

Paper Boys



*one man's
accounts of
picketing at Wapping*



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PREFACE

They said we were greedy printers but we showed them all.

Since the Winter of Discontent, when the Soft Cops were no longer able to control the workers their role for Capital has been on the decline and that of Hard Cop on the increase.

It would take their combined efforts to break up the strike. It would take over a year, 2000 arrests, beatings, the murder of a resident by a scab with a police escort and Sabotage to firmly mount the saddle, sign a Secret Agreement.

One thing is very certain, the leaders have not thought through their actions. They have acted out of pure expediency. They have sown the seeds of contention and the harvest will be very bitter and the fruit will be very bitter. The target for that bitterness depends on the ex-pickets.

So finally the backsliders, scab lovers and careerists have done what they were always itching to do. Everything they organised was rubbish.

Everything that was good was organised by pickets. Outside the control of coppers in flat caps. The worst are the friendly ones. They don't follow through when a good thing gets successful. Moreover they draw good activists into the swamp.

The question then asked is what would happen to the union if the activists were outside control? It would be different, instead of empty resolution making. Questions have to be asked. What kind of organisation is needed? How to organise outside of control? How to get rid of the gangsters who own? What to do with the lackeys?

It is on strike that the real proletariat comes out.

Yes, the whole year went by in a flash. A nightmare in a way BUT it was the stuff of which we will have good Proud memories for a lifetime. This last year is the measuring stick for printers for many years to come. Those that have picketed many many hours have established their reputations. It is no secret to the ruling class that the flyers are the elite. That could only be smashed up by an inside job. Even then it took them several months to complete the job.

But even then the genius of the pickets staged a regroupment with several surprise pickets at the scab gate in December.

This letter to a friend from a young prisoner speaks clearly as to what was going on at the time: "As you know there was a warrant out for my arrest well they came round my house on Friday and nicked me and took me straight to court the police said that I should plead guilty and I will get £50 fine for the offence and £10 fine for jumping bail. Well the judge said he wants social reports on me, I don't know why because it's only breach of the peace and he would not give me bail and put me in here for 3 weeks till I go to court. I didn't have a solicitor or nothing at court so could you sort the union solicitor out for me as I don't fancy it in here for too long."

Even later, just before the end there was an important action for us. The telephone workers are on strike. There is a mass phone in to N.I. in the afternoon at a given time. It works. Their lines break down for hours. We are learning our art.

Pickets have not found it possible to carry on the strike but that did not prevent leaders from being widely booed in meetings after the event. Pictured in the mind is one gloating from the platform. He was back in control now.

Those that didn't picket are nobodies. Those that scabbed will spend the rest of their lives telling lie after lie to try to cover up their crawling. Only heroism in the battles to come can wash away the stain.

Recent years have seen a number of pitched battles between thousands of workers

and thousands of police strikebreakers. The battle is waged over a fixed piece of ground. A list helps to tell us that it has become the norm: Warrington, November 1983; several times at Notts pits in the spring of 1984; Orgreave, June 1984; several times over the running of first scabs in Yorkshire, August and November 1984; several set-piece fights in February, March and April 1986 with printers and May Day and 3rd May and 24th January 1987. This is only a partial list of industrial battles not giving at all the heat of the battle nor does it take in the community battles like Brixton etc.

It is sufficient to show that these battles are no rarity in recent years. What has never been lacking has been the individual courage of the pickets. But there has been no system to it. Will we be ready for the next one when it comes? If so, we will become the most powerful group in the country.

This book was written mostly during the strike. It is full of invaluable accounts. The characters in this book are typical of other pickets, not untypical.

INTRODUCTION

The main characters in the following account are: The Dangerous Brothers, The Bomber, Fatty, The Windmill, Dapper Dan, Ginger, Dab Hand and The Student. I use these names for obvious reasons as all that you are about to read is actual fact. But because of the illegality of a lot of our actions I must protect these men. Here is a brief insight into their lives before the dispute started. The Dangerous Brothers are really father and son. The son worked as a messenger at the Times. A respectable boy, He had done pretty well at school, left at 16, went on to further education and after a year was offered a job at the Times. Because the money and the opportunities were good his father advised him to take it. His mother was over the moon because it was through her efforts that he got the job. His father has no connections with the print, or trade unions of any sort. But he is anti Police and has been since the age of 12, when they locked him in the cells at Kennington Station for the night. Other than that I suppose he is just your average working man fiddling by as best as he can. The Bomber is so quiet and inoffensive I don't really know how we got to meet him, but he ended up as part of the Times staff and was sacked. Fatty is a Wapping resident who found us because he did not like what he was seeing on his streets. The Windmill a neighbour of the Brothers who worked at the Sun. Another clean living youngster until this dispute. Ginger started out as a friend of the Brothers. He also worked at the Times. We later named him Judas for he betrayed us. Dapper Dan who could see scabs even when there were no scabs, a nice young fella who worked at the Times always liked to look smart even when having a brawl with the filth. The Dab Hand a good friend but one who was very hard to get to know. I felt he was deeply political but he never let you know what those politics were. There you have a brief outline of the main characters. The writer is the father mentioned as the Dangerous Brothers.

1. MY FIRST MARCH

It was January of 1986 when my son first told me about the strike at the Times and that he was going on a march to Wapping. It did not mean anything to me at that time. I just shrugged it aside as another five minute strike on the papers. It was not until the following day when he told me some of his friends had been nicked and he had bruises and torn clothing that I had any real interest. When he explained the police tactics of that night, it

seemed to me as though they had made a beeline for the youngsters on the march, nicking as many as they could, and roughing up the others. Two of his friends that were nicked had just been standing in the road.

I decided I had better take a look on the next march, which I did. I was amazed at the amount of police present and the bullying tactics they displayed. If you can imagine a march of 2000 people all walking orderly behind banners heavily escorted by police in front, at both sides and at the rear. The police transit at the rear runs right into the marchers time and time again, bashing his bumper into the backs of their legs, until someone retaliates, there is a scuffle, an arrest, people all round protesting, more arrests, punches and truncheons drawn, more arrests. The march leaders protest to the officers in charge who give their customary silly grin, and advise you about making a formal complaint. They have the power to deal with it on the spot, but no. The march progresses down the Highway, more intimidation, more arrests. This time it is done by a sixteen stone copper stomping on a woman's foot, then telling her to get out of the way or go home if she doesn't like it.

We eventually get to Wapping. I am 50 years of age. I have travelled half way round the world. I was on active service with the army in the Middle East and I am telling you I have never seen anything like the N.I. plant at Wapping. The Queen of England does not get that amount of protection. There is this huge concrete building with a ramp leading up the middle surrounded by a steel fence, with double gates, a security check point that would make Checkpoint Charlie in Berlin look like the turnstiles at Lords. Behind the steel fence are coils and coils of razor wire, behind those something that resembles a minefield with cameras everywhere. Across the small street leading down to the gates I counted 200 police standing five deep, in front of the police are doubled crowd barriers. Behind the police are twenty mounted police, and behind the mounted are six vehicles including two bus loads of police.

The rear of the march stayed at Thomas More St, some 400 marchers. About 1,000 stayed outside the Plant. The other 500 or so spread out along the Highway in an attempt to block all side streets leading from the plant. I carry on with the crowd heading for Glamis Road, which is the last exit point for N.I. lorries leaving the plant. Every yard of the Highway has police on it. I really have never seen so many. Some are sitting in vans already wearing riot gear although the march has been very good humoured and peaceful. By now our numbers are reduced to a few hundred and we are surrounded by as many police. We try to block the road, which is already closed to all traffic, including residents. The only thing allowed to move are N.I. lorries and police. The police push us back on the footpath. We surge into the road, the police push us back. The pickets are singing the Hokey Cokey, but the police are getting more violent with each push, making arrests every few minutes, mainly for obstruction. How can you obstruct a Highway that is already closed to the public? So it goes on until 2AM. The crowd starts to dwindle. This is the moment the police have been waiting for with our numbers reduced we take a right bashing from them, with dozens more arrested. Our crowd finally breaks up at 2.30AM. We now have the quarter mile or so walk back to Tower Bridge. Some pickets make the mistake of walking off alone, and are beaten up or arrested on the way. It is far safer to stay in groups, a lesson all pickets are to learn in the coming months.

2. THE POLICE TRY TO GET RID OF US

The sacked printers now know they are fighting two armies. The Police and N.I. For the

Police action goes much further than just protecting N.I. from the pickets Their action is designed to get rid of the pickets and protesters by intimidation and force. If not let them explain why they block off Dock Street, Cable Street Butchers Row and side streets all around the area. That is not protecting N.I. It does not matter what the Police argument is they cannot justify making the whole of Wapping a no go area in the name of protection. If this is the answer seal off the whole of London and stamp out crime. No, the police have instructions to break this strike, at all costs. The same way they tried to break the miners. That instruction can only come from government. It hasn't worked with the miners, all they have succeeded in doing is getting a temporary respite, the miners will rise again rest assured. As for the printers they have no jobs to be driven back to and they are being paid by the state so they can't hold out a lot longer, a miscalculation on someone's part?

3. WAR DECLARED ON US

The marches and protests carry on at Wapping in much the same routine every Wednesday and Saturday night, various groups manning the gate to N.I. 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They are pretty well organised. The arrests are soaring in spite of the fact that we are now fighting back and releasing some prisoners. By now I have met the aforementioned crowd and we had sort of teamed up. If we saw an arrest being made for no good reason we harassed and obstructed as best we could to get the man or woman away. We were quite successful at this. I myself at the time of writing have been arrested ten times, but only arrived at the Station twice. We are now expert at getting behind the police lines to get at the scabs and lorries. At the beginning of the dispute we were quite happy to get near enough to a lorry for the driver to hear us calling him scab. But then the lorries tried running us down mounting the pavement and with a police escort who took no action against him. We heard and saw various accounts of this type of incident. So decided war had been declared on us. It was time for action and we decide to set up ambushes along Commercial Road. Our first effort was a bit feeble, plenty of stones were thrown but very little damage is done. Our next effort is a lot more successful. Four windscreens smashed, headlamps shattered and we are getting better. We are also stretching the police force now they have to put large numbers of men on the Commercial Road area, so we move further afield and on it goes. Every meeting is now hearing tales of ambushes, damage reports. We are fighting back and it feels good. Morale is high. People have long lost respect for the police. Now they are losing their fear of the police. An arrest now is always followed by a scuffle and sometimes by a near riot in an effort to get prisoners away. A song has been made up called Paper Boys which is sung to the police on every available opportunity. I shall refer to them as such for the rest of this account. For that is what they are, no disrespect to you genuine paper boys.

4. FATTY

We first met Fatty at the top of St Davids Lane, he was standing all alone facing about 8 paper boys having a right slanging match with them and standing his ground. I later learned that he was a resident of Wapping, and that he was only in his teens. I have nothing but admiration for him. He is fearless. Many a paper boy regretted trying to nick him. He is hefty and punches every ounce of it. He was very useful as he knew the area

well and was able to show us all manner of short cuts and bypasses around the area. I remember one confrontation with about 8 Paper Boys at Glamis Road. Four of us were walking down the Highway to Butchers Row. The chief paper boy stopped us and told us to go back, we were not allowed to go any further. I was having a heated argument with him when in steps Fatty and knocks him to the ground "I'm going this way, and you won't stop me," he said. There were fists and boots flying in all directions but we got through and went to Butchers Row, although it appears half the Met were out looking for us that night. He was so casual about it all I have never seen him get excited even in the most fearsome battles.

5. THE STUDENT

The Student was about the most pleasant person I have met in my life. Our first meeting came about when my son and I were on a sortie at Glamis Road, scab hunting. We saw this chap standing all alone by the roadside. We suspected he might be a plainclothes paper boy. Went into our silly routine of talking about the weather and walked by, cursing him under our breath as we could see a TNT juggernaut coming up behind us. We carried on walking, then heard an almighty crash, we looked back to see the windscreen had disintegrated. The Student, who we had mistaken for the filth was doing about a hundred miles an hour past us and into the flats and away. Later that night we made ourselves known to him and it has been my privilege to have him as a friend and confidant ever since. I remember his bravery shining through on many an occasion for bravery it was. He was the first to admit that he feared the police, but he could overcome that fear in what for him was a fight for Justice. One such occasion was in Commercial Road, we saw three little girls crying. He asked them what was wrong. It appeared their Mother had been arrested and was in a police transit down the road. He took command, told someone to take care of the girls and he charged at the Transit. It was a night when the paper boys had been especially vicious with arrests. But he did not let that stop him. He barracked the life out of them for leaving the children on the street at that time of night, it was almost midnight. The mother was apparently drunk although she looked and acted quite sober to us. She had apparently been mistaken for a picket so they had arrested her, but she was nothing at all to do with the dispute They arrested her and left her three children in the middle of Commercial Road on their own. The eldest was 8 years old. It was midnight. The Student stood his ground across the front of that transit until he got action and those children were taken care of, and the scum responsible shown up for what they were. The Student in spite of our age difference is quite a friend to have. I'm proud to have met him.

6. BYFLEET

The picket action was now spreading to all parts of the country with stories coming in of flying picket action everywhere. We decided to go on one of these to Byfleet. On arriving at the depot I was amazed at the turnout about 200 to 300 in the early hours of the morning. We have taken the Surrey police by surprise. There is only one officer on duty. We quickly take the road and decide to let nothing pass in or out that is anything to do with TNT or N.I. We stop all drivers and question them. Some admit to working for N.I. We ask them to go home, they do quite peacefully. One idiot from a security firm

attempts to run us down with his car. It is set upon and demolished. By now more police have arrived. I call these police for they were the Surrey Constabulary, very very different from the Met. They talk to us and even set up a road block to vet drivers and vans for us advising anyone from N.I. to turn back. Another idiot tries to ram his way through. The police stop him, take his particulars and he drives away. The police are across the entrance in front of us at this time holding us in the entrance where they should have been getting us out of. At this time a juggernaut TNT arrives full speed to break through our blockade only it is the police who are his first targets. It was a miracle that nobody got killed that night. But the inspector is in after him like a flash. I was told the driver would be prosecuted. That has never been confirmed. With dancing and singing, pushing and shoving we hold the entrance all night. The police have taken one prisoner and offer to let him go if we in turn let two vans out. It is a hard choice but we vote no. 6.30AM our job done we bid the constabulary goodnight and go home. A successful night's work. Although I have praised the Surrey police and believe me they are a far better force than the Met when it comes to dealing with people, a black mark must go against them for their Press conference the following day when they showed an array of weapons that were used, supposedly used that night. Fabrication inspector? Or did you have to justify our success?

7. THE FEEBLE AND THE BRAVE

Things are getting worse at Wapping with much more restriction on movement in and around Wapping arrests being made for no reason, truncheons too readily drawn. Officers being completely ignored. I'll always remember Chief Paper Boy Harris trying to get 200 men to form a half belt cordon across the Highway. For anyone who does not know, that is where you put your arm around the bloke in front of you and hold the belt of the bloke or dame who's in front of him. The trouble with Harris is that he seems never to have heard of a half belt cordon. The other problem is that the Highway is only wide enough for 100 Wallies. The other problem is the paper girls are getting wary they don't know whose hand is grabbing what. They are all laughing and giggling with the exception of a dozen or so little angels who are tying to do this awkward manoeuvre to please sir. Harris is blowing fuses all over the place and we are all rolling about laughing, Harris keeps shouting and screaming at them and suddenly dozens of them just walk off, one even sticks his two fingers up at the inspector. Their discipline is very good. On another occasion an inspector tells a dozen of them to spread out along the march, one of them says bollocks. The inspector puts his head down and walks away, they all laugh.

The pushing and shoving is getting a lot worse with the knee coming up for good measure. But still we are there every Wednesday and Saturday. It is all getting sorted out now. The weak and the strong. The feeble and the brave. I don't use the word coward because there are none, weak and feeble some maybe but they are there on the march and that takes courage the way these paper boys are dishing it out. Our little team is gaining experience all the time. We are becoming quite expert at releasing prisoners, with our hit and run tactics. Ginger is the first to be arrested for throwing a bottle at a TNT lorry, a futile attempt as the lorry had gone past. It was an expensive arrest as far as the paper boys were concerned for they got a good hiding that night. Ginger got a bind-over. Dapper Dan was next on an obstruction. He fought it all the way. He even asked to go to Crown Court but he still ended up with a bind-over.

When we are not at Wapping fighting them we are looking for them elsewhere, early

morning the White Mice as they are called delivering scab papers to the shops. Brick their windows, steal the papers, chase them off, stop their routine. It is war now and they declared it. Let us all remember that Murdoch declared war on us. Using the Met paper boys as his army aided and abetted by the government. No doubt supported by Eddie Shah, who we are all sad to say did not succeed. "You wasn't ready, Eddie." And neither is Murdoch, talk is cheap let's see your bank balance before and after. Then tell us you are being successful. The price of windscreens alone would put most firms out of business. By now they are being smashed at an alarming rate.

8. THE HATRED THAT IS BUILDING UP

We are into April now and still holding firm. The union chiefs are making speeches. Murdoch is making speeches and telling more lies. In case the reader thinks I am prejudiced by that remark I am not. Murdoch's lies to date are on record for all to see. When asked by the Union in 1985 what certain men were doing at Wapping Murdoch said they were erecting the new machines. We know now they were learning to operate that machinery. A blatant lie. When Murdoch said all the sacked printers had been offered jobs they hadn't. Another blatant lie. When he said they had all had fair notice they hadn't, some were in hospital, some were away on holiday. Another blatant lie. And when it comes to FINAL OFFERS from Murdoch, they are a laughing stock. The union have had so many final offers they have lost count. But Murdoch is on record as saying "This is my final offer" so many times. One lie after another. The Wapping setup is enormous. The building, the presses, the office space and as I have said earlier it is built like a fortress designed to keep people out. All this was not built in days, weeks or months. It took years, the machinery was purchased so long ago, it is almost obsolete. Carefully planned years in advance of this dispute. Think of all the lies that were told in those years of planning and scheming. And you know you have a man who cannot be trusted in any way. A liar and a cheat to put it mildly. No doubt a lot of people think it was a brilliant move. It was, if you are a general fighting a war and you want to destroy the enemy. A new concept in industrial relations this little lot, as revealed here just a ruthless plan to get rid of an entire workforce. Couple this lot with the way the police are performing at Wapping and you can understand the hatred that is building up among printers and other men of conscience.

9. GET IN AMONGST THEM

A Wednesday night in April our little crowd have just left the main march at Wellclose. We are heading down the Highway towards Glamis Road when 3 TNT juggernauts come out of Wapping Lane followed by a dozen scab cars. As they pass us we are unprepared. All we can do is heckle them, then to our amazement they are stopped by a surprise attack on Glamis Road by 300 pickets. The Paper Boys are surprised and they don't have the numbers to contain them. We dash into the flats to find bricks, bottles, anything that will do damage. And quickly get in amongst them, smashing windscreens, side windows, ripping at brakepipes and generally causing as much damage as possible. An inspector tries to stop us, he even calls me sir and tells me not to be silly, he is so polite, because he is on his own unfortunately. I recognise him from an earlier escapade when he was mob handed, he didn't call me sir that night. He called me a scumbag, I remember! The

dangerous brothers go in high and low. The inspector is off duty for a while incapacitated. Fatty is enjoying himself tearing a juggernaut apart with an iron bar. Dapper Dan, Ginger, The Windmill and Dab Hand are all running up and down the scab cars, smashing and punching. Denting bonnets, door frames, heads and faces. Our job done we move off. Reinforcements are just arriving. We move off to Commercial Road. We are in time to catch the same juggernaut limping along. We give them another work over. The transits arrive we move off to Butchers Row. Here we meet up with a large number of pickets. We capture 4 juggernauts, smashing more windscreens, side windows etc and the transits come screaming up. We disperse to meet somewhere else, and go on until almost 3AM. We are just about to call it a night when a fleet of White Mice arrive. By now we are down to three members, our weapons are all spent. We just run to the roadside and heckle them. A transit comes screaming out of the back and 8 paper boys jump out. I am arrested and in a futile attempt to get me away my son is arrested with me. The charge is throwing stones at these vans. We laugh when we think of the damage we have caused all night now we are arrested for nothing. The only reference I shall make to the arresting officer is that he was a pratt.

10. DAY IN COURT

Our day in court was an experience that should not be missed by anyone interested in the judicial system. We are met at Thames Magistrates by a little scotsman. He is court usher. He doesn't talk, he shouts. He demands to know who we are, what we are charged with. How do we plead, and then tells us what punishment we can expect. He does not do this politely, it is all done in a kind of threatening manner. But we are not intimidated. We tell him to mind his own business. With this he goes into a rage about what should happen to all Wapping pickets if he had his way. And informs us that we will be here all day for messing him about. He also tells us we should get back to work and not to be so greedy. A well informed man is Jock of Thames. True to his word we actually get into court at 2.30PM only to be told we have to appear at a later date as they are only dealing with the guilty pleas today. The police have already been informed of this they have not even turned up. We go back to court a fortnight later. Go all through the same procedure with Jock. Only this time there are a lot more pickets present and they are all giving him the treatment. His back is covered in "Don't Buy The Sun" stickers. He is in and out of the court every few minutes with his stickers on show. We finally get into court. The evidence is read out, the cross examination takes place. It is proved beyond a doubt that the police are lying at least on one point. Two officers tell conflicting stories. The magistrate makes excuses for them saying it is quite easy to get some things wrong, and we are convicted and fined £75 and £100. Apart from the injustice of it all, it really doesn't bother us one little bit. We won't be paying. The taxpayer will. What a crazy system.

11. WE ADOPT THE BOMBER

Our next serious confrontation with the paper boys was at Glamis Road on what was supposed to be a peaceful demo. We were warned by the officials not to start anything as they were going to try a peaceful sit down demo. They did, we did not trust the met well enough to sit down in front of him. How right we were proved after about half hour 8 transit loads of Riot Clad paper boys screamed up. Without a word they were out of the

vans, clubbing everyone in sight followed by a charge of horses. Even the uniformed paper boys standing nearby were disgusted with this action. But done nothing about it. We steamed into the ones who were silly enough to venture away from the main pack. We did not get hurt, but we hurt a few of them. We dispersed, met up again a short time after and went to look for a bit of revenge. We found it at Wellclose as we arrive there to see some pickets being dragged away to the transits. We steamed in and released them battering the paper boys as we did so. We stayed round until it was 3AM. I think we avenged the Glamis Road incident well and truly.

The following Wednesday march was much of the same. It first started a little earlier at Tower Hill. They went for an early arrest. We went for an early release. In what was quite a scuffle 3 paper boys were hurt. A transit was damaged. Traffic was brought to a standstill as the fighting spread across the road and one 16 year old youth was arrested. Backs were up on both sides and they stayed that way all night. With scuffles and arrests every few minutes. People were fighting back now, who a few months ago were telling us to keep it peaceful. Men and women who normally would not say boo to goose, were throwing punches at the Met. Words cannot explain the bitterness and hatred that is building up amongst the printers not so much now for Murdoch and the scabs but for the police. Murdoch and the scabs do what they do for money. It is not nice but at least they have a reason. But the police do not have a reason other than the sadistic pleasure it gives them to bully and beat people. This whole operation could be carried out by a third of the number they are using with no violence of any sort. If it was policed by policemen instead of these gung ho boys whose great idea of a joke is to drive past the pickets holding up copies of the Sun newspaper with a £20 note and laughing their heads off. Or to grab elderly women by their hair and drag them out of a peaceful march just to start trouble. It was on one such incident that we adopted the Bomber.

We knew him beforehand but I'm sure he won't mind me saying he was the sort of person you avoided if you could, he was so dull and boring. If you run into to him 100 times in one night he would say hello every time and tell you the same thing, usually something trivial. Like "there's another march Saturday" or some such remark. He was so timid he made rabbits seem like ferocious beasts. Yet this night a 19 year old paper boy of about 6'4" and weighing a good 13 stone had a hold of one of the oldest women on the march by her hair dragging her out of the march and trying to knee her in the stomach. She was 60 years of age, creased up with arthritis and of no threat to anyone. The Bomber flew into action. Now a fighter he is not but he makes up for lack of technique with an all action assault, not for him the bobbing and weaving. He is in, scratching, punching kicking, spitting, biting, every muscle in his slight frame springs into action. The bullying bastard soon lets go of the woman and runs for cover. We grab the Bomber before the reinforcements arrive and smuggle him away. He wants to stand and fight them all. He joins the team.

12. CANNOCK CHASE

Reports are coming in every day of flyers, successful ones and failures, of ambushes set up here, there and everywhere. Various members of the team go on various actions. But our next outing as a team is not a flyer but a day's outing to Cannock. To welcome the marchers who are coming to Wapping from Glasgow. The idea being to lift their spirits for the last legs of their march. We are given to understand that we will line the road somewhere to clap them in and then go to a miner's club for the evening or so we thought.

The coach stops, someone says "We're here". When we look around us we are in the entrance of a TNT depot with lorries everywhere. We get off the coach. There is quite a large police presence. We assemble in the roadway. The police are very friendly and this has a calming effect on the pickets until one TNT driver gets a rush of blood and decides to leave the depot at full speed, knocking down a police inspector and The Windmill. Some police at the back unaware of what has happened see the Windmill and the inspector getting to their feet assume it's a fight and try to arrest the Windmill. Suddenly it is like a battlefield with a punch up everywhere. Another TNT truck tries to come into the depot. That gets demolished. We get the Windmill away from the police and away from the depot but in the ensuing mayhem we lose track of him and later find he was arrested again. By now a lot of police have been hurt. A lot of vehicles damaged but sanity prevails. The inspector that was knocked down has got together with the officials on our side and calmed things down. The police withdraw, we hold our meeting.

All is calm but we are a man short. We want him back. A police bus is raided down the road but he is not on it. Two lucky pickets that were on board are released by us. The driver goes berserk to think we could nick his prisoners. A police transit is surrounded, but he is not on it. They must have whisked him away. We go back to the main assembly that is now standing in the TNT driveway listening to country music and speeches. Then we are told that the depot has shut down. But there is another one a few miles away. We march off guided by some locals. We find this other depot. With the aid of a skip and some builder's materials we quickly close this one down as well. The police are present but take no action. We had already done considerable damage to the TNT vans before they arrived. But now they just line up across the plant to protect it. And we barricade them in. Then it is back to peaceful picketing outside.

An inspector arrives to tell us that he will not let our coach take us home as the driver will be breaking the law driving too many hours. We inform him that this is fine by us as when we have finished here we are going down to the local village to find out who reads the Sun and who sells it. We have all night. Suddenly he thinks it will be alright for the coach driver to take us home. "Yes, but we are a man short don't forget, and we cannot go home without him." "Right," says the inspector, "leave it to me. I will see what can be done." And so it went on for an hour. That inspector got some funny looks from his men but had certainly avoided any more violence and it didn't cost him anything, a bit of pride maybe, but I had the feeling he knew how to be a policeman. The Windmill stayed put until the magistrates the following day. He was eventually bound over by the Cannock magistrates and so it wasn't a bad day out for him.

We were eventually told that our coaches would be about two hours. So we made use of the time by going down to the main road and ambushing anything that came along belonging to TNT. It was like bomb alley with pickets all along the road, unlike Wapping they had no police escorts here. We smashed the bloody life out of them. Then back to the coach and home. The Windmill later received £350 compensation for being knocked down by the TNT truck and that inspector was his main witness. Incidentally it was on this trip that he earned his nickname for the way he flailed his arms about when fighting.

13. DAB HAND

To my knowledge the Dab Hand has only been arrested once although collared four times during the dispute. He is not a fighter but a dab hand at getting people away from an arrest. He moves in very quickly when the scuffles start, pulling and pushing until he has a

grip on the arrested man, then pulls him away into the crowd. He had done this on numerous occasions and it is many a picket that is grateful to him, myself included. He has lost untold pairs of glasses and hats in these scuffles. I remember one occasion at St David's Lane. He was busy pulling a man away from 6 paper boys when we steamed into them from the other side not knowing he was there. As we bundled the six over with their prisoner the Dab Hand was buried beneath the lot of us. Another pair of glasses and a hat. The amazing thing about this man is that he went in time and time again without hesitation. Yet he will admit to a real fear of being arrested. And like myself he is just another man of conscience.

14. MAY DAY

May the 3rd is getting ever nearer and all the gossip is now about what is going to happen on that date. You see the marchers arrive from Glasgow and Newcastle that day, it is also the official march to celebrate Labour. Rumour has it that we could see 30,000 at Wapping and that we will be able to shut the plant down that day. However I have long learned to distrust rumour and speculation. So make no special arrangements for it.

We attend the march on May 1st the proper labour day march. It is quite a large turnout. As soon as we arrive at Tower Hill I know something has been planned by the paper boys. They are very thick on the ground and a lot more physical than usual, almost challenging us to have a go at them. I notice that most of them already have their chinstraps down and padding is obvious around the arms and vulnerable bits. They also let a TNT juggernaut run past the march knowing full well that it will inflame the situation. It does, there are arrests and scuffles throughout the short march to Wapping.

When we arrive at Wapping it is swarming with paper boys. Many van loads in riot gear sitting up the side streets. More mounted than usual. And many more around the entrance and roadway itself. The march comes to a halt outside the plant. The usual crowd slope off up Wellclose to the tea caravans. These are mainly women, children, and men that come just for the march and do not want to get involved in anything else at the plant. Suddenly there is a charge of horses out of Virginia St right into the main march followed by gangs of riot police clubbing everyone they can. They scatter the main march in the Highway. Not content with that they carry on the charge straight up Wellclose to the tea vans where the women and children are, clubbing left and right no account taken of sex or age. We decide to get at them, we are joined by many more who are incensed at what they have seen. We rip up fences, paving slabs and anything we can throw. I ended up standing toe to toe with a bunch of them who were clubbing a bloke on the ground. My son on my left, we batter the daylight out of them, then off to someone else, so it goes on. We have them on the run now pushing them back down Wellclose everything is going at them, bricks, fists, feet and bottles. Lots of pickets are hurt, but so are a lot of them. We have them now back down the Highway. They retreat and regroup. We stand victorious in Wellclose.

I have a bump the size of an egg behind my ear from one of their truncheons but I feel it, I am so elated, so proud of my son, and of everyone who has stood and fought. They cannot justify their action that night. I don't know if anything sparked it off but whatever it was does not justify the action they took. They have now regrouped and make another charge, no, not at us who are standing our ground but down towards Dock Street where the Women and children, old men and frightened people are busy trying to get home out of it. They charge in again, clubbing and punching as they go. We steam in

behind them and the battle of Dock St takes place. We make them retreat again back towards Virginia St. They are confused now, with some advancing and some retreating. We are picking them off really well. One bright spark in riot gear climbs a wall to gain a vantage point, we spot him and charge. I have never seen a bloke so terrified. There was a ten foot drop the other side, I think he said AH AAR.

As we are battling our way back to Virginia Street I saw what must be one of the funniest things I have ever seen. Chief paper boy Harris was lining up 30 or so riot boys on the far side of the Highway. He gives them the order to charge. They do, the opposite way. He screams at them "not that way you fucking fools!" Just then we charge at him. I think he overtook them in two seconds flat. To my left I can see a bloke holding on to the saddle of a galloping horse, clubbing its rider with his own truncheon. To my right I can see my son dragging a rider off his horse. He then spots three more moving in on him and steps aside. I am a bit occupied with a heavyweight who wants to hit me. I tell him to be a good boy and go home. Just then a bottle cracks him on the head. I look up and see the Bomber smiling. We are now back where we started. Holding the Highway outside the plant. Lots of people have been hurt on both sides, an uneasy calm is restored not by them but by us. Nothing has been settled by all this. We are still here. We are still blocking the Highway. Was it an experiment? A Rehearsal?

15. MAY 3RD: MY SON ON MY LEFT

We were soon to find out on May 3rd. The march was an enormous affair. It was decided for some reason to have two marches, one to approach the plant from Tower Hill, the other from Glamis Road. With the Glasgow and Newcastle marchers to lead the latter. The Tower Hill march arrived outside the plant first. We were with this march and stood outside the plant waiting to applaud the other march when it arrived. We were told they were to try and gain permission to march to the main gate of N.I. Not the whole march just the handful that had marched from the northern towns. They eventually arrive at Virginia Street. At a signal the paper boys charge out. The officers directly in front of the marchers scattered. The marchers grabbed the steel barriers to make horse traps. The horses charged in the Highway followed by hundreds of paper boys in riot gear, with the long truncheons and small round shields, no attempt at arrest. No warning or order to disperse. No attempt to communicate even with those who stood perfectly still. Everyone in their path was clubbed and beaten. At the same time another hundred or so attacked up by the tea vans. The horses broke through our ranks and charged up Wellclose. Hundreds of uniformed yobs move down from Dock Street and more still from Glamis Road. We were surrounded and being attacked on all sides, so when Chief Wyn Jones has a press conference to say his men were trying to disperse us that is a lie. People were trying to disperse, trying to go home, but were being driven back into the fray.

I myself was very busy with one mounted yob, who took a dislike to me. And I swear up to this point I had taken no action whatsoever. He charged up and took a lump out of my head, spun his horse around and charged back at me for a second swipe. I grabbed two banner poles tied together and jabbed him in the chest almost dislodging him. He came again and again each time I dodged his truncheon and jabbed him with my poles. The road was clearing now. I had been separated from my crowd. They had gone off towards Glamis Road. I was being driven back to Dock Street. Again he charged, again I jabbed. This time I caught him in the throat, as he reeled backwards I grabbed him and threw him to the ground, giving his mount a stab to get it out of the way. I

leaned over him to do him a mischief as he lay on the ground when I was grabbed around the throat by what I can only describe as a giant of an inspector. He is throttling me and all he will say is "I'll kill you, you bastard animal!" but he is still holding my throat. My hands are free. I start punching his stomach which is almost level with my face. He is soft, probably a desk jockey, I can feel my punches going in. I drive him back across the road punching for all I am worth but still he holds my throat. He is now joined by five paper boys, truncheons drawn, but they can't get a good hold on me. The inspector is acting as my shield.

He has let go of my throat now but I can still hear him repeating over and over again "I'll kill you, you bastard." We are up against the wall, a crowd of youngsters surrounding us. Throwing everything they can at these six that are trying to contain me. Don't get me wrong they could have handled me easy it was just the inspector was in everybody's way. I am hit in the face by a bottle from a youngster in the crowd who calmly comes to within a few feet of us to apologise. The inspector is groggy now. I can hear him gasping for breath. I only have my right hand free now and I am putting it to good use hooking him to the stomach and balls continually. "Get the cuffs on him" comes his despairing cry, as he slides down the wall. As much as he was big, the one who decided to put the cuffs on me was little. He has cuffed my left hand to his right. The others are busy trying to fend off the crowd that is getting ever closer. Two of them are trying to hit me with their truncheons and I am now using this little one for a shield. The crowd surge in now. I am left against the wall with this featherweight dangling on my wrist. The crowd are busy giving his mates a hiding, I kneed him and knock him to the ground, stamp on his throat and give him an ultimatum, "Die here or take these cuffs off." He takes the cuffs off first undoing his own wrist. I grab for the key, but can't get it as reinforcements are coming in behind and all hell is breaking loose.

I am fast about to move off when the inspector makes a comeback. Trying to grab me, I throw a left hook forgetting the cuffs are still attached to that hand. I see his face open up like a pilchard tin. His determination cost him dearly. I run across the road trying to conceal the cuffs dangling from my wrist. My passage is made more difficult because the road is littered with the crowd barriers. I see a riot clad paper boy sprinting towards me, as he vaults a barrier, I tackle him. We meet in mid air. I go for a head lock and end with his helmet under my arm. I keep running. I make my way up to the tea vans, concealing the cuffs up my sleeve. He has put them on so tight my hand is swelling. There are fights and scuffles going on everywhere. I have to avoid them because of the cuffs. I see a trusting face in the tea van, tell him my predicament. There is a woman in there with a little girl. I have to pretend I am her husband in case we are stopped, and that I have broken my arm. I am smuggled away in a car. To my amazement this total stranger that is helping me turns out to be a neighbour. He drives me to my house and hacks the cuffs off me. I hope he reads this sometime. For I say now that was a very courageous thing for him to have done and add to that the fact that he was already in serious trouble with the Met, makes his action even more courageous. I shall never be able to repay that debt but I do hope I get a chance to make up in some small way.

My main concern now I am free of my shackles is to get back to Wapping and see how my son is. I have not laid eyes on him since the trouble started. I get back. No one is allowed down the Highway. All the side streets are blocked. I remember Fatty's guided tour and get back to Wellclose. I see a familiar face who tells me my son is OK but he has been informed of my predicament with the cuffs and is trying to find me. I head off towards Dock Street where I'm told he has gone. They have a cordon of horses and riot yobs across the road still stopping people going home. I am approached by one of them

brandishing his truncheon in my face. "Piss off back to Wellclose, you can't come through here." He is standing just at the rear of two horses. I put all the venom I can into a righthander and send him sprawling to the floor between the two horses. The horses panic and I see the gap, stepping on him as he tries to get up, I sprint though a few try to grab me but there is a large crowd in front of them and I'm quickly smuggled away. As I approach Tower Hill my son is coming towards me, I feel so emotional with relief I want to kiss and hug him, and I do. We make our way back to Wellclose causing the paper boys as much trouble as we can on the way. Teams of riot yobs and horses are still present in and around Wellclose, but they have lost a lot of their numbers doing it. The people they thought they had dispersed are now blocking their way to get back down. The riot clad yobs now line up in three's and try to quick march through us with their shields held high. Everything's thrown at them, kicks, punches, bricks, bottles, hot tea, you name it. They are hurt a lot more going down than they were coming up. It is almost over.

People are standing around telling stories of what has been seen. Everyone you talk to is bloody angry. The damage has been done, not to us, for bruises and cuts heal, but to the police force of this city. The one thing they must have is the respect of the public. They lost that respect this night and I just hope that the public figures like the right honourable Tony Benn and other politicians present remind parliament at every opportunity they can of this night's work. I know they won't but still you must have hope. We were informed later that 180 police were seriously hurt and over 500 pickets. You can always juggle figures. To the men of action that night it was 500 police and only a handful of pickets. My own personal view is that a lot more than 180 police were hurt and a lot of people reported being hurt for minor scratches. It all depends on how you want it to look. But a sorry night for the Met in any case. They will pay for it for a long time to come.

I was later to see for myself the actions of my son and the rest of our crowd on Video, as they were attacked the other side of Virginia Street. This is where the police sustained most of their casualties. They were met with a hail of missiles, crowd barriers were thrown like tennis balls. As they tried to break out of Virginia Street, My Son, Fatty, The Bomber, Dab Hand and The Windmill were true warriors that night. And all escaped injuries. May the 3rd will never be forgotten. By the printers, by the onlookers, or by the police. For it was a new experience for them. They did their worst and we are still here. Perhaps they forgot about the determination of people who have right on their side. Hitler forgot it and I think Wyn Jones has made the same mistake. He had better ask Maggie and Murdoch what to do next. Yanks, we will still be here. Stories are still coming in about that night. But I am trying to write about the things that I have first hand knowledge of. And so I close this chapter.

16. SURPRISE AT THE GATES

The first attempt at "taking the gate" was arranged for 7AM one morning. The instructions are not too early and not too late. Hide yourselves in the area until 7AM. Then appear in force, rush to the gates and block them. This one was a good one as the police thought we were going right into the plant and really panicked, calling for help from all quarters. The inmates of Wapping thought their time had come.

One paper boy tried to get heavy handed with one of the gang as we approached the gates. He was clobbered by the lot of us and to add to his discomfort he got trapped on the fence by the crowd and was pinned there for over an hour all on his own staring into our faces at close range. He got himself in a right old state of nerves. He got so many slaps

and digs his whole body started to twitch and the smell of him suggested he might need a new pair of pants. The crowd held really firm letting nothing in or out.

The Paper boys tried a tactic that almost worked. They grabbed women by the hair and tried to drag them away hoping that we would break up and try to release them. But it did not work that way. All that happened was quite a few police got hurt. They did not realise our determination, not only to hold the gate, but to prevent them taking any prisoners. We were unlucky in this event, they managed by sheer brute force to take one. But it cost them dearly. There were helmets flying in all directions. They suffered quite a few casualties that day.

They brought in the cavalry. We repulsed their first charge. But as we were quickly getting outnumbered and the violence was getting worse, it was decided we should have an orderly withdrawal. We lined up and marched back up to the Highway to the astonishment of the Paper Boys who were left in large numbers guarding nothing. We had a few lumps and bruises, but we had done a good job. We had held out for an hour and a half. We had trebled the Paper Boys wage bill for the day and we had delayed Murdoch, plus the bonus of frightening the life out of the scabs.

That was the start of many more "Taking the Gates". We did not realise it at the time but that was eventually to be used as an excuse to end the dispute, coupled with the Paper Boys riots. But it was an action I was glad happened. The benefits it brought us were enormous. It lifted everybody's spirit every time it happened.

17. EASTLEIGH

In between marches to Wapping we are organising various other activity. I mentioned flyers before. We have attended many. Our next one is to a place called Eastleigh. We have instructions from the organiser not to show ourselves there until 3AM. Apparently the papers will be in the depot at 3AM and we can then prevent them being diverted to other depots. We arrive just outside Eastleigh on the main London road. We have a bit of time to kill. We find a coffee stall. The look of astonishment on that man's face when he was suddenly confronted by a queue of 100 to 150 blokes asking for tea's burgers, chips, etc. He is only used to serving the occasional lorry driver. We then make our way to the depot, it is somewhere on an industrial estate. The only trouble is nobody is quite sure where. We have all parked our cars, and are wandering around this estate in groups looking for the depot at 3AM. It is as quiet as the grave. Suddenly from down the road a yell rings out to break the silence. "Here it is lads". This is followed by breaking glass and yelping dogs. Everyone rushes down and gets into the action, windows are going in, a crowd are busy tearing down the fence. A police car is on site, so we know we haven't much time. The fence down we dash in and set about demolishing every vehicle in sight. I can see furtive figures lurking in a darkened room, crash go the windows and they disappear out of sight. The police car tries to pick us up in his headlights crash go the headlights. The place looks like a battlefield after the battle. We group up and walk out of the depot just as the reinforcements arrive with the dogs. There are van loads of them. They spread out in a line across our path probably thinking we are going to stand and picket the entrance but we have no need, nothing will be able to drive out of there tonight. A tall sergeant with a lovely southern drawl says "Good evening gentlemen, turned out nice again hasn't it?" "Yes," comes the reply in chorus "Very nice." "Goodnight." "Oh you going then?" he asks amazed. I'd have loved to have seen his face when he later knew the damage we had caused. As we left the industrial estate I saw a

sergeant taking down numbers. I heard of a few people being raided in their homes but I am not sure. I heard nothing myself though I used my own car. I certainly don't think anyone was arrested over it. So a very successful night.

18. A BLOODY GOOD SYSTEM ISN'T IT

Now you have a good picture of what is going on in the dispute. You may or may not be disgusted by some of the events described. Let me put the record. There is no left infiltrators causing the trouble or organising the violence. Or by loud mouthed beer swilling printers, though god knows we do have some in Fleet Street. No, all these actions described are carried out by what used to be honest workers who were sacked wrongly and dishonestly by a man who is building an empire around the world and will stop at nothing to achieve it. And then being denied the right to protest about it in the time honoured tradition by a police that is using Wapping to try out all the tactics they might need for urban riots that they are sure will come later. Wapping is a training ground for the police. For the Notting Hill and Brixton riots they feel sure will come later. It will serve two purposes. It gives the police training and experience. And if they could be successful in quelling us it will be the end of the line for trade unions in this country. All this talk of unions getting up to date, bringing them into line with the modern world is pure eyewash. When it comes down to it, the working man only ever had one weapon against his boss, that was the right to strike. That right is no longer in existence. We know you always could be sacked for striking but nobody ever was because of the solidarity amongst unions. That solidarity has been eroded by men like Murdoch and women like Maggie conniving schemes with scabs like Hammond to sell people's jobs from one union to another. And then give the police the power to prevent in anyway they see fit to squash any protest about. On May 3rd a BBC camera crew were attacked and badly beaten by Police for filming them in action. Their camera was smashed. Why has there been no hue and cry over it? Who runs the BBC?

This whole business need never have developed into the disgrace it is now if peaceful picketing had been allowed in the first place, at the main gate of N.I. What did the police allow? Six men or women to stand on the main gate for cosmetic purposes only. They are not allowed to speak to anyone in the normal way, ie flag the driver down and ask him not to cross your picket line. You are not allowed to use the word scab or they nick you for insulting behaviour. They have actually removed pickets from that gate for singing. I have already described their actions on the marches. You probably think I am biased probably making a lot of this up. It can all be checked and verified. A lot of the action is recorded on Video. Attend any march Wednesday or Saturday and see for yourself. Or if you know any reporters, ask them why their stories and pictures are never used from Wapping. All the other papers have a vested interest in a victory for Murdoch so do most other big companies. Ask for the arrest details from Wapping or attend Thames magistrates and see at first hand what goes on. It can all be checked out. Ask any resident in the area, above all ask the local schoolkeeper who caught the police tearing up railings and digging up rocks from the school grounds on May 4th to put on the table for the press conference by Wyn Jones as weapons we were supposed to have hurled at them the night before. I could go on and on.

A lot of prominent people know what is going on but are afraid to speak. It is not a very popular topic for a political platform but many an MP has witnessed it first hand and done nothing about it. I have their names but withhold them for the moment in the

fervent hope that they may do something. I can always reveal the names at a later date. Why do the police seal off the whole area at Wapping? It would be far more peaceful if it was allowed to go on. Confrontation perhaps? Why do the police allow TNT lorries to break every law of the road? And yet take no action? And this includes knocking down their colleague at Wapping Lane and injuring him. Why do the police arrest perfectly innocent men? There are enough law breakers down there myself included. And who is paying the massive police bill? I know who is not. All these and many other question need answering but they never will be I don't suppose. Where and when do we get the answers? 30 or 50 years time when somebody writes their memoirs? The question you should all be asking is does Mr Murdoch pay taxes on all these millions he is making and if he does what country does he pay them to? Not England I can assure you. But England is paying his protection bill. "A bloody good system isn't it." Just keep changing your nationality until everyone is confused as to who you belong to. Personally I am not surprised at what is going on with the police. As I stated earlier I am anti police anyway or should I say anti the present police of the Met. I'm not against having a police force, but I just don't like hypocrisy. If you join the police to be a policeman, do your job, don't turn into a bully boy. That's what the Gestapo did and they lost. It's no good crying afterwards that you were only carrying out orders, they used that excuse as well, but they were still executed. I have dwelt long enough on complaints. I know by now complaining does not get you anywhere.

Fight back. That is the answer. And fight back I will. Victory now or a long slow death of the Trade Union movement and of freedom as we know it. The freedom people talk about once a year at the Cenotaph. The freedom that you will not miss until it has gone, syphoned away by legislation, and by a paramilitary police force that governs itself and answers to nobody. Don't be misled by people who say it will never happen in this country. It is happening. It started in the coal fields and has now spread to Wapping. It could end here at Wapping. We could defeat them and save the trade union movement at the same time and claim back our freedom to walk the streets and to protest in a peaceful way. But we do need support, the support of everyone now. Before it is too late.

19. TRIBUTES

I should like to pay a few tributes to people I have met during this dispute. People like Mary, resident who attends every march no matter how bad the weather, no not a printer, a resident of Wapping, she is over 80 years of age. Has a few health problems, but always turns up and she is so cheerful. And Kevin who was run over by a TNT lorry while listening to speeches from an assortment of MPs who witnessed the incident when a juggernaut ran into a crowd of 2000 people and kept on going, witnessed by at least 300 police but they could not prosecute him they had insufficient evidence. And Davy who saved me and helped me so much, I shall always be grateful. Also Arne who worked tirelessly for the cause. The Gary's, one a printer who put me and my safety before his own. The other a student who always attended the marches and believed so strongly in justice and helped anybody in need. Also Ray who was so cheerful and so willing to get involved as he proved on more than one occasion especially at Cannock. He did more than anyone to advertise the AA that night only he and a few close contacts will understand that. To Charlie and his family. I must say well done your support has been tremendous. Charlie had already like so many other printers fought one war in 39/45 now they were at the front showing that same spirit. Thanks to Sion who made a lot things

possible and on a number of occasions was just plain brilliant, a very special person. My thanks to Tony, John, Billy, Danny, Keith especially Keith I know I was in the company of men when I was in your company. Men I could rely on, depend on and trust, and you don't find many of them about. This dispute has just lasted 12 months, I don't know how much longer it will last. The media are beginning to mention the enormous cost of it so far in police wages. So maybe someone will start to listen when it comes to money. But as far as I am concerned and hundreds like me, it will go on for ever. If I ever see a TNT lorry I will abuse it. If I ever see a scab I will abuse him or her. If I ever see a paper boy from the Met I will want to spit in his face. The bitterness is embedded deep in my heart. I pray for the day when a Met officer will need a pint of my blood and I can say "get stuffed."

I single out a few other people who I know made every effort at enormous cost to themselves.

Bolly whose marriage was wrecked because of the dispute. Tiger who has a crippled right hand because of the dispute, but was fighting with us right to the end.

The three Gary's I have briefly mentioned before. The student who gave it everything he had and is still waiting for the call for more. The Printer who fought all the way and always put others before himself. And the Cleric who had to leave the country for his own safety for all his efforts.

The Bomber deserves another mention because he was a bit special. It is very hard for a strong man to be brave. It is almost impossible for a meek man to be brave but the Bomber rose above all men with his daring and bravery.

My other half is obviously something extra special to me. But without bias I can say that if I had another one like him on my left we would have been unbeatable. I admire so much about him. And he did give more than most. And bear in mind he wasn't fighting to save a good job, on the contrary he had one of the worst jobs and one of the lowest paid. But he fought on the principle and that made the difference. They don't give medals to real heroes. Thank god he never got one. If I have done nothing else with my life I will die a proud and happy man knowing I had him as a son, a friend, and a comrade in arms. For his loyalty to the cause and to me he was prepared to die and almost did a few times. If you think that a bit extreme try standing in front of 20 charging horses with batons drawn followed by a couple of hundred drunken riot cops all fired up with hate, and let me know if you see it as a life or death situation.

20. GINGER'S BETRAYAL

The FINAL offers from Murdoch come thick and fast. I don't involve myself with them as they do not apply to me. My son's job for £2000. And that to me is an insult because included in that deal would be my son's present and future. But more important his freedom, for he would have to sign away his rights of protest and recall to get that money. The union have one ballot after another and the offers are overwhelmingly rejected. Murdoch accuses the union of vote rigging and holding an unfair ballot, with all the venom of a poor loser he decides to make individual offers to all members with a deadline for acceptance. That is not very successful, so he extends the deadline again not very successfully. We are still at Wapping. We are still marching. Ginger is among those who have accepted the offer. We are all a bit annoyed at this betrayal. For he had less reason than most to accept and will never be forgiven. Many hardship cases held out, people with mortgages etc. Of these that held out you have to admire most of all the ones with long

service, for the offer was about £1000 for every year's service. I don't know that for certain, as it did not concern me. What I do know is that every person involved had every opportunity to accept without any pressure whatsoever from any quarter. They each had the offer sent to their home, where they could study it and decide for themselves. The result was a kick up the arse for Murdoch. Panic spread through the ranks for a few days, as it seemed everyone you spoke to knew someone who had taken the offer, but once the true figure was known we were all quite happy. It worked out at less than a third. If you subtract a half of those, who did not participate in the action we were hardly dented. So Murdoch's plan to get us off his back had misfired. All his money was in vain.

So now you have it. They tried to beat us off. They tried to intimidate us off with beatings and arrests. They tried to buy us off even offering us our own Newspaper but none of it has worked. The only people who have taken any notice are the officials. Not all of them I hasten to add but quite a few have taken a back seat. When I question some of them about their absence I am told they have been up north organising things, that's as may be but in the end it will be at Wapping where this battle will be won and that is where they should be seen. If only to keep up morale. They should be more involved in organising and doing rather than trying to create interest elsewhere valuable though that may be. If we can stop the papers, the north and all those other places will soon take notice and we can only stop the papers at Wapping. That is Murdoch's money supply. Without his money he is powerless. We must concentrate on cutting that supply off. It is no good anyone sitting back now and waiting for miracles to happen. We have burnt our boats in refusing his final final offer. So now we have nothing to wait for. Let us not fall into the trap of thinking the TUC or the Labour Party will somehow rescue us. They haven't got the balls for it. They are both sitting on the fence waiting to see which way we go. So let us go forward and win. Don't listen to the voice of frightened men who plead "keep it peaceful". The enemy has made the rules and there is nothing peaceful about them. Have a go, you haven't got much left to lose. Don't lay down and die especially not to someone like Murdoch.

21. BACK TO BYFLEET

To get on with the business in hand. Our next flyer was back to Byfleet. Only this time the talk was of wrecking the place rather than picketing it. The depot is set in the old Brooklands circuit industrial estate and is protected by security barriers. It lays back of the road about a quarter of a mile. This time we decide to go in. The security guard makes a vain attempt to stop us, but is pushed aside, we run the quarter mile to the depot. A juggernaut is trapped outside the depot gates. This takes our first onslaught. Two police cars quickly arrive on the scene, they take our second onslaught when they try to pick us up in their headlights. Everything is being hurled in amongst the vehicles behind the fence. Men are attacking the fence trying to pull it down. A small group stays with the juggernaut dismantling it. A security guard rushes towards us with two huge dogs. A flare lands in front of him and the dogs take off one way he takes off the other way. The two police cars seek refuge in the depot. A Portakabin just inside the fence is being smashed to pieces. In the distance we can see blue lights flashing and sirens sounding. Time to retreat, but very important we stay in a group. We march back towards the gate and are being passed by police vehicles, fire engines, ambulances. We decide we still have the upper hand and attack the police convoy bricking them as we leave. We get back to the gate and break away for our assorted vehicles. our little group of about six are still walking

to our vehicle with the police convoy still belting towards us, when the Bomber has a rush of blood, steps into the road and hurls a lump of concrete at the police transit window. Amazingly they shied off, leaving us in peace. As we left them in pieces. The following day I was very amused to see an account of this in the Media. The headline read "police horses rout pickets" and went on to give an account of police horses chasing us across fields. I can assure you that I saw no horses nor were we chased by anyone. The police turned up in huge numbers but it was all over by the time they arrived. I believe one driver was hurt as he tried to drive through the pickets. That would account for one ambulance but I think whoever sounded the alarm must have thought world war three had started as I say there were ambulances, fire engines and hundreds of police yet we were never approached. Another very successful night. We could not find any papers to pinch on the way home which was another good sign. The fact it made the media was a big boost, at least we were getting publicity; good or bad people would know we were still here.

22. POLICE LEFT FLAT FOOTED

The marchers were beginning to show a little imagination. They had been lining up by Tower Hill Station assembling for the march every Wednesday and Saturday since day one of the dispute always with a huge police escort waiting in Tower Hill. We had been saying for months "let's walk away from them" but it had gone unheeded. Until finally they did it. We went out the back door. By this I mean we marched off by Tower Hill tube towards Aldgate then on to Commercial Road. The police were left flat footed at Tower Hill and we brought chaos to the East End traffic catching a few scabs in the middle. The scabs did not like it, the police did not like it. The Pickets loved it. When they eventually caught up with us we just slipped off down a side road and made them dismount from their vehicles to escort us. This proved a great success and should have been done more often. On another occasion we changed the starting place to Aldgate East Tube Station. I saw two Juggernauts attacked on the far side of the road by our crowd. Someone said the police had spotted them so they disappeared into the station and away. I saw another two juggernauts approaching down Commercial Street. I walked towards them followed by two women. As they approached the station the crowd began to surge forward. They slowed down and I seized the opportunity to stuff a firework under the cab in between cab and trailer in the hope that it would do some damage. A City of London sergeant spotted me and caught up with me. Instead of arresting me he started to abuse me, threatening to punch my face in. The only thing he hadn't noticed was that his men had run back to control the crowd. He was now left on his own with me. I spun him into the railings nearby and told him a few home truths. I did not hit him very hard as I am not a bully and he did not have the arsehole to fight back. I was now joined by the two women and together we chased him back to the crowd, barracking him all the way. I then joined the crowd outside the tube station. The City police were relieved by the Met. As they started to pull away I yelled abuse at the sergeant and was promptly arrested by some really text book type proper boy from Kingston nick for insulting words. I did not resist this arrest as it sounded like great fun and that is exactly how it turned out.

I was taken to Hither Green and locked in a cell for a few hours. I could hear a lot of talking going on and a lot of swearing particularly the word cunt being used continually. I was taken out of the cell to the charge room where there were five men on various chairs all talking excitedly about various subjects and again plenty of foul language

being used although the mood was jovial and calm. This text book dick from Kingston who did not appear very popular with the other group, then read out my charge. That I on such a date at such a time, subject to this section and that section did use the word cunt. There was a grey silence and then everyone in the charge room just burst out laughing with the exception of the Kingston dick. I said to the desk sergeant that the only person that night who could possibly be insulted by that word is one. This added to the laughter. The Kingston dick just went red. I would not mind but it is not a word I normally use or had used on this occasion. He had his choice of all the others but like a good copper he had to fabricate. He probably thought it sounded worse. I was bailed to appear at Thames.

I appear, plead not guilty and said I would be calling 38 witnesses. That shook the life out of them and they transferred my case to Wells St magistrate at a later date. I appeared without a solicitor and with my witnesses now reduced to three. The Kingston Dick seemed to get on the wrong side of the magistrate right from the off. Then he got the location wrong and argued about it although luckily the magistrate knew the area well. I immediately offered to put this matter right which pleased the magistrate and won him over. I supposed technically there was no charge to answer as he had the wrong location. My witnesses were called and made a hash of it. But the case was dismissed with a wink and nod from the magistrate. The Kingston Dick looked sick. I don't know how you taxpayers must have felt. It was a terrible waste of your money. I know swearing is not nice but if you are standing with a group of 150 people and they are all swearing who can you be insulting? This type of case is all too familiar with the Wapping dispute and should be stopped. We are supposed to have a new system of prosecution. It does not seem to be working. It appears if the police want to go ahead with silly charges they do regardless. So what has happened to the new system that was to have curbed this trend?

The dispute goes on in much the same way. It is obvious to everyone concerned that we are not just fighting Murdoch. If that was the case it would have been over in a couple of weeks. No, we are fighting the government, apathy on the part of other workers, and a police force that has gone power crazy. Our enemies are growing because the longer we go on other paper Tycoons think Murdoch is winning, so they start reducing calls, staff cut backs etc. So other union members hold on to what they have and forget about helping us, but we are still here.

23. INCIDENTS

The following incidents have happened at Wapping although I was not directly involved. A police officer is knocked down at Wapping Lane by a speeding TNT lorry. The lorry is allowed to drive on. The injured officer is quickly bundled into a police van, out of the sight of pickets.

A 62 year old picket is beaten up by a transit load of police in Tower Bridge Road. He is told to make an official complaint but of course he needs identification numbers which are missing as usual.

Another elderly picket is beaten up in Cable St by TNT drivers or police he is not quite sure, needless to say there were no witnesses to either incident.

M. Hicks a union leader who stewarded marches was arrested for assaulting a police officer. They say the sentence is not political but it was clearly a warning to other union leaders what would happen to them if they did not succeed in completely breaking up the strike. But it has not stopped us and add to that the fact that although Hicks is popular he

is not among the men of action because he many times broke up concentrations of pickets when we were getting ready for an attack on police or the plant. This is a political sentence there can be no argument about it. His reward for peacemaking? Three months in the nick.

A 19 year old boy is knocked down by a TNT lorry and killed. The lorry is allowed to drive on. A picket who went to help the then injured man is arrested, others are told to piss off or they will be arrested. The official line is that he fell under the wheels, no enquiry, no prosecution to date.

A man and his family are run off the motorway and attacked by TNT lorries because he had a support sticker on his car. The lorry numbers are given to police. Insufficient evidence.

24. ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Most of the country will know by now what happened at Wapping on the 24th January 1987. Or at least you know the Media version.

A huge march arrived without incident at N.I Wapping. Most of the march went into Wellclose car park for a concert cum rally. Many hung back in the Highway towards Dock Street. A smaller crowd stayed around the entrance to Virginia Street and left of there. It was amongst this crowd that the trouble started. Virginia Street was blocked solid with police in Riot Gear who had already shown themselves to the march as far away as Charing Cross. They stood there, shields and truncheons drawn. Now it does not matter what Wyn the Fib tells you (That is Wyn Jones Assistant Commissioner). They were threatening to that crowd, remember May 1st and May 3rd 1986. We had to feel threatened. A few turned a lorry over across the entrance to Virginia Street. The Riot Police charged out. But what nobody has mentioned is that they did not charge at the troublemakers. No they charged towards Dock Street smashing into everyone with truncheons, boots and shields. The troublemakers were the other side of Virginia Street clearly seen on TV films of the incident. They continued with these charges for an hour or so. The main group of stone throwers were still holding their position opposite the Wine warehouse tackled only by a small group of riot police but still mainly ignored by the police. They in fact took men away from this area to deal with the marchers. They then had horse charges again not at this crowd but away from them. By now everyone was incensed. When you see elderly men and women beaten and kicked you would have to be something odd if you did not get annoyed, you go to help someone laying on the floor hurt, and you are in turn beaten and kicked. People tried to get away but are forced back into the crowd by other police.

Wyn Jones says on television that the idea was to separate the stone throwers from the pavement. Is he unaware that the whole of London is paved? Was this a desperate statement from a desperate man? We hear stories of anarchists, Marxists, Young Socialists, Greek left wingers etc. etc. all being blamed but we don't hear of them being arrested. People laying injured on the Sogat bus were no threat to police or N.I. but they were attacked. People were attacked in pubs all round the area. People were beaten up in Cable Street, at Tower Hill and at Commercial Road. Can Wyn Jones seriously say they were throwing stones from that far away, nonsense. The idea was once again to break up the march and drive everyone home. Any police force worth its salt could have quelled the trouble right at the start. The troublemakers were within ten yards of the police for hours, no serious attempt was made to disperse them or arrest them. No they wanted an excuse

to stop all marches to Wapping. Make the printers look bad. But they won't succeed. Wyn Jones makes a comment about innocent people being hurt saying "they don't have labels this is a stone thrower." But if a policeman is going after someone, either to arrest him or beat him, should he not know who he is going after. Let me explain. They stand behind their shields for ten minutes facing the stone throwers who are within ten yards of them. Then they charge in and beat up innocent people. As for not having labels, what about the people who did have labels. The Legal observers, with luminous coats on stating that they were legal observers, beaten up. What is Wyn the Fib's excuse for that? Newsmen with thousands of pounds worth of equipment hanging around the neck. Beaten up. Wyn, your mob couldn't read a label if it was stamped on their eyelids. Why do they take their numbers off when they go in it is to stop complaints or don't they have numbers to start with. Are they perhaps the Rent a Mob we keep hearing about?

Our little crowd had running battles with these scum in riot gear up to midnight and all came out of it unscathed, a few lumps and bruises but nothing to worry about. The Windmill got a good belting for trying to help an unconscious man on the floor. Some scumbag tried to crush my fingers with a truncheon as I shut an iron gate in his face. My son had his legs beaten by a truncheon by one goon while another one held him, but these were minor scrapes, that were avenged over and over again. We were split up quite a few times during the night. And each time we regrouped. We all had good accounts of our actions to recall. We fought from the Highway to Commercial Road and back again. We joined the Residents' March for a while and were most impressed by them. We fought side by side with many groups that night. Miners, Gays, Anarchists, Marxists and believe it or not a group of Conservatives from Surrey. We were impressed by all of them. I would need to write another two books to recall all the incidents that night. But I will try to recall a few.

There was a bloke in Wellclose with a skateboard running broken paving stones from the back of Wellclose to the crowd at the front. With all the chaos that was going on all around him he never faltered even when the riot police were charging up towards him. The riot cop who tried to smash my head in at Cable Street. When I banged him against the wall and he was cut off from his mates, I was giving him a couple of slaps when he almost burst into tears and wanted to know what he had done to upset me, dropping his truncheon and shield with fright I threw him back to his mates. He wasn't worth keeping. The other incident on the car park. A riot cop chased a man across the grass. As he grabbed him they both fell to the ground. The man rolled out of the way onto his feet and ran off. The Riot Cop was a bit slower getting to his feet and two others following up both lashed into him with their boots, one in the face and one in the ribs. Then they realised their mistake and had to carry him off. Funny what that red mist does to you. Or perhaps their helmets had fallen over their eyes?

Then there was the wag who climbed a tree in the thick of it all and gave a send up of John Arlott giving a commentary on the action. Pickets 0 Police 10 and so on. Then there was Charlie at 68 years of age going into the bastards with every charge and never got marked. Mind you he has had experience, he fought NAZIS once before, 39/45 and beat them then. Another elderly man at the back of Wellclose who gave a speech about freedom and human rights in a loud clear voice. He stood his ground and carried on speaking and denouncing their actions even when they surrounded him and pushed a truncheon in his throat. Saying that his voice and the right to use it was his last freedom and that they would have to kill him for it. A brave man like so many that night. Also Helen who attacked a mob of riot police as they surged towards her, on her own. Even the bully boy leader had to admit she was a brave girl and told her so. Another chap who I

can only describe as man bearded, bespeckled friend, who is slight in build but who stood in the thick of it all night toe to toe with the bastards they never even took the smile off his face. Big Jim who just kept charging into them at Wellclose even after they broke his wrist. And Tim who had so many truncheons hit him that night he looked like a losing Rocky but he still kept going in. I am only sorry I cannot mention all the brave men and women that night. Enough to say I was very proud to be with them. I make no apologies for any of the action taken that night. My only apology is that we were not as well equipped as them or we could have inflicted a lot more injury. Remember what I said earlier, they declared war on us.

As for Neil Kinnock, Norman Willis and all those who condemn. Get off your arses and find out for yourselves what is going on, don't sit back and condemn because Maggie's men tell you to. Anyone who was not at Wapping has no right to comment. You can't pick out what part of news you will believe and what part you will discard. Come down and see for yourself or shut your mouth when you don't know what you are talking about. We have had twelve months of police at Wapping. We are the experts on them. Anything they get they deserve. They are out of order.

I have listened to Willis, Kinnock, Hurd, Wyn the Fib and many other prominent people denouncing the violence that night. Most of them were not present, so have no right to comment until they have heard both sides through. Hurd especially had no right to comment because obviously as home secretary his view is biased and predictable and prepared even before the action had taken place. That was obvious for all to see. Talk of banning the demonstrations at Wapping are nothing new from this man. It seems to me that these and many others like them who condemn us never have an alternative to offer. I mean what else can you do if riot police charge at you? What about letting them hit you over the head and then offering them your head again with a smile perhaps? The foolish ones who say you should go home or disperse should be there to see that this is impossible. The riot scum actually chased people who were going home up as far as Tower Hill tube and Commercial Road. The union officials who condemn the police but then admit there were troublemakers in the crowd are surely losing their way in this dispute. This is not just about Saturday 24th January 1987. This is about a solid twelve months of police harassment and brutality with a few of us fighting back. When we attack them we are left wingers, anarchists and all the other labels. Should we be like the coloured kids in Tottenham, Stoke Newington, South London and other places? Please you Union Men and Labour men take a leaf from Arthur's book, if you must comment and you are not brave enough to support our actions at least be man enough not to condemn them. We are not trying to take over the state or cause a breakdown of law and order, we are fighting back against not British law as written in the books. But Wyn Jones law as invented at Wapping patented by Maggie Thatcher and endorsed by Hurd. They should thank their lucky stars we are so peaceful or it might be Downing Street and Parliament itself that we could be attacking. As for Kinnock he should remember his position and not sacrifice us for a few votes he might pick up in the stock broker belt. That won't get him into No 10, we will and at the moment that's very doubtful. He has lost a lot of voters and friends at Wapping. Voters he and his kind have taken for granted for years.

In conclusion, to date the Dangerous Brothers have been arrested three times, fined and put on bind-overs. But they are more active now than they were at the start. The Windmill has had more fights than Henry Cooper and won them all. He has been arrested twice fined and bound over, but he is still more active now. The Bomber arrested twice fined and bound over, but he is still more active now. Fatty is still more active than ever.

Dab Hand is exactly the same, never misses a march or a flyer. Dapper Dan has quietened down a lot although he still attends marches he has been arrested twice it might of taken its toll.

25. AFTER THE 24TH

After the battles of the 24th January we had a meeting to decide our next move. It was agreed that we should step up the action quickly. The media was taking notice at last although for the wrong reasons. But as the saying goes there is no such thing as bad publicity.

On Monday 26th January it was arranged for us to turn up at Wapping and take the gate at 3AM. We arrived but unfortunately not enough of us. We decided to have a go anyway. Now taking the gate is always done peacefully. You simply walk across the Highway down Virginia St. and stand at the main gate of N.I. The police send for the cavalry and reinforcements which normally takes an hour or more and by then we have achieved our objective which was to delay Murdoch's scabs from entering or leaving the plant and we walk away back to Wellclose.

But this time it is different, because we are so few in numbers. A paper boy jumps out of his transit with no warning and starts belting people around the head with his truncheon. Of course we fight back but two are arrested and the reinforcements are there within minutes so we must retreat.

However like so many defeats we manage to turn it to our advantage. While the paper boys are busy protecting the gate from a non-existent threat we can go on raiding parties around the area which we do with impunity and with success. Lorries are bricked, scabs are chased and beaten up.

The morning had its humorous side. Lucky was one of those hit by a truncheon but that was not what upset him. It was the fact that the paper boy who hit him came from his own area. I tried to explain that they are all animals from whatever area but I couldn't for laughing.

The fact that we had been awake at 3AM made most of us feel that we should use the opportunity to our advantage so we were out all day scab hunting. The police would have helped Mr. Murdoch a lot more if they had let us take the gate for an hour. What they should learn is the lesson we have learned if they stop you doing one thing, do something else. Incidentally the scumbag who started wielding his truncheon was taken off duty when an inspector arrived and learned what had happened. I don't give him any credit for his move I just mention it as a fact. It suited his purpose at that time to call his dog off. The same inspector will turn his dogs loose for the same reason.

We remain active right up until the usual march on the Wednesday. We arrive at Tower Hill and are all impressed by the turn-out. It proves once again that the intimidation of the 24th has not worked. We are still here. The march proceeds without incident. The paper boys behave themselves. They are under the spotlight a bit.

26. THE SELL-OUT

Like a knife in the heart the sell-out came suddenly. It is a crazy mixed feeling of betrayal, sadness, anger, and hate. The unions have withdrawn from the dispute. They say they had no alternative because of Murdoch's court action. Brenda Dean does not look like a

beaten picket, with her hairdo, makeup and jewellery, plus her expensive car to take her to the television studio. I have just spent twelve months of my life supporting sacked workers who have lost a lot. Men and Women boys and girls who have followed this woman in a desperate struggle for jobs. And now she sits in a television studio telling us that's it. It's all over. It was all for nothing. She has not missed one appointment with her hairdresser, or had to sell any of her chattels to keep going. But to add insult to injury she looks quite happy about it and never once offers a word of thanks for our support. This woman should be hounded out of office immediately. They want Murdoch, let them have Murdoch. I am sure that we can survive if we get organised quickly.

It was like a soldier running out of ammunition. A suicide charge or surrender. Support could have won the day. We must bring them into line or get rid of them. We have a few options. They need us and our contributions. We don't need them. Or take other action but we need to stay together and organise. We are untouchable now. Remember all the suffering that has gone on in the last year.

I would like to say that whatever the final outcome, I am proud to have met you, the printers in your dispute. You have fought a brave fight against enormous odds and I think you have been victorious in many ways. We certainly beat the old bill on occasions and raised questions about them. We have stopped Murdoch a few times and discredited him in many quarters. And there were so few of us. They couldn't beat us. Our own union might of beaten us if we take it lying down but I don't think the fighting men and women I have stood with the past twelve months will lay down for long. I have spoken to many men and women about the sell-out. It means a lot of things to all of us. But I will try to say what it means to me.

It means that my wife can sleep on Wednesdays and Saturdays for the first time in twelve months. That we can now go out as a family again on Saturdays or for weekend trips. It means that we can talk of something else other than Wapping. We can watch other programmes on the Television rather than the news. It means my family can get back to leading a normal life, that me and my son can now devote some of our time to them. That we can all relax and start again enjoying ourselves in each others company. That is the good side of it. And for that I am truly grateful that it is over. I cannot describe the agony my family have gone through this last year. The worry, the isolation, the fear of a knock on the door. Never being free weekends. They have stood up to it so well. Never grumbling or moaning. I know some wives have walked out for less. Words cannot express my gratitude and admiration for her.

But the bad side of it is the betrayal. The feeling that we have been cheated. We had this bastard reeling on the ropes and the referee disqualified us. We were winning, our small army was beating the lot of them. So they changed the rules. It's like playing cards having a full house. And then somebody telling you that as from now a pair beats a full house. That hurts and will go on hurting for a long time. Friends you stood side by side with fighting for your life, are now speechless and subdued when you meet. People who were not for you or the dispute are now walking about with very smug looks on their faces. I have done what I considered the right thing and would gladly do it again even if I knew in advance how it would end. We have given them a good fight and who is to say it is all over. While I live and Murdoch, Dean, and Thatcher live, the fight goes on for me.

All I ask is that you don't forget the deeds of brave men on your behalf and that you stay in touch for the day of reckoning that will surely come. We must remember. We must bear the burden of responsibility for allowing this monster to run riot over the workers of this country, and we must at all times be ready for the call. Above all we must remember the lessons learned. Don't accept your leaders at face value. Don't trust your employers

any time. Don't believe speeches, words are cheap. But in this case they were worthless. Brenda asking my son to get off his knees and fight in January 1986 sounded good. Look what she asked him to do and then think how she backed him up. The sell-out was complete and she still has not acknowledged anyone who took part with a thank you or a word of condolence. Nothing. She should be sacked at once and so should all those who worked with her. Don't be fooled by her whining about she had no option. We were in the front line. We were not giving in. We were suffering. But still we stood. We were getting beaten up. But still coming back for more. So don't let her tell you she had no option. She had.

They try war criminals don't they? How about making a start with her. Charge: Treason followed by Wyn Jones. Charge: it's got to be lying and inflicting cruelty to pickets. Then we could have Harris! For untold crimes against humanity followed by Maggie: collusion with the enemy. Then Mathews; "I was only following orders." All guilty of treason, homicide and spreading disease throughout the land. Murdoch will disappear up his own arse before we can get to him, like Hitler we will never know what happened to him.

But to be serious they should not be allowed to get away with it. The scabs will suffer in their own way. They will always have to think before they speak in case they are in the company of pickets. They will always have to check what pub they go into in case they are spotted by pickets. But above all they will have to live with what they have done. Always lying and covering up whenever the dispute is mentioned and it will be mentioned. People will still be talking about Wapping for many years to come. It has to become a part of our history. So scabs will live in shame for years to come and we must all ensure that they are never allowed back into the fold. You might have to work alongside them sometime, never forget their crimes. You might see them in the street. Treat them as fools. Let them and their friends know what they have done.

We had a traitor in our midst, Ginger, as I mentioned earlier he took the money half way through the dispute, some of the gang still speak to him, but that is about all they do. They say hello and make polite conversation. But he knows what he has done, and he is suffering because of it. He looks a shadow of his former self. And it will remain that way forever. He is still trying to justify his action, not to us, but to himself. So was it worth it. The thing is those who held out to the last are getting the money anyway, but with honour for the rest of our lives and that is the difference. I spoke to a printer about the sell-out. He seemed a bit defeated and said it had all been for nothing. I quickly stopped him there and told him he had no reason to think like that. We have achieved a great deal. We have stemmed the tide and bought a bit of time for the rest. We hurt Murdoch more than any of us realised at the time. We have stood against all odds together and with heads held high.

As for the rest of the gang. The only one we have lost contact with is Fatty, but I am sure he will get in touch before too long. The rest have all got temporary jobs on various papers. We have not come out of it too bad. There is a strong bond between us. A strong feeling of companionship and we are still there. Life goes on.

POSTSCRIPT

It is now June 87. Maggie has just won an election to rule for another five years. I am sitting in Wellclose writing what should be the end to this episode. I would like to say the end to this dispute but I cannot.

As I sit here I can see the scabs on the landscape all around me and recall countless deeds of men and women who were fighting for their jobs. I have a great feeling of anger towards this scab plant sitting in front of me. Still being allowed to turn out his papers in spite of all that has gone on. A great feeling of anger that we have not finished the job yet. But a feeling of shame overrides my anger. Shame for the way we were sold out. Shame for the TUC and Labour Party.

A deep shame for the people who should have supported us but did not. A lot of these are now suffering the same fate and being sacked along with the scabs who have served Murdoch's purpose they can now be dumped. A deep shame that our rights have been taken away without a single argument from any quarter. In most parts of the world people would take to the streets, but not here. My deepest shame is for the way we have allowed all this to happen. Our rights gone, the police force a band of mercenaries, who can smile at little old ladies, so politely then turn away as they get mugged or raped. Who can be so polite to you one minute then crack your skull the next without a reason. Please don't tell me it is only a minority. It is not, it is the Majority doing it at different times.

I look to my right I see some broken railings, to stumps of trees, no doubt ripped up to be used as defence against the paper boys on the riot. To my left is a stencilled message "Please don't buy the Sun". In front of me is a scab "Convoys" leaving the plant. They are starting to build on the main battleground, the car park, but they will never build over the memories.

I know that all those brave pickets who stood their ground so often will gladly do so again. There are many like me who are only waiting to be called.

Now I have brooded long enough in this godforsaken hole. I must finish. My apologies to anyone I have not mentioned and should have. There must be thousands of you.

My thanks to those that have helped me.

"Victory tomorrow for today we fight."

"...I am approached by one of them brandishing a truncheon in my face. "Piss off to Wellclose, you can't come through here." He is standing just at the rear of two horses. I put all the venom I can into a righthander and send him sprawling to the floor..."

Read about fighting the police, smashing scab lorries, closing down distribution depots and generally disrupting the smooth running of Rupert Murdoch's media empire.

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