had been removed.
FOOTNOTES

1. Virtually all the older Moorends miners, who had taken on leading roles in other NUM branches, had retired from the industry. Although several of the younger ones were active in the union at a 'pit level', the tradition of regular branch attendance and holding of positions had virtually disappeared. This was not quite so true in nearby Thorne and this was one of the factors which, I believe, contributed to a very different strike experience in Moorends' 'twin' village. The total lack of Moorends involvement in the official branch structures was one of the things that changed as a consequence of the Strike. Even so, this change only involved two of the village miners.

2. The fact that they went to the trouble of touring the villages gives an indication of the 'pit political' tradition that the two officials stood in. One was a communist, an ex-Thorne miner who still lived on the South Common, the other lived in Dunscroft and saw himself more in the syndicalist tradition. Their willingness to 'adopt' over a hundred miners that were not in their branch was undoubtedly a key factor in getting the Moorends strike operation 'off the ground'. The 'adopted' miners became prominent as picket organisers and, perhaps because they experienced the inadequacy of other branches' strike operations at first hand, their women partners were key in the founding of the 'soup kitchen'.

3. Thorne Colliery, taking its name from the older, market/water transport village, ended up situated next to its own pit village, Moorends. Similarly although Hatfield Main took its name from the old, established village of Hatfield, it was situated some distance from it, in its own village of Stainforth. Just as the development of Thorne colliery eventually encouraged the building of an additional miners' housing estate on the South Common, Thorne, so Hatfield Main led to the building of an extensive estate at Dunscroft, Hatfield. Although much of the Hatfield activity was centred on the Welfare in Stainforth, there was also a very lively Strike community centred on a kitchen housed in the Broadway Hotel, Dunscroft.

4. Because the Armthorpe women had made such point about their kitchen not being a soup kitchen, I was somewhat taken aback by the Moorends activists use of the term. It was only in the course of the interview programme that I came to realise how the nature of their 1984/85 experience meant that this term was considered appropriate and politically unproblematic. The lateness in establishment, the scarcity of resources and the more basic level of provision led the women to adopt a very 'matter of fact' approach. The local miners and their families either had to use the soup kitchen or starve or return to work.

Similarly, the women's very limited involvement in the broader political community meant that they found their group's title 'support group' (rather than 'action group') unproblematic. In Armthorpe the name 'Ladies Support Group' was rapidly replaced by 'Women's Action Group' and was never mentioned in interviews.

5. Due to their weak position, the women tended to 'ignore' these rebuffs. One shopkeeper however seemed to make a point of attacking them, the miners and the Strike. His pronouncement that it wouldn't make any difference if none of the miners used his shop again revealed the extent to which many village inhabitants assumed Moorends had ceased to be a mining village. The unofficial boycott begun by the women had defeated the shopkeeper by the end of the Strike. He then faced major problems in trying to sell the shop.

(Moorends: 113W)
Moorends - the Strike Experience

6. The victim was Jim Donnelly, a miner from Hatfield, for whom this attack by dogs was just one of several nasty experiences he had with the police.

7. The absence of any bulletin in the village which had given birth to the Butty Squasher was just one indicator of far the political and cultural tradition of Moorends had declined. I met writers, poets and cartoonists, who could undoubtedly have produced an excellent and lively information bulletin, but the degree of political atomisation seemed to have proved too great an obstacle.

8. Roy Stanger was a much-respected and very popular figure in Moorends. Apart from being a strike activist, he was a football referee and played a leading role in organising local sports. When the kitchen first opened he refused to take advantage of it, unless he was allowed to help with the work. The women forced him to come in and adopted him as part of the kitchen 'team'.

   Unfortunately he was already suffering from a serious illness and, despite all the efforts of the Moorends women, wasted away physically during the Strike. After the Strike ended the women continued to care for him, until he died in the Summer of 1985. Roy's death was remembered as one of the most tragic parts of the Strike's aftermath. Moorends virtually came to a standstill on the morning of his funeral. Over 500 people packed the church to pay their respects, with an NUM wreath being carried in front of the hearse.

9. At this stage the regular police presence around the pit was fairly small. The police tended to concentrate their forces on the open pits where coal production was a possibility (albeit a distant one). There were less than a score of NCB workers employed at Thorne and no question of coal production.

10. It was suggested that they could help with old age pensioners fuel, or with the heavier work at the kitchen. As in Armthorpe the young unemployed did help out in these areas, and as in Armthorpe, all the Moorends activists commented on how there was virtually a total cessation of anti-social behaviour among the village youth during the Strike. Nevertheless, the inability of the Moorends strike operation to incorporate and develop the collective activity of the young unemployed eventually left the strikers vulnerable to exactly the kind of police attention they were afraid of. Any attempt to turn the Strike into a 'community strike' would have had to have addressed the large numbers of unemployed youth in the village, the immediate victims of the pit closure programme.

11. After Armthorpe, and perhaps the Kent pits, Hatfield probably had the most extensive twinning network in the country. While I was doing my field research, the Stainforth Miners Welfare and the Broadway Hotel were frequently the setting for strike benefits, twinning reunions and other political events. One of the reasons that Hatfield became involved in supporting a 'federation' of four village kitchens was that it had led the field in Yorkshire, having formed a very early twinning relationship with the Keresley, Coventry strikers. The latter, as a striking pit in an anti-Strike area, were pioneers in establishing a food kitchen and other forms of self-help.

12. In the 1970's she had been a member of the Communist Party and its women's group, which had Del Carr and Marie Cairns among its membership. For a period Cath had been quite active, but then, in the late 1970's, the women's group - like the CP branch, 'just disintegrated'. She dropped out of membership and only took out a card again during the Strike. 'I didn't care who knew I were a communist. Plus we got a lot of support from CPers during the Strike and that made a difference.'

(Moorends: 107W)
13. Whereas in Armthorpe, political criticism was peppered with a few allegations of corruption, in Moorends the WSG tended to be accused of 'cliquishness' with slightly more references to full cupboards (although in both cases these accusations were mentioned by a small minority of 'outsiders'). Because of the vulnerability of the 'kitchen in the pavilion' and the shortage of storage space, the Moorends women had to store food, clothes and toys in their homes, thus increasing the scope for these allegations. It was the young unemployed that, in their interviews, seemed most prepared to enter into this type of 'gossip', perhaps reflecting their lack of political awareness and their uncritical attitude towards information. (See Chapter 12)

14. The nearest police station was in Thorne, and after the Strike even this was put on a part-time basis. The station was only open at certain times of the day, with enquiries outside these times being directed to the main station in Doncaster.

15. As in Armthorpe, 'local' police were not used in the front line, patrolling the pit or arresting pickets. This led some people to conclude that the local police were better than the 'Mets' (undoubtedly there were some who refused to cooperate in anti-Strike activity) while others pointed out their background role, providing the necessary local intelligence for the 'outside' police.

Three Moorends activists reported clashes with 'local' policemen in village pubs and clubs, although they were even more vulnerable as they left them. The fact that the policemen felt confident enough to use the village pubs revealed the weakness of the strike-based community. Their presence in an Armthorpe pub or club, especially after the village invasion, would have been the cause of a riot.

16. The Miner was produced more frequently and served a multitude of roles during the Strike. It acted as a kind of national strike bulletin for the miners themselves, began to link the women's groups and was distributed around the broader Miners Support network. The edition with the nine photographs, taken by Tony Howe, came out a week after the incident. The Ministry of Defence put out a statement suggesting it was a bomb disposal team and explained: 'Members of explosives ordinance teams are instructed not to have their photographs taken because it would compromise their work and their safety' (Guardian 15/6/84)

17. This was also a tactic used by the headmaster at Armthorpe Comprehensive who, the school students felt, was very hostile to the Miners' Strike. The over-rigorous enforcing of uniform regulations was also the main issue around which the senior students chose to organise their one day strike, when they wanted to join the village's return to work march.

18. All of these worked at a distance from the village. At the finish there were three strikebreakers on the bus that went into Thorne Colliery. None of them were locals - living in the village. (Moorends: 136M)
Chapter Twelve

MOORENDS AFTER THE MINERS STRIKE

'We did not paint the mining community in any couleur de rose, but this community without the mine and the mineworkers is in danger of becoming merely an aggregate of socially isolated and culturally condemned human beings.' Fernando Henriques, Introduction, Coal is Our Life, 1969 edition

Introduction

In this chapter I investigate the nature of the local community in Moorends eighteen months after the 1984/85 dispute. I describe the work and non-work situation of the miners who live in the village, that of their women partners and that of the young unemployed. I outline the way in which the continued closure of Thorne Colliery continues to have a major effect on the community, reducing the possibilities for collective organisation, struggle or 'identity' among the village population.

In contrast, I describe how the impact of the 1984/85 Strike can still be perceived in the attitudes and social relationships of sections of the village population. I suggest that the effects of the year-long dispute, in their strengthening of the local community, act as a kind of backdrop to a process of renewed decline in the economic and social life of the village. I suggest the local political processes are slightly more complex, with the radicalisation of leading Strike activists finding a partial reflection in a renewal of the village's political life.

I then turn to the situation of the young unemployed in Moorends. I describe their extreme financial problems, their constantly narrowing horizons and their exclusion from many areas of social activity. Although there are similarities with the situation of the younger groups of unemployed in
Moorends After the Miners' Strike

Armthorpe, I suggest that the weakness of the community in Moorends serves to increase their lack of social contact, restricting their access to collective activity and identity. I investigate the contradictory role of the Moorends Strike experience in radicalising the ideas and attitudes of a minority of local unemployed youth, while not facilitating their participation in the broader, class-based 'community' outside the village.

THE MOORENDS MINER

I interviewed fourteen miners who had returned to work in four different pits; Hatfield, Askern, Rossington, and Markham Main (twelve were still working, one had been sacked and another had taken redundancy). Like the Markham miners, the men from the three other pits complained of having to put up with poor working conditions, of the scrapping of local agreements and of an increasingly authoritarian regime being imposed by management. The most frequent complaint, however, was that, due to these factors, morale had plummeted and the type of work relationships that made life at the pit bearable had simply disappeared. In answer to the question, 'What are the main differences at work?', Gordon, a face ripper at Askern, suggested:

'The new machinery has made our particular job a lot easier in the physical sense. We never used to have these machines before, we bored and fired the rips and just had a small bucket to fill out with. It were harder work, but we could get stuck in and it were faster. Now there's a lot of dead time. Any breakdowns and we're waiting all the time. We're not as much in control as we used to be.

And you have to be a lot more careful of what you do. You might be hanging about but you couldn't leave the job for a break or owt. They're jumping on you. And there's a lot less men: there's four hundred men less. Only seven hundred out of the eleven hundred that were there before the Strike. The number of faces have gone down from five to two. They blamed it on the Strike, but I was on one of the faces a couple of months after the Strike, salvaging some stuff, and it could have worked, there weren't even any weight on it...' (Moorends: 136M)

As in Markham, one of the main complaints of the craftsmen was the cutting of their wages, due to the loss of locally-agreed bonuses. Dave, an underground fitter at Hatfield, explained:

'We used to get paid for signing reports every day. The management suddenly announced that we couldn't get paid for this, because we weren't
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fully face-trained. So we said, 'If we're not fully face-trained, we can't alter the powered supports either.' and so we now need men to do it for us. There's been a whole bunch of lads who've gone in since the Strike and said, 'If you're not going to treat us decent, we'll come off the fitting staff and do our face training.'

The face men don't seem to get so much hassle as we do. Mind you, nobody's allowed to have any say in what they're doing any more. From overmen downwards it's, 'You've got to do what we say now ... or else.' They want to be in complete control now. They're there to manage and they're going to be seen to do it, whether they're right or wrong. The men don't seem to stick together in dispute situations the way they used to, and the union doen't seem to be as bothered about an individual's problems as they used to be. They more or less just want to smooth things over, and keep everything running smoothly. (Moorends: 138M)

This new union role, placing a premium on conciliation, was confirmed by Jim, another Hatfield miner, recently elected onto the NUM branch committee:

'There are a lot of men doing things now that, prior to the Strike, they wouldn't have done. Or they wouldn't have tolerated the ways in which the gaffers have been treating them and talking to them. Whereas prior to the Strike, if a man had a grievance, it was "Down tools and everybody out!" But now they're not, and me being a union man, I'm taking that line myself. I'm trying to get the men to stop down the pit and not lose money. Until we can sort out the men or the mens' grievance... before we take this kind of action. It's difficult, because the management are really coming down heavy on people and their natural reaction is, "Sod it, let's go home! "' (Moorends: 140M)

This union role was blamed by a lot of the village miners for the increase in disciplinary attacks on the part of management. Billy, a Rossington miner, had been sacked in June 1985 on the pretext of his bad timekeeping, whereas he claimed that, before the Strike, the union would have refused to tolerate such treatment:

'After the Strike, I went back to work and instead of being put on a production face with a good bonus, I was put on salvage. Oh, what a job, bloody awful it was! Your most militant men had already got the chop, they'd already gone, so when the management came down, what could we do? They used my timekeeping to get rid of me. I would never have been sacked before the Strike. I blame the union more than owt, because the union didn't have enough backbone. They can't have pushed it. (Moorends: 145M)

Elaine, his wife, explained how the sacking had taken them by surprise:

'From March to June it were alright, but we never really had a chance to get back on our feet. It was horrible having to go back to work like that, and Billy found it particularly difficult getting up on the early shift. The personnel called him in one day and said to him, "You've got a bad record, haven't you? " and they just cooked up this big case against him, going back years and years. He'd done six years on the face, and in all that time he'd only had two warning letters.
Anyhow, the union man warned him, "Don't miss a day in the next six weeks." And I stopped up every night when he were on days to get him up at four, so he didn't miss the half four pit bus. And he worked the full six weeks and he was never late once. Anyhow they had four of them stand in a row outside the Manager's office while the union man went in and argued, but at the end, the manager came out and just said, "You're reinstated, you're reinstated. You two, you're sacked." And the union, after all we'd been through during the Strike, they never...... they didn't even fight for him! Oh yes, I'm very bitter. (Moorends: 108W)

Elaine's bitterness was directed both at the NCB who she saw as victimising her husband by ignoring the traditional six-week trial period, and the NUM for allowing them to get away with it. Her letters to both, complaining about her husband's treatment, were never replied to. The sacking allowed her to contrast her experience of the Strike 'community' of 1984/85 with the lack of 'community' as an unemployed member of the village population:

'Now it's just one long struggle. It's worse than being on strike, cos there's no end in sight. When we were on strike we seemed better off, we seemed to cope better, we had the kitchen to fall back on and all such as that.' (Moorends: 108W)

Apart from the village miners that had been sacked, many more had taken voluntary redundancy or early retirement. Harold, 52, explained how all his age group had taken redundancy:

'God only knows why we did go back. We'd have been better sticking it out, because when we went back it were like going back to the nineteen ruddy forties. It was either 'Do that job or get down the bloody road! ' That were it, and when they offered us the special deal - there were about thirty of us and we had a meeting - and no-one was happy about it, but nobody else had refused it. We were all that brassed off with the place and after a long talk we all decided to take it...

[Margaret: I didn't agree with them finishing.]

'And I didn't either in a respect, but a lot of lads looked at it this way - If we wait till we're 65, we'll get nowt bar our pension - that's if we reach 65 with the way things are going in the pits.' (Moorends: 137M)

Even in deciding to quit their jobs, the underground miners act collectively. There is an implicit understanding that, having beaten the union, the government and coal board management are going to transform the industry into one which will not be suitable for old miners to work in. However bitter they might feel about 'selling' their jobs, the deterioration in their work situation, the rock-
Moorends After the Miners' Strike

bottom morale and the 'special' redundancy offers left them little option but to 'retire' early. Liz, one of the young women supporters of the Strike, described her view of this phenomenon:

'The NCB are on top now aren't they? They've got the miners frightened to death. They daren't do anything. When they first went back it were ... oh, I know quite a few people who lasted the year, went back and then packed in, took their redundancy. Because of what it were like when they got back. All the bonus was stopped, the conditions were terrible. They seem to be glad to be out of it. Sid - he's in his mid-thirties - he finished on ill-health. They tried putting him on pit top, and he decided to take his redundancy. He's on a course now, he's learning to do bricklaying. Then there's Ted and Ernie up the road, they're about fifty, they're not bothered now. And there's Mr. Walsh, he's about fifty too. He's not bothered either, or at least I don't think he is.

It's a bit difficult for me to keep up with what's going on now, because I used to go round and talk about things with Sid, but with him not working there now, I don't get the same amount of information. There's a lot of miners who have lost their jobs since the Strike.

(Moorends: 113W)

In Moorends there did not appear to be a great deal of overt controversy over men taking redundancy (unlike Thorne, where it was the cause of major and ongoing rows). Nevertheless, as in Armthorpe, the voluntary and involuntary 'quitting' of the coal industry by a large number of village inhabitants, had a major impact on the local community. Mary, one of the support group women, observed:

'The village has suffered ever since they shut the pit. But it's got really bad this last year. Now there's only a few miners on the busses to the different pits. There's that many redundant miners in the village, it's a shame. Things have altered in the clubs, there's fewer people in them. It's that quiet in the Social, its dead, people can't afford to go in there. It's a wonder any of the clubs survive really, they're all in trouble.

(Moorends: 110W)

The Miner and Leisure

In the previous chapter, I described how the Strike served to bring the local miners together, encouraging new relationships among people that had previously had little contact with each other. In the Strike's aftermath, these friendships were frequently maintained, although several people commented on the decrease in their socialising since the return to work. Although some men from the same pit tended to go out together, there was also a tendency to go out with
Moorends After the Miners' Strike

'mates from the Strike'. There was also a lot of socialising with women partners and women Strike activists. This phenomenon is shown in Table 12.1 below.

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<th>associate with</th>
<th>Partner</th>
<th>W'mates</th>
<th>Strike</th>
<th>Family/ relatives</th>
<th>Political</th>
<th>Partners' Few</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>79</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main</td>
<td>Live</td>
<td>2-5</td>
<td>over 5</td>
<td>Known</td>
<td>Known</td>
<td>Known</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associates</td>
<td>locally</td>
<td>miles</td>
<td>miles</td>
<td>1-3 yrs</td>
<td>3-10 yrs</td>
<td>10-50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yrs</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No Interviewed: 14

Source: Moorends Interview Survey 1986/87

A comparison of this table with its Armthorpe equivalent reveals how the decline of the village community had weakened both the relationship between work and leisure and the local family/kinship networks. The effects of the Strike are also evident. Although in a few cases, workmates and 'Strike mates' were, of course, one and the same, often the 'Strike mates' worked in different pits and there had not been a close friendship before the Strike (this explains the relative 'newness' of many of the leisure relationships). Although few miners mentioned their partner's workmates (who often lived some distance from the village), several specified that 'mates from the Strike' included their partner's Strike associates. This tended to confirm the opinion held by virtually all the miners, that there were closer social relationships between men and women 'activists' as a result of the Strike. One of the Daves explained his pattern of social leisure activity:

'Stella and me always go out together, usually on weekends because of the shifts. We're very close now. We sometimes go out with my mate, an electrician from the pit, but usually it's whoever we bump into - usually miners from one or other of the pits. I used to have lots of mates who weren't miners, who I thought were O.K., but they turned out to be anti-Scargill and anti-Strike, so I've cut them out of my circle. We tend to go out locally, nearly always Thorne-Moorends, but sometimes we go over to the Welfare at Stainforth. Before the Strike we never used to go over there, during we were regular all the time, and now we still use it, cos we have a lot of friends from the Strike over there.

(Moorends: 138M)
Moorends After the Miners' Strike

This statement gives a clear illustration of the 'closeness' between the men and the women who had supported each other through twelve months of hardship and sacrifice. It also confirms the role of the Strike in the long-term politicization of the miners' 'community', forcing the restructuring of their relationships along more political lines. This phenomenon was also reflected in the broadening of the miners' conception of 'community'. An example was Dave's new-found fondness for the Hatfield Miners Welfare Institute in Stainforth. 'The Welfare' had been at the centre of a very strong Strike community, the setting for many emotional experiences and strike friendships. This allowed the Moorends miners to feel 'at home' in the Stainforth Welfare, and view it as one of their 'locals'.

Political Attitudes and Activity

As in Armthorpe, the role of the Strike in politicising the attitudes of the local miners was evident. The Moorends miners were unanimous in suggesting that the television coverage of the Strike had been biased, and as a result, 75 percent suggested that their T.V. viewing was more serious, critical or sceptical.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TV Strike Coverage</th>
<th>Post-Strike Viewing</th>
<th>Old papers coverage</th>
<th>Current Paper</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fair Poor Rubbish</td>
<td>Same More serious</td>
<td>Good Poor Terrible</td>
<td>Same More 'left'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 14 86</td>
<td>29 71</td>
<td>0 21 79</td>
<td>64 36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No interviewed: 14
Source: Moorends Interview Survey 1986/87

There was a similarly critical attitude towards newspaper coverage of the Strike, but in contrast to the Markham Main miners, this critical attitude appeared to have led to a smaller change in newspaper readership patterns. There were no Sun readers, and the Wapping dispute had led one miner to transfer from the Times to the Guardian, but the decline in the village's political traditions
meant that there was, in comparison to Armthorpe, only a small readership of radical or socialist newspapers.\[23]\n
The radicalisation of attitudes among the Moorends miners was also apparent on several other issues, as indicated in Table 12.3.

**Table 12.3 Attitudes of Moorends Miners on Major Issues (%)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>More hostile police role</th>
<th>More hostile NCB managers</th>
<th>Increased respect for unions/LP</th>
<th>More aware radicalisation</th>
<th>Overall</th>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>93</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No Interviewed: 14  
Source: Moorends Interview Survey 1986/87

The unanimity among Moorends Strike activists when it came to their attitudes towards the police reflected the nature of their Strike experience, under constant threat of being overwhelmed by superior numbers. Stuart, who was subjected to harassment and violence on several occasions, explained:

'I was surprised, probably I shouldn't have been, at the lengths the state was allowed to go to. They had me a few times. I was arrested at Orgreave and I had several narrow escapes. In Moorends we were confronted with 'em everyday, harassment were so widespread ... it was just normal ... legalised violence. We expected it after the first few months or so, but that doesn't mean you can ever forget it.  

(Moorends: 134M)

Jim, who had police dogs unleashed on him at Orgreave, explained how the miners became accustomed to this institutionalised violence wherever they went:

'I was stopped at an M1 junction. We'd just come off junction 27 and we stopped to have a cup of tea. We'd been out since four and we had an hour to spare. We'd been at this tea caravan about five minutes when two van loads of coppers pulled in. And they got out and one of them put a truncheon near enough up my nose and stated that he didn't want no... "Gypsies, wogs, or Yorkshire miners in Nottinghamshire, so push off before you're lifted ! "......There weren't much I could say with a truncheon up my nose ! [laughs] I never did get to finish my cup of tea either !  

(Moorends: 140M)

This demonstration of naked force, and the attempt to underline the miners' isolation by comparing them to other heavily scapegoated minority groups, was something that the Moorends activists encountered on a daily basis. The role of
state agencies in forcing them to redefine their image of, and attitudes towards, society is again obvious. Hostility towards an individual, truncheon-wielding policeman tended to develop into a hostility to all the agencies (courts, prisons, ministries and government) that allowed him to deny the miners their civil liberties. It also encouraged the empathy that miners have traditionally felt for the 'underdog' and minority groups, which was further reinforced by the prominent role that these played in the Strike support community. In reply to the question, 'Did the Strike have any impact on your friendships?' Jim replied:

'Yes, I've got a lot more. Different walks of life too, y'know; Asians, blacks, Irish, American, Scottish, Welsh. Different people from a much broader area.' (Moorends: 140M)

An equally bitter attitude towards the NCB management was shared by all those interviewed, although it was tempered by one miner who suggested:

'There's a lot that's reacted to them by a policy of total non-cooperation, but I feel it's futile to resist them in a blanket way. They've got the upper hand at present and you've got to earn a living somehow.' (Moorends: 11M)

There was also a unanimity among the miners that the Strike role of the women had earned them a much greater respect, both inside and outside personal relationships. Virtually all the miners suggested that the Strike had led to closer, more egalitarian relationships between men and women in the village. One of the Daves confided:

'We're a lot more tolerant of each other. She's got more say. My attitudes to her as a woman have changed. Mind you we've both changed. We're a lot more political. We don't waste our money on useless things anymore. We've learned to handle our money a lot better.' (Moorends: 144M)

Dave's latter observations again indicated an awareness of how changed personal relationships were intimately connected with changed attitudes towards the broader, market-oriented society.
Moorends After the Miners' Strike

The miners' political radicalisation was also revealed when they talked of their increased awareness of the labour movement. Although the Strike had demonstrated major weaknesses in the unions and Labour Party, the Moorends activists had also seen the potential of political action by working people and this had caused a shift in their ideas. Although this radicalisation was rarely accompanied by an increase in organised political activity, it was, nevertheless, seen as an important gain by the miners themselves. Gordon explained:

'It made me realize just how important the unions are and how weak the movement is. The Labour Party was quite happy to sit on the fence and let things go by. It seemed as if Kinnock was happy to let Thatcher do the dirty work on us (...) I can't take the local Labour Party round here seriously, they're rubbish. That's why I've not become more active. But in my views, I've changed a hell of a lot. The Strike made me think a lot more left-wing. I question things a lot more now.' (Moorends: 136M)

Gordon's attitude was not untypical. Of the fourteen male Strike activists interviewed, two were members of the local Labour Party (both had joined in 1983) and one was a long-standing but inactive member of the Communist Party. The phenomenon of political radicalisation, unaccompanied by political activity, was common to several sections of the Moorends population and seemed to underline the weakened state of the village's political tradition.

**MOORENDS WOMEN**

Because of the size of the workload and the very small numbers involved, virtually all the Moorends Womens Support Group activists were suffering from extreme exhaustion by the end of the 1984/85 dispute. The problem of maintaining a collective identity as their partners, the 'Moorends' miners, once more became the Hatfield, Armthorpe, Askern or Rossington miners and marched back to work at their respective pits, foreshadowed greater ones in the Strike's aftermath. Although, on the one hand, the women's support group was not 'overshadowed' by the re-establishment of the local NUM branch as the 'central' political institution in the village, its absence meant that the women found
themselves even more 'cut off' than their Armthorpe counterparts from developments in the coal industry. Because of their limited involvement in the broader women's group/Strike support networks, the women found themselves almost totally dependent on the bits of news that their partners managed to pick up at their local pits.

It was ironic that, after ten months of hand to mouth existence, when the women's support group finally ceased its kitchen operations a week after the return to work, it had over a thousand pounds left in its newly-opened bank account. The core of leading women activists wanted to keep it as a fund to assist others in struggle, but the pressure to dispose of it built up rapidly. The surplus food was donated to one of the local old folks homes, £50 was given to help mend the leaking roof at the local toddlers' playgroup, and £50 was given to the local branch of the St. John's ambulance, which had provided the soup kitchen with cooking pots. The rest was donated to Hatfield NUM's hardship fund, and the Moorends Women's Support Group ceased to function as a collective.

There was no involvement in the Doncaster or South Yorkshire Women Against Pit Closures networks, no involvement in the Doncaster Women's Centre or the programme of Coalfield Women's Education projects. This meant that, unlike Armthorpe, there was no organisation of a local assertiveness training course for Moorends women. The Moorends miners collected money among themselves over a two month period, and, on the 4th and 5th May, treated the women activists to two nights out, a Saturday night meal at a Thorne hotel, and a Sunday night session at Uncle Arthur's. They were also presented with certificates from Hatfield NUM, commemorating their Strike role.

Women and Paid Employment

As in Armthorpe, after the initial period of recuperation, the women activists found it very difficult to return to their pre-Strike domestic
Moorends After the Miners' Strike

routines. By the end of 1986 there had been a substantial increase in the number of activists who were holding down some kind of paid employment. Before the dispute, only two of the ten WSG activists were involved in part-time paid work. Two years after the Strike, three were involved in full time work and four in part time. Some of these jobs were of a 'casual' nature, but most were more permanent. Maureen explained her situation:

'Now and again I go into the pea fields. It's my first season this year, just casual work. And I do catering most Saturdays; parties, weddings, things like that. I work all over the place. It's for the lady from Hatfield pit canteen, she has her own catering business. I'm about to start working behind the bar at the Welfare as well. After the kind of routine I had in the Strike I seem to have more free time and I just seem to have picked up different jobs as I've gone along. (Moorends: 106W)

Another woman had applied for a job as a home help and had been accepted for training at the time of our interview. Another managed to find some work in a food processing plant near Selby, North Yorkshire (which involved a lot of travelling from the village each day). As with the Armthorpe women, paid employment appeared to be more than a source of extra family income, or of personal financial independence (although the latter was obviously important). It seemed to be a way of keeping the women's horizons broadened out, of escaping domestic confinement and of maintaining regular social contact.

The nature of many of the women's jobs made it difficult for them to see their workplace as a setting for union activity. Five were in a union (an increase of two since the Strike) and four others mentioned how they would like to be able to join a union. The two non-WSG women interviewed who had full time jobs prior to the Strike claimed that, due to their Strike experience, they had become more active within the union. One, working in one of the two small Moorends supermarkets, was waging her own union membership and recognition campaign, whilst the other had become more active in her Doncaster workplace organisation and had persuaded her local branch to elect her as their delegate to the local Labour Party constituency.
Women and Leisure

The women sought increased social contact in other areas too. Although formally the support group ceased to operate as a collective, the women involved did maintain a large degree of informal, social contact with each other. The Strike had been a period of intense social contact, when those most active in the dispute had broken down many of the normal barriers and forged a collective identity. Maureen recalled her Strike activity:

'During the Strike I was full time down on the Rec; cooking, cleaning, collecting money, organizing raffles. Never a dull moment, twenty four hours a day! And even when I came home from the Rec, they used to come here! There was no union base, because they were all from different pits. And all the women. That was when my house became an open house and it still is! It's mainly the kids' friends now. I usually have a houseful of teenagers, there's nowhere for 'em to go around here. Then there's my friends and Gordon's, they're in and out all the time.' (Moorends: 106W)

It was also a period when, for the women, hard work was combined with intense leisure activity. Heavily dependent on the local pubs and clubs for their funds, the women became 'regulars' in them. Elaine explained:

'We never went out as much as we did when we were on strike and we used to go out in gangs. Me and Mo, we used to go out and have a good time on a pound! All the women that used to be down the kitchens, we used to have great nights out together. Everybody was in the same boat, and as soon as you went through the door, it was, "Do you want a pint?"' (Moorends: 108W)

The outline of the Strike community was still clearly evident in the social relationships of 1986/87. Although they did not go out as often as they had during the Strike, nearly all the women reported going out more frequently than they had done prior to 1984. They also shared more leisure time and activities with their partners, sometimes 'going out' together two or three times in a week. They also reported an increase in 'getting out of the house' independently of their partners. As in Armthorpe, groups of 'unaccompanied' women were becoming a common feature in local pub and club life. Margaret, one of the WSG activists suggested:

'Without a doubt things are changing round here. Women are going out in gangs, leaving their husbands to go out with their friends or stopping at home - I don't know, but it seems as if on a Friday night anybody who's anybody, all the ladies, are going out on their own. Well they
didn't used to do it and in the village I come from, you still only go out with your husband or boyfriend. Everyone likes to go out on a Friday night, but now all the married lasses go out with their mates and all the single lasses with theirs. It seems like the natural thing, especially for the young uns. I still find it strange, but perhaps that's just me. I'm old fashioned.'

(Moorends: 109W)

Margaret, a middle-aged WSG activist came from Rawcliffe, a predominantly agricultural village eight miles to the North of Moorends. She was therefore contrasting women's new-found independent access to pubs and clubs not simply with the 'old fashioned' customs in Moorends itself, but with the traditional ways of village life in general. Seventeen year-old Lorraine had also developed a historical perspective on women's work and leisure opportunities:

'Grandma used to tell me about how she wanted to go to work, but she'd been prevented. She had to stay at home and have the meals waiting. It seemed as if the men were in everything and the women were left behind. During the Strike, women were doing everything; loggin' and coalin', picketing, calling other women scabs, cobblin shoes together. It helped womens equality along a good bit, I reckon. Today women do what men are doing. Walk into a pub now and women will be sat there suppin' pints!'

(Moorends: 122YU)

It was not, however, merely a question of women having increased access to the bastions of the 'exclusive male group'. Due to their activity during the Strike, the women activists had established a more equal status in these clubs. Cath compared this with her experience before 1984:

'They respect us a lot more. At one time I could go into a club and you wouldn't get anyone talking to you much, in the fella line - not about unions, strikes or things like that. Now I can go into that club, practically any time day or night and I could get into a conversation with a group of men..... which we often do.

(Moorends: 107W)

The Strike's strengthening of the local community encouraged a closer personal interaction embracing different areas of people's lives. The women's adoption of a highly public, political role during the Strike therefore helped raise their status in the field not only of leisure, but of work, trade unions and political activity. Their increased involvement in the world of paid employment, at a time
when many men were leaving it, tended to reinforce their more equal position in the community.

Relationships Between Women

The close friendships that the women had established during the Strike appeared to have survived in the difficult period of the Strike's aftermath. Elaine suggested:

'Before the Strike, I didn't know Cath, and, with Mo, I just used to say 'Hello' to her on the street. Now we're good friends, because of what we went through. We call round to see each other nearly every day.... And, if we were together in the pub, we'd nearly always discuss the Strike.

We often sit back and have a laugh at what happened during the Strike. Different things, especially with Cath, she were a nutcase. We took her to Stainforth one night, she decided to slide down the bannister and landed on her head. She's done all sorts has Cath. We took her out for her birthday at the Social. She ended up doing the splits! She's a scream is Cath!'  (Moorends: 108W)

The very small numbers of women actively involved and the more 'beleaguered' nature of the Moorends strike community encouraged the activists to see other women's lack of participation as a major cause of their defeat. As in Armthorpe, friendships based on a shared experience of struggle encouraged closer relationships between activists and a certain 'distance' between themselves and others who had remained 'on the sidelines'. Due to the restricted nature of the women's activity, these divisions tended to be expressed in a less political way than in Armthorpe. In describing the continuing closeness among the small group of activists, Cath explained:

'Some, I would say, are more political with one another, and some you still get that catty feeling. I mean all the work that we was doing down at the kitchen. A lot of the time stuff had to come back to our houses - we were accused of filling pantries up and one thing and another. But they didn't see the real part of it, where things were getting stolen or destroyed during the break-ins and that.

And kiddies' toys at Christmas time, we took 'em back to the houses 'cos you couldn't leave them down there. It was because they weren't involved, they didn't know... it was their loss in a way. (...) We could have done with a lot more to be involved, so towards women that didn't support us, there's still that bitter feeling...'  (Moorends: 107W)
Despite this negative aspect, the overall status of women had been raised due to the role that the Women's Support Group had played in holding the Strike community together. Other women who had not been centrally involved in the group itself, commented on this, and on the way in which women generally, but WSG activists in particular, related to each other on a far more political basis. So Pam, the middle-aged daughter of a retired miner, involved in the AUEW and Labour Party, suggested:

'Going back over the years, certain women have been very involved in the local branch of the Labour Party, but a lot tended to stay in the background. But in the last couple of years women have been realizing that they're as good and important and clever as anybody else. And I think the men now see that the women have got a lot more about them than they thought before. Women round here are definitely a lot more political.' 

(Moorends: 119W)

One of the key elements in the new relationships between women was this feeling of respect based on collective achievement: increased self respect fusing with respect for women who had proved themselves in the common struggle.

Womens Relationships with Men

The shared involvement in major collective struggle also proved a cornerstone in the new relationships between men and women. The women's participation in public political action constituted a major challenge to both men and women's preconceptions about a 'women's role'. As a result it provided a new basis for gender relationships both in the family and in the wider local social system-community. To understand the impact of the women's Strike role, it has to be seen in the context of the women's 'role' that was anticipated by many Moorends inhabitants, that of a weak point in an already weak link. Their achievement in setting up and holding together the strike-based community earned them the admiration and respect of all those who were committed to the Strike. Gordon explained how he had witnessed it:

'Men have a lot more respect for the women, especially in this village. People were just sitting back and letting things happen. Then when the
lasses made up their mind they were going to do something, they just did it. It were brilliant.' (Moorends: 136)

Underlying Gordon's attitude is an appreciation of the weakness of the local community prior to the Strike, with an absence of collective institutions and resources resulting in atomisation and apathy among the village population. The increased respect mentioned by Gordon was reported by all the other Moorends miners interviewed. Dave, a Hatfield miner, suggested:

'Without a doubt they were the bosses, although unlike our bosses they flogged themselves to death in that kitchen. Nobody could believe what they achieved. We're all that proud of them!' (Moorends: 144M)

While Jim, the Hatfield NUM committee man, explained:

'Oh yeah. The lads still talk about what the women did in the Strike. We had a discussion the other day about how we should have a women's section in the union. There's a lot more respect for women. Before the Strike they were just in the kitchen; children and kitchen, y'know... But I think when they formed their own women's group and it started off running the kitchen, then suddenly they were on the picket line... They proved they could do other things. The men were forced to change their attitudes.' (Moorends: 140M)

All the WSG activists interviewed reported the same phenomenon. After her teenage daughter had confided in me that it took her mum an hour to visit the local corner shop, Maureen admitted a proliferation in her friendships with miners, explaining:

'They realize that we're here now. They know that we can achieve things, that we're not just there to clean the house up. I think a lot of people thought that Moorends wouldn't get a soup kitchen off the ground. It's dawned on them that we are a lot stronger than they thought we were.' (Moorends: 106W)

This impression was confirmed by non-WSG women. While acknowledging the key role of the activists, Liz identified a knock-on effect on other Moorends women:

'Men respect women a lot more now, especially with the women who were active in the Strike. They did wonders for the village. They've got quite well known and prominent. Miners always speak to 'em now. Nobody forgets what the women in the village did for them. And there's generally more respect. If a group of women had gone in a club on their own before Strike, there'd probably have been some sarky comment passed, but not now, it's just accepted.' (Moorends: 113W)
Moorends After the Miners' Strike

The higher standards by which the women judged themselves and each other also had an impact on the relationships with their partners. This was not merely a question of appreciation of their Strike role, although this was important. The increased awareness and confidence of the women allowed them an independent standpoint from which they could discuss, endorse, or if necessary challenge their partner's views and activities. One WSG women gave an example:

"After a few months back at work, we did have a major row. [****] was offered overtime and he said he was taking it, which I didn't agree with. I thought they was sort of covering up with the management and that sort of thing. It took us a long time to sort out. [****] is a big union man and it hurt me very much to think he was snuggling up to management's side of it."

(Moorends: **W)

Another described how she found it impossible to reconcile herself to her husband's taking of redundancy:

"Well I didn't agree with it at all and I still don't. We don't often have words, but if we do, it's over his taking redundancy. Don't get me wrong, I'm glad he's out of it in one sense. He's spent thirty years down the pit and its taken its toll on him, you can tell. He still gets a lot of pain in his neck and shoulders. It's just we were fighting to save jobs and I think he's too young to finish like this."

(Moorends: **W)

Despite her deep concern for her husband's health and her understanding of his motives, this woman had obviously developed her own deeply held principles, which she felt she had to stick to, independent of what her husband had decided.

Despite their limited involvement in the broader strike support community, the women had developed a confidence on a variety of issues. Although there were one or two areas of village life that were still dominated by men, the women were beginning to challenge for access. One such area of conflict was over full membership and leadership rights for women in the working mens' clubs. This was mentioned as a problem area by nine (64 percent) of the Moorends women interviewed and it appeared that, whatever the CIU rules, a challenge was not far off. Cath explained:

"There's virtually no areas that we are barred from now. Nearly all the pubs and clubs have women's darts or pool teams. It's just the club committees. They had a notice up a few weeks back, saying there were vacancies on the committee. So Margaret and me says, "Well, at least it..."
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doesn't say men only need apply! " Me and her had a laugh about putting up for it. In a way, we wanted to put up for it to stir up trouble - to see what would happen. We wanted to challenge it! The trouble was we didn't want the job, we didn't want to get tied up with the committee, so we didn't bother in the end.' (Moorends: 107W)

Political Attitudes and Activity

These changes in personal relationships and women's status in the village were accompanied by significant changes in their attitudes. The media coverage of the Strike had made them more aware of its failings. Table 12.4 illustrates this critical awareness and indicates a changed attitude towards the media on the part of a minority of women.

Table 12.4 Moorends Women and the Media

<table>
<thead>
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<th>TV Strike Coverage</th>
<th>Post-Strike Viewing</th>
<th>Old newspapers coverage</th>
<th>Post-Strike Change</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>

No Interviewed: 14 Source: Moorends Interview Survey 1986/87

Although there was unanimous hostility to the television strike coverage, only 43 percent of the women reported a significant change in their viewing habits. One of the others, Elaine, who had described the T.V. coverage of the Strike as 'rubbish', suggested:

'I like soap operas; Crossroads, Coronation Street, Emmerdale Farm, East Enders. I don't like Dallas or the American ones.... News only occasionally. I'm usually bathing Andrew when Calendar is on. Documentaries bore me. I like a nice sloppy love story. I still watch more or less the same as before the Strike.' (Moorends: 108W)

Elaine, like the other women interviewed, had become something of a news addict during the Strike, but with the Strike over and both her and her husband without regular paid employment, a severely privatised lifestyle was re-emerging. Her television consumption reflected this, returning to the pre-Strike pattern of less serious, escapist programmes.
Similarly, although all of the women condemned the bias in their pre-Strike newspaper, only a third had changed to a more ‘left-wing’ one. The main change was from the Sun to the Daily Mirror. Margaret explained:

‘The Sun paper was really biased and I can honestly say we have never had that paper in the house since the Strike. And we never will, ever again, no, not ever. And if anyone says to me, ‘I’ve been marking the Sun Bingo’, I say, ‘I don’t know how you dare buy it!’ They were that biased against the miners, and now the printers. I always used to get the Sun, I thought it were a good newspaper, a working man’s newspaper. But I stopped it when they were printing lies about us.’ (Moorends: 109W)

Four women suggested they had started reading the Yorkshire Miner whereas none had read it prior to the Strike. As with the men, there were few that read the socialist press on a regular basis. Pam was one of two exceptions:

‘Just Socialist Worker, and Militant, if I see it being sold. I got the Labour Weekly when I first joined the Labour Party, but I’m in the process of cancelling it, it’s gone that right wing. I cancelled the Mirror during the Strike. I was a regular reader before, but during the Strike I just thought it were a load of rubbish. I think it went downhill when Maxwell took over. (...) Socialist Worker gives things from our angle, my angle. Not what they want us to think, it’s written down from our side. After I’ve read it, I pass it on to my mam and dad and then they pass it on to their next door neighbour. Although sometimes it seems to be too critical of other people – preaching from the sidelines and stuff. ’ (Moorends: 119W)

Pam had been holding down a full-time job, and had therefore been involved in the Miners’ Strike as an ‘outside’ supporter. Nevertheless its effects on her attitudes were apparent. The transformation in her ideas was sustained due to an individual involvement in the Labour Party and broader political community. This was not the case for most of the other women, although the impact of the Strike was still visible in terms of their attitudes, as table 12.5 illustrates:

Table 12.5 Post-Strike Attitudes – Moorends Women (%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>More hostile police role</th>
<th>More hostile NCB managers</th>
<th>More aware unions</th>
<th>More aware Lab party radicalisation</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No Interviewed: 14  
Source: Moorends Interview Survey 1986/87
Again there was unanimity when it came to disgust at the Strike role of the police, and increased hostility to them in the Strike's aftermath. And although five of the women explained that they had less personal contact with the coal industry, they all expressed an enduring hostility to NCB/British Coal management. Only five of the women were in a union, but in all, ten suggested that their Strike experiences had caused them to be more aware of their strengths and weaknesses. The low profile of the local Labour Party during the Strike caused two women to suggest they were irrelevant, and one to write them off as 'rubbish'.

What became apparent was that in the Strike's aftermath, there had been even less consolidation or development in the women's radicalism than was the case in Armthorpe. Just as the lack of a local pit seemed to cut the women off from developments in the NUM/WAPC, their lack of involvement in the broader political community during the Strike caused them to suffer an acute political isolation in the aftermath. Apart from Pam, the potential of collective struggle for encouraging rapid political development was illustrated by the case of a WSG member, Cath, who explained:

'I learned a lot politically during the Strike. I did belong to the Communist Party at one time ... in the 1970's. Before the Strike, I wasn't involved in the party any more ... I think it was because I was frightened people knew I belonged to the Communist Party - not a political party, but 'the Commies' you know. And when the Strike came, with being involved and everything, I took my card out again. I didn't care who knew what party I belonged to.... Plus we had some very good friends in the Communist Party in the Strike that helped us out, sending money through to the kitchens ... it strengthened my belief in Communism. I'm still a member and so is Stuart. We get the occasional newsletter, but we're the only ones around here and we're not involved in any activity, as such. We don't even see the Morning Star since the end of the Strike.'

(Moorends: 107W)

Cath had joined the Communist Party in the early 1970's when it still had a sizeable core of active members in the village. Apart from attendance at local branch meetings and district residential schools, there were regular meetings of a Communist women's group which were held in each others houses.
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Although her lapse in membership coincided with a serious decline in local party strength, when she decided to rejoin in 1984/85 the weakness of the radical political tradition had become acute. With the Strike over, her party membership meant very little in practical terms. Apart from her non-readership of the Morning Star or other Communist publications, there was no attendance at meetings or educationals, no local campaigns, no sales of party literature. The increasingly serious divisions which became manifest in the national party during the Strike, leading to the expulsion of several prominent members, had a significant impact in Moorends, where the earlier role of these individuals was well remembered.

Unlike their counterparts in the Thorne Women's Support Group, none of the ten Moorends WSG women joined the Labour Party. Their lack of involvement in the broader support network meant that they had forged few links with the Fleet Street newspaper workers, and as a result, none of them became heavily involved in the Printers Support Group that was set up in nearby Thorne (See Appendix 21). Neither, unlike local Labour Party left wingers and the Hatfield Women's Action Group women, were they involved in mobilising support for Silentnight workers in their two-year-long strike over wage cuts and victimisation.

In the absence of continued involvement in the trade union/class oriented community, certain Moorends inhabitants attempted to involve the ex-WSG women in a less radical form of 'community'. In late 1986, some of the owners of the more expensive (ex-officials') houses bordering the Rec attempted to launch a Moorends Tenants' Association. Unlike the tenants' associations of previous times which had fought for rent restrictions or improved amenities, the main aim of the 1986 campaign turned out to be the prevention of council house allocation to itinerants or gypsies. A chief instigator of the campaign was the wife of a retired Hatfield undermanager, who, early in the 1984/85 Strike, had challenged the women on their legal rights to collect food for the kitchen. Although some of the WSG activists were persuaded to attend the
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first public meeting, their newly-sharpened political instincts caused them to speak out against the anti-gypsy activity and the campaign faded rapidly.

Although the WSG women would not ally themselves with the more reactionary elements in the village, neither did they appear able to break out of their political passivity. As a result there was an even greater gap between their political ideas and their political activity, and as time passed, their less-developed radicalism and militancy became overlaid with the increasingly predominant ideas of 'new realism'. Pam, who had earlier commented on how the local Labour Party was moving steadily rightwards, suggested:

'There used to be a real community in Moorends years ago, when we had a pit. I think during the Strike it brought this back, but after it, people have allowed themselves to slip back. There are differences, but the individualism's crept back in, 'I'm alright Jack' and stuff that disappeared during the Strike. Some people have gone back into a 'dog eat dog' frame of mind ... in my opinion.' (Moorends: 119W)

Similar views on the erosion of new-found community by 'the law of the jungle' were expressed by over half the women interviewed. For twelve months they had sustained themselves and their striking communities in a determined opposition to the dominant economic and ideological systems. The weakened base of the village community and the decline in its radical political tradition made its inhabitants especially susceptible to a repenetration of their lives by market forces and Thatcherite (or 'new realist') values. Many of the women at least had some compensation, in terms of paid employment and higher public status. The main victims of the Thatcherite strategy and the 'universal market', the young unemployed of Moorends, had neither.

THE YOUNG UNEMPLOYED

As has been described in Chapter Eleven, the participation of the young Moorends unemployed in the Strike was on a very different scale to that of Armthorpe. There appeared to be three main reasons for this. There was the major
weakness in the pre-Strike community which meant that the strike activists found it difficult to 'integrate' large numbers of the young unemployed. There was the lack of a strong political current which sought to encourage their involvement as part of an overall Strike strategy. Nor was there an open pit, union branch or Welfare Institute/strike centre to act as a focus for activity.

Despite their lack of collective involvement, virtually all the unemployed youth interviewed felt that the Miners Strike had created a community inside the village. So Lorraine suggested:

'Before the Strike they didn't seem all that close really. When the Strike was on the people seemed to get a lot closer. They realized they needed each other' (Moorends: 122YU)

Steve:

'Yes, during the Strike there seemed to be a lot more closeness. Everyone were solid, friends. It brought the community together.' (Moorends: 121YU)

and Josie:

'During the Strike people seemed to mix and talk together. People would talk to everybody else, give them time for a chat. It were funny... really close. Anybody'd help anybody.' (Moorends: 126YU)

But they did not mention how they, as unemployed youth, had fitted into this newly-created community, or describe any major change in their own status. Given their lack of resources, status and confidence, the absence of a clear invitation to participate in strike activity had, in effect, acted as a form of exclusion. This feeling of exclusion was mentioned by several unemployed people who were fully behind the strike. Sarah, when asked if she had been involved in the Womens Support Group, suggested:

'No, I couldn't. It was all for miners' wives and girlfriends, very close knit. Outsiders weren't really welcome at all' (Moorends: 132YU)

For the young unemployed, involvement in the Strike was usually dependent on family connections, to be negotiated and entered into on an individual rather
than a collective basis. The low level of unemployed involvement in the Strike community found a reflection in several areas of their lives in the aftermath.

**Financial Dependency**

The economic dependency on state and family which was apparent among the Armthorpe unemployed was even more evident among those in Moorends. The higher level of unemployment restricted family resources and made borrowing more difficult. The amounts borrowed were usually small, with mothers (again) being the most frequent 'source'. As in Armthorpe, the unemployed were keenly aware of their dependency. Eighteen year-old Yvonne explained:

>'I get £18.40 a week. I pay Mum ten pounds a week board, but that's ridiculous so I've promised her £12.50. So I'm left with £6 to cover everything else; bus fares, clothes, shoes, make-up, going out. It's not worth living for £6 a week. I wanted to claim for some new clothes 'cos I was desperate, and they just gave me a maternity form to fill in. The only use is if you're pregnant. That's why they're all getting pregnant and moving into houses.....

'I do a bit of babysitting, but I can only manage by sponging off my mother, either paying it back or putting it on the slate.'

(Moorends: 124YU)

While Sarah, living with her (working) mother and (working) elder sister merely said:

>'The only way I survive is with the help of me Mam. She's kind and only charges me £2 a week board'

(Moorends: 132YU)

Two young men who had recently started work on a year's Community Programme scheme contrasted the independence that their meagre wages gave them with their previous situation. One of them, living partly with his parents, partly with his unemployed partner and her three children, explained:

>'I get £54 for a 3-day week. I give £10 a week to my Mum. When I was unemployed, I used to have no money at all. When I got my giro I'd owe it all out on the same day. I'd be borrowing off me Mam especially... all the time.'

(Moorends: **YU)

Another, living with his mother and her partner, neither of whom could find employment, explained:
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'It's definitely a lot easier to manage now. Before I was borrowing money off everybody and cadging off others to pay people back. Two days after my giro arrived, I'd be sponging off me Mam.'

(Moorends: YU)

Earmers' and Anti-Social Behaviour

Due to the much lower level of economic activity in Moorends, the other source of additional income for the unemployed, 'earners', were much rarer. Because Moorends is bordered on three sides by agricultural land, one of the major sources of casual work for women and youth in previous times was land or 'field work'. But whereas their mothers and grandmothers could depend on several months work every year, the young unemployed rarely mentioned landwork as a potential 'earner'. One exception was Lorraine, who explained:

'It's very difficult. I do the odd bit of babysitting and occasionally help Mum with a catering job. During the Summer there was a bit of pea picking, but I was questioned about that down the Dole Office, so I couldn't do it. I get £36.60 a fortnight. I give £10 a week to Mum so there's just £8.40p for me after that. When I need new clothes or shoes, there's not much left.... so I tap Mam.'

(Moorends: 122YU)

Significant earners, like regular fieldwork, carry major problems of detection by the DHSS. The unemployed's involvement in economic activity has to be unofficial and out of public view, which often means it being kept within the family or kinship networks. Only when the small amounts earned in activities such as babysitting are placed along the pitiable levels of state subsistence described by Lorraine, can their importance be fully appreciated.

The importance of the weekly car boot sale also becomes apparent. It was a regular feature in the lives of virtually all the Moorends unemployed I interviewed. For June, a young unemployed mother, it provided a bright spot in a weekend that began with a penny-pinching Saturday morning shopping expedition:

'10.15 a.m. Went shopping, bought a fresh chicken for Sunday dinner and some veg. Paul gave me some money last night, which meant I could buy Steven's snap for his school trip on Monday. I've only got £1.50 left, and we wanted to go to the car boot sale tomorrow. I was really looking forward to it, but I don't think we will go, I don't fancy borrowing any money.'

(Moorends Diary, September 1986)
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The alternative to constant borrowing, or hunting casual work outside the reach of the D.H.S.S., was involvement in more overtly illegal activities. There was a close relationship between the absence of earners and participation in illegal and sometimes anti-social activities. As one 21 year-old youth, adept at turning his hand to most jobs, explained:

'You just can't find any 'foreigners' around here any more ... I've been all round this village, and Thorne and Stainforth and even Fishlake. There's just no work available. When I was first unemployed I used to have to steal taties and coal and sell 'em in order to get any money.'

(Moorends: *#YU)

Although compared with the cities there was a very low level of theft, the historical benchmark that people used was so low that several Moorends people mentioned the growth in local crime. There had been no incidence of mugging or purse snatching, but burglaries, petty crime and vandalism had begun to be more common. Gordon, with an unemployed daughter, explained:

'Just recently there's been a big increase in anti-social behaviour. There's quite a few break-ins and coal stealing and stuff. And prior to Bonfire night some unemployed youth walked in and stole the doorman's box at the Welfare, which is the first time anything like that has happened.

Until recently we used to be able to leave our back door open, it was standard practise, you felt you could trust people, but not any more. My mum used to have an aviary in the back garden, but last year that was broken into, and the birds stolen.'

(Moorends: 136M)

And Johnny, a retired miner, explained how he felt the increase of crime was part and parcel of the changing social structures of the village:

'In the old village, everyone knew each other. It was a bit like a big family, everyone knew about the misbehaviour of individuals and they were soon put in their place by the community.

Since the coal board shed its responsibilities for housing and so many strangers started arriving, people don't know each other and don't seem to feel any responsibility to their neighbours. We've lived in this house for thirty years and, although I've sometimes locked the house up when we've gone away, I never needed to lock the garage. Last year it happened. I woke up one morning and all the stuff I kept in the garage had been cleaned out.'

(Moorends: 158SC)

And whereas the young unemployed also referred to the increase in break-ins and thefts, few chose to dwell on the subject. They were well aware that responsibility for most of this anti-social behaviour was laid at their
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door. Although they conceded that many of the specific 'accusations' were justified, they still felt they were being unfairly scapegoated as a group. The lack of 'earners' and the rise in anti-social activity were a part of the young Moorenders' daily experience.

Privatised Routines

It was not only in the availability of economic activity that there was a discrepancy between Moorends and Armthorpe. The severe lack of financial resources caused an even greater narrowing of horizons, forcing the young unemployed to lead a routine, monotonous, and often severely privatised existence. Although the unemployed were sometimes unwilling to discuss this in interviews, it was graphically illustrated in their diaries. Yvonne described a fairly typical day, November 4th:

'11.00 a.m. I got out of bed and had something to eat. Then I put the fire on and had a fag. I let the dog out and then I went in the bath. I went to Jenny's and had a natter. It was about 2.30 p.m. when I went home. I had a look through my Mam's catalogue, then I went to the shop and after that I watched telly until 6.00 p.m. when I had something to eat. Then I got ready to go and see Carl.

6.00 p.m. I went round to Carl's and he had decided to go out with his mates. We sat talking but Mark came round and all he could talk about was his girlfriend and how hard she worked. It really annoyed me. Then we all left while Carl got ready to go out. I went home and watched television and wrote my diary.

10.30 p.m. I went to see Carl.' (Moorends Diary, November 1986)

The privatised routine of domestic chores, T.V. watching, catalogue reading and personal hygiene is only broken by calling on close friends and neighbours. And there is evidence of a segregation in an unemployed couple's leisure activities, due to lack of funds. The following day, November 5th, was not substantially different:

'10.40 a.m. I got up and had something to eat. Then I went over to Jenny's to have a natter. We talked over things that had gone off.

12.00 p.m. I came home and tidied my room.

3.30 p.m. I watched Sons and Daughters, then I went back over to Jenny's. Today is really boring I just can't find anything to do.

7.30 p.m. I went round to Carl's and we all stood round a bonfire while Carl's dad set the fireworks off. About 9 p.m. the fire was dying down and Carl, David, Lorraine and me went on the rec but it was really boring so we went back to the shed (at Carl's) and played cards.

12.30 a.m. We went home and when I got in I was wet through because it...
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was raining really fast. When I got warm I went in the bath and had something to eat and then went to bed.' (Moorends Diary, November 1986)

Without a work routine or other major landmarks to give 'definition' to their lives, and without the financial resources to engage in most other activities, the unemployed found it difficult to plan ahead or initiate activity. Their time was spent in more passive pursuits; staying in bed, watching children's T.V./soap operas, interspersed by attempts to relieve the boredom; having a bath, getting ready to go out, going up the Rec. Hobbies, or leisure pursuits were few and far between.

Leisure Activities

Even more than was the case with the Armthorpe youth, leisure activities lay within a very narrow band, as indicated in table 12.6:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outside Activity</th>
<th>Claimed by Women</th>
<th>Claimed by Men</th>
<th>Home-based Activity</th>
<th>claimed by Women</th>
<th>claimed by Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drinking-pubs/clubs</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Watching TV</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Reading Novels</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snooker</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Listening to Music</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Visiting friends/relat</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betting</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Reading catalogues</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowls</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>'Sitting'</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending meetings</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Knitting</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Studying</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reading politics</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No. Interviewed; 14 Source: Moorends interviews & diaries 1986.

There are several factors which emerge from this table. Not surprisingly, none of the young unemployed's leisure pursuits are costly in terms of major capital outlay or fixed expenditure. Virtually none of them imply collective organisation, team discipline or extensive travel. Compared with the men (table 7.2), the women (table 8.2) or even their unemployed counterparts in Armthorpe, the young Moorenders' leisure pursuits are heavily home based and individualistic. The lack of financial independence also appears to be encouraging a gender segregation, with women finding themselves concentrated in
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their 'traditional', privatised leisure pursuits. The predominance of home-based hobbies was encouraged by the severe shortage of public facilities at the disposal of the young unemployed. The connection between this lack of public resources and the absence of local industry was pointed to by several of the Moorends parents. Maureen explained:

'Everything round here, it's lack of funds. There's no industry or unions that you could go to and say, 'Would you sponsor us for this?' Say we want to do something for the teenagers of the village, where are we going to get money from? You can't do it with just a few raffles. There's a lot of destruction in the village. There's a lot of bored teenagers that, every time they go somewhere, they get moved on. Y'know street corners, the Rec, the Bullring, the library wall, they're moved from there. Somebody's made a complaint, 'cos some kid's got a ghetto blaster or something.

This is why I end up with a lot of unemployed kids in the house. I think they feel unwanted, as though they're some kind of pest. There is a little youth club up the road, and little is the word, you couldn't swing a cat, but even if they could all fit in, they're not all into playing ping pong, which is all that's put on there.' (Moorends: 106W)

Although a clear majority of the young unemployed interviewed listed 'going out drinking' as one of their pastimes, there were major differences between their social activity patterns and those of the employed. Because of the high level of unemployment, it was difficult for the young people who had paid employment to 'cover' for unemployed friends. Unlike Armthorpe where at least the older male youth were members of 'mixed' peer groups which were able to subsidise their unemployed members, in Moorends the unemployed tended to stay in their own groups. Nights out were less frequent, sometimes once a week but, in some cases, once a fortnight or less. As in Armthorpe, a night out frequently consisted of a pub crawl round Moorends and Thorne, taking just one or two drinks in each pub. Unlike the employed sections of the population, they very rarely went further afield. Again the unemployed were reticent to discuss these differences, but they were all too evident in their diaries. One of the young unemployed women described her 'evening out' with an employed friend, at the end of a day spent watching kids TV programmes and 'getting ready to go out':

'We sat as usual with Josie's Aunty Josie and friends. Our Ellen [an unemployed sister] came in the Welfare and asked me if I was going over the Comrades Club, but I said 'No, we're all going to Thorne'. Then they decided to go to town. I did not want to go, so Josie went with them and
There is little doubt that this young woman could not have afforded to go into town even if she had ‘wanted to’. The unemployed often attempted to rationalise their restricted social activity by stressing the preferability of them. So another young woman, who had admitted that she could only afford to go out for a drink in the village once a fortnight, then suggested that the reason she never ‘went out’ in Doncaster was that she’d ‘get mugged’.

Even when employed and unemployed were drinking in the same pub or club, their drinking patterns were very different. One miner suggested that, on the occasions that the unemployed went into a pub as part of a ‘mixed group’:

‘they can’t afford to be in big rounds. You’ll always see them having to stay on their own or pairing off with another UB 40. If they buy a pint, they’ll tend to make it last a long time.’

This meant that despite remaining in the cheapest village club, the unemployed could not socialise on an equal basis to the waged population. They were either dependent on them (‘cadging’ drinks) or they avoided feeling obligation by withdrawing from the collective group (staying out of ‘the round’). However sociable they or others might feel, it was ultimately the state that defined their sociability pattern. If their giro was nearly spent, they had to ‘stay on their own’ or decide not to ‘bother’ going out at all.

Status of the Unemployed

Leisure was only one of the areas where the young unemployed tended to opt for individual or group withdrawal. The disappearance of many of the institutions which involved the village population in collective political or social activity has already been described. However, due to their exclusion from a waged relationship, the unemployed found it difficult to play a full role in the few that survived. As a result, the number of roles they could play in relation to the employed section of the population was severely limited. Their
activity patterns, rooted in their lack of resources and their limited life chances, did not tend to 'mesh' easily with those of the employed. They preferred to relate mainly to other unemployed people, avoiding close involvement with other sections of the population.

This withdrawal from the village community often involved a severe privatisation and therefore almost an 'invisibility' for many of the unemployed. Apart from the infrequency of their visits to pubs and clubs, they did not spend much time in the local shops. The major increase in bus fares severely reduced the frequency of 'window shopping' trips to Doncaster, explaining their frequent 'obsession' with mail order catalogues. As Yvonne suggested:

'Everything is so expensive. I usually have to order my clothes out of Mum's catalogue. Two pounds per week is better for me than £25 out of my giro. Its only £36.80 and its got to last a fortnight.'

(Moorends Diary, 1986)

Apart from periods spent on street corners or the Rec, the majority of their time was spent in their own or each other's houses. The consequent 'invisibility' was only part of a low status which marked every part of the unemployed's lives. The Moorends youth were acutely aware of this low status. So when Louise, one of the more confident young women, was asked, 'If there is a local community, would you say most unemployed young people feel part of it?', she replied:

'No, there's nothing at all for them to do. Nobody takes an active interest in them. There's no community spirit even though there's that many on the dole. Everybody treats us like 'dole wallahs', scroungers, like idiots with no intelligence. Working people are more accepted. A wage packet is very important.'

(Moorends: 128YU)

This low status provided a further incentive for the unemployed to stick together. As in Armthorpe, the Moorends unemployed suggested that, between themselves, there tended to be more sympathy, more understanding of the pressures and problems they faced. But their mutual understanding was not matched by the resources to assist each other; and this tended to encourage an 'atomisation' even among the unemployed. The DHSS regulations, while on the one
hand encouraging a dependency on the family of origin, also reinforced this
tendency to atomisation among the young unemployed.

One 22-year-old youth, who divided his time between his parents home
and the home where his partner lived with her two young children and their baby,
explained their problem as follows:

'We claim separate. We have to. If we claimed as a couple, we just
wouldn't survive, we'd only get five pounds a week more than she gets
claiming for herself and the children. We can't afford to be seen to be
living together as a couple. It wouldn't just be the shortage of cash.
Without any money, we'd be forced to sit at home all day, every day,
dying of boredom. We'd spend all day getting on each others nerves.'
(Moorends: #YU)

The power of the state to override other factors and determine the nature of the
unemployed's social relationships is clearly evident. The likelihood of a
worthwile existence under DHSS regulations is remote and means that local
'community', even at the basic level of the family unit, is denied them.

Unemployed couples are forced into frequent separation from each other, with
young women being left to cope with babies and children on their own. But these
enforced separations also put severe strains on relationships. In the middle of
her October diary, the partner of the 22-year-old man quoted above confided:

'After tea we sat down and had a long talk. Neither of us are happy about
being split up like this, and the kids can't understand it, so I
suggested he move back in. So we can live together properly.'
(Moorends Diary, 1986)

The woman is expressing her determination to resist the state's atomisation of
her family. She wants herself and her partner to be able to shape their own
lives and relationship, to establish their adult status, even if this means an
unequal struggle against the power of the state.

Political Attitudes and Activities

There was evidence of a radicalisation of young peoples' attitudes,
although the phenomenon was far less marked than in Armthorpe. Their 1986/87
views on major Strike-related issues are summarized in table 12.7 below.

-584-
A majority of the Moorends youth interviewed (57 percent) claimed that the Strike had 'changed their political ideas' (this compared with 79 percent in Arthorpe). Their unemployed status seemed, however, to make it difficult for them to sustain or develop this awareness. Even more than in Arthorpe, there was an extreme reticence among several of the unemployed to admit to having political opinions. Their extremely privatised existence meant that, although they had 'attitudes', they had not had the opportunity to test or develop them through social interaction. Apart from a uniform hostility towards the police, the young men showed slightly more confidence in expressing their opinions and appeared to have been radicalised more by their Strike experience.

Alongside the hesitancy, there was a much greater mix of radical and reactionary views, often in direct contradiction with each other. It was Steve, one of the more politicised male youths, who first alerted me to this phenomenon:

'Young people's expectations are getting lower now. And some have totally reactionary ideas. There's more hatred of cops and Tories, but there's still some hostility to blacks and gays as well.' (Moorends: 121YU)

His linking of lowering expectations (and the consequent tendency to withdraw into a privatised existence) with more reactionary attitudes proved remarkably accurate. There seemed to be a significant conflict between the atomised position of the young unemployed and their ability to sustain broad, radical or
Moorends After the Miners' Strike

even liberal opinions. This was often revealed in unexpected areas. So, for example, in the middle of her interview, one young Moorender launched into a heated attack on Bob Geldoff and his 'Band Aid' initiative:

'It's all wrong. It's not fair sending all that money out to Africa. It's not fair. They should do something for us in Britain. They should look after their own before they start worrying about the blacks in Africa.'

(Moorends: 124YU)

Two other unemployed young women, sitting in on the interview, agreed.

Another example lay in their attitudes towards trade unions. Because of the small number of young people in full employment there tended to be very few union members among the youth in the village. Overall, 46 percent of the young unemployed (36% women and 57% men) claimed that the Miners Strike had made them more aware of trade unions, with a slightly higher proportion (53 percent) being 'in favour' of trade unions. This left almost half the Moorends young unemployed either non-committal or slightly hostile to trade unions, making them by far the least pro-union of all the interview groups.

A similar situation emerged in their attitudes towards the media.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TV Strike coverage</th>
<th>Post-Strike viewing</th>
<th>Old newspapers coverage</th>
<th>Post-Strike change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fair biased</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biased</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No opin</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same + serious</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
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<td>43</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Av.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No Interviewed: 14

Source: Moorends Interview Survey 1986/87

Only 71 percent of the Moorends youth considered the T.V. coverage heavily biased and only 50 percent claimed they had adopted a more serious 'balance' in their viewing due to the Strike experience. As a group they were heavily dependent on the television for information and entertainment and they spent a lot of time watching it (for example they watched more soap operas than
any other interview group, averaging just over six 'soaps' each). Almost inevitably this meant that they also subjected themselves to a daily barrage of advertisements, pushing consumer durables that they were unable to afford.

Over two thirds of them considered their pre-Strike daily newspaper to be biased, although significantly less reported a change in the newspaper they read. Although I did not enquire into which member of the family had made the decision, two ex-Sun readers and one Daily Star reader had transferred their 'allegiance' to the Daily Mirror, while one had stopped reading the Daily Mirror because of the nature of its Strike coverage. Only two of those interviewed read one or more socialist newspapers, one on a regular basis, one more infrequently.

The smaller degree of change shown in the political attitudes of the unemployed was also apparent in their level of political involvement. The Thorne-Moorends Labour Party did not appear to have any policy of encouraging participation among the local youth. There was no branch of the Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS) and there had been no attempt to set one up. Neither had there been any local campaigns on the issue of youth unemployment.

For many of the Moorends youth the Labour Party appeared to be 'the establishment'. It was a Labour Party-dominated parish council that failed to provide them with decent facilities, and a prominent Labour councillor that used to prevent them from taking full advantage of the facilities that did exist (for example, sending them off the Rec). The opinion that the local Labour Party was 'not interested in them' was reinforced by the story, related to me by three of the young men, concerning the closure of the nearest LYPS branch, based in Stainforth, on account of its support for the Militant Tendency. As a result, not only was there no involvement of young people in the local Labour Party, but there was a significant degree of antipathy to such involvement.

When it came to involvement in parties to the left of the Labour Party, the picture was almost as bleak. The unemployed's low level of Strike
involvement and its confinement to the local area had meant that they had not established any major role in the broader political community. The continuing weakness of the radical political/trade union tradition in the village served to reinforce this situation. Not surprisingly, given the severely weakened local presence of the Communist Party of Great Britain, none of the young people mentioned this organisation as a political alternative. Neither, unlike their counterparts in nearby Thorne, had any Moorends youth taken up membership in the revolutionary groupings (see Appendix 21). Only one had become involved on the periphery of the Socialist Workers Party, attending their Doncaster meetings on an irregular basis.

The absence of a substantial political organisation, committed to encouraging collective political activity among the young unemployed, appeared to be taking its toll. The unemployed, in their particularly privatised and atomised situation, were especially prone to 'slipback' in their political ideas and activity. As in the arenas of economic and social involvement, the unemployed tended to be the group most excluded from the weakened political networks of the village community.

*The Unemployed and 'Community'*

Whether it was in the areas of economic, social or political life, it was evident that the young unemployed were the main victims of the process that Henriques described as 'the tearing of the heart' from the communities. They appeared to be on the periphery of a village population that was, in any case, close to becoming 'merely an aggregate of socially isolated and culturally condemned human beings'. (Dennis, Henriques, Slaughter, 1969: 10) This could be seen in their own perception of their 'place' in the village social structure. When the Armthorpe unemployed were asked, *Is there a local community?*, 79 percent replied that there had been one prior to the Strike, 100 percent thought that the Strike had either created one or strengthened it, and 93 percent felt
Moorends After the Miners' Strike

that there remained a strengthened community in the Strike's aftermath. The very
different Moorends responses are outlined in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Was there a local community?</th>
<th>Was one created during Strike?</th>
<th>Is there a local community?</th>
<th>Do unemployed feel part of Community?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Young Unemployed and Local Community (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Was there a local community?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avg</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No Interviewed: 14  
Source: Moorends Interview Survey 1986/87

The decline of the local social system is well illustrated in that only one of
the Moorends youth felt that there had been a 'community' in the village before
the Strike. Although 93 percent felt that the Strike had created (or
strengthened) a community in the village, only 36 percent felt it had survived
in its aftermath. And when asked, 'Would you say the unemployed feel part of the
local community?', only 21 percent of the Moorends youth replied 'yes',
compared with 71 percent in Armthorpe.

This is not to say that the Moorends unemployed regarded the Strike as
a waste of time. A clear majority saw it as an interesting and, in the main, a
positive experience. Lorraine described its effects on her own development:

'It was a positive experience for me. I used to be right quiet. I used to
put me head down and go red. I've got more 'gobbler'. I've started
standing up for myself a lot. I'm more outgoing. There was this scab on
the Rec. who shouted at me, "Whose are these dogs? Get them on a lead!"
And I said, "They're not mine, but I'd rather talk to the dogs than to a
scab like you!" "Who do you think you are?", he says. "I'm a better
class of person than you'll ever be!" ' (Moorends: 122YU)

Lorraine's experience indicates the potential of collective struggle
to shape the local community, breaking down established hierarchies and helping
to transform relationships in the process. However, the defeat of the Strike,
the weakened state of the village community, and it's limited involvement in the
Strike support community, all acted as an obstacle to the local unemployed's
Moorends After the Miners' Strike

sustaining or building on their Strike 'experience'. Their severely limited life chances impacted on their attitudes and relationships, causing them to lack self confidence and to become increasingly insular.

There was also evidence of a deep pessimism. A smaller proportion of the Moorends young unemployed (36 percent) claimed they thought about their future than in any other interview group, and even less (21 percent) admitted to trying to plan it. No less than 86 percent viewed their long-term future with deep gloom, and when asked the subsidiary question, 'If you think the prospects are gloomy, what do you think should be done?', 43 percent offered no suggestion at all (the highest of any group). When asked, 'Is there anything you think you could do about it?' 64 percent of the young unemployed replied 'No', which again was a far higher proportion than in any other group.

As I argued in Chapter Nine, on their own, the unemployed have very little basis around which they can organise a sustained collective struggle. Effective mobilisation becomes more likely when they fuse their more sectional interests with the broader, class issues faced by the organised workers movement. As in Armthorpe, the most optimistic among the unemployed were those who had been most active in the Strike and who had seen the potential of collective political action for changing people's situation. Paul suggested:

'It were a positive experience in the sense that miners wanted to defend their communities and had to strike. I just regret the TUC and Labour Party leaders not putting their weight behind it. Instead of fighting the system, they apologised for it and still are, even now, if you look what's going on down at Wapping. But it were a positive experience for everybody round here and me especially ... I'm more caring, I care about all kinds of different people, sympathise and support them more. Since the Strike I've become more involved with politics and political people. I know what I'm doing now.' (Moorends: 120YU)

But overall, the weakness of the local political tradition and the absence of organisations based on such class-wide perspectives made political mobilisation among the Moorends youth extremely difficult.
In this chapter I have outlined the nature of the local community in Moorends eighteen months after the end of the Strike. Although my central focus has been the renewed decline in the strength of the village's social networks, this has been far from a simple process.

Initially I looked at the situation of the miners, those who, in previous times, constituted a clear majority of the village's economically active population. I described how, confronted with a deteriorating work situation and deprived of the strong organisation which allowed them to shape their working lives, many Moorends miners have chosen to quit the industry altogether. Combined with British Coal management's refusal to reopen Thorne Colliery, this tended to further undermine the already weakened basis of the old, pit and union-centred community. The more traditional community networks identified in Armthorpe, where the social ties of the workplace still tended to underpin other social relationships, were very much weaker in Moorends.

Neither was the revitalised, Strike-inspired community, with the women's collective at its heart, immune from fragmentation. The weakened state of the village's political tradition which had encouraged an isolation from the broader support community during the Strike, also caused problems in its aftermath. While not 'overshadowed' by a central, male-dominated institution (a local NUM branch), the women's support group had been unable to find an alternative focus for collective political activity and, in a formal sense at least, underwent a very rapid disintegration.

Although relationships forged in the course of collective struggle were subject to numerous post-Strike pressures, their lasting effect on the Moorends' community was clearly evident. The higher status in public life that the village women established due to their central involvement in Strike activity had largely been maintained. Unwilling to return to their previous
privatised existence, the women's lives revealed changes in many areas. Closer, more egalitarian relationships with partners were accompanied by more numerous, richer relationships with other men and women in the village. An increased entry into the world of paid employment was matched by an improved access to social and leisure facilities in the village, typified by the women's independent access to the 'working men's clubs', previously the domain of 'exclusive groups of males', but now regularly frequented by 'exclusive groups of females'.

While the process of politicisation undergone by the WSG women during the Strike encouraged their increased involvement in political discussion and debate, their lack of involvement in the more political support network and the weakened state of the village's radical political tradition seemed to discourage an ongoing participation in political activity. Nevertheless an overall increase in union membership was accompanied by a slight increase in union and political activity - even if, at the time of the fieldwork, this was confined to two of the non-WSG women.

Although widespread joblessness among older miners was becoming a factor in the weakening of the village community, the problems of the young unemployed in Moorends, largely excluded from participation in this community, were of a very different order. All the problems found in Armthorpe were present in the closed-pit village but in a far more acute form.

It was not merely that their lack of financial resources prevented them from participating fully in a range of economic, social and leisure activities. Their exclusion from a wage relationship also implied their exclusion from collective work and trade union organisations which are crucial in allowing working class people to define their own identity and community. Excluded from membership of collective organisations that could empower them, the young unemployed found their lives and relationships defined almost totally by the state.
Moorends After the Miners' Strike

Specifically, their exclusion from a remunerative wage relationship meant that the transition from childhood to adulthood became something of a nightmare, with the young unemployed's dependency on state and family preventing their planning of a future. Unable to embark on the adult stages of their life, prohibited from developing mature, adult relationships, they found themselves confined to the twilight world of adolescent dependency and self doubt.

The denial of their right to work cut deeply into the self-esteem and self-confidence of the young unemployed and together with their lack of resources, made it impossible for them to participate fully in a range of social activities. Often largely invisible to other sections of the population, their lives were marked by routine, monotony and boredom. Lacking a basis for collective organisation or activity, the tendency towards group withdrawal from interaction with employed sections of the population was replicated in a tendency towards individual withdrawal into a severely privatised existence. Deprived of social contact, the unemployed tended to become heavily dependent on the mass media, transmitting an ideology largely hostile to their situation and subjecting them to unremitting pressures from the 'universal market' from which they were excluded. Instead of the young Moorenders' lives being defined positively by a local community, they were defined negatively by forces that were fundamentally antagonistic to their interests.

The atomised situation of the Moorends unemployed cannot be seen in isolation from the overall weakness of the village community. A vicious circle existed whereby the weakened state of the community prevented it from providing them with a 'safety net', while their withdrawal into privatised lifestyles or anti-social activity only served to weaken it even further. Thirty years of pit closure and growing unemployment had reduced the complex and close-knit social network that had existed in Moorends to a shadow of its former self. It was increasingly a village without a community, merely 'an aggregate of socially isolated and culturally condemned human beings'.
FOOTNOTES

1. Gordon later explained that the Webster Cutting Machine used by the rippers was only one of many examples of new technology introduced at Askern since the Strike.

2. Whereas 45 percent of the Markham Main union activists interviewed read the Socialist Worker or another socialist newspaper, only one Moorends miner was a regular reader of the Socialist Worker, while another was a keen supporter of the anarchist 'Class War'. One of the problems was the availability of socialist newspapers, with a further two miners suggesting they had Socialist Worker or Militant whenever they saw it being sold.

3. Without direct responsibility for any sacked lads, the closure of the kitchen caused the incoming funds (especially from the Hull dockers) to accumulate rapidly till they reached £1,8003. Because there was such an acute, local shortage of private and public resources, the women's idea of maintaining a substantial fund in the interest of possible future struggles was one that would have involved an intense political debate. The WSG women felt they needed a break from this kind of campaigning, and the result was a rapid compromise, with small amounts going to local charities/worthy causes and the majority going to the more 'political' NUM hardship fund. The prompt 'passing over' of their resources to the 'established' leadership of the Hatfield NUM meant that the women were not subjected to the public challenging of status endured by the leading Armthorpe WSG activists.

4. As Cath said, :

'Most of us had hopes that we could keep the group together. But by the end of the Strike we were exhausted, we just needed a break. There was a lot of illness around after the Strike and we needed to recuperate our energies. Although most of us have got jobs, we've stayed in touch and the possibility is there for the future.' (Moorends: 107W)

Other leading women, such as Maureen, who would have been crucial to any ongoing collective activity, also spent a lot of times nursing elderly relatives and other sick people, such as Roy Stanger.

5. There was obviously a process of self-selection involved in the assembly of the kitchen team. Although in other areas, there were examples of women with full-time jobs giving them up in order to pursue Strike activities, these were the exceptions that proved the rule. The partners of striking miners tended to hang on to whatever employment they had, while frequently looking for more. The mid-day opening hours of the Moorends kitchen meant that women with full-time jobs found it very difficult to become involved. Those who had part-time jobs with regular hours found it easier.

6. I used twenty hours as the 'threshold' between part-time and full-time jobs.

7. Due to the shortage of money, this sometimes meant going round to each other's houses for an evening, but the women also reported that they went out 'properly' to pubs and clubs a lot more frequently.

8. Virtually all the men and women I interviewed had anticipated that the decline in 'community', caused by the pit closure, would make Moorends less resilient in a long strike. The media focus on the anti-Strike activities of some Nottinghamshire women confirmed the government strategy of trying to 'use' women to pressurise strikers, once the money supply to striking families had been cut off.

The fears of the union activists on both counts tended to be confirmed by
the level of inactivity in the village during the early part of the Strike. Indeed the Strike experience was much harsher, and, had it not been for the determination and self-sacrifice of a very few activists, the Strike ‘community’ may well have collapsed in the latter months of the dispute. This happened in several North and South Yorkshire villages, with scores, then hundreds of ten and eleven-month strikers returning to work. Some of the Doncaster pits at which Moorends men worked were not exempt. Rossington and Bentley, in particular, had significant numbers of strikebreakers (See Appendix 15). The Moorends activists were, not surprisingly, very proud of the small number of village inhabitants that ‘scabbed’.

9. By 1986, the national leadership of the Communist Party of Great Britain, had lost control of the Morning Star and did not encourage their membership to read it. The ‘official’ CPGB publications were Marxism Today and a new weekly, 7 Days, but neither of them appeared to have a readership in Moorends.

10. The expulsion (or attempted expulsion, as he eventually won his appeal) that did most damage to the reputation of the Eurocommunist-dominated CPGB was undoubtedly that of Frank Watters, the CP’s fulltime organiser in the area for fourteen years (1953-67). Watters had been a key organiser of political activity in Moorends and in the NUM, and was still well respected on both counts. For his own account of his work during the early period see Watters (1958 and 1959).

Alongside Brian Robson of Thorne, perhaps the most prominent (non-village) Communist Party member in the area was Bill Matthews, an ex-Hatfield NUM activist and a key figure in building Hatfield’s 1984 twinning network. Bill, brother of Fred Matthews who was killed in the 1972 Strike, was a close friend of Watters and a consistent critic of the ‘Eurocommunist’ leadership’s Strike and post-Strike performance. He eventually resigned from the CPGB in March 1989. One of the causes of his eventual resignation were the unremitting anti-Scargill activities of leading CPGB members such as George Bolton and Pete Carter.

11. Due to the pressure from their left wing, including the women from the Thorne Printers Support Group (see Appendix 21) the Thorne-Moorends Labour Party were addressed by, and put on a major fundraising social for the Silentnight strikers. The two year strike of Silentnight workers provoked a wave of activity in nearby Hatfield. The Womens’ Action Group were the main organisers of supermarket and street collections and social evenings. One of the leading women suggested that, as their twinning campaign built up, more local women were mobilised by the Action Group than had been during the Miners Strike.

12. In 1961, the Communists had won the local tenants association to a position of demanding council houses for 23 caravan families, threatened with eviction (Chapter Ten, Footnote 32). One of the reasons why ‘caravan dwellers’ tend to be a recurrent issue in the politics of the village is, of course, Moorend’s proximity to large expanses of open countryside and moorland.

13. The post-Strike status of the WSG women was revealed by the extensive attempts that were made to involve them in relaunching the tenant’s association. The initial approach was not, of course, made by the ex-undermanager’s wife, who would have been given extremely short shrift, but by another woman, who had been supportive during the Strike.

14. When I first met the two young men, they were on the dole. I myself was preoccupied with the women’s interview programme. When I came to arrange their interviews they, and several other young village inhabitants, had been placed on ‘community programme’ schemes. Being allocated to these schemes
was, of course, part of the 'unemployed experience' (with the community programme being at the more satisfactory end of the scheme spectrum) As they only worked for three days per week and were returned to the dole after a year, I felt the youth concerned could justifiably be considered as part of the village's unemployed population.

15. With the exception of the one young man who had cancelled the *Daily Mirror* because of its Strike coverage, non-readership of daily newspapers was not reported by any of the unemployed youth interviewed. This was partly because more of them continued to live with their families of origin and did not have to pay for the papers. This, of course, tended to cloud the youth's attitudes towards cancellation or change of newspapers. More revealing was the small number of unemployed who were regular readers of socialist newspapers. This was another area where the rise in busfares proved important. With no local sales in the village, papers like *Socialist Worker* or *Militant* were very inaccessible to the young unemployed.

16. I have tended to focus on more 'local' factors, but more general considerations, such as the extreme weakness of the class-struggle oriented community and the very low level of industrial and political activity, were obviously influential. The defeat of the Miners' Strike was seen by many as the death knell of the politics of militancy/class struggle/'Scargillism'. The post-Strike resurgence of 'new realism' had a major impact on a variety of unions (including the NUM) and political parties (such as the Labour and Communist parties). The ongoing paralysis of the CPGB, and the rightward drift of the Labour Party were both of importance in dissuading the WSG women from political involvement.
Chapter Thirteen

CONCLUSIONS

My object in this thesis has been to use the technique of 'community study' to investigate the relationship between work, struggle and 'community' in two pit villages in the Doncaster coalfield. I have argued that the presence of a major workplace can lead to the development of a certain kind of community in the residential settlements that house their workforces. With reference to Armthorpe and Moorends - two pit villages - the relative geographical and social isolation, the sharing of work experiences, life chances and aspirations, all tended to encourage multiplex role playing between members of the village populations, resulting in close-knit, solidary communities.

A key aspect in the construction of these communities was the frequent involvement of the local population in collective political activity, usually in the face of opposition from employers and state. By locking a large proportion of village inhabitants into a common wage relationship, the pit provided the material basis for the union to become the main vehicle for collective political activity, the central instrument through which the mining population sought control over their lives.

This process had its roots in the nature of the deep coalmining industry, which encouraged its workforce to form strong collective organisation in order to exert some control over their underground work situation. But the emergence of 'the union' as the central focus for collective activity and struggle in the pit was paralleled by a similar process above ground. The unpleasant and dangerous work situation placed a premium on improving the quality of life in residential settlements that were
Conclusions

frequently marked by an extreme dependency on the employer and a severe lack of facilities. The solution pursued by both Armthorpe and Moorends inhabitants was the construction of collectively-owned, democratically-controlled institutions which, alongside their union branch, acted as power points in their economic, political and cultural lives.

The pit and the union branch therefore played a crucial role in encouraging common group membership, shared beliefs, attitudes and aspirations. Above all, the union encouraged the belief that only through collective organisation and struggle could the life chances of the local population be defended and improved. As the pits were part of a national and international economy, these life chances were not determined at a purely local level and struggle around them had to be placed in its broader industrial and political context.

The constant concern and frequent interventions of the state in the coal industry served to accentuate this tendency, with watersheds in the miners' struggle tending to correspond with landmarks in the broader class struggle. In protracted and often violent confrontations with the state, the resources of the coalfield villages were mobilised alongside those of the miners' union, with the collective interests of union and community being galvanised in the process of collective struggle. During periods of heightened conflict, the boundaries of the miners' union became permeable and other sections of the village population were mobilised in collective political activity alongside the miners. In this way, major political events acted as landmarks in the population's collective consciousness and moulded the web of social relations that define a community.

The history of Armthorpe illustrates the process by which industrial organisation of the miners was intimately bound up with the political mobilisation of local and broader class communities. The participation of the

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Conclusions

miners in a democratic, egalitarian underground organisation was reproduced, in their active involvement in the union branch and both were reflected in the participation of other sections of the village population in collective political activity during the 1926 General Strike and lockout. It was during this dispute, which saw local and broader class communities mobilised in support of the miners, that the foundations of Armthorpe's democratic and egalitarian political tradition were laid. Although centred on the union branch, it was a tradition which refused to acquiesce to a division between economic and political struggles. The branch was required to play a major part in the concerns of the local and broader class communities, and although it had a key role in the development of the Armthorpe tradition, there were other institutions that facilitated this role. Political parties, especially the more radical ones in the marxist tradition were important and other, locally-based institutions also assisted in the political mobilisation of the village population, both miners and non-miners.

The history of Armthorpe also allows an insight into the position of women in the pit villages. The suggestion that the social relationships developed between workers in the central workplace are crucial in the development of 'community' in the village, has evident implications for the village women, excluded from this central workplace. Although they sometimes engaged in wage labour, often of a part-time or seasonal variety, the primary role of married women was the sustenance and reproduction of the labour force in an industry which was notoriously demanding and destructive of its human resources. The key institution in this process was 'the family' and the women therefore often found themselves heavily confined to a domestic environment, a state of affairs endorsed by schools, church, state and media.

Inevitably the women's confinement to the more privatised arena of the family tended to disguise their relationship to the coal industry. The pronounced segregation of gender and conjugal roles apparent in pit villages
encouraged some observers to see women as inhabiting a 'separate world' from the men. This research into the position of women in the Armthorpe community suggests a more complex situation, supporting Claire William's (1981) thesis that these gender divisions should be analysed in relation to the overall division of labour in the coal industry. That is the oppressive gender roles experienced by women in mining communities have to be seen in the framework of the overall exploitation of both working class men and women. When, as in 1926, there was a major collective struggle against this exploitation, Armthorpe women were able to participate in, redefining the local community and their place in it. By challenging conventional stereotypes in the course of the collective struggle, the women guaranteed themselves at least partial access to the more public, political areas in the village life.

The importance of the miners' union branch in the development and maintenance of 'community' is again revealed in the major divergence of the Armthorpe and Moorend histories which began with the closure of Moorends' colliery in 1957. Whereas Armthorpe continued to enjoy physical growth, new institutions and new developments in its industrial and political traditions, Moorends suffered a lack of physical growth and a severe decline in industrial and economic activity. The miner's union branch found itself unable to function and the institutions associated with it also went into decline. Although the village's radical political tradition appeared to be given a boost by the closure of the pit, its separation from a local industrial base made it increasingly fragile and it's eventual decline in the late 1970's was precipitate.

The strength of 'community' is difficult to measure in 'normal' times. I have argued that it is in periods of crisis that the nature of social relationships are revealed in their starkest form. This was especially true of the 1984/85 Strike, when the government strategy of isolating the...
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striking miners increased their dependency on local networks and resources. As the Strike progressed, the question of whether jobs and pits were essential to coalfield communities became overlaid with others concerning the strength and resilience of these communities in the face of a sustained state offensive.

What I have attempted to demonstrate is how the very different Strike experiences of the Armthorpe and Moorends populations revealed the different strengths of 'community' in the two villages. In Armthorpe the village's 'pit political' tradition - the energetic mobilisation of the maximum industrial and political activity from below - was evident from the earliest stages, resulting in an outward-going, active strike involving large numbers of people. Much of the state's preparation was aimed at preventing such activity and isolating the miners.

The success of the state's strategy encouraged a renewal of bonding between the union and the local community - a source of the miners' resilience in previous protracted struggles. The key position of 'the union' at the heart of the village community was indicated by the way that a range of democratically-controlled village institutions (Welfare Institute, Home Coal Scheme, Pit Shop Fund) were placed at the disposal of the Strike. But the nature of the Armthorpe community also allowed the union to mobilise the village's human resources. The more pressure was applied by the state, the more non-miners; women, unemployed youth, shopkeepers, publicans, and old age pensioners responded by 'getting involved' in the Strike. Extended family and neighbourhood networks were mobilised as an essential part of the Strike community. It was not merely a case of a 'strengthening' of the old community. Free from the pressure of the daily work routine, the hierarchies imposed by the coal industry and the priorities of the 'universal market', a new network of social relationships began to emerge, shaped by the needs of the collective struggle. Unlike the more established village community, a
participant's status did not depend on their age, sex or employment, but on their degree of commitment to the collective struggle. Within a matter of weeks, what had begun as a trade union dispute had been transformed by the political mobilisation of the local population and had become in effect a 'community strike'. This fact was graphically illustrated by the local population's response to the police occupation of the village on 22 August.22

The strength of the local Strike community was also revealed by the fact that not one of the Markham Main miners living in Armthorpe broke ranks with the Strike collective during the twelve months of the dispute. It was a community that, confident of its local strength, continued to attempt to shape the course of the national strike. In the process of renewing its links with the political and trade union community, it helped pioneer the major cross-fertilisation operation between the local and broader Strike support communities which became known as 'twinning'. Although the personal, face-to-face interaction with outside supporters added an important dimension to the strike experience of most Armthorpe strike activists, it was particularly important for the women. Time spent in the more political support community provided them with the opportunity to put their Strike activity into its political context. It was not merely the distance from the village and the (all-male) pit that was important, but their experiences in the 'second' community gave them a yardstick by which to measure their social and political relationships in the village.

In contrast, the protracted closure of Moorends' colliery had led to a situation of extreme weakness in the village community. The disappearance of the union branch and its related institutions meant that there were few collective resources and the village population had grown unaccustomed to collective involvement in industrial/political activity. The disappearance of the 'pit political' tradition placing a premium on 'timing, speed,
decisiveness and breadth in mobilising support' (Gibbons, 1988: 163) was clearly apparent. Far from the Moorends miners making an early intervention to shape the course of the national strike (as was the case in Armthorpe), the weakness of the community was such that it required initiatives from the neighbouring open-pit villages to encourage the belated setting up of a soup kitchen and a local picketing operation.

Even though the rudimentary Strike community which grew around these initiatives played a vital role in sustaining the local strikers, its development was, in comparison to Armthorpe, extremely limited. The traditions of self-organisation, of industrial and political mobilisation, appeared long-forgotten. The result was a less dynamic community, making provision in fewer areas, involving less joint activity between male and female activists and placing a heavy emphasis on 'community welfare' to the detriment of more political strike activities.

The sectionalism tolerated by men and women activists was also evident in their relationship with non-miners. Although the unemployed constituted a much larger proportion of the population than in Armthorpe, there was no sustained attempt to involve them in building the Strike community. Bound by a vicious circle of scarce material and human resources, the embryonic Strike community struggled to secure essential supplies from a village with few material assets. Lacking the political will and confidence to mobilise other sections of the village population in strike activity, the Moorends Strike activists also felt unable to make direct approaches to the broader, Strike-support community. The exceptionally strong links with the broader, class-based community that had existed in previous decades had been allowed to deteriorate and it was only in the final weeks of the Strike that the women embarked on their first 'twinning' expeditions into the 'outside' labour movement.
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To point out the weaknesses of the Moorends Strike community is not to minimize the significance of its emergence. Although the gruelling strike experience revealed the degree to which twenty eight years of pit closure had undermined the strength of the village's social networks, it also provided a graphic demonstration of the role of collective struggle in reviving or recreating 'community'. As in Armthorpe the 1984/85 community contained major differences from the one described in Coal is Our Life. Alongside an increase in multiplex social relationships, there was a significant reduction in the segregation between men and women, an emergence of women into public prominence and a radicalisation of political attitudes. By involving themselves in collective activity aimed at asserting control over their lives, the mining population revitalised the village community.

Similar comparisons and contrasts can be made in the aftermath of the Strike. Just as 'community' was more in evidence in the open-pit village prior to the Strike, so the continuing impact of the Strike, in terms of a strengthening and radicalisation of the local community, could be seen more clearly in Armthorpe than in Moorends. With the return of the Armthorpe strikers to the local pit, they regained access to a potential source of collective strength, yet they faced a series of massive problems. The major shift in the balance of industrial and political forces allowed the management to introduce significant changes in the miners' working conditions, which were seen as heralding more fundamental ones with serious implications for miners' working lives. The inability of the union to prevent this retrogression and the severe 'external' problems facing twelve-month strikers caused a large number of the village's miners to quit the industry, thereby weakening the pit-centred community. Nevertheless, key elements of the Strike community survived the defeat so that, despite their extremely weak position, the miners were once again able to participate in collective action and re-establish some control over their working lives.
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The survival of elements of the Strike community in the miners' lives outside work was also important. Closer, more egalitarian relationships between miners and their partners were accompanied by more numerous, richer friendships with people who had undergone the same experiences during the twelve-month collective struggle. There was also a continuing identification with the broader, class-oriented community, with links being maintained on the basis of shared political attitudes and personal friendships.

The return to work saw a severely weakened NUM heavily concerned with its waged (and victimised) members. The constitutional boundaries became less permeable and were indeed reinforced at the 1985 Annual Conference. Armthorpe women, having emerged 'from obscurity to respect' during the Strike, again found themselves excluded from workplace based struggle and union centred political activity. The activists, in particular those who had been heavily involved in the more political 'support' community, found it extremely difficult to return to their previous privatised roles. Apart from taking on more paid employment and more union work, the women embarked on a series of initiatives, aimed at maintaining their collective political activity and identity. There was participation in the Doncaster Women Against Pit Closures group, financing of local sacked miners, involvement in women's education courses, and the establishment of a local community centre.

The latter initiative in particular, which would have given the women an ongoing collective presence in the public life of the village, came up against concerted opposition from prominent local figures, increasingly assertive and intent on re-establishing the more traditional, pre-Strike village hierarchies. Their success in blocking the women's initiative was not, however, a foregone conclusion. The collective struggle had left its mark on the community and the heightened status that the women had earned through their Strike role did not disappear overnight. Despite the re-imposition of the pit-centred work regime, old gender divisions and stereotypes were
clearly weakened. Increased self-respect was accompanied by increased respect both between women and between men and women.

In a seminal political tract, eighty years earlier, Luxembourg had identified a key effect of the mass strike as the stimulation of the 'spiritual growth' of its participants, the advance 'by leaps and bounds' of their intellectual stature. This was indeed true of the leading Armthorpe activists, their 1984/85 Strike experience leading to a major growth in their political awareness. This, in turn, led to major changes in relationships and friendship patterns. Closer, more political friendships were established or maintained both within the village and with supporters beyond the coalfield.

In the absence of any major industrial or political alternative, several leading women joined the local Labour Party branch, hoping to find further political development and a continuing role in the class-struggle based community. Again these hopes were largely disappointed. Much of the conservative, male chauvinist opposition already mentioned originated from inside the local Labour Party 'establishment' and the women found it difficult to relate to most of the politics they discovered in the meetings. Their 1984/85 introduction to the politics of grass roots mobilisation and class struggle stood in stark contrast to the trends of electoralism and new realism that were becoming increasingly dominant in Labour Party wards in the aftermath of the Strike. But if the Strike did not lead to a transformation in the political complexion of the village\textsuperscript{a3}, it certainly had an impact on local political institutions. Both the parish council and the local Labour Party were opened up and made more democratic, with women (not necessarily those from the WAG) playing a far more prominent role.

Another low status group, on the periphery of the old community, who benefitted from the Strike experience were the young unemployed. Their heightened status and increased access to community survived the ending of
the Strike. Despite the re-establishment of the work and market-oriented routine in the village, their strike roles continued to have an impact on their status in the local community. This was often revealed in their involvement alongside young miners and others in leisure relationships. However, their exclusion from the waged relationship not only cut them off from trade unions, but made it more difficult for them to develop a presence in the world of organised political activity.

The weakness of the Moorends Strike-based community appeared to be confirmed by its rapid decline in the aftermath of the dispute. Just as the absence of a local union branch had undermined the pre-Strike community, so it seemed to accelerate the decline of the collective that had been established during the year-long struggle. With the ending of the Strike there appeared to be no alternative focus for ongoing political activity which would allow the village population control of the economic and political forces which shaped their lives. Group contact with 'the union' and the outside support community faded rapidly. With problems and crises again encountered on an individual basis, an 'atomisation' began to emerge in every section of the population.

The village miners, travelling long distances in order to work a variety of shifts at different pits, tended to spend less time socialising in the village than did their Armthorpe counterparts - and frequently only 'came across' their Strike associates at weekends. Their strike defeat had put the state and British Coal management in a position where they could reshape the coal industry with a minimum of union interference. With their deteriorating work situation foreshadowing more fundamental changes, and deprived of a strong union which allowed them some control over their lives, a large number opted for redundancy. This further undermined the local community. Work
relationships, previously providing a basis for multiplex interaction, no longer tended to underpin other social relationships in the village.

The women's plans to maintain their support group, using their surplus funds to support workers in struggle as well as local community initiatives, would have necessitated a major political debate and this prospect proved too much for the exhausted women. Nevertheless the higher public status achieved during the Strike survived. As well as increased involvement in paid employment, the Moorends women gained more equal access to the social and leisure institutions in the village. There were, however, none of the collective initiatives attempted by the Armthorpe women. There was no involvement in the WAPC group, no initiation of assertiveness training or other educational programmes, no attempt to set up a community centre in the village. Apart from the lone CPGB member, none of the WSG activists felt attracted to membership of a political organisation. The weakness of the community caused the impact of the Strike to manifest itself at a more informal, individual level; in increased involvement in waged relationships, changed attitudes and altered friendship patterns.

It was among the young unemployed that the greatest atomisation was apparent. Because the Moorends Strike community had not embraced them, there was no equivalent improvement in their post-Strike status. Burdened with unremitting financial problems, they found themselves excluded from many areas of social activity; their lives and relationships defined overwhelmingly by the state, their existences routinely monotonous and severely privatised. Their perceived inferior status in a work- and market-oriented society took a heavy toll on their self-esteem and confidence, confronting them with fundamental questions concerning their identity and value to society. Heavily dependent on the mass media for their view of the 'outside' world, their political attitudes tended to be more contradictory, involving a mixture of radical and reactionary views. Their exclusion from
work and trade union organisations that would help them define their class identity also inhibited their involvement in political activity. The weakness of the local community meant that it could do little to assist the young unemployed. Their withdrawal into home-based isolation or anti-social activities merely weakened the community even further.

The situation of the young Moorends unemployed tends to underline Henriques' previously mentioned observation that a pit village without a mine is 'in danger of becoming merely an aggregate of socially isolated and culturally condemned human beings' (Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter, 1969:10). By itself the pit can provide the basis for residential settlements with a wide variation of social relationships, that is, very different types of 'community'. In Armthorpe and Moorends the importance of the pit lay in the fact that it provided a material basis for 'the union', rooted in a radical, democratic tradition, to become the main vehicle for collective political activity among its waged members and other sections of the population. Through their union branch, the village populations were able to gain access to important local power points in the economic and political systems which governed their lives.

Other power points situated outside the village require a different kind of collective access. Increasingly major parts of people's lives are shaped by the state, or by 'the market', dominated by corporations operating on an international basis. The more powerful and far-reaching the intervention of the employers and their state, the more working class people have to respond on a similar scale. Trade unions and political parties organised at a national or international level may seem a far cry from a village union branch, but by encouraging people to join together in political activity, they can still provide a basis for 'community' among them. In other words, collective organisation of people around a common purpose is crucial in establishing community whether this be at a local, or a broader, class
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level. The 1984/85 Strike, initially a reaction to pit closures, became concerned with this fundamental issue, whether working class people had the right to shape their own lives and community in opposition to the state and the market. The year-long collective struggle over these issues had the effect of strengthening ‘community’ at both local and class levels.

The importance of the 1984/85 Miners’ Strike lay in the fact that it revealed to hundreds of thousands of people the powerful forces at work in British society: demonstrating the significant shift in the balance of class forces, but also indicating potential avenues of advance for working class people. It not only exposed the awesome power of the state, harnessed by a Conservative government in a concerted assault on working class organisation, it also revealed the strength, creativity and resilience of working people when mobilised around issues of fundamental importance to them. Despite the stunted, sectional response of Labour Party and trade union leaders, the Miners’ Strike indicated the potential of industrial struggle as a key arena for political mobilisation. In the course of collective struggle, rich relationships between unions and political organisations were created and strengthened which allowed the constitutional boundaries of the unions to be broken down, allowed sectional divisions and barriers between industrial and political struggle to be overridden, allowed an industrial struggle to be transformed into community and class mobilisation. As this thesis has indicated, this kind of major, class struggle can transform not only the political situation, but the hundreds of thousands of people who participate in it.

The general implication of the thesis is that, when released from dependence on the state or the market, unfettered by workplace-based hierarchies, people are able to free themselves from many of the routine thought processes which ‘normal’, everyday life tends to encourage. Their attitudes towards each other are reconsidered in the light of the demands of
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the collective struggle; people's qualities and potential being judged by a totally different set of criteria. In the course of such a social experience, people's relationships with one another are frequently recast, resulting in an appreciation and a closeness unusual in everyday relationships. The community that rests on these social relationships also tends to be transformed by the struggle into a more inclusive, aware and discerning one, sensitive to the social and political needs of the local population. In the process of collective struggles, like the 1984/85 Strike, people enjoy a rare freedom to define their own lives, their own identity and their own community.
FOOTNOTES

1. Among them Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter (1969) and Frankenberg (1976)

2. Also, of course, by the nature of the 'invasion' itself with the whole pit village being surrounded and occupied as if it were 'enemy territory'.

3. This kind of transformation was seen in several South Wales villages during the 1926 strike/lock out when Communist Party membership reached its peak and in Maerdy over 200 members were registered, 33 of them women. The manager of Maerdy Colliery who had represented the area on the Rhondda Urban District Council for over ten years, was heavily defeated by a communist, the union branch chairman. Stuart Macintyre (1980: 35 and 181)

4. In the case of the Moorends women, 'the union' was represented by the Hatfield NUM officials, who during the Strike, used to visit them and keep them informed. None of the officials lived in Moorends and, with the return to shiftwork, even the Hatfield president, who lived in Thorne, found it difficult to keep in touch.

5. The need for improved social facilities, in terms of a community centre, youth club or coffee bar was mentioned by several of the Moorends informants, women and men. But as with the women's reluctance to tackle the male exclusivity of the Social Club Committee, there was evidence of a major gap between what needed to be done and the local people's willingness to attempt it. Such a gap was less evident in Arnhorpe. Probably because of the high success rate of campaigns and initiatives, people seemed more optimistic and ready to 'have a go'.
APPENDIX 1

The THESIS RESEARCH PROCESS

Research Development

My special interest in the mining industry and its residential 'communities' is a fairly recent one and did not begin as a 'sociological' one in the strict sense of the word. As a socialist, I had been committed to supporting the National Union of Mineworkers' 1984/85 struggle for jobs, pits and communities from its earliest days. In December 1984 I was faced with the problem of choosing a topic for my M.A dissertation in Labour studies. With the longest national strike in British labour history showing little evidence of immediate collapse and the rest of the labour movement apparently paralysed in an evidently inadequate support role, I decided to try and 'explore' the factors that enabled the majority of miners, their union and their 'communities' to wage an apparently never-ending struggle in the face of overwhelming odds. I eventually decided to investigate the relationship between sectional and class consciousness as it manifested itself in the strike-related activities in two mining villages; Keresley, near Coventry and Maerdy, South Wales. I had some contact with the strike activists (both men and women) in both villages, having worked with them in the Birmingham Miners' Support Group on fund raising and other activities.

By the time I was ready to 'enter the field' (June 1985) the Strike had been called off by the NUM without any withdrawal of the pit-closure programme, without the National Coal Board (NCB) backing down on any of the issues that had provoked the Strike, and without any agreement over the reinstatement of some 600-700 sacked NUM members, many of them union activists and strike leaders. From my brief visits to mining villages (delivering financial and other assistance) I saw how badly people were suffering from the traumatic defeat and aftermath of the 'Great Strike'. Especially in Maerdy, where the last pit in the Rhondda existed under a permanent threat of imminent closure, there was a mood of almost total anguish and despair. I myself was not unaffected by this mood, and suffering from political/emotional depression, I had to convince myself that my research project was still feasible and 'valid'. This in turn seemed largely to depend on my ability to give a guarantee to the long-suffering people I would be 'studying' that they were not going to be exploited or 'scrutinised' to no good purpose. The traumatic situation therefore made me feel especially sensitive to D H J Morgan's observation that:
Any research situation has, in part, an exploitative character involving the definition of the other as an object of research.' (1972: 189)

There were two things which convinced me that such a 'guarantee' was possible. The first was my reading of *Coal is Our Life* a 1956 community study of Featherstone, a small mining town in West Yorkshire. This study sought to show how, in an industrial community, patterns of conflict generated in the work situation form a continuing background to other social relations. The study, written from a Marxist perspective, had a broad scope. It began with a brief history of the development of the local coal industry and town, followed by some statistical analysis of the contemporary population. It then gave an account of the local (early 1950's) techniques of coal-getting, and the associated relations of production, contrasting the solidary teamwork relations of the miners themselves with the recurrent conflict between miners and management over conditions and wage rates. This conflict was then shown to be fundamental in determining the activity, organisational structure and militant attitudes of the local trade union (NUM) branch. The second half of the study comprised rich, detailed observations on certain cultural and leisure activities, economic and family life, life cycles and expectations. These were also interpreted as reactions to, and interactions with, the specific form of wage labour prevalent in Featherstone. So, for example, the authors concluded that the particular type of male dominance found in most areas of social life in 'Ashton' reflected the dominance of the pit in the economic life of the town.

The second key factor in building my confidence was the series of discussions with my dissertation supervisor, Peter Fairbrother, in which he argued that it was possible to write an academically valid dissertation which could also be read, understood and appreciated by those who were the 'object' of the study. The refreshing accessibility of *Coal is Our Life* merely seemed to confirm this argument.

At this stage I still felt my basic research design - namely a comparison of the Strike experience in a 'heartland' community with that of one in a 'minority' area - was valid. However a second weekend visit to Maerdy sowed serious doubts about my choice of research location. It was not simply that the village's situation in a near-derelict valley, and its mood of impending doom, depressed me. The political and trade union traditions of the village and the threat of pit closure had made Wales' 'little Moscow' a veritable bastion of the 1984/85 Strike. The 770-strong pit workforce, nearly
all of whom lived close to the pit, exhibited an extreme form of solidarity, with not a single miner breaking ranks during the twelve months. Paradoxically, this diminished Maerdy's 'usefulness' in my research strategy. Apart from the distribution of food and other welfare work, there was very little open strike activity in the village. With 100 percent solidarity assumed, not only were there no mass pickets in the village, there weren't any pickets at all! There was little need to organise local strike bulletins or other strike activities to raise morale or rally the 'waverers'. There was no conflict with scabs, no major conflict with 'outside' police as they had little excuse to intervene in village life. The majority of Maerdy's strike activity took place hundreds of miles away from the village; in Southern England, the West Midlands and even Lancashire and Yorkshire. Many of its leading activists, involved in picketing and fundraising operations, were based permanently in Birmingham, Coventry, London and elsewhere, returning to Maerdy at irregular intervals to see their families and for rest and recuperation. Although I had, of course, planned to incorporate these far-flung activities in my study, I had not envisaged having them as the central feature.

I decided that, in order to capture the remarkably rich experience of the Strike, I would have to transfer the location of my research to a village that was in a solid, striking area, but that had been forced into a more prominent 'front line' role. Looking through back copies of the national newspapers, I was struck by the high levels of strike activity in the Doncaster area, and in one pit in particular, Armthorpe. Although under a NUM/TUC agreement, the West Midlands had not been one of 'their areas', I had met one of their fundraising teams in Birmingham towards the end of the Strike and had been impressed by their high level of commitment and political maturity. I discussed the issue with my supervisor and he agreed that I should locate my field research in Armthorpe and Keresley.

There remained serious problems with gaining access in Armthorpe in mid-1985. Not only was there the endemic post-Strike depression factor, but due to the village's prominent role in the Strike, there had been several researchers from the media and academic worlds, studying its inhabitants on a variety of pretexts. A team of socialist filmmakers from Denmark had made a good impression, sending back several copies of their video to Armthorpe (where a local shortage of Danish interpreters was soon discovered!) but British researchers did not have such a good reputation. One team from Liverpool University had been given a great deal of access during the Strike.
but, despite giving assurances about a forthcoming book, had apparently disappeared completely without explanation. (Some of the interviews later appeared as part of a wide-ranging book, 'The Enemy Within', edited by Samuel, Bloomfield and Boanas (1986)).

By the time I arrived in July 1985, there was a noticeable element of disappointment with, and mistrust of, academic researchers. My original contact, an NUM branch committee member whom I had met while he was on a fundraising trip to Birmingham six months previously, was in the middle of a major domestic crisis. I took the first tentative steps into 'the field' armed with a single phone number - that of a grass-roots NUM activist whom I had never met before, but with whom I shared political perspectives and Socialist Worker Party membership. Not only did he help me as a key informant, providing a lot of detailed information on the Strike, the pit, the village and its population, but he also had an extremely large circle of contacts. He acted as a key 'gatekeeper' into the research area.

Despite the 'difficult' situation in the coalfields, and not a few setbacks and crises of confidence, my first experience of research 'in the field' was more rewarding and enjoyable than I had dared hope. More important, I felt I was successful in producing (and distributing) a relevant and accessible report from the data I had collected - one that appeared to justify the trust and confidence that the mining men and women had placed in me by their cooperation. I also found that this initial experience of fieldwork, and the reading I did for my Masters degree, strengthened my interest in the sociological and political issues surrounding the mining industry, its unions and its residential communities. I felt as if I had merely touched the tip of a fascinating iceberg and the doubts I felt about doing a major piece of research began to recede. A careful re-reading of Coal is Our Life confirmed that, apart from its content and sensitivity, the undogmatic, open-ended way in which it was written invited restudies which could extend and augment it.

I had little difficulty in deciding on Armthorpe as the focus for my post-Strike community study. Apart from the excellent relationship I had established with several key informants in the pit and village, its rich history, its leading role in the NUM and certain similarities with Featherstone made it an obvious choice. Keresley, situated 'on my doorstep' would have been more convenient in terms of time, energy and physical resources, and would undoubtedly have offered the opportunity for an interesting study. However, I wanted to draw on the 1956 Featherstone study
not just as a 'model', but also for purposes of comparison, and Keresley was too obviously dissimilar in too many ways to make such comparisons valid. These major differences; its size (a tiny village with a population only a fifth the size of 1956 Featherstone), its geographical position (on the edge of a minor coalfield and a major city, Coventry) and its short history (it was still being built at the time of the Featherstone study) were compounded by another quite separate problem. The successful 'decapitation' exercise performed by on its union organisation by the NCB during the Strike had left several of my best informants in the very unhappy, unstable position of joblessness, with little input into, or information on, developments in the pit and union.

My initial research proposal was fairly straightforward. I aimed to conduct a detailed ethnographic study of a Yorkshire mining village and compare my findings with those in Coal is Our Life. My intention was to combine a series of research techniques, supplementing contemporary information with a historical dimension. I aimed to generate most of my data through structured, but open-ended interviews with village miners, their partners and children, contrasting their situation with those of miners living outside the 'community'. In addition to archival research, I felt that more informal discussions and participant observation of life in the village would provide me with a considerable body of data. In employing a 'multiple strategies' method of research I saw myself, in the words of Schatzman and Strauss, as a methodological pragmatist who 'sees any method of enquiry as a system of strategies and operations designed - at any time - for getting answers to certain questions about events which interest him' (1973: 7).

On reconsideration, I felt I needed a cutting edge to the study which would reflect the continuing significance of the 1984/85 Strike, and its defeat, among people who depended on coalmining for their livelihood. I felt I needed to generate some data on the effects pit closure could have on a previously pit-centred 'community'. With this in mind, I decided to contrast the post-Strike situation in Armthorpe - a pit village with a working pit - with that in Edlington, a mining village ten miles to its south east, where the pit was unexpectedly closed by the N.C.B. (on economic grounds) in December 1985.

It took me three visits to Edlington and several long discussions with local inhabitants to confirm my growing suspicions, namely that although the contrast might have been an interesting one in other ways, the more serious...
sociological effects of the Edlington closure would take some time to become apparent. The data generated by research in the village would not therefore allow me to address the issues I wanted to look at.

A casual conversation with the younger brother of the woman whose home (near Armthorpe) I was living in, suggested a possible solution to this dilemma. Having been on the dole himself since leaving school two years previously, he mentioned that his mother was just about to be made redundant by the closure of a large sea food packing plant in Thorne-Moorends. I knew his elder sister had been unable to secure regular work since leaving school four years previously and so I enquired about how many wage packets would be coming into his family after his mum lost her job. He replied that between seven adults in three separate households, there wouldn't be a single wage or salary. When his sister's partner came home from an afternoon shift at the pit in Armthorpe, I asked about the rest of his family, who lived in Moorends and Thorne. His reply was similar. Of the ten adults (of working age) in five households, he was the only one in regular employment. He suggested this situation was not so unusual in Moorends or Thorne due to the very high levels of unemployment and the seemingly irreversible trend of closure in the local industry.

During my M.A. research, I had already discovered some of the history of the 'twin' villages, Thorne and Moorends. Thorne was a large, long-established village, situated at an intersection of waterways in an agricultural area nine miles to the northeast of Armthorpe. The protracted (1909-1926) sinking of a colliery one and a half miles to the north of the village led to the building of an adjacent pit village, Moorends, and a significant expansion of Thorne itself. In the 1930's, 40's and 50's the villages had developed a rich political, trade union and cultural life, but the temporary closure of the pit at Moorends, on technical/economic grounds in 1956, led to a widespread scattering of its workforce to other pits in the Doncaster coalfield. I began to envisage the possibility of using the Armthorpe/Thorne-Moorends comparison as a tool for investigating Henriques' 1969 prediction on the fate of pit villages, following the closure of their pits:

'this community without the mine and mineworkers is in danger of becoming merely an aggregate of socially isolated and culturally condemned human beings.' (Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter, 1969:10)
The following morning I visited the Barnsley headquarters of the South Yorkshire County Council (now abolished) where I spoke to several workers in the planning department and, with their help, began a search for relevant statistics on Moorends and Thorne. I discovered that it had recently been designated a rural development area with one of the worst rates for both adult and youth unemployment in South Yorkshire. That evening I walked around Thorne, then Moorends and its almost deserted pit top. Moorends in particular, with its uniform streets of ageing pit houses appeared deprived, neglected and somehow depressingly shabby. There was a lack of trees, public gardens or parks. The few public buildings I could discover seemed old and in poor repair, many of the small, street-corner shops were closed down, with fading, flaking paintwork and dusty disused windows. I spent an hour in a similarly bare and nearly empty public house before returning to my 'home base' near Armthorpe. There I checked my impressions against those of my 'hosts', with regards to life in their old village. They coincided and I thought I had something. I remember getting very excited and deciding that part of my Armthorpe study would have to involve a comparison/contrast with the social/cultural/political life in a mining village without a working pit, Moorends.

Theoretical Considerations in Research Design

An important stage in the formulation of my research design was my investigation into theories of 'community', under the guidance of Ian Proctor. In all we had some six meetings together and although the topic was simply 'The Community Study' (an optional unit in the year long general Research Method and Design course) he assisted me in making it very relevant to my particular field of research. Initially he directed me to two areas of literature - namely the more general discussions and controversies relating to the concept of 'community', and then the particular studies that referred specifically to the mining industry and the residential communities that were established to house its workforce. This combination proved fruitful. I felt that I could have easily 'lost my way' in the volumes of literature on 'community' had it not been for the mining literature acting as an anchor. Bill Williamson's 'Class, Culture and Community' (1982), Stuart Macintyre's 'Little Moscows' (1980) and Martin Bulmer's 'Mining and Social Change' (1978) were especially useful in keeping me alert to the need to relate the more general theoretical literature to my particular research problem.
My discussions with Ian tended to focus on three areas: the validity of the concept of 'community', different perceptions of 'community', and the significance of class and gender in occupationally-based communities. I found the observations of Pahl (1968), Stacey (1974) and Bell and Newby (1971) very useful in appreciating that 'the notion of community is used and abused in a seemingly endless variety of contexts' (Macintyre, 1980: 176). The potent ideological uses that the concept of 'community' can be put to were usefully demonstrated and analysed by, among others, Norman Dennis (1968) and Leonore Davidoff and her colleagues (1976). With this as a background, I was then encouraged to investigate some of the possible alternatives to the concept of 'community', in particular Margaret Stacey's concept of local social systems. It appeared to me that there was a great deal of validity in Stacey's propositions when tested against the various studies of mining towns and villages that I had become familiar with. I felt, however, that the concept tended to encourage an overly mechanical, static approach to the study of constantly changing social relationships. I resolved to incorporate the rigour of Stacey's approach, while continuing to use the concept of 'community'.

Also of some relevance was Ronald Frankenberg's 1976 critique of Coal is Our Life, concerning the danger of researchers adopting the (male) miner's eye view of the community and thereby reproducing in their reports the sex discrimination and exclusion that existed in the mining villages they were studying. The prominent role of women in the 1984/85 Strike seemed to underline the importance of such an observation, and encouraged me to extend my reading to some of the more recent contributions concerning the position of women with regards to the contemporary mining industry and its residential 'communities'.

Apart from the personal and political contacts I had already established, I gained important insights into the 'coalfield women's eye view' from the large number of strike histories and other writings produced by the women Strike activists themselves (for example Barnsley WAPC (1985), North Yorks WAPC (1985), Coventry WSG (1986)). Two life histories that combined a depth of insight with a highly sensitive authenticity were recorded by an Australian trade union researcher, Lynn Beaton (1985). Her book, written in the form of two interlocking diaries/autobiographies, touches on virtually every area of what Dennis and his colleagues described as women's 'separate, and in a sense, secret lives' (Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter, 1969: 228).

I became equally excited whilst reading another Australian woman's study of an open-cast coalmining town in Queensland. Starting from a Marxist
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Perspective similar to that evident in *Coal is Our Life*, Claire Williams (1981) is primarily concerned with the potential for, and the factors underlying, the production of an oppositional class consciousness in advanced capitalist economies. Concerned with examining the exploitation of men and the oppression of women as separate but interrelated issues, her sensitive investigation of gender relationships in family, minesite and township allows her to place the 'separate', 'secret' lives of Open Cut's women in their broader, structural context.

Not only does this lead to a deepening of the theoretical insights contained in *Coal is Our Life*, but Williams also compensates for another weakness in the 1956 study - its lack of self consciousness in its approach to methodology. She provides a systematic and frank explanation of how she struggled with the formulation, redevelopment and implementation of her research design. This revelation of problems, mistakes, hunches and lucky breaks added enormously to the usefulness of her study and boosted my confidence as I struggled to formulate my own provisional research design and the appropriate methodology.

There were other activities which proved very important at this early stage of research design, prior to entry into the field. Since early December 1985, I had been having regular fortnightly meetings with my thesis supervisor, Peter Fairbrother, at which we reviewed my recent activity, discussed problems, set short-term targets and began to lay out a timetable of activities for me to follow. Peter impressed on me the importance of getting into the habit of writing regularly, and we agreed that I should submit a fortnightly written report of progress/problems/projected plans around which we could focus our meetings.

Apart from encouraging me to organise my work more systematically and assisting me to formulate and focus my ideas, these reports also served as a rudimentary pre-field diary open to review for a variety of purposes. For example, I later used them for tracing the development of important strands in my research methods. One example was an early January 1986 meeting at which I mentioned to Peter that due to my long periods of absence from Armathorpe, I had asked a couple of my key informants to keep a written record of any interesting developments in the pit or village. He mentioned how useful he had found diaries in generating data in previous projects and this led to a long discussion on their potential. At subsequent meetings we developed the idea and discussed its practical application in my research project. By the time I
re-entered the field (in March 1986) I was 'armed' with a dozen reasonably 'impressive' blank diaries and a fairly clear idea of how I intended to use them. And although my experience in the field then became the most important element, had it not been for the encouragement gained at subsequent fortnightly discussion sessions, I doubt that I would have decided to develop the diary network to its full potential.

Other discussions that were important for clarifying my research aims, areas and methodology took me further afield. In February, I contacted Dennis Warwick, a sociologist at Leeds University, who was involved in a research project focussing on the Featherstone in the 1980's. I had two long and fruitful meetings with him and his fellow researchers at which we discussed our research strategies, methodology and potential problems. He also provided me with copies of two very interesting working papers on women in mining communities (Warwick, 1984, Carrol and Warwick, 1986). Yet another important forum for discussion was the weekly research design and methods seminar run by Bob Burgess for all the Sociology department's PhD students. Both the seminars themselves and the opportunity for informal discussion afterwards proved invaluable to me as an antidote to the 'loneliness of the long-distracted researcher' syndrome.

**Proposed and Actual Methodology**

By the end of February I felt more prepared to enter the field. Through the process of study and discussion I had clarified my theoretical framework, developed a number of flexible working hypotheses and outlined four major areas that I intended to generate data on, namely:

1. Whether it was relevant to describe mining towns and villages as 'communities as they often were during the 1984/85 Strike? Did the sociological reality of a 1986 mining village justify the use of this term, and, if so, what were the key factors that underpinned it?

2. How numerous and how significant were the changes that had occurred in Yorkshire mining villages over the previous thirty years? Could Coal is Our Life and its theoretical framework provide a basis for the understanding of social relationships in a contemporary mining village? For example, what effect had unemployment, and youth unemployment in particular, had on a pit-centred village?

3. What had been the effect of the Strike on the local social system(s) /community in Armthorpe? How had people reacted to the defeat? Had they come to terms with it, or recovered from it, and if so in what ways and to what degree? Had there been significant changes in roles and social relationships? If so, had these changes disappeared, persisted or developed further? Was there any evidence of a widespread radicalisation among sections of the village population due to their Strike experience? Had these
changes had any observable impact on the local political/trade union/social structures in the village?

4. What were the longer term implications of the Strike's defeat for the pit-centred towns and villages of 1986? If the kind of local social system/community described by Dennis and his colleagues was still present in Armthorpe in 1986, would the closure of its pit mean that the village would be in danger of becoming, in the words of Fernando Henriques, 'merely an aggregate of socially isolated and culturally condemned human beings'?

The above themes are obviously very broad ones, offering a great deal of scope for various areas of study. The reason I chose this broad approach rather than set up a more narrow, specific 'problem' stemmed partly from my agreement with Glaser and Strauss's (1976) proposition that hypotheses, concepts and theories are most usefully generated and developed in the process of doing research, and partly from my, albeit severely limited, experience of field research. For my M.A. dissertation, investigating the relationship between sectional and class consciousness, I had sought to contrast the Strike experience of a 'solid' pit village, Armthorpe with that of a village in a weak, 'minority' striking area, Keresley. Although the two experiences were certainly not identical, the differences paled into insignificance when Keresley was contrasted with its neighbouring Midlands pits. It was only when I was well into the course of my fieldwork that I discovered that my over-rigid research design was seriously flawed, which had had the effect of cutting me off from rich areas of data, hypotheses and insight.

There was, of course, danger in the opposite extreme. As Glaser and Strauss point out, the researcher can ill afford to approach reality as a 'tabula rasa'. Rather he/she:

'must have a perspective that will help him [sic] see the relevant data and abstract significant strategies from his scrutiny of the data' (1967:3)

I felt it important that this perspective should be both broad and flexible. It had taken considerable time and effort to build up sufficient confidence to understand that, as Morris Freilich pointed out, I, as the researcher, was the project, the information absorber, analyser, synthesizer and interpreter (1977:32). My main objective at this stage was to generate a large amount of rich data in a variety of areas; the history of Armthorpe, the work situation and union activity in its pit, the social and political life in the village, the relationships between miners, their women partners and unemployed youth, and finally, the element of contrast with similar areas in Thorne-Moorends.
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Achieving Access

Although I had informed the official union leadership at both area and national levels of my presence, I consciously avoided any attempt to negotiate access through these 'power elites'. Apart from their major problems, vulnerability and preoccupation with holding the union together with less than minimal resources, I was aware that, as Cohen and Taylor (1972) pointed out, gatekeepers that can grant access can also restrict it. I therefore avoided asking them for assistance, favours or sponsorship as I did not want to become over-identified with, or obliged to them. Although I developed a much closer relationship with the official union leadership at branch level, I still avoided becoming too dependent on them. I was aware that, especially in their extremely vulnerable post-Strike situation, institutional leaders tended to be keenly aware of the possible political implications of research, and, if they felt threatened in any way, they could impose severe limits on my field of research.

While carrying out my dissertation research, I had been introduced to the village at a grass roots, unofficial level. Nevertheless I was aware of a possible problem of 'narrowness' of access. It was obviously beneficial to have key informants that were mature, political activists with carefully considered perspectives - based on long experience in pit, union and village - but as Bell (1977) observed, there is a problem of becoming too involved or identified with a particular group of people, especially in the initial period of field research.

In order to avoid this problem, I pressed the more politically active miners for introductions that took me outside of their immediate group. Having asked my 'primary' gatekeepers for introductions to their workmates, partners, drinking companions, friends and relatives, I proceeded to establish independent relationships with several of them. I then used them as secondary gatekeepers, seeking further introductions to useful informants in order to counteract the problem of gaining too narrow a perspective on the research area from the outset. One example of this was my choice of 5th form school students to keep diaries for me. There were several potential candidates who were the sons and daughters of established informants (political or trade union activists). Instead I relied on the recommendation of a teacher I had never met but who was, in turn, recommended by a teacher associate of one of my 'primary gatekeepers'. It made the setting up of the diary network slightly more complicated, but I felt it was worthwhile, because these young informants
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and their families gave me a real insight into another, less politicised section of the village population.

My particular route of access also made me more aware of the need for unobtrusive observation in typical, everyday situations; watching, listening to social interaction in pubs, clubs, library, swimming baths, pit yard, pit canteen and union office. It also made me more conscious of the need to be keenly aware of, and sensitive to, roles – both people’s conception of their own roles and their conception of mine. The observation that Spencer (1973) made regarding the problematic relationship between bureaucrats and researchers is to a lesser extent true in most social situations. As a researcher I did not fit into any formal chain of command, rank or status. I could move back and forth in a variety of areas at a variety of levels. I was not subject to the same rules or constraints felt by those I was observing. As a result I could easily appear as an uncontrollable element in an often stable, controlled and ‘hierarchical’ system.

I soon became very aware of the need to define my role quickly – responding to other people’s conception of my (and their own) role. In most cases an introduction that suggested I was a researcher from a distant academic institution was plainly insufficient, requiring me to emphasize my other roles. So I gained immediate access and related to the small core of highly political activists because I was seen as a committed socialist of fifteen years standing. To a broader layer of active trade unionists and branch officials I emphasized my work as an experienced trade union activist and branch official. With the less committed, but inquisitive rank and file mineworker, I outlined my previous non-academic background of eight years of manual work and shop floor struggle at British Leyland Cars, and, of course, my active support for their own year-long struggle.

This last ‘role’, that of an active Strike supporter in 1984/85, was invariably mentioned when informants were introducing me to new contacts and was invaluable in opening up access to areas that otherwise might well have remained closed or far more difficult. It also meant that in order to maintain the degree of access I achieved in the extremely volatile political situation, I had, like Claire Williams, to ‘disassociate myself from identifying with the bourgeoisie’ (1981:11). In order to open up the maximum access to the ex-strikers of Armthorpe, I had to refrain from any attempt to gain direct access to higher NCB management. It was much later in the research process, after I had completed all my major interview programmes that I felt free to begin...
negotiating access to local management via the Coal Board's area industrial relations department.

Although there were undoubted advantages to this 'segregation' of fieldwork in a highly politically-charged situation, there were also disadvantages. With management being the gatekeepers to (legal) underground visits, I was forced to conduct all my miners interviews without having witnessed their below-ground work situation. It also meant that attempts to gain access to sensitive local statistical data had to be postponed for a considerable period.

Entry to the Field

My preliminary field trips, in March and April 1986, were taken up with a series of activities. I made four of these trips, apart from two very brief visits to research major 'open conflict' situations and a further weekend trip for a social event in support of the sacked News International printworkers. My first aim was to re-establish contact with the informants that I had lost contact with over the previous eight months. I visited them, explained what I was doing and ensured that they had all had a chance to see the end result of my previous research, the M.A. dissertation. I began to undertake a detailed search of the local press in order to compile a detailed post-Strike chronology and supplemented my library work with discussions and unstructured interviews with some of my 'key' informants. (I had already asked three of my 'key' informants to record any notable events in pit and village life). I also began the difficult task of drawing up a draft version of the interview schedule, which I showed to my informants in order to get an initial reaction.

I consciously kept these initial field trips short. Apart from attempting to attend the weekly seminars in the core 'research design and methods' course at Warwick University, I found the periods between the trips very important in allowing me the opportunity to discuss issues with my supervisor, reconsider my preliminary research design, ponder the proposed interview schedules and 'collect my thoughts' generally before returning to the field. It was during one such early respite that I decided to attempt to set up a formal diary network as a major source of data generation. Likewise it was due to discussions with my supervisor that I felt confident in making other major modifications to my research strategy, such as relinquishing Edlington as the pole of comparison and seeking out an alternative 'pit village without a pit'.
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As a result, the third and fourth field trips saw a major restructuring of my research work. Having decided to focus on Moorends and Thorne, I had to attempt to establish access in this completely new research area, where I had virtually no contacts and certainly no 'gatekeepers'. I paid the first of many visits to a recently-retired (Markham Main) miner who in turn introduced me to a (Hatfield) NUM branch president, an established member of the Communist Party, who lived nearby. After a long discussion (and leaving copies of my dissertation for their perusal), they both agreed to help me and I was invited to attend a meeting of the recently-formed Thorne Printers Support Group.

Due in large part to the favourable introduction of the NUM official, this meeting provided me with several more invaluable informants and gatekeepers. Some of them were activists from the 1984/85 Thorne Womens Support Group, some were women supporters who had only been indirectly involved in the group, and others (male and female) were members of the Thorne-Moorends branch of the Labour Party. At this stage I was still unclear about the relationship between Thorne and Moorends, and hearing people talk about the 'twin villages' and joint political institutions, I (wrongly) assumed that the two villages could be treated as a single unit, with a similar Strike experience and similar post-Strike problems. Only in the process of the research did I come to understand that, despite the many interconnections, the villages were very different sociological entities. It was at an even later stage in the research process that I realized that, despite the marvellously rich data I had been given by the Thorne women and men, I would have to 'deprioritize' it in favour of Moorends (as I shall explain below).

The third and fourth field trips also saw the establishment of an extensive network of diarists. The aim of persuading people to keep a periodic series of weekly diaries was to allow them to express, in their own way, their conception of their own reality. I attempted to select a broad span of people, of varying age and sex, from a variety of different situations; employed/unemployed, married/single etc. I tried to be both patient and flexible in building up a dependable network. I was aware of Bob Burgess' observation that only certain types of people tend to write autobiographies or keep diaries (1982:132), and rarely are these working miners, their female partners or the unemployed youth of mining villages. But the sociological value of diaries pointed to by Burnett was clearly evident.
'The writer himself [sic] and alone selects the facts, incidents and events which are to him most important and in doing so he also unconsciously reveals something about his own attitudes, values and beliefs.' (1977: 10)

The very fact that they could reveal so much was obviously seen as a problem by many of the people that I wanted to keep diaries, with several of them initially describing themselves to me as 'not good enough', 'not interesting enough' or simply 'non-diary' people. Rather than simply accepting their self definition of inadequacy/insignificance, I usually persisted and sought to persuade these 'non-diary' people by discussion, by explaining how I myself kept a daily field diary and by making the diary-keeping as simple and non-intimidatory as possible.

Keeping a diary is obviously a method of data generation that requires a degree of confidence and there were four people who I approached who, for various reasons, found it too difficult a task. More often it was a case of allowing postponement or partial completion, followed by a quick read and then a phone call or a return visit in order to reassure the writers about their value. There were also a number of people who were very keen on trying their hand at keeping a diary. I soon realized that my initial target of a dozen or so diarists was too conservative, and, over three or four weeks I managed to recruit a network of thirty six diarists - fifteen living in Armthorpe, thirteen living in Thorne-Moorends, and eight living outside mining villages (to provide a further element of comparison). I asked them to complete five diaries, during the first weeks in April, May, July, September and November 1986. The purpose of covering an eight month period was to allow me a purchase on possible changes in their lives.

The first month's diaries were particularly rewarding, as I was able to study them, discuss some of the contents with the diarists and use the results in the initial formulation of the interview schedules. However, as I became more and more preoccupied with organising and conducting an intensive interview programme, it became difficult to devote as much time to the diarists, and, on reflection, I feel that a slightly smaller network, or a smaller number of diaries per person (or a larger research team!) would have allowed me the opportunity to develop my work around the diaries more. As it was, if I stopped to 'talk' with all of the thirty six diarists as I collected their completed diaries or delivered the new ones, the process would have taken days out of my interview programme. As it was, some of my informants became so keen on writing diaries that they requested and completed 'extra'
ones, or asked for an additional one and got a friend to complete it. One
Markham miner wrote no less than nine diaries over the eight month period,
while another Armthorpe woman, as well as her diaries, wrote a detailed,
moving account of the awesome problems that had confronted her and her family
in the immediate aftermath of the Strike.

Although, as the interview programmes developed in intensity, it
became more difficult, I forced myself to set aside time for reading the
completed diaries within a few days of collecting them. This allowed me to
pick up on any important new developments and develop an understanding of the
lifestyle of my informants, so I was better prepared to gain maximum benefit
from either informal discussions or interviews. The successful collection of
thirty six completed diaries could, of course, take over a week. People had to
be given some flexibility in terms of 'starting' times, but postponing the
collection too long tended to increase the possibility of 'mislaid' diaries,
as well as setting a 'bad example' (i.e. giving the impression of personal
disorganisation on the part of the researcher!). These considerations meant
that field trips had to be organised around the needs of the diary timetable,
as well as the needs of interview programmes, holidays, union branch meetings
and disputes (not to mention the 'needs' of the people who were putting me
up/putting up with me, my thesis supervisor and the occasional personal-
crisis!).

Although I was very excited by the sheer volume and richness of the
early diaries, I felt the need to combine it with more structured
investigation into particular aspects of 'community'; soliciting information
on certain activities, relationships and attitudes. I anticipated that the
chief source of data for my thesis would be a programme of in-depth, stuctured
interviews in and around Armthorpe and Thorne-Moorends. The interviews, aimed
at generating detailed data on the lifestyles and relationships of the local
populations before, during and after the Strike, were primarily targeted at
three groups of people; coalfield women who had been 'involved' in the Strike,
male mineworkers who had been similarly involved, and young, mainly unemployed
people who had 'been through' the Strike. I felt the type of historical data I
required from the older coalfield men and women could be best generated by a
less-structured type of interview.

The key role I envisaged for the structured interviews made me
extremely nervous about the construction of the initial schedules. I felt that
their basic structure should be similar in order to facilitate
comparisons/contrasts between the different groups and yet I realized that areas of major importance for one group would be largely irrelevant for another. I decided to group the questions into sections (see Appendix 2), each of which could be reconsidered/restructured in relation to the particular interview group. After several days work, I eventually produced a rough draft of a women's schedule, which I discussed with a series of people; my supervisor, my chief gatekeepers and the people whose house I was staying in. After a few major and a multitude of minor changes, I felt able to produce a seven section, fifty five question working draft, and armed with four copies, I embarked on my first couple of interviews. I soon discovered 'weaknesses' and made a further five or six alterations. Using a political associate's word processor and the photocopier in the Armthorpe post office I produced ten copies of the new schedule, which was sufficient to see me through the whole of the women's interview programme.

**THE INTERVIEW PROGRAMME**

Having decided that, in order to generate the richest data, there would have to be significant differences in the schedules for men, women and youth, I also decided that the three interview programmes should be carried out separately. Although excluded from the underground work situation, my gender, work, trade union and political background made it relatively easy for me to gain access to the male side of the community. There was therefore a temptation for me to begin with the easier (miners') programme. However I felt the danger, pointed out by Frankenberg, of male researchers becoming over familiar with a single perspective and accepting a miner's eye view of 'community' required a different approach. I decided that I should attempt to 'get' an alternative women's view of community first, which could then make me more alert and 'challenging' when it came to constructing and carrying out the male interviews.

**The Women's Interviews**

Initially I was uncertain about the numbers of in-depth interviews I needed to carry out. As the Armthorpe community study was at the centre of my thesis, I felt that the majority of interviews should be with women in that village, with a smaller number in Thorne/Moorends and a still smaller number with women who lived outside pit villages altogether. Because my main focus was on the way a major workplace and collective struggle shaped community, I felt justified in concentrating on those women with some connection with the
coal industry, who had been involved in the 1984/85 Strike community, whether actively at its core, or more passively on the periphery. With almost eighteen months having elapsed since the Strike, I was unsure as to how many women (from the latter group in particular) would be willing to subject themselves to interview.

Because of the limitations of time and money, my interview programme had to be very intense. The major entry of the coalfield women into the fields of paid or voluntary work had reduced their 'spare' time and made the planning of such a concentrated programme even more difficult. Although I began by interviewing the core WAG activists and using them as 'gatekeepers' for relatives, friends and acquaintances, I had to be constantly on the lookout for names, addresses and telephone numbers from any source. I used to try and fix up the first few days of interviews before I set off up to Yorkshire, but on subsequent days there was often a tension between devoting all my energies to carrying out the interviews and the task of organising the future programme. If, on one or two days of a very full interview schedule, I neglected to set aside an hour or so for fixing future interviews, I would suddenly be faced with the prospect of an interview-less day, which tended to be very frustrating if I was 'in full flow' (and had not planned a day off!).

The large amount of preparation and consultation that I had invested in drawing up the schedule was well rewarded in the process of generating interviews. The schedule, although in one sense obviously 'over lengthy', allowed the women an opportunity to tell their story and explain their ideas and aspirations. With few, if any exceptions, both they and I really enjoyed the interviews. The more successful interviews I carried out, the more introductions I got, and the more easily people were persuaded to sacrifice their time for an interview. A few of the interviews were completed in just over two hours, but many took between three and four hours, and others, which lasted seven or eight, had to be completed in parts. As my introductory guarantee to 'victims' was that I would only take up an hour or two of their time, I had to swear most women to secrecy on the actual length of the interview sessions!

I feel the policy I adopted, that of seizing whatever opportunities presented themselves, and generating the maximum amount of data from a large number of women, proved a successful one, especially in Armthorpe. In Thorne-Moorends however, although this 'seizing of opportunities' led to a massive
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generation of data, it also produced major complications in my overall research design.

Although the Armthorpe women had been keen on emphasizing the positive changes in their lives due to their Strike experience, our discussions revealed a degree of pain and frustration due to the weakening of the 'Strike community' and their own lack of activity. In contrast, the women involved in the Thorne Printers Support Group were confident and determined. I remember my excitement, when during my third field trip, I was introduced to this predominantly-female group, quite obviously a direct product of the women's collective strike experience. As I was not yet ready to embark on the Thorne interview programme, I just chatted with the group members and collected names and addresses.

A fortnight later, while at home in Birmingham, I received a phone call at home from one of my 'gatekeepers' in Thorne (the Hatfield NUM branch president) informing me of the public 'launch' of a fifty-page booklet on the local Strike experience (People of Hatfield, 1986). I brought forward the start of the field trip and returned to Yorkshire for the launch. Almost half the 'audience' were women activists from the Strike and they were in a confident, celebratory mood. The Thorne Printers Support Group women introduced me to others and, by the end of the evening, two had agreed to keep diaries and five more had agreed to be interviewed.

This led to the rapid interviewing of virtually half of the Thorne Womens Support Group. The WSG had run a large kitchen and welfare operation, with major debate among the women about the appropriate boundaries to their role and a significant involvement both in flying picketing and the national strike support network/community. At that stage, I had had very little contact with the women who had been active in the Moorends WSG. None of them attended either the Printers Support Group or the launch of 'A Year in Our Lives' (they were the only one of the four local WSG's that had no direct input into it). I had been informed that there was only a small number of them and the difficulties of arranging interviews caused me to push them towards the end of the women's interview programme. It was only after I had carried out eight very successful interviews with the Thorne women that I began to interview their counterparts in the smaller of the 'twin' villages. Even after I realized that I had seriously underestimated the differences between the Strike experiences in the two villages, the amount and richness of the Thorne women's data made me reluctant to draw the necessary conclusions and reshape.
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the research design. Although in retrospect it seems amazing, I hoped it would prove possible to contrast the sets of data from all three villages (and the non-village group) without making the research design over complicated!

One reason for my reluctance to deprioritize the weight that I gave to the Thorne data was the small size of the Womens Support Group in Moorends and the consequent difficulty in setting up a substantial interview programme among the village women. Having had long and detailed interviews with most of the core women, I went on to interview several others who had been 'on the periphery' or played a more indirect role in supporting the group. I realised (belatedly) that my difficulties in organising a 'substantial' interview programme reflected the difficulties faced by the women during the Strike and said a great deal about the strength of the local social system in Moorends.

At the end of the womens programme, I had interviewed fifty seven women; 22 in Armthorpe
11 with Markham connections but living outside pit villages
14 in Moorends and
10 in Thorne.

I was satisfied that, along with a total of 42 adult women's diaries, the interview programme had generated an adequate amount of rich and varied data.

The Unemployed Youth Interviews

Although numerically I had planned this as the smallest part of the interview programme, it was the one that provided me with the greatest challenge. The lack of self confidence and the severe 'privatisation' which characterised the lifestyle of the unemployed meant that they rapidly grew accustomed to 'staying in the background'.

If I had had a week or two to spare to allow me to get involved in some of the unemployed groups, it would possibly have been a lot easier. As it was, it proved far more difficult to win interviews from 'cold' or casual introductions. Most showed a definite interest in the idea of being interviewed and none of them refused outright to give one. A majority however, especially those who had not been heavily involved in the Strike, would suggest that there was no point in interviewing them, or that they were very 'busy' over the next few days, or could they 'sit in' on someone else's interview first, just to get an idea of what was involved. The problem of
agreeing a suitable venue was also much greater than for other groups. In most cases they lacked their own 'space', and had to consider the feelings and reaction of their parents. (As a guest of various mining families myself, I was in a similar situation and only suggested using my home base when there was no possible alternative).

Even when they had agreed to an interview, there were often long delays and postponements. Although the pace of village life meant that many of the adults were not paragons of punctuality, some of the younger people took the habit of breaking appointments to the extreme. The first time I would feel disappointed, the second frustrated and the third time used to make me feel as if I were attempting the impossible.

The lack of self confidence previously mentioned (see Chapter Eight) was also a major problem. Even when the young person and I had met previously, it still proved difficult to put them at their ease and get them to 'open up' in describing their experiences, relationships and ideas. I was confronting the phenomenon described by Sinfield when he described the long-term unemployed's response to questions as 'laconic to the extent of disconcerting the most experienced interviewer' (1985:192). Often their attitude seemed to be - my life activity is monotonously boring and can be of no possible interest to a university researcher, neither are my relationships particularly interesting, and expressing my opinions will only 'show me up' in front of this 'expert' or his university colleagues.

There was no easy solution to these problems. By initially concentrating on areas that they felt more familiar with, responding positively to their answers without being seen to be judgemental, most of the unemployed could be put at their ease. It was obviously easier if they had completed diaries, allowing me to raise issues from them and prompt fuller replies. If their lack of confidence was reflected in non replies and their consequent embarrassment was threatening to ruin the interview, I was forced to prompt, but concentrating on the ideas of other members of their peer group rather than my own. A remark along the lines of, 'One of the Armthorpe youth reckoned that...,' was far more likely to elicit a genuine response than one which began, 'I reckon that...'.

Most of the unemployed youth would eventually 'open up', on topics that they felt at least partly familiar with, but their 'warm up' period tended to be longer than that for other groups. Once they felt more at ease,
they were often very keen to explain and 'justify' their ideas, so their interviews tended to be only slightly shorter than those of the adults. Overall, carrying out a successful interview with a young unemployed person tended to involve more hard work than a miner's or woman's interview. Obviously their age was a contributory factor, but similar problems with the few 'redundant' adults I interviewed suggested their unemployed status was the main reason for their lack of confidence. Despite these problems, I interviewed thirty two unemployed young people; 14 in Armthorpe, 14 in Moorends, and 4 in Thorne (with equal numbers of lads and lasses).

The Miners Interviews

The miners interview programme was of a similar size to the women's. There were some more detailed areas of questioning in the interview schedule, mainly concerning the post-Strike developments in the workplace and the National Union of Mineworkers. Having put some thought into the first draft, I discussed it with my main gatekeepers and my university supervisor. The second draft proved adequate, only needing a couple of minor alterations. The pattern of interviewing was not substantially different from that of the women's; beginning with Armthorpe and Markham Main miners living outside the village, then moving onto Thorne and Moorends miners.

Because I left the miners' interviews to the last, I found there were several of the miners I knew had taken voluntary redundancy or early retirement. Before approaching them for interviews I thought very hard about their status. I decided that, on account of the large numbers who were leaving Markham Main on this basis, I could hardly afford to ignore them. I eventually decided to include a small number, alongside an equal number of sacked miners. A similar phenomenon of demoralized miners 'quitting the pits' was evident in Moorends and again I felt it important to describe the process and its effect (see Chapter 11). The rate of 'desertion' from the pits appeared to increase throughout the later period of research in 1987 and 1988 and underlined the importance of timing in this kind of investigation. Although there were a few prominent individuals who had left the pit during or immediately after the Strike, by the end of 1988, whole layers of the local strike activists had left Markham Main, with some of them quitting the area completely.

Once again I really enjoyed carrying out the miners interviews. Because of the number of Armthorpe and other local miners I had come to know, the organisation of the interview programme was easier. I began with some of
the central core of Strike activists, and then progressed to less prominent members of the Strike community, the partners of the W.S.G. activists and the sacked miners, some of whom had not been particularly involved in collective Strike activity, but had been arrested for pinching coal and other Strike-related crimes. I felt my strategy of 'leaving the miners till last' proved largely successful. While carrying out the women and youth interview programmes, I had become more aware of a variety of aspects of a miners life, which then allowed me to probe certain interview areas in more detail (work, underground union organisation etc.). On the other hand, the fact that I had immersed myself in a woman's/unemployed youth's eye view of 'community' acted to prevent me from becoming over-familiar and complacent in these interviews.

There were a different set of difficulties that I had to overcome in the interview programme. The rotating three-shift system complicated matters somewhat, both in terms of the 'availability' of certain groups of miners, and the state of their body time clocks when the interviews took place. Although it was over two years since I had worked shifts, a few weeks sharing a house with a miner proved sufficient to 're-sensitise' me to the effects of the shiftwork in terms of exhaustion and mood. I tried to arrange interviews on (or soon after) weekends, or at certain times of the day most suitable to the working miner's shift pattern. I decided to call a halt when I had completed fifty seven miners' interviews; 22 in Armthorpe, 11 outside the village, 14 in Moorends and 10 in Thorne.

By this time it was early 1987, and although I was 'itching' to develop the historical dimension of my study through interviews with the older members of the village populations, I felt I needed to develop my thesis and 'get to grips' with the massive amount of data I had already collected. I went through all of the 146 interviews, listening to the recordings and checking my interview notes. I transcribed some of the key interviews in full, but more often I transcribed passages that I felt were of particular relevance. I also re-read all the diaries, similarly marking out, and listing, key areas for attention. This process, although time consuming, allowed me to identify several important themes that I had previously been unaware, or only partly aware of.

I also felt the need to process the mass of data into a more manageable form, to facilitate the drawing out of themes and to open it up to at least some basic quantitative analysis. Not yet being adept at computer programming (it had taken me all my courage to become word-processor
literate!), I felt that it would be difficult to do justice to the interview and diary data via a computer programme. I opted for the less technologically-advanced alternative of a large-scale wallchart (measuring 15ft x 6ft) with all the interview replies (or summaries of the replies) included. These were colour coded to make trends, contrasts and comparisons more obvious, with the more interesting/revealing quotes marked out to make access easier. Where relevant the interview replies were supplemented by references to passages from diaries. Although this summarising of 146 interviews onto a wallchart involved a lot of time and effort, the re-reading and 'encapsulating' of replies again helped me to identify interesting trends and themes. When completed the wallchart became a very useful tool, allowing me to test out my ideas and hypotheses 'at a glance'.

OTHER SOURCES OF DATA

The formal interviews and diaries were not the only sources of data. I spent several weeks compiling a post-Strike chronology from the local newspapers and carried out historical/archival research in several of the South Yorkshire libraries (Doncaster, Sheffield and Barnsley). I also took account of Bob Burgess' warning (1982:107) that conversation and other elements of everyday life, although they constitute important data for the field researcher, can go unrecorded in the formal interview situation, I sought maximum involvement in informal conversations and group discussions. I found the more informal situation allowed me to raise more sensitive, difficult issues, and to gain a clearer insight into certain key areas. As Burgess pointed out, in order to gain the richest results from such informal 'interviews', the researcher must 'share' the culture of the informant, understand in some detail his/her work situation, be attuned to the various shades of meaning that he/she attaches to certain situations and events.

My own work background and my experience in the labour movement assisted me in this to a certain extent, but I still had to make an effort to become attuned to the less obvious rhythms and patterns of life in Armthorpe, Thorne and Moorends. Even so, I was often aware of missing out on potentially important insights due to my lack of 'expertise' (especially in the technical aspects of coalmining) and so I often found it more rewarding to keep my mouth shut and simply 'listen in' to two or more experts discussing an issue. (By this stage I had established a firm friendship with an ex-Armthorpe miner who was doing research in a related area and who used to patiently explain the technical processes involved in the various mining systems). Although in
Thesis Research Process

retrospect I feel I must have missed out on many of the finer points of discussion, I still found these informal conversations a very valuable source of information. I used to participate or simply observe them in a variety of areas; in the union office or pit canteen, in the Tadcaster Arms or other pubs, the Welly, the Coronation or the Social Club. On a few occasions I 'set up' and taped similar joint sessions; twice with a group of three youngsters who insisted on sitting in a formal interview, once with three women in a similar situation, and twice with miners in the course of disputes at the pit.

Because of the nature of my thesis, focussing on the role of work and collective struggle in the shaping of 'community', my observer's role was not restricted to the everyday situations of pub or pit canteen. In order to get a clear understanding of the involvement of the activists in ongoing collective struggle, I attended the meetings of the Yorkshire Campaign Group (rank and file NUM and, occasionally, women activists), I went on WAPC - organised trips to London, and on the village processions which preceded the May day or Yorkshire Gala demonstrations. I recorded interviews and discussions after strike meetings, attended the Thorne PSG meetings and several of the bigger NUM rallies where men and women attended in roughly equal proportions to hear Scargill, Heathfield or other leading officials. I was invited to attend a series of social/fund raising events in Armthorpe and Thorne and, in turn, used to invite my 'hosts' in the coalfield down to Birmingham for parties, socials or weekend 'breaks'. By winning acceptance among the village populations and maintaining regular contact with them, I was able to get and maintain a real 'feel' for the life of the pit villages.

Completion of Field Research

The latter part of 1987 and 1988 were neither as exciting or enjoyable as the earlier periods. Most of my time was taken up in the lonely struggle of data processing and analysis, and trying to do justice to the data in the process of 'writing up'. Long periods of drafting and redrafting chapters were however interspersed with a few enjoyable fieldtrips, during which I interviewed older, retired miners and their partners (or in too many cases, miners' widows). Again I got involved as a participant observer, sitting in on one of the Armthorpe senior citizen's clubs, taping reminiscences over cups of tea and biscuits and arranging further interviews between games of bingo!

There was no question of modifying the main interview schedule. Instead I designed a very basic, fifteen question schedule which allowed the
older people the chance to 'open up' on their experience of local community in former times. In contrast to the young unemployed, the retired miners and their partners soon lost any inhibitions and launched off into rich and detailed stories of their youth or early adulthood. The interviews were exhilarating and, because they contained such variety, I found it very difficult to call a halt to the programme. Had it not been for the 'gentle pressure' applied by my supervisor, I could have quite happily spent several more months in Armthorpe and Moorends, interviewing the old mining men and women. As it was, I completed thirty four interviews with 'senior citizens', the final one being conducted in Leicester, with the daughter of one of the earliest, and most popular, Markham undermanagers. She proved very helpful and gave me a fascinating insight into the 'other side' of the village community in the 1920's and 1930's.

When added to the interviews I conducted with non-miners; local teachers, publicans, shopkeepers, historians, the overall programme consisted of just over two hundred interviews. The pattern is summarised in the table below:

Table A1.1 South Yorkshire Interview Programme 1986-1988

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>Coalfield Women</th>
<th>Miners</th>
<th>Young Unemployed</th>
<th>Retired Miners or Partners</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Armthorpe</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moorends</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thorne</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-village</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Pit Visit

From September 1987 to July 1988 I had been waging a seemingly hopeless battle to negotiate access to the underground work situation at Markham during a working shift. Having gone through all the correct channels and been given a degree of cooperation I seemed to hit a brick wall at the level of pit management. Knowing how much I wanted to go down, miners in various pits started discussing ways that I might be got down 'unofficially', when suddenly I was given a time and date for an underground visit at Markham. It turned out to be one of the most interesting experiences of my life.
I was 'taken down' by three senior management personnel, a trainee deputy and the NUM branch secretary. Although slightly embarrassed to be part of such a prestigious visiting party, the visit surpassed all my expectations. I was given a large amount of information from both union and management, I saw the face teams at work, and I witnessed some astonishing 'interaction' between miners, union official and personnel manager. I was, in turn, amazed and terrified by the (apparently unexceptional) health and safety conditions and nearly lost several limbs leaping on and off the man-riding belts!

On coming out on the surface and before I went into the (official's) shower room, I was invited to a three course lunch with the pit manager in his palatial, board room type office, followed by a lengthy and fascinating interview with the personnel manager and an assistant to the area personnel director. Again I felt relieved that I had got the research design right and left my 'approach' to management till the latter part of my field research. After some initial hesitation, the personnel managers proved very hospitable and open in their interviews. In return I could afford to be polite and friendly, knowing that by meeting them at this stage I would neither destroy the trust I had built up with the miners, nor be asked to abuse the hospitality and cooperation shown to me by the pit managers.

After this fascinating respite, it was back to the word processor screen and drafting chapters, discussing them with my supervisor and then redrafting them. Despite pressures of thesis and other work, I have maintained contact with my friends in the villages. I occasionally visit them for Maydays, Gala Days and parties, and they visit me in Birmingham. Without the warmth and comradeship that I experienced in the pit villages, I feel that the latter stages of my work would have proved a great deal more alienating. I relied heavily on the support of my friends, my partner and my supervisor in finally completing the thesis.
## APPENDIX 2 - Miners Interview Schedule

**Strictly Confidential**

**Personal Interviews - Biographical Background**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date of Birth</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Single / Married / Divorced / Partner?**
- **Have you a paid job at the moment? If so, where?**
- **Are you a member of a trade union? If so, when did you join?**
- **Could you describe briefly your jobs/career background?**
- **Does your partner have a paid job at the moment? If so, where?**
- **His/her jobs/career background?**

**Work background of your family?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>F's Grandfathers</th>
<th>M's</th>
<th>F's Grandmothers</th>
<th>M's</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Work background of partner's family?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>F's Grandfathers</th>
<th>M's</th>
<th>F's Grandmothers</th>
<th>M's</th>
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</table>

- **Address?**
- **How close to Pit? How long?**
  - Rented
  - Owner
  - Mortgaged

**Have you ever lived anywhere else?**

**Have you any relatives living locally? If so, which ones and how close do they live?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Grandparents</th>
<th>Sisters</th>
<th>Brothers</th>
<th>Uncles/Aunts</th>
<th>Cousins</th>
<th>Sons</th>
<th>Daughters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>M1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>F3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- **Does your partner have relatives living locally? If so, which ones and how close?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Grandparents</th>
<th>Sisters</th>
<th>Brothers</th>
<th>Uncles/Aunts</th>
<th>Cousins</th>
<th>Sons</th>
<th>Daughters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**How many of your immediate family are unemployed?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>Brothers</th>
<th>Sisters</th>
<th>Sons</th>
<th>Daughters</th>
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</table>

**How many of your partner's immediate family are unemployed?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>Brothers</th>
<th>Sisters</th>
<th>Sons</th>
<th>Daughters</th>
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MINER'S INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

SECTION 1 - WORK, LEISURE & MEDIA.

1:1. How do you spend a typical week?

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUNDAY

1:2. Can you describe, in some detail, what you do at work, who you work with etc.?

1:3. What, for you, are the main differences at work since the end of the Strike?


1:5. When 'relaxing', who do you spend your time with?

1:6. Where do they live?

1:7. How long have you known them?

1:8. Do you spend any time with relatives?

1:9. Did life in your family change much during the strike?

1:10. Has it gone back to the old pre-strike pattern since the return to work?

1:11. Do you watch T.V.?

listen to the radio?

read newspapers?

1:12. What kind of T.V. programmes do you watch? Has this changed since the strike?

1:13. What did you think of the T.V. coverage of the 1984/85 Strike?

1:14. What newspaper(s) do you read? Have you always read it/them?

1:15. What did you think of the strike coverage?

SECTION 2 - STRIKE EXPERIENCE.

2:1. What do you remember most about the strike? Experiences, incidents, hardships?

2:2. In your opinion, what was the strike all about?

2:3. At the beginning, were you in agreement or disagreement with the strike?

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2:4. What activities were you involved in related to the strike? (fundraising, picketing, kitchen, meetings, demonstrations...)

2:5. Can you describe how you might have spent a typical day during the Strike?

2:6. What, would you say, was notable about the Strike, its strengths and weaknesses?

2:7. What, in your opinion, was the value of the Women's Support Group?

2:8. What did you think about the policing of the Strike?

2:9. Did you or your family have any personal experience of the police during the Strike?

2:10. Do you know anyone else who had such experience?

2:11. What, for you, were the main problems during the strike?

2:12. How did you/your family manage financially during the strike?

2:13. Did you/your family get any help from anywhere that helped you get by? If so, from where? (relations, neighbours, friends, W.S.G., Union, shopkeepers...?)

2:14. A lot of families ended up in severe debt. Did this happen to you?

SECTION 3 - DOMESTIC WORK.

3:1. Who usually does what around the house now?

Shopping  
Cooking  
Washing up  
Washing clothes  
Ironing/mending clothes  
Childcare  
Cleaning  
Gardening  
House Repairs

3:2. Has this always been the pattern?

3:3. Were there any changes during the strike?

3:4. If so, has it gone back to the old pattern now that the strike is over? If not, what has changed?

3:5. Do you think that women should be principally responsible for domestic work and childcare? Did your views on this change at all during the strike?

3:6. So in your household would you say the division of domestic work/childcare is
   a) similar to that of your parents
   b) slightly different to that of your parents
   c) radically different to that of your parents

3:7. Would you say local peoples attitudes on this are changing? Why do you think this is?
SECTION 4 - GENERAL EFFECTS OF THE 1984/85 STRIKE.

4:1. Have your ideas about the strike changed in any way since it ended? If so, how?

4:2. What do you think about what's going on in the mining industry now? (Sacked lads, U.D.M., N.U.M., Speed Up, Pit Closures, industrial relations etc.)

4:3. How have these developments affected you? Have they had a major impact on your personal relationships at work or in your household?

4:4. Would you say you were more aware of what's going on in the coal industry now than you were before the strike? If so why is this?

4:5. What's your attitude towards the N.C.B. management?

4:6. Has the experience of the strike affected the way you look at the N.C.B.?

SECTION 5 - EFFECTS OF THE STRIKE ON THE 'COMMUNITY'

5:1. People sometimes talk of 'community' in mining villages, or 'mining communities'. Do you think there is such a thing locally?

5:2. If so, do you think the 1984/85 Strike has strengthened or weakened this community? What do you see as your 'community' now?

5:3. Did the Strike have an effect on your a) Range of friendships b) Relationships with neighbours c) Relationships with relatives d) ... with local shopkeepers/tradesmen/teachers?

5:4. Some people have suggested that due to very clearly defined sex roles, women were virtually excluded from major areas of the public life of mining villages. Would you say that this was accurate, and if so, is it still accurate today?

5:5. Due to the major activity of women during the Strike, many people said, 'Things will never be the same again'. Do you now think there will be any lasting changes in the lives of local women as a result of the Strike experience?

5:6. Would you say the Strike has had any effect on local peoples attitudes towards each other?

5:7. Have there been any changes that you have noticed in a) local political parties (people joining/leaving/changes in views or attitudes?) b) the local trade union organisations? c) the local societies, social clubs, pubs etc.? Are you a member of any of these clubs or societies?
SECTION 6 - EFFECTS OF THE STRIKE ON YOU.

6:1. As a trade union member, would you consider yourself to be actively involved in the union? In what ways? At work? In the branch?

6:2. Has your activity increased or decreased since the 1984 Strike?

6:3. Has the experience of the strike changed your attitudes towards trade unions and the labour movement in general?

6:4. What would you say are the main strengths of the N.U.M. at
   a) National level?
   b) Area level?
   c) Branch level?
   d) Pit level?

6:5. What would you say are the main weaknesses of the N.U.M. at
   a) National level?
   b) Area level?
   c) Branch level?
   d) Pit level?

6:6. Has the Strike brought any major changes in your life?
   (In your views, your politics, your hopes, your plans or your activity?)

6:7. What has happened to the local Women's Support Group since the end of the Strike?

6:8. Have there been any local campaigns since the end of the 84/85 Strike?
   If so, have you been involved in them at all? In what ways?

6:9. Have you joined/left, become more/less active in
   a) any political party
   Or b) any area/national campaign
   since the end of the strike?

SECTION 7 - FUTURE PROSPECTS.

7:1. What do you think the prospects are for
   a) yourself
   b) the Coal Industry.
   c) the local youth, lads, lasses
   d) the local children
   e) the local village/community
   f) the local area generally (Donc/S.Yorks)
   g) working class people in Britain?

7:2. Do you tend to think very much about the future?

7:3. If you think the prospects are gloomy, what do you think should be done about it?

7:4. Is there anything which you think you could do about it?

7:5. How do you feel about the 1984/85 Miners Strike now?
   (Do you regret it. do you feel it was justified? Overall, was it a positive or a negative experience?)

7:6. Would you say the Strike has changed you as a person? If so, in what ways?

MANY THANKS FOR YOUR HELP AND COOPERATION IN THIS PROJECT.
### APPENDIX 3 - INTERVIEW PROGRAMME

#### THE ARMTHORPE STUDY

**In the village**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miners</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired miners and partners</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<Teacher, Secret (LP Ward)
chairperson (LP womens section)
pit personnel manager, training officer, publican, baker, research worker>

**Outside village**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miners</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<NUM researcher, tutor, Under-manager's daughter,LP Branch Sec, Historian, NCB Area IR Rep, ASLEF & TGWU Secs>

#### THE MOORENDS STUDY

**Moorends**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miners</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired Miners or partners</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<W M Club Association Organiser, Historian, Publican, shopkeeper>

**Thorne**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miners</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(teacher, poly student)
APPENDIX 4 Introduction and Guidelines for Diarists

PURPOSE:
I need to have fairly detailed information on the everyday activities of different people in this area.

KEEPING THE DIARY:
I'd like you to fill in this diary during the first full week in April. I will let you have new ones for the first weeks of May, July, September and November (1986).

- Don't worry about grammar, writing or spelling. Any 'deciphering' problems will be mine.

- Overleaf you will find some guidelines to areas and issues that I think you might cover. If you want to cover other activities, please do. Your thoughts and observations on issues or events are also very welcome.

- As with all my research, any information given will, of course, be strictly confidential.

- This diary consists of 14 pages (2 per day). If this is not enough, just use extra sheets of paper.

- If you can manage it, it is a good idea to record your various activities at the end of each day.

- Use the margin as you wish, e.g. 7 a.m. | Cooked breakfast.

- If you have any queries or problems let me know as soon as you can (or when I pick up the diary).
SUGGESTED GUIDELINES TO AREAS/TOPICS

1. 'DOMESTIC' ACTIVITY: Cooking, Cleaning, Washing/Ironing, Children/supervision, Shopping.
   (Details - How long spent? Difficulty, problems/achievement/satisfaction? Inside/outside the home? Alone/with whom?)

2. PAID EMPLOYMENT/WORK: Type of work, shift, conditions, incidents?
   (Details - How long spent? Difficulty/problems/achievement/satisfaction? where?)

3. TRADE UNION ACTIVITY: At work? Branch or branch committee level? Outside these areas (i.e. Rank and File, district, area or national activity?)
   (Details - How long spent? Problems/satisfaction? With whom? where?)

4. LEISURE ACTIVITIES: - Home Based (e.g. T.V. / Radio / Music / Reading / 'Hobby' / Gardening)?
   - Outside Home (e.g. Pubs, clubs, voluntary association visiting friends, relatives, sports/betting etc)?

5. POLITICAL ACTIVITY: - Campaigns, meetings, demonstrations etc.
   - Political party or group activity (e.g. meetings, propaganda activity, organising, reading etc)
## APPENDIX 5 — DIARY NETWORK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARMTHORPE</th>
<th>MOORENDS-THORNE</th>
<th>Outside Village</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women 5</td>
<td>Women 4</td>
<td>Women 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth 5</td>
<td>Youth 5</td>
<td>Miners 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miners 5</td>
<td>Miners 4</td>
<td>Youth 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After initial 'experiment' with twelve in April, there was a series of four diaries in the first weeks of May, July, September and November.

Two diarists dropped out after May, and were replaced by two others. Eight other people completed diaries, although I did not consider them part of the network. The completion rates were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Potential</th>
<th>Actual</th>
<th>'Extra'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>34</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Added to which seven diarists volunteered to keep additional diaries, producing an extra seventeen, and bringing the total to 165 diaries over the eight-month period.
## APPENDIX 7 - 1981 CENSUS STATISTICS

### ARMTHORPE AND MOORENDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ARMTHORPE</th>
<th>MOORENDS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL POPULATION</strong></td>
<td>12,218 (%)</td>
<td>5,322 (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Population</td>
<td>9,123</td>
<td>4,039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economically Active</td>
<td>5,762 (63.2 of adults)</td>
<td>2,315 (57.3 of adults)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working</td>
<td>5,123</td>
<td>2,091</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking Work</td>
<td>564 (9.8 of E.A.)</td>
<td>304 (13.1 of E.A.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economically Inactive</td>
<td>3,361 (36.8 of adults)</td>
<td>1,724 (42.7 of adults)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanently Sick</td>
<td>213 (3.7 of E.A.)</td>
<td>113 (4.8 of E.A.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>750 (6.0 of total pop)</td>
<td>435 (8.2 of total pop)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(%)</th>
<th>(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Econ Active 16-24 yrs</td>
<td>1,402</td>
<td>554</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Econ Act, out of work</td>
<td>267 (19.4 of E.A.)</td>
<td>145 (26.2 of E.A.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>247 (17.6 of E.A.)</td>
<td>106 (19.2 of E.A.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employed in</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy/Water</td>
<td>1,130 (20.6 of work pop)</td>
<td>610 (29.2 of work pop)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>1,030 (20.1 of work pop)</td>
<td>560 (26.8 of work pop)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>320 (6.2 of work pop)</td>
<td>100 (4.7 of work pop)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Service Industries</td>
<td>2,260 (44.1 of work pop)</td>
<td>570 (27.3 of work pop)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>320 (6.2 of work pop)</td>
<td>20 (0.9 of work pop)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-time jobs</td>
<td>4,550</td>
<td>1,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time jobs</td>
<td>940 (17.1 of total)</td>
<td>230 (11.6 of total)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working outside</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>district of residence</td>
<td>400 (7.8 of work pop)</td>
<td>260 (12.4 of work pop)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Housing

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Owner Occupied</td>
<td>2,696 (62.9)</td>
<td>983 (53.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council</td>
<td>1,178 (27.4)</td>
<td>839 (45.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rented</td>
<td>320 (7.4)</td>
<td>100 (5.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.. by virtue employ</td>
<td>95 (2.2)</td>
<td>13 (0.7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

APPENDIX 8 — PRIOR WORKPLACES OF MARKHAM MINERS

PLACES OF ORIGIN OF MEN EMPLOYED AT MARKHAM MAIN COLLERY, ARMTHORPE, YORKS. C.1843

- Markham Main, Armthorpe workplace
- Place of origin 1-9 men
- Place of origin 10+ men
- Other places of origin — one each

33 Number of men who moved from each region to Markham Main Colliery

Source: Dorothy Dearden (Vine)
APPENDIX 9 - ARMTHORPE POPULATION GROWTH 1851-1981

Source: Census Reports 1851-1981
APPENDIX 10 - THE DONCASTER COALFIELD (PITS & OWNERS) 1942

EAST MIDLAND COALFIELD

REFERENCE
■ Mines
▼ Levels or Drifts
□ Abandoned up to 1942
□ Closed Mines as at 1942

Scale of Miles
FORWARD TO VICTOR

APPENDIX 11

ANN BROWN

AND SECURITY

PRIDE AND STRENGTH

YOUR UNION IS

MARCH 31st

FEBRUARY 1996

BRANCH MEETINGS

THURSDAYS, 7.30 p.m. BURBERRY HALL

To discuss the following:

* New Union Constitution
* New Shop Stewards
* New Branch Structure
* New Union Policies

Participants — COMMUNITY — Organise

Rank & File Newsletter

AMPTHORPE TANNERY

AMPTHORPE
Dear Colleague,

We are interested in securing your assistance to end this long, unnecessary strike. We believe that the only way the strike will end is when everyone decides to return to work, despite the 'advice' being offered from our Union. It is apparent that there is no possibility of a negotiated settlement, as the men appointed to negotiate on our behalf have consistently refused to do so. We can only conclude that they have an ulterior motive in their wish to prolong our suffering.

If YOU are :-

Tired of having no money to spend on your wife and children,
Tired of being used as a political battering ram,
Tired of the scenes of disgraceful violence which tarnish the good name of all of us,
Tired of having our Industry constantly associated with thuggery and violence,
Tired of wanting to return to work, but fear intimidation from the lunatic minority,
Tired of hearing our 'leaders' pretend to be interested in jobs when we can see our own gradually disappearing by their decisions,

THEN -

Why not join us at work and really take action to secure our futures, instead of allowing our leaders to pretend that the majority of Yorkshire miners are solidly behind Union policy?

We believe that the majority of men employed at Markham Main Colliery are decent, law-abiding people who genuinely want to return to work.

We also believe that the current problems will exist until this majority returns to work and demonstrates to the hooligans and vandals that it is they who are in a very small minority.

If you share our views, please contact us, in the strictest confidence, by ringing the Colliery (Doncaster 831321) and speaking to one of us about YOUR organised return to work and the assurance of job security when the strike is over.

We look forward to being of help.

The Markham Main Working Miners Committee
CALLING ALL MINERS and WIVES

MASS DEMONSTRATION

MONDAY, 18th FEBRUARY, 1985
1.30 p.m. - 2.15 p.m.
at the
ARMTHORPE PIT GATES
2.30 p.m. Sandwiches & Tea at Armthorpe Welfare Hall

Speakers:
PETER HEATHFIELD, N.U.M.
MIKE CARDEN, Shop Steward, Dockers Liverpool
STEVE FOREY, ASLEF, Kings Cross
PETER HEADMAN, Kent N.U.M.
DAVE DOUGLAS, Hatfield N.U.M.
LIZ FINNEY, Armthorpe Action Group

GUEST ARTISTE APPEARING
COME AND GIVE YOUR SUPPORT

Printed by G. W. Askew & Son (Printers) Ltd., High Fishergate, Doncaster. Telephone: 23714
If any illusions still remain about a return to normal work they should have been well and truly kicked into touch.

Management have continued to adopt their dictatorial attitude towards us all. Every section of the workforce has been victimised.

Our problems, namely management, still remain and it has got worse since the return to work. Do not forget we returned to work in dispute. The fight goes on and no one can escape that fact.

Management keep saying that THEY own the pit, THEY are the Union, THEY are the elite and time and time again we have to drag their heads out of the clouds and inform them that WE are the Union. Now we have been forced to do it again. Even a dog gains a certain amount of intelligence & awareness eventually - when will they learn?

Our Main grievances began the first day back at work:

1/ CRAFTSMEN

First it was the craftsmen who were victimised by having their report money stopped. This was the first measure in a process that seemed to attempt to teach the Doncaster Area a lesson for being united in the fight for their rights.

2/ MACHINE MEN

Along with all the previous came the immediate withdrawal of waternotes for machinemen - a long standing agreement, but it did not quite suit management so out it went with NACODS appearing to be happy to comply.

3/ FACEMEN

Then came 12's unit regup over managements cooking of the books over bonus payment. A reduced pit bonus payment was made and also 51's was kept in the contract despite the fact that it had not started up in full production. The Manager's reaction to this was that if we had not been on strike for a year then 51's would have been ready - so according to them we are to blame.

4/ RIPPERS

From the return to work rippers have also had a drop in money as management have simply discarded their claim to extra payment on any face bonus. Along with that came the threat of downgrading to 10 grade if they did not pull their weight in line with management dictat.

5/ DEVELOPMENT WORKERS

Development men have not escaped the management hammer either as they have attempted to reduce them to three-man teams and put who it suited them onto the pit market. The manager also threw in the line that if the development men went along with this he would ALLOW those over 50 to take redundancy.

6/ PRIORITY LIST

This is something that is constantly under threat. Management are trying to take it away from the Union, and make no mistake, nothing would please the Management more than being able to pick the men that HE wants and use that list as a disciplinary measure.

7/ LETTERS OF VICTIMISATION

These letters victimising the workforce are being sent out all the time. These are in contradiction to guidelines supplied by the Citizens Advice Bureau who state that we have the fundamental right to withdraw labour without subsequent victimisation.

Practically all the workforce has received at least one of these letters, some as many as three.

8/ WATER NOTES

The grievance that has brought all this to a head is the dispute over water-notes on
51's. This has been 'simmering for a few weeks and has now blown up' with men being told to work in water whilst also suffering under roof water. At one stage they were supplied with oil-skins. These proved impracticable as they hampered shovelling and other duties. It was then suggested by Management that Brattice cloth be installed overhead. How PATHETIC! Next they'll be supplying us with brollies.

So, enough is enough. The men have come out and the rest of the pit has been quick to respond in support.

NACODS - FRIEND OR FOE

Our grievances are numerous - no one since the return to work. MacGregor (remember him?) was and still is Thatcher's puppet and that is how upper-management is using NACODS members. They are carrying out NCB policy to our detriment.

Throughout the strike NACODs, while earning wages, claimed to support us. Yet even now they are still riding on our backs, taking what Management throw at them and passing it on to us. They are still on their knees. It is about time they began to practice what they preach.

Remember the police during the strike? ONLY DOING THEIR JOB? - compare that with the duties and mealy-mouthed excuses being performed by NACODS members, especially when they police the pit bottom in search of ardent criminals with the glorious prospect of stopping their time.

We therefore appeal to NACODS members to get off their knees, bearing in mind that their leaders, Messrs. Sampson & McNersy have admitted they have been coerced. Let them carry out their proper duties of Health, Safety and Welfare of men, rather than policing and productivity driving.

DEMANDS

From all this must come demands from the workforce as a whole. These must include:

a) The priority list must remain intact.

b) Yorkshire Water Agreement to be adhered to with NACODS men carrying out their responsibilities.

c) Letters of Termination should be returned to the Management via the union office followed by those serving being visibly wiped off all records.

d) Anyone sacked as a result of these letters should be followed by immediate action taken by the whole of the workforce.

e) A call for total amnesty and re-instatement of all miners sacked as a consequence of the strike.

Whilst these lads are still out of work all efforts should be made to forward regular donations taking care of them and their families.

As a workforce we have recently remained solid for 12 months. We are now under more intense pressure than ever before from Management & so it is vital that we stick together. We have not been out for 12 months for nothing.

AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL. So, stay united.

THE WATER NOTE AGREEMENT

Management and our local Branch Officials met on Wed, 10th April 1985. In this meeting Jimmy Millar commented that deputies were saying that there was no Yorkshire Water Agreement upon which the Manager, G Longmate categorically stated that:

"He WAS working within the Yorkshire Water Agreement"... and he repeated that "The Yorkshire Water Agreement and the local Water Agreement were still intact. The Union must accept this."

Paragraph 1 of the Yorkshire Water Agreement says:

The issue of water notes shall be determined by the deputy and the women concerned during the working shift and any disagreement shall be referred jointly to the Manager and the Branch Secretary. In the meantime the men should continue to work normally.

Paragraph 1 of the Local Water Agreement says:

In future the issue of water notes shall be determined by the deputy and the workmen concerned during the working shift and any disagreement shall be referred to the Manager and the Branch Secretary. In the meantime the men should continue to work normally.

This bulletin has been compiled by your colleagues in the Armthorpe Branch NUM. Please make every effort to attend Branch Meetings to make YOUR Union more DEMOCRATIC.
## APPENDIX 16 - WOMEN'S GROUPS IN MINING COMMUNITIES
### DONCASTER COURSE PROGRAMME 1986

### WOMEN'S STUDIES

28 sessions - Tuesday mornings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Tutor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17 December '85</td>
<td>Preliminary discussion</td>
<td>Edna Woodhead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 January '86</td>
<td>Assertiveness Training</td>
<td>Dr Eileen Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 January '86</td>
<td>Images of Women</td>
<td>Edna Woodhead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 January '86</td>
<td>Assertiveness Training</td>
<td>Dr Eileen Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 January '86</td>
<td>Women in History: Hannah Mitchell</td>
<td>Geoffrey Mitchell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 February '86</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Jean McCrindle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 February '86</td>
<td>Short Story: Odour of Chrysanthemums</td>
<td>Edna Woodhead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 February '86</td>
<td>Women's Rights</td>
<td>Joyce Draper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 February '86</td>
<td>Women in History</td>
<td>Eve Adams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 February '86</td>
<td>Graphics &amp; Design 1)</td>
<td>Jennie Clarke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 February '86</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 March '86</td>
<td>Women Writing</td>
<td>Evelyn Haythorne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 March '86</td>
<td>Coping with Stress</td>
<td>Joyce Gessler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 March '86</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 April '86</td>
<td>Writers Workshop</td>
<td>Joyce Harmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 April '86</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 April '86</td>
<td>Women's Health</td>
<td>Dr Jenny Goodman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 April '86</td>
<td>Relaxation</td>
<td>Jill Walker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 April '86</td>
<td>Women's Health 2</td>
<td>Dr Jenny Goodman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 May '86</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 May '86</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 May '86</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 June '86</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 June '86</td>
<td>Progress Report &amp; Discussion</td>
<td>Edna Woodhead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 June '86</td>
<td>Writers Workshop &amp; Discussion</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 July '86</td>
<td>Women in History</td>
<td>Trudy Pankhurst Greene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 July '86</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1) For Women's Forum

2) Extra session - Monday morning.

Source: October 85 - September 86 Report by project worker, Edna Woodhead
## APPENDIX 17 - MARKHAM MAIN WORKFORCE
### STATISTICS 1979-1989

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>'Men on the books'</th>
<th>School-leavers starting at pit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 1979 - 1503</td>
<td>1979 37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1980 - 1550</td>
<td>1980 34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1981 - 1559</td>
<td>1981 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1982 - 1536</td>
<td>1982 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1983 - 1529</td>
<td>1983 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1984 - 1458</td>
<td>1984 NIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1985 - 1495</td>
<td>1985 NIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1986 - 1359</td>
<td>1986 NIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1987 - 1315</td>
<td>1987 NIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1988 - 1082</td>
<td>1988 NIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26/8 1989 - 785 (proposed)</td>
<td>1989 NIL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No of Women employed</th>
<th>1985</th>
<th>1989</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canteen</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleaners</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No of men taking redundancy* from Markham</th>
<th>No of transferees starting work at Markham Main</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1979/80 - 45</td>
<td>1979/80 - 33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980/81 - 36</td>
<td>1980/81 - 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981/82 - 51</td>
<td>1981/82 - 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982/83 - 28</td>
<td>1982/83 - 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983/84 - 34</td>
<td>1983/84 - 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984/85 - 55</td>
<td>1984/85 - 120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986/87 - 125</td>
<td>1986/87 - 153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989/90 - 81 (proposed)</td>
<td>1989/90 - NIL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average age of miners at Markham</th>
<th>Number of Miners living in Village</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 1985 - 39 years</td>
<td>26 August 1989 (proposed) - 301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1989 - 32 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Includes special 'early retirement' packages.

Source: *British Coal*, Markham Main Colliery.
APPENDIX 18 - 1986 Map of Moorends & North Thorne
APPENDIX 19 - THORNE BUTTY SQUASHER 1929 - 1930

Organ of the Thorne Communist Pit Group

Front Pages of 4-sided bulletins
No 12 - 28th June 1929
No 15 - 17th August 1929
No 25 - 15th November 1929
No 43 - 8th August 1930
No 57 - 14th November 1930
The battle is not yet over, and any tendency to sit back
and "lounge" must be vigorously combated. Neither the winning
of a price list nor the election of Communist Checkweighmen
is the be-all and end-all here. There are a hundred and one
minor questions to be settled, whilst looming evermore omin-
ously in the background is the termination of the Yorkshire
Agreement in December 1929.

There is the question of the PANS. A job which affects
from three to four hundred men, and where wholesale robery
is the order of the day. For instance we should like to know
exactly where the six inches taken for barring goes to. This
matter has already been raised in the Branch room and now that
the men have a Communist Committee there can be no fear that
progress will be sabotaged. But the rank and file must not go
to sleep. They must stand solidly behind the committee.

There is also the STONE question. There is no price list
for the stonemen. But now that the pit bottom work is finished,
there is nothing to prevent the stonemen, most certainly those
with over two years experience, having an "All Throw In Price
list for their job. They must raise the issue and keep fighting
for it.

Finally, amongst the local issues is the retention and
consolidation of the newly won price list. If this is kept it
will not be because the Thorne Junkers like English "gentlemen"
keep their word. It will because the Communist Party and the
Y.M.A. branch are strong enough to compel them to keep it. We
hope that by the time these lines appear in print we shall have
two Communist Checkweighmen, Bowler and Machon as a big step
towards the "safeguarding of the Price List." This must be fol-
lowed up with the election of Communist Sub-checkweighmen. For
this position we are putting forward Blood and Kewen. These
are two more individuals who proved their worth in fighting for
and suffering victimisation in the struggle for the price list.

Behind all these local issues is the County issue. Already
the miners are "in debt" to the coalowners to the tune of £8,000,
000 in Yorkshire. The quantity of salable coal raised in the
first quarter of 1929 was 212,800 tons, less than the corre-
sponding quarter in 1928, and aside by side with this, some 16,000 less
shifters were employed. Yes, the coalowners will want their pound
of flesh. Militant miners must prepare to protect their posi-
tions by joining the Communist Party and the Y.M.A.
The Eighth Annual Report of the Secretary for Mines for 1928 has just appeared. There is cold comfort for the miners in it. The year 1928 was as disappointing as 1927. Output was less, shipments abroad less, less men were employed, greater irregularity of working, while the excess of costs of production over proceeds was twice as great as in 1927.

Some improvement has been manifested in the export trade in the first seven months of 1929. The receipts of the port of Hull show an increase from Thorne Colliery from 60,819 to 150,441 tons. It must be borne in mind, however, that this increase is artificially created by the subsidy derived from coal sold inland. This has now ceased, and the bosses are looking to the miners' pockets for some more relief... for themselves. Look out for the coming December. The Yorkshire Agreement ends and the miners will have to fight like Hell.

Arise Sir Jimmy the 'Lick - Spittle, thou god and faithful Puff!'

Jimmycus the lickspittler being given the Vice-Presidency of the Sick and Medical Aid Club. Also a bottle of Hair Restorer for services rendered to the Boss. Ceremony performed by Major Weller-Kadeszar.

Some say: "Good old Jim" but...
The only conclusion that any sensible man can arrive at in regard to the Thorne Colliery Checkweigh Elections, is that undue influence is being exerted by the management.

Those who pay the "Piper" should "call the tune". The men pay only the men should be able to say - who is to represent them. But the ignorance of what constitutes fair play and common justice exhibited by the management in these elections is only excelled by their arrogance and tyranny.

When a Manager has the audacity to say, (although the men have elected checkweighmen and sub-checkweighmen), "That we do not recognise them as such."

P. T. D
WATER!

The drinking water makes everything dirty instead of clean. What's happening with you across the way?

STINKS LIKE Rotten FISH.

WHAT THE HELL ARE THEY ALL SCRATCHING AT?

Stay a little longer and then you will know.

THE MAN THAT SAID OUR DRINKING WATER WAS PURE SHOULD BE MORE DRINK IT!

SO HELL, JESUS CHRIST! THIS IS AwFUL.

Now I'm rubbing my back on this drop.

This sample of water is pure.

THEY SAY OUR DRINKING WATER IS PURE.

AND NOT A DROP FIT TO DRINK!
Vote CAR

For a champion of the people

Dear Electors,

On the County Council

For a champion of the people

A change in policy.

His supporters have ceaselessly fought for
only Bill Carr, his fellow communists and

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Money is squandered high. Knowledge grows with
dishonesty. Socialism is no joke.

On every public service and every nationalised industry,
ion keeps the people's wages at a lower level. At the present of
the most oppressed minority, it is spreading.

This is what the Communist believe. He is the man responsible.

In the County Council:

   No meals on wheels. Service not enough places in the
to the elderly. For example, there are too few doctors.
   The general undertakings of the area has meant the
   cant fetch help, cant make a start in the
   cant fetch help, cant make a start in the
   cant fetch help, cant make a start in the

The National Coal Board states that
from all its local responsibilities.

The National Coal Board states. The miners have to travel long.

Thorne and Moorside continue to face hard times.

W.R.C. Elections. Thorne Division Polling Day April 11th

COUNTY COUNCIL ELECTIONS 1967

APPENDIX 2D COMMUNIST PARTY ELECTION LEAFLET

COUNTY COUNCIL ELECTIONS 1967

APPENDIX 2D COMMUNIST PARTY ELECTION LEAFLET
Vote CARP for the County
Above all he needs your help
Friends to return back to you on what has gone at County Hall. We believe
Bill Carpenter has refused to fight for you on the County Council.
What can you do?

For Youth
It must improve much more likely for the youth and the city.

For Health
It must step up its supporting health and medical services for the young.

On Education
It must provide more courses for young people including education.

On Jobs
It must ensure more County services in this area.

Bill Carpenter will demand
that the West Riding takes action
The criminal neglect of this area must be ended
APPENDIX 21

The Strike Community in Thorne

As I have already explained (in Appendix 1), this appendix emerged from a 'flaw' in my research strategy. Because the 'twin' villages of Thorne and Moorends had both been heavily reliant on Thorne Colliery in previous times, I felt that I could use their combined Strike experience as closed pit villages as a contrast to that of Armthorpe. Only after I had completed many rich and rewarding interviews in Thorne did I begin to conduct interviews in Moorends, and only then did I realise the full significance of their differing Strike experiences. This appendix outlines the nature of the Thorne Strike experience, the community it gave rise to and the nature of the aftermath.

The Strike Experience

The centre of Thorne is a mile and a half to the South of the centre of Moorends, and there used to be a significant band of agricultural land between the two villages. However the additions to the northern side of Thornè and the southern side of Moorends have led to the boundaries of the two villages only being a few hundred yards appart (See Appendix 18).

The Coal Industry Housing Association (CIHA) estate built on Thorne's South Common in the 1950's tended to attract a younger generation of miners. One of the results was that, unlike Moorends, there were two of Hatfield Main's trade union officials living on the estate at the time of the Strike. There were also several miners, who although not union officials, were prominent in the pit organisation at Markham Main. However, although there was more awareness of the imminence of a major dispute, there were no meetings or preparations made in advance. The early days of the Strike witnessed a similar pattern to that of Moorends emerging. Some Thorne picketers travelled over to Armthorpe, some to Hatfield and a few to other pits in order to go 'flying' into Nottinghamshire and elsewhere.

When Hatfield NUM toured the village to gather its members for a meeting in Moorends, several miners from other pits went along too. The willingness of Hatfield NUM to lay on picketing vans for Thorne miners encouraged many of them to become regular 'Hatfield' pickets. They were deployed from the Stainforth Welfare and returned there after the early morning pickets. Some of the Thorne miners also went on the longer pickets and became part of the extensive Hatfield fundraising and twinning networks.
Local Provision for Striking Families

Two or three of the local women, discussed the setting up of a local kitchen with the Hatfield/Stainforth women, returned to Thorne and called a meeting at the Wykwell public house, their local on South Common. The meeting was well attended, formed itself into a support group and decided to raise money to set up a kitchen. As one of the women, Kitty Holding, reported in her diary at the time:

'We must help others because this government is trying very hard to starve us back to work. It's not just the men and women, but children and we can't let that happen ... We call ourselves the Thorne Women's Support Group and we have made a start with street collections. We have just found a place to have our meals service (that's what we call it, as it sounds better than 'soup kitchen'). It's hard to get shops to help ... don't they know it's them that will suffer if the miners lose this fight? You would think we were people from outer space, not folk that live in the same village' (Holding, 1986)

Although some of the local shopkeepers, publicans and club stewards were very supportive, because Thorne had never been a purely mining community, the response was far more 'uneven' than in Moorends. The government's strategy of isolating the miners appeared more effective, with a minority of tradespeople being quite hostile and refusing support. The Thorne Rural District Council agreed to allow the women the use of the 'bungalow' (a pavilion/changing rooms on Coulman's Rec, (the recreation ground on Coulman Road). With the help of Brian Robson, minutes secretary of the Hatfield strike committee, Terry Lynsky, Hatfield COSA branch secretary, and other local mining activists, the women set up a makeshift kitchen, and on the 30th April, opened it up. Originally planned for three days opening per week, this was soon raised to five.

The numbers using the kitchen rose steadily from just under a hundred to well over two hundred and, even with the Hatfield NUM donating £90 and Armthorpe £20 per week, the available funds soon ran out. The presence of political activists allowed the women easier access to the broader support community and, needing a minimum of £300 per week, the women decided to look further afield for funds. Their initial trips took them to meetings with trade unionists on the East Coast and across the Pennines. Having addressed union meetings, the women began to do house-to-house collections in the working class areas of Bradford. Here they were given a great deal of assistance by the local Sikh community and treated to a meal in the local temple. Kitty recorded in her diary:

'We have been to Bradford. God the people there are more hard up than us! It makes me cry to think they will give their last to help us. When we went to the Indian temple for our dinner I had a curry, never ever had it before (...) With no spoons we had to eat it with these things called
The Strike Experience in Thorne

Chapaties, and we ate with the men, although their women eat downstairs. It's a great honour to eat with the men; they are called the untouchables as they are low class to some of the other Indian community. Can't wait to talk to the other girls (...) They gave us boxes of curry and all the trimmings to take home to my family, they are great people!

(Holding, 1986)

With an increasing number of outside links, as well as the regular shop collections and raffles in the (sympathetic) pubs/clubs, the Thorne kitchen went from strength to strength. Unlike Stainforth or Armthorpe, there was no local union branch or strike committee to act as an alternative 'pole' of authority. As in nearby Moorends, the kitchen was the heart of the Strike community. Ian, one of the local NUM activists, explained how he saw their role:

'Most outside people saw it as an attack on the miners, not on the class, not on them. That's the capitalist media at work. The women's support group was something original. Without them a lot of people would have been struggling to get involved. Some wives were involved while their husbands were at home, and the Thorne women got more women involved from other areas, 'cos women, when they get together, relate better, they give more support. They were the key to the community around here.' (Thorne: 178M)

And Brian Robson, the minutes secretary of the Hatfield strike committee, explained:

'The womens support were vitally important to the Strike. They kept the strike community going and growing. The kitchen was central - the focal point for those who weren't totally committed. The women became the heart of what had been a very masculine community. It would have been hard to imagine the struggle being maintained without them. (Thorne: 170M)

This fact was recognised by the women themselves. Marie explained:

'They couldn't have done without us. They couldn't have gone on. They would have been starved back. We gave them a lot of incentive to carry on. We were behind them ... no at the side of them, all the way. We were dead proud of them and they were proud of us.' (Thorne: 164W)

Several of the Thorne activists, including Terry Lynsky, Hatfield COSA branch secretary, had been arrested at a mass picket of Coal House, the NCB headquarters in Doncaster on 27 March, and placed under extremely restrictive bail conditions. This made them available to join Tom Wilson, a Hatfield winder, and Ernie Taylor, a sympathetic deputy at Edlington, in helping with work around the Thorne kitchen. One of the local solicitors volunteered her services and an advice centre for strikers and their families was set up at the kitchen. This sharing of locally-based activity brought the women and men a lot closer, but the women were still in charge. Terry, an ex-CPGB member/council candidate explained it as follows:
The Strike Experience in Thorne

'The women's support group were brilliant, just heroes. They were without a doubt the most marvellous movement that had taken place since the war years. What they managed to do with a second-hand cooker and a second hand fridge, and borrowed pots and plates - it was amazing what they achieved. There were a few of us men that helped out, but it was their show. I'll never forget the role they played - I'll always be indebted. (Thorne: 175M)

Women on the Picket Line

There was also a sharing of Strike experiences outside the village. The significant size and independent status of the women's group, and the local presence of some of the key political cadre in the Hatfield NUM led to a more wideranging political discussion in the Thorne kitchen than elsewhere. As Kitty explained to me:

"In some areas, the kitchens were run by the union, but ours was an independent one. Thorne women got more political as the Strike went on. We took our kitchen group further than just providing food. Other groups just touched the surface, but we were more rebellious, we delved more into politics and other activities." (Thorne: 165W)

The high level of political discussion produced a highly productive tension in the strike network. For example a debate about the 'appropriate' women's role in the Strike was initiated at an early stage and seemed to encourage both a dynamic kitchen organisation and a much broader strike role among the women. Several of the women were determined to play a more active role in picketing operations. Through their close contact with the Hatfield support groups, the Thorne women were invited to participate in the all-women's pickets at Nottinghamshire pits. Joyce described her first experience of 'flying':

'When we arrived at Calverton, there were twenty or so women already there. There was a new building, a social club across the road and thirty cops came running out in their shirtsleeves, demanding to know what we were doing. We just said, 'We've come on a demonstration'.

About eighty or ninety of us lined up, singing, peaceful like. They radioed for more police and told us to move across the road onto a little piece of grass. We asked why and they just ignored that so we said no and they surrounded us and crushed us inwards. There were women falling over and being trampled on. They were manhandling us and grabbing hold of them that fell over. Anyone who resisted they dragged across the road. Finally they got everyone across onto this piece of grass. They arrested Gilly and Yvonne and dragged them off. They wouldn't let us move off that piece of grass, not to have a pee or leave or anything.

They kept taunting us, talking about their overtime payments and the holidays they'd booked. And slagging us off, 'What do you think you're doing here? If your men were worth anything they'd be back at work'. It were just frightening tactics. Most of the women had never experienced these tactics before. In one sense it was worse for the women on the picket lines. They were always casting aspersions on our morality, calling us slags and things. Suddenly you weren't a person - not a woman - you were beneath contempt. That's how they treated us, total hatred and contempt. Glorifying in their power." (Thorne: 169W)
Despite the fact that Gilly had got a four-month old baby at home, they kept the two Thorne women, along with another twenty women pickets, in the cells till the following afternoon. Yvonne explained:

'As we came over, we'd agreed that if one were arrested we'd all pile in. So when they arrested Gilly, I gave this copper a right good kick. We were kept in the meat waggon for two hours, then locked up for about twenty hours in these filthy cells. And we had to use open loos. It was degrading, rotten .... When they eventually brought us to trial four months later, it lasted five days! I was charged with abusive language and obstructing an unknown police constable. They described me as a trouble causer, a ringleader, so they had to find me guilty, but I was given an absolute discharge with £100 costs to pay.' (Thorne:160W)

Despite this horrific beginning, a minority of women continued to 'fly' into 'Notts'. Although it was later in the strike when the majority of the kitchen women became active on the Hatfield picket lines, with three busloads of pickets returning to their kitchen, they were very aware of the picket line violence. As Erica put it:

'We spent twelve months sharing the same emotions. You could go into the kitchen one day and you'd all be laughing and joking. The next day you could be near to tears 'cos one of the lads had had his head smashed in ...When all the trouble happened at Hatfield you could feel the tension building up in the kitchen ... because you were getting reports back. So you were all sharing the same feelings. Who's going to get hit today ... Who's going to get hurt?' (Thorne:168W)

And Carol:

'Our mood used to change depending on what was going on on the picket lines. I remember young lads coming into the kitchen with cut heads. One came in with his eye hanging out where he'd been beaten. Another had been hit on the head with a fire extinguisher. He looked absolutely terrible ... shocking. I said, 'You need to go to a hospital' but before we could help him, his knees just buckled and he collapsed. We had to carry him out.' (Thorne:167W)

Due to the prominent role of the Hatfield pickets at Orgreave, many Thorne strikers were heavily involved and several men suffered serious injuries. All the women agreed to stay away from Orgreave (although some voiced their resentment at this exclusion). With their personal experience of flying picketing and police violence, several of the more radical women were anxious to play a more consistently 'front line' role alongside their partners. The police invasion of Hatfield (on 21st August - in order to get the first two strikebreakers into the pit) therefore had a major impact on the woman activists in Thorne. The Hatfield NUM and women's action group called for more women's involvement on the picket line, and even women who had argued initially that the women's place was not on the picket line began to incorporate picketing at the
The Strike Experience in Thorne

Stainforth pit gates into their daily routine.

So, for example, an average day for Kath Robson in the latter part of the Strike might comprise the following:

- Up at 5.45 a.m., two hours at work as a school cleaner
- An hour or so at the kitchen, then
- Catch a bus with two or three other women to Stainforth,
- Stand on the picket line to 'scab' the scabs, catch the bus back to Thorne
- Two hours in the kitchen
- Back to work for two and a half hours
- Home for tea and then back out collecting or speaking  (Thorne:161W)

After their initial doubts about the picket lines, the women hardened up to the abuse, intimidation and danger. As Kath said, 'I used to love picketing. Early on we had a few barneys about it and I never imagined I would, but I did.'

Like the miners, the women also became involved in more extensive picketing expeditions. One of these again took them into the middle of the 'Notts' coalfield. Joyce explained:

'We went down to Mansfield, real enemy territory there. We went down with the Hatfield women to march with the Greenham Common women. They were supporting the miners due to their anti-nuclear stand. We marched through Mansfield - all women. We hardly got any abuse off the pavement, just off the coppers. We stayed overnight in a school hall, and the Mansfield women's support group fed us. Then we went out on two nearby pickets. The cops who were there seemed to concentrate on the Greenham Common women. They arrested at least half a dozen - no violence or other reason for it - just put us into situations where arrests would be made.

'I've never seen such big cops. They were a real savage bunch. All the time it was crude sexist remarks, trying to antagonise us. The real hatred was for the Greenham women, the cops kept on calling them lesbians and sluts. There were about sixty of them from all over Britain; they were very well organised, peaceful and friendly. I must admit I was frightened a good bit of the time though.'  (Thorne:169W)

This involvement in the trade union and wider political movement was to have major repercussions in the aftermath of the Strike.

Fundraising and Twinning

Although the Thorne women's support group recognised the key role of Hatfield as the supporter of four separate kitchens, there was still the problem of finding all the extra cash to meet the expanding demand at the kitchen. In August the women took responsibility for organising their own Thorne demonstration to publicize their cause locally. Having marched round the village with bands, banners and supporters from far and near, they held a rally and a gala with speakers from Hatfield, Yorkshire NUM and the support group. The massive old Thorne Colliery NUM banner was unfurled after many years of neglect and hung on the wall of the kitchen. There was, of course, strict price control
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at the gala. One commercial stallholder who refused to lower his 'standard' hot
dog price was immediately 'sent packing'.

It was accepted that the local men should participate in the Hatfield
fundraising trips, and some Thorne women also shared this work. But the women
also organised their own fundraising expeditions. These took them further and
further afield. They went collecting in Sheffield, Hull, Grimsby, and
Cleethorpes. Their range of collective experiences was significant. They
addressed scores of union meetings, they went on board North Sea ferries to
address seamen, they even set up collection points outside York cathedral! Kath
explained:

‘On the way up we made up more songs, 'cos we always used to love a good
sing song in the kitchen. We stood outside the Minster in groups of two's
and three's with our collecting boxes and copies of the Miner. A man had
been up grumbling at us. ‘What do you think you're doing here?' He was
that nasty we said, 'What has it got to do with you?' (it did make me
swear that strike) - ‘Sod off!’

Up came the PC Plod, one of that rare breed, an almost nice cop. He was
just taking our phone numbers, when a voice came over his radio. ‘Are them
miners wife still there? Keep em there!' So then Sergeant Pig arrives
with the meshed up vans, and told us we had ten minutes to get out of
York. He wanted to take our tins off us, but we told him he'd have to
fight us for 'em. We eventually climbed in our van and spent hours going
all round York, chanting at the tops of our voices, 'Maggie, Maggie,
Maggie, Out, Out, Out!' We were talking to crowds of people through the
windows, and making up loads more songs. A real good day that were.'

(Thorne: 161W)

Several of the women also went down to London for week-long trips. They
stayed in a squat and collected around Fleet St and the central London NUPE
organised workplaces. Mick and Carol Russel were the main anchors of these trips
but others went for one or two weeks. Kitty recorded in her diary:

‘I am to speak to a meeting in Fleet Street. I will be travelling down
with Mike and Carol. We will be staying with some friends of theirs IN A
SQUAT, I am going SQUATTING, we have no money but we do see life! As for
not being in the kitchen, I will be glad to go, as it upsets me to see the
men so down (...)

Thinking about it all I was not really bothered before the strike, my
husband went to work and that was that. But it's a lot different now, I
don't think it will ever be the same again. I for one will stand up and
fight for my husband's rights. In the last few months by God I have had to
do just that. But I feel ALIVE at last, we have had to beg and steal over
the last few months to feed other families, we have done things that we
never would have before.' (Holding, 1986)

They also spent a week at the Young Vic in London, suggesting changes in a
(Channel Four) play about the 1926 strike, raising funds and trying to raise the
audience's awareness of the reality of the 1985 struggle. Kitty's diary read:

‘Well it were a good week at the Young Vic, we was able to get the
producer to change some of his show. You would think it was just like this
strike, they even had a voice just like Maggie Thatcher's in it. At the
end a miner got down and crawled back down the mine. Well we just stood up
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and shouted "Get off your bloody knees and walk tall", well the house was full with people. They just looked at us, some started to clap us, others just walked out.

Why do people like them go to see a show when they don't agree with what it's about. People are funny.’ (Holding, 1985)

With a very heavy and constantly expanding workload around the Kitchen and the 'mood' of the pickets often reflecting the predominant mood of the Strike and the pickets, there were inevitably some arguments and disagreements over priorities, but all the women acknowledged that the Thorne kitchen benefitted from its more open and adventurous approach. Christmas provided a good illustration of this, with various outside supporters coming through with a huge quantity of financial and other resources that the women had never dared to hope for. The twinning relationships with the Fleet Street printers and the Hull dockers proved especially valuable. There was a trip to a pantomime, a significant increase in food rations, and, of course, numerous presents and a party for the kids. When the Father Christmas that was scheduled to distribute the party presents couldn't get to Thorne, a 55-year-old Hull docker (who just happened to have been carrying a Santa Claus suit around in the boot of his car for thirty years!) stepped into the breach, and according to one of his local helpers (Ernie Taylor), was 'the best Father Christmas I have ever seen'.

After the 'brilliant' Christmas, the early months of 1985 provided a sharp contrast, with people suffering more and more from the cold, exhaustion and crippling financial hardship. Efforts to sustain morale often centred on the regular social nights organised for the women, pickets and supporters at the Stainforth Welfare. As in Moorends the return to work was not marked by the same collective defiance as it was in Armthorpe. Some of the miners returned to work with their own pits on Tuesday, 5 March, the majority with Hatfield the following day, and others with Armthorpe a week later on Monday 11th. The women took their banner on the Hatfield march back and, as with the Stainforth, Dunscroft and Moorends women were later awarded seventeen memorial certificates by Hatfield NUM in recognition of their key role in the Strike.

The Aftermath of the Strike

Just as there were contrasts between the Moorends and Thorne Strike experiences, there were significant differences in the aftermath. As with the Armthorpe women, there had been significant opposition from many of the women to the return. As Margaret said:

'Left to me, Wes just wouldn't have gone back. We had a few words in the kitchen over it. I felt it was wrong after all we'd been through, being
sent back like that. I still feel the same way." (Thorne:166W)

and Yvonne:

'I didn't want the Strike to end. I didn't want them to go back to work, until they'd all got their jobs back. Scargill was right in his predictions and there's still sacked lads out in the cold.' (Thorne:160W)

Nevertheless, even the most determined women were exhausted and lessened their group involvement with the return to work. Alongside all the other problems, the long-awaited trial of the thirteen Coal House pickets in Sheffield continued to weigh heavily on the local activists (over a year after their arrest they were all eventually cleared). However both men and women activists stayed in touch with each other, some of the women joined the Doncaster Women Against Pit Closures Group and tried to help out those ex-strikers who faced the most desperate financial problems, accidents and bereavements. As people overcame their more severe post-Strike problems, there was a strengthening of collective activity. A large number of women took up paid employment and changes occurred in other areas. As one explained:

'The position of women is changing every day. They're not frightened or backward any more. They want to go forward. A lot of ordinary women like me have gone out and got jobs or tried to get a job. They notice politics more. In mining areas, they didn't use to go in a pub on their own, now they do. They've got more forthright.

Like me. I'm more independent, I took up a job. The Strike brought me alive. It's made me a different person, more politically aware. It changed my relationship with *****. After twenty odd years of a marriage it can start to get... ugh, you know what I mean, but we haven't got that staleness any more, its worked out great.' (Thorne:***W)

There were localised 'campaigns' waged against the few Thorne scabs (most of them were successful and very few remained in the village after six months). The political radicalisation of the activists was reflected by the significant numbers (both men and women) who joined the local Labour Party, the left wing of which was substantially strengthened by the influx. Just over half the Womens Support Group women joined the local Labour Party branch, and seven out of ten remained in membership by the end of 1986. A smaller number of men joined, but again most of them kept their membership up. Gilly described how she saw it:

'The local Labour Party has been swamped by local miners and miners wives. Dad has told me that in the old days most of the leading Labour Party and Communist Party were men, with only a few women. Now its getting to be 50/50 around here, and the women are well to the fore.' (Thorne:163W)

This was apparent in the public face of the local Labour Party. Three new officials had recently been elected, with two of them, the secretary and treasurer, being women. Joyce Harrison, one of the more radical members of the
The Strike Experience in Thorne

womens' support group, had been elected onto the Thorne Rural District Council, which in the aftermath of the Strike became heavily dominated by Labour. Other Labour Party women were appointed as local magistrates.

Although the virtual disappearance of the Communist Party ensured that the Labour Party was the main beneficiary of the strike activists' politicisation, the more radical political traditions were reestablished among the younger members of the Thorne population. Two of the unemployed children of strike activists had become active in revolutionary politics, a young man in the Socialist League, a young woman in the Socialist Workers Party.

The former played an important role, along with Brian Robson (CPGB), left-wing Labour Party members and several other ex-WSG members, in founding a printers support group to campaign on behalf of the sacked News International printers at Wapping. This group resurrected all the old campaigning methods; organising leafletting, meetings, fund-raising socials, street stalls and picketing expeditions to 'Fortress Wapping'. At Christmas 1986, door to door collections were once again organised around Thorne in order to supply Christmas presents for the children of the striking printworkers.

As in Armthorpe and Moorends all those interviewed commented on the change in the status of women and in the relationships between men and women. The heightening of women's status was illustrated in the informal public arena, with Kath suggesting:

'They [men] think women played a great role and they appreciate it. Miners who didn't even know us fall off their bikes to say hello. Some of the lasses think people aren't bothered any more but they are. It's definitely improved.' (Thorne: 161W)

And also in more intimate, private relationships. Anne Taylor, secretary of the WSG during most of the dispute, explained:

'The men respect the women a lot more now. They give us credit for intelligence now. Mining wives were supressed in terms of their intelligence prior to the Strike, but the operation we put on during the dispute was nothing short of amazing. I'd say a lot of women used to feel a bit inferior to the men, but not now, we're equal. We stand at the side of the men now, not at the back anymore.' (Thorne: 162W)

Kitty confirmed this:

'On the home front, I could never go back to being a housewife. There's not enough in it. Now I sit and discuss and argue with my husband about pit, work and politics. Prior to the Strike, I wouldn't have done....I find the same with my neighbours. Small talk all the time irritated me. I can't believe that that was me. I can't stand small talk anymore.' (Thorne: 165W)

Another woman explained how different men were reacting in different ways to the increased assertiveness among the women:
The Strike Experience in Thorne

'Things have definitely changed a lot. Probably some of the men are a bit scared. Obviously there are some women who have slipped back, but there are an awful lot who have gone onto new things, found new interests outside the home. Some men are scared, cos they have lost control.

This is especially true in an area like this one where a lot of men are unemployed or early retired. It's the women who are working now. It's them who hold the purse strings and this can frighten the men a bit. Traditionally they have had all the power and viewed women in a certain male chauvinist way. Since the Strike there's a respect there, a grudging respect in some cases, that they didn't have before. Things have definitely changed since the Strike. A woman is entitled to her own views, her own political views and not her husband's, cos that went on a lot in the past.

Women often take the lead now. I think a lot of men have been dragged towards this. It upsets their lifestyle. Middle class women know this. They have a freedom that working class women haven't got. Now we're going for it; some men respect you for it, some are scared. They're having to change their attitudes, and some can't handle it.' (Thorne: *T*)

The significant swing to Labour in Thorne was mirrored in the growth of a political community among the political and union activists who had worked together during the Strike. Joyce explained some of the changes:

'The pubs are a lot more political now and the clubs too. The landlords and landladies are more friendly and put posters up for our do's for Silentnight or the printers. Wherever we go we attract people who want to argue politics. Political people, including political women, are becoming part of the scenery. We have got a wider circle of interested people, people always want to join in now' (Thorne: 169W)

There was also an enlarging of 'community' for many of the activists. Ian explained:

'I've got a lot more friends and they're a lot more spread out, geographically like. We met people during the Strike that we'd never have met otherwise. It was good travelling and meeting different people. I changed my drinking partners. I used to drink in Moorends with pit workmates, but now I tend to go out with friends from the Strike. My community used to be centred just on Thorne-Moorends, but when we started going through to Armthorpe and places, it joined the village communities together' (Thorne: 179M)

Overall, those who had been active in the Strike were very positive about its effects on their lives. Ernie suggested:

'The Strike were a really positive experience for me, the experience of a lifetime. I renewed friendships with people that I'd not seen in ages, they just turned up in the kitchen. I've got friends who are printers and dockers, people all over the place. I see myself as a member of the working class movement. Once you've been through twelve months of that, you see things a lot different and a lot more clearly. I need the
collective strength of the working class. When the working class get together there's a lot of potential strength there.' (Thorne: 174W)

Erica: 'I'd do it all over again. It gave me more confidence and it made me more understanding of other people's problems. You seemed to lose your own problems 'cos there was always someone worse off than you. A Strike like that changes you in a lot of small ways. It brought me out. It woke me up to reality. I couldn't just hide in my own little house, my own little world. (Thorne: 168W)

and Ian: 'I don't regret one minute of it. I feel it was justified, the vast majority of people do. Someone had to stand up and fight, and our Strike motivated a lot of people outside the NUM to resist the Tories and what they're doing to society. Rights aren't something that are always there, they have to be fought for and won. So although we lost, we won in one sense, that we showed people that we were still willing to stand up and fight for our rights.

It did change me. I'm more aware of things that are happening around me. It made me more political. It's made me more bitter towards the police and the Tory Party. I'd say it had definitely broadened my horizons ... It's highlighted the class identity.' (Thorne: 178W)

But it was the young generations and the young unemployed in particular, facing similar problems to their counterparts in Armthorpe and Moorends, who appeared to have benefitted most from the Strike experience. Louise, who had been fifteen at the time of the Strike confirmed its impact, both on herself and on those around her:

'It opened my eyes about miners and unions. The more active miners started to look at things differently. Cos before, a lot of them were sexist and even racist. But during the Strike a lot of them changed their attitudes, they saw that there were nothing wrong with being gay and stuff. You can't go through that kind of experience without it changing you. The Strike made me think about things a lot more. I was always on the gobby side, but it made me more politically aware. It made me stand up for my principles. Politics is in everything now. Everything is political as far as I'm concerned.' (Thorne: 184YU)

and Darren, who was eighteen at the outbreak of the Strike:

'My friends now tend to be those with similar ideas, those who drew the lessons of the Strike. Before I would have knocked around with anybody, racists or whatever. Now I can't - without getting into serious debate. Before if I was in Stainforth Welly, I'd have gone looking for unemployed people, mates off the dole like. Now I go looking for miners, Labour Party members, political people, to sit and have a good talk with.

It's changed me. I'm more caring. Before I just cared for myseff, but now I care for all kinds of different people. It's the same for a lot of people round here - that's why we set up the printers support group.' (Thorne: 181YU)
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