



Pride: The Unlikely Story of the True Heroes of the Miner's Strike

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In 1984, a small group of gay men and lesbian women stepped away from London's vibrant gay scene to support a beleaguered mining community in the remote valleys of South Wales. They did so in the midst of the 1984 miners' strike—the most bitter and divisive dispute for more than half a century. In the 1980s, Margaret Thatcher's social and fiscal policies devastated Britain's traditional industries, as AIDS began to claim lives across the nation. As the government and police battled "the enemy within" in communities across the land and newspapers whipped up fear of the gay "perverts" who were supposedly responsible for inflicting this disease, miners and homosexuals unexpectedly made a stand together and forged a lasting friendship. It was an alliance which helped keep an entire valley clothed and fed during the darkest months of the strike. And it led directly to unions and the Labour Party accepting gay equality as a cause to be championed. *Pride* tells the inspiring true story of how two very different communities—each struggling to overcome its own bitter internal arguments, as well as facing the power of a hostile government and press—found common cause against overwhelming odds. And how this one simple but unlikely act of friendship would, in time, help change life in Britain—forever. This is the true story that inspired the Golden Globe Award-nominated, GLAAD-nominated, BAFTA-winning film *Pride*.

Pride: The Unlikely Story of the True Heroes of the Miner's Strike Details

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From Reader Review *Pride: The Unlikely Story of the True Heroes of the Miner's Strike* for online ebook

Emma Dargue says

incredible book that highlights one of the lesser known parts of Britain's social history when lesbians and gays support the miners (lgsm) and a group of coal miners from South Wales came together through the coal miners strike of 1984-85. this book shows the suffering solidarity and utter heartbreak of two groups of people who were unfairly discriminated against due to thatcherism and were abused and were starved into submission by a government who had privatised everything to line the pockets of the fat cats in London at the expense of Britain's industrial heartlands.

David says

After I watch movies based on historical events I'm often very interested in finding out more about the event, person or whatever it is about. *Pride* (www.imdb.com/title/tt3169706/) was no different and I was happy to find out a book had been published about it and decided to pick it up. I certainly wasn't disappointed by it, but it didn't add much to the story of the movie.

The book is chronological going from the background, through the actual events and in the end chapter even a small part about how LGSM was invited to lead the *Pride* parade in London after the movie was released and how LGSM wanted to lead together with trade unions which the *Pride* committee denied them. It is made up of interviews and discussions with the actual people involved together with the author's short exposition of the events covered. The interviews is from both the Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners (LGSM), Lesbians Against Pit Closures (LAPC) and people from the mining community. It isn't in depth interviews with one person at a time, but rather several voices is heard for every part of the story.

I think the background part of the book, which cover both the background of the miners and that of the lesbian and gay communities and the hardships they all went through, is the one thing missing from the movie. Which is quite normal since a historical background is hard to convey in an appealing way in a movie. For the other parts it is small nuances which is the difference. Gethin probably didn't own the bookstore where they held there meetings, Joe/Bromley probably didn't exist but is rather a collage of different characters, the reception of LGSM into the mining community was not as tense as portrayed, etc. The one thing which the book adds some depth to in the actual events is the LAPC split off from LGSM. It is clear there certainly are differences of opinion on the split and whether it was good or not. In the movie the LAPC is a bit brushed of as comic relief and therefore I appreciated they got the chance to tell their side of split in the book. Their part of the history feels a bit short-changed in the book also though, although not as severely as in the movie.

The focus of the book is definitely on LGSM. Most of those interviewed in the book is from LGSM, then the miners community and the least amount of interviewees is from LAPC. Whether the difference in number of interviewees from LGSM and LAPC is a reflection of the number of people involved in the organizations and their respective impact I don't know (LGSM was clearly first and LAPC a splinter group though), but obviously the number of miners greatly exceeded those of LGSM and LAPC. And even while the lesbians and gays emphasize how the meeting with the mining community changed them, it is much easier to see how the lesbians and gays had an impact on the mining communities and the possibility to come out as a

homosexual. A great example of that is Cliff who was part of the mining community who had hid his sexuality his whole life and suddenly his village is visited by a group of homosexual men and women. Hywel Francis, one of the interviewees from the mining community, recounts how Cliff was excited weeks in advance for LGSM's visits and how it was such a big thing for him. Which is not hard to imagine.

All in all it is a good, not amazing, book, but I recommend you watch the movie first. And if you are like me and want to know more about the characters and the history, do pick it up and hear the voices of those who were there. It is amazing the history which was in danger of being forgotten, as told in the final chapter of the book, now has gotten a new life through the movie and the book. And it certainly is a story worthy of remembrance.

Aimee says

Tim Tate's book of the true story of the 1984 miner's strike, as seen in the hit 2014 film of the same name. The most powerful part of this book is that it uses the words, voices and names of those who were there to recount the good, the bad, and everything in between in those mid-80s years that were so fraught and full of change. It's amazing to see how much and how little has changed. Still, the power of kindness and compassion shines through and fills you with pride.

Sam Herbert says

Pride is the inspiring true story behind the hit film. Set in the 1980's, this is the story of Thatcherism, the miners' strike and how they struck up an unlikely alliance with gay men and women from London. I'm not a politically-minded person at all: I didn't know a lot about the miners' strike apart from what I'd learned from seeing Pride and Billy Elliot. This book is written from the perspective of both the miners' and from members of the group, Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners (LGSM), and it is straight from the horses' mouth: their views and opinions as well as facts about the time. It really is written in layman's terms, simple and easy enough to understand, without getting bogged down with political jargon. Finding common cause at how the striking miners were facing abuse and persecution from the government and the police, and how the gay community were consistently being treated the same, LGSM started fundraising for the miners and donated their money directly to a suffering mining village in South Wales. What follows is an unlikely friendship between LGSM and the miners, a friendship that supported the strike, and a change in attitude across the valleys towards gay people. After the miners' strike finished, the miners continued to support LGSM by campaigning to get a gay rights motion passed into the Labour Party agenda. The people in this story are the unsung heroes of the miners' strike. I find it completely baffling at how the gay community were treated in the 1980's and how the government and the media constantly persecuted them, creating ridiculous laws and discriminating against them purely because of their sexuality. Ultimately, this is a story of struggle, overcoming that struggle and campaigning and hoping for change. A wonderful story, one that really moved me at times. If you haven't seen the film, YOU NEED TO.

Siân Esther says

An excellent insight into the lives of the Lesbian and Gay activists, Welsh miners and miners families during the mid 80s in the UK. Not only is it an ultimately uplifting book but it gives you a real taste of the political

and social climate of Britain during the mid 80s from a LGBT and working class perspective. I loved this book.

Aline says

"You have worn our badge, 'Coal not Dole', and you know what harassment means, as we do. Now we will pin your badge on us; we will support you."

Turns out that even in book form, the scene where the miners join the 1985 Pride march still makes me cry buckets and buckets. This story is just so immensely powerful and heart-warming. It means solidarity and unity, one struggle, one fight, and I will always carry it with me, everywhere I go in life.

Kim Howard says

I am of a similar age to many of the contributors to this book and am saddened by how little of my own history I know. This book does not claim to be a balanced discussion about the events. Instead it gives voice to the people who were there and experienced it all at first hand. One of those books that you have to hug before you return it to the shelf - although I am certain there are many people who will have totally opposing reactions.

Corina says

I watched the movie three times when it first came out, so you can imagine my thrill when I managed to get a copy of this book from Gay's The Word, particularly as it was a signed copy by Mike Jackson! The fact that it's mostly made up of interviews with little intervention from the listed author was refreshing compared to other books that focus more on structural narrative. It gives a lot of historical context for the social environment of Thatcher's Tory government, and the consequences of its toxic policies on the mining communities. Also it was interesting to see the divide in ideologies in the gay community of the time, which is still very much in place today, like lesbians having separate groups and bisexuals not really being accepted anywhere. But the main story is one of such warmth and hope, that even if there wasn't a clear win for the underdogs it still felt like a victory as this experience paved the way for progress and new legislation. Definitely recommend, and it's a must to watch the movie in parallel!

Mrs Chris Wilson says

I found this book enthralling. I think the choice to present events as described by people there at the time was a master stroke. I was 22 in 1984, doing my finals at uni and I am ashamed to say that these events more or less passed me by. Reading this book has been a real education for me, one that has sadly come 30 years too late. I would recommend this book to everyone.

Ellie says

Pride (2014) is one of my favourite films - it's such an inspiring story! If you haven't seen it yet, I highly recommend it.

I enjoyed the extra insight this book gives into the story behind the film. If you've already watched the DVD's special features, most of the book won't be news, but nonetheless it's a fun and very accessible read. Would recommend.

Eleri says

First off, I love the film 'Pride' and that is what drew me to this book initially. Being from South Wales and the daughter of a strong trade unionist I knew a lot about the Miners' Strike of 1984-1985 but this story was new to me. This true story of the coming together of two such diverse groups as miners and lesbians and gay men is heartwarming and the long-term effects flabbergasting.

Stylistically, I love the way that the story is told through the words of the people who were involved, with the author chipping in to furnish us with facts and figures and move the discussion along. We learn about the history of mining disputes in the UK and the immense amount of people employed in the industry. I have been down several mines in various areas and could not have coped with the horrific conditions; the men that did though had no choice, because there were few other jobs available to them and so down the pits they went, from such young ages, to support their families and to provide the rest of the country with fuel. We learn as well about the historic struggle for gay rights, and the out-and-out hostility that homosexuals faced right into the nineteen eighties and nineties. The interesting parallels that exist between the two groups are emphasised; both were marginalised and attacked by various conservative governments, and, more worryingly, by the press.

The words we read in 'Pride' are honest, and often hard-hitting. For example I knew that the police would use entrapment methods in order to arrest homosexuals, but was totally unaware of the lengths that the laws reached; thankfully we live in more enlightened times but that is surely only down to the struggle of the likes of people in this book.

I cried more than once whilst reading this book; it was certainly an emotional roller-coaster. Sometimes the tears were out of frustration and anger that a government could do what they did, to the miners and to the gay community. At other times I teared-up with sadness at the hopelessness of the situation. Mostly the tears were tears of joy and pride at the unquestioning solidarity and humanity that these two groups showed to each other. If Margaret Thatcher showed us the worst of humanity then surely the likes of Mark Ashton and Dai Donovan demonstrated the best, being people we should all aspire to be.

I think Pride is an important book, particularly in the current political climate where groups are being marginalised and attacked by various factions. We can't underestimate man's inhumanity to man and we can't underestimate the lengths that our government will go to in order to subjugate its people, and to silence them on the major issues. This is a history that we do not teach our children, but we definitely should and I would be in favour of putting this book on school reading lists.

The overriding theme of this book is solidarity and the things that can be achieved when people find a common bond and work together for the greater good; who could possibly argue with that?

If you've enjoyed the film then you should definitely read the book. If you haven't seen the book then you should definitely read the book. If you were a fan of Thatcher then you should definitely read the book. If you were anti-Thatcher then you should definitely read the book. Basically, everyone should read the book. You might not like everything you read, or agree with what the people inside it say, but you might just learn something.

Mike Jackson says

We are very pleased with Tim Tate's curation of our story about Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners (LGSM). From the outset Tim was clear that he didn't believe he could / should write our story but rather interview the individuals involved and curate what we said. He has done a brilliant job of this. His narrative thread is essential to put our words into political, social and historical contexts. I have heard some people say that they find it strange that a book should follow a movie but in this case the movie was based on real life people, events and the archive which we kept (now at the Peoples' History Museum, Manchester, UK). One correction to the title above. LGSM were NOT the true heroes of the Miners' Strike, the heroes were the striking miners and their communities. LGSM, alongside millions of others, were proud supporters of their cause. And still are. It ain't over yet!

If you want further information about LGSM see our webpage:
www.lgsm.org.

Kylie Alvey says

Why can I say I am completely and utterly amazed. This book is extremely remarkable and beautifully written. I love reading books based on real life because I get that sense of what happened and I get to learn a lot more about history, history that happened way before my time.

I mean I've seen movies like holding the man, pride and the normal heart. It's sad, really really sad but informative nonetheless.

I highly recommend this book.

Chent Higson says

Last book of 2017 woop woop!

It's hard to believe that I only watched Pride for the first time earlier this year. I've since watched it over a dozen times and I can honestly say no story has changed me as much as this one has. It gave me courage and conviction to be who I am and to fight for it.

The only reason the book of this historical story lost a star is because I wasn't totally sold on the style, and I felt it missed out on some depth because of it. I loved reading the words of the actual people involved (particularly Mike Jackson) but I could've done with more from the self-appointed narrator.

But I hardly care. I love the story, the movie, LGSM and everyone and everything to do with it and I genuinely screamed when I discovered this book had been published.

Sean Kennedy says

This is a great companion to the film, as it gives even more background to the story and enriches the whole experience. If you loved the movie, I cannot recommend this enough.
