



Exploring coal mining with folk song

Pony Driver

Written by Bryony Griffith

In partnership with

***the National Coalmining Museum
for England***

and

Wakefield Music Hub





The Full English Extra

The Full English Extra was an initiative to preserve and promote the folk arts, building on the success of EFDSS' flagship project The Full English, which created the world's largest digital archive of folk songs, dances, tunes and customs, and a nationwide learning programme that reached more than 16,000 people. The project was led by the English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS), funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The Full English Extra saw the collections of Mary Neal, suffragette, radical arts practitioner and founder of the Esperance Girls Club, and folk dance educator Daisy Caroline Daking added to the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library online archive (www.vwml.org), alongside its collection of 19th century broadside ballads and songsters.

The Full English learning programme worked with three national museums – the Museum of English Rural Life at the University of Reading, the National Coal Mining Museum for England near Wakefield in Yorkshire and the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich, London – combining folk arts and museum education to provide powerful new learning experiences for schools and music hubs.

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Additional Resources: Audio recordings of all the songs in this pack are available for free download from www.efdss.org/resourcebank.

Pony Driver Lyrics

Collected by A.E.Green from William (Bill) Hill in 1966 who worked as a pony-driver at Glasshoughton Colliery in 1925. The song is found in 'Poverty Knock', edited by Roy Palmer and also 'Doon the Wagon Way – Mining songs from the North of England', edited by Micheal Dawney. It also appears on the Yorkshire Garland website www.yorkshirefolksong.net

1. I am a driver, these are mi tubs,
I'm off the road boys and my pony rubs.
Where is the doggy? No-body knows.
'e'll be daan on the pass-by, pickin' 'is nose
2. I shall be glad when this shift is done,
Then a'll be up there, aat in the sun.
Tha'll be daan 'ere boy, in this dark 'oil.
Still gruntin' and groanin' and pullin' this coil.
3. Corn's in the manger, watter's in'trough
Th'all shove thi nose art when tha's 'ad enough.
A'll tek thee in't standing an' drop off thi gear,
An' when ah come back, ah know tha'll be 'ere.

Pony Driver Notation



Pony Driver Questions

This song demonstrates Yorkshire dialect and mining terms.

On your visit to the National Coalmining Museum of England (NCMME) in Wakefield, see if you can find the answers to these questions:

If you can't find the answer, ask one of the guides, they are real former miners and will know lots of answers!

(Answers on next page)

1. What is the job of a *driver*?
2. What are *tubs*?
3. What is the pony rubbing on?
4. What is the job of the *doggy*? Where does the name come from?
5. What is the *pass-by*?
6. What do '*oil*' and *coil*' mean?
7. What is *watter*?
8. What is the *standing*?
9. Before the Mining Act of 1832, who pushed and pulled the coal carts?

Answers

1. The driver led the pit-ponies along the railtracks in the mines while they transported coal from the pit face in big, wheeled coal carts.
2. Coal 'Tub' is another name for a coal cart. The ponies were harnessed to the tubs and pulled them along the railway tracks, either full of coal or empty.
3. Sometimes the tubs came off the tracks by accident. The tunnels were low-roofed so if the pony and cart came off the track, its back would rub on the low roof at the side.
4. The 'doggy' was in charge of looking after and repairing the tracks that the coal tubs were pulled along. The name apparently comes from the 'dog nails' that were used to hold the tracks down.
5. A 'pass-by' is a section of wider tunnel with a double track where carts going in opposite directions could pass each other.
6. If 'coil' = coal, 'oil' means 'ole.....or hole.
7. 'Watter' is water. 'Ochre watter' is water that has turned orange because of the amount of iron in it.
8. The 'Standing' is another name for the stable. The stables were down the mine and the ponies spent nearly their whole life underground. At some pits, they were allowed to run around up top for a few weeks in the summer.
9. Following several pit disasters in which children lost their lives, an investigation into working conditions down the mine took place and led to the Mining Act of 1842. It deemed it unsuitable for girls, women and boys under ten to work down the mines. Young boys and girls had previously been 'thrusters', pushing the carts with their heads, or 'hurriers, pulling the carts with a large belt around their waists. Pit ponies were introduced to replace them.

The National Coal Mining Museum for England

The National Coal Mining Museum for England is the museum of the English coalfields and is based near Wakefield in West Yorkshire. Set in a reclaimed coal mining landscape including two historic pits, Caphouse Colliery and Hope Pit, the Museum brings to life the history of one of the country's oldest industries.

Visitors can access original colliery buildings to find out how life at a pit worked and explore interactive galleries, which tell the story of the thousands of people who laboured in the industry and the communities that grew around them. The Museum's nature trail and mine water treatment plant with reed beds show how, even today, coal mining leaves its mark on the landscape.



*National Coal Mining Museum for England:
Bird hides and Caphouse © NCMME*

The highlight of a visit to the Museum, however, is a trip underground. With a former miner as their personal guide, visitors ride the cage 140 metres underground in a shaft dating back to 1791, to discover first-hand what life was like at the coal-face.

The Museum runs a vibrant learning programme for school groups, welcoming over 16,000 pupils every year. The combination of historic buildings, galleries and natural landscape provide a unique creative learning space where pupils can investigate the past, solve a scientific problem, dress-up, touch the real thing, sketch, observe and be amazed. The Education team offer a series of workshops and trails, which support learning across the curriculum and provide a stimulus for lots of creative projects.

For more information about learning opportunities at the Museum, please visit the website www.ncm.org.uk/learning

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Wakefield Music Services

Lead Organisation for the Wakefield Music Education Hub



Wakefield Music Services is the Lead Organisation for Wakefield Music Education Hub. They are proud to teach over 7,000 young musicians every week and run over 70 progressive ensembles and groups. They also organise and run a wealth of concerts, projects and events throughout the year. Their belief that practical music making is for everyone through an inclusive approach not only ensures that each individual makes musical progress but that they also develop a wider range of educational, social and life skills.

The music service also offer a broad range of support and CPD for schools in a drive to continue to raise national curriculum standards and broaden musical opportunities. This includes the delivery of highly acclaimed training across the country and publishing a variety of original resources that are used in schools.

Musical opportunities have continued to grow and enrich over the last few years as they have developed new, exciting and innovative projects with other arts and cultural organisations.



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Outstanding Music for All

www.wakefieldmusicservices.org

Biography: Bryony Griffith



Bryony Griffith is a musician and singer with over 20 years of experience researching folk material, and devising innovative ways of presenting it for use in performance and education work with children, young people and adults. Bryony's skills and enthusiasm encompass solo performance, duo and band work, and also extensive experience of playing for folk dancing. Her solo album, *Nightshade*, was released in 2014.

Bryony is an experienced folk educator in school settings, including education work linked with the National Coal Mining Museum. Bryony is in much demand by festival organisers to lead music and singing workshops, including the Folkworks Summer Schools, Shepley and Whitby folk festivals.

As a performer, Bryony works as a solo artist, and also in a duo with melodeon player and dancer Will Hampson. Over the last 15 years, they have both been key members of the award-winning Demon Barbers. Their partnership started in the acclaimed ceilidh band Bedlam in their early teens which took them all over the UK festivals and gave rise to the formation of the young Cotswold side, Dogrose. They later joined the celebrated Newcastle Kingsmen. Bryony was also a member of the *a cappella* group The Witches of Elswick.

www.bryonygriffith.com



Explore The Full English digital archive

www.vwml.org/thefullenglishproject

Discover more learning resources

www.efdss.org/resourcebank



At the English Folk Dance and Song Society, we champion the folk arts at the heart of England's rich and diverse cultural landscape.

Our award-winning Resource Bank contains over 100 resources – incorporating hundreds of audio files, videos and supporting documents, all free to download. They offer endless practical ways to use folk song, music, dance, drama and more in all sorts of community settings, as well as in formal education.

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