

Don't Go Down the Pit

Words and Music: Nigel Harbron

The musical score is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of two staves. The first staff has four measures with lyrics: "Don't go down the pit, my hin-ny, Don't go down the pit, my son." The second staff has four measures with lyrics: "Find your - self a job a - bove ground, Don't do what your fa - ther's done." Chord symbols are placed above the notes: D, Em, G, D, Em, A in the first staff; D, G, D, G, A, D in the second staff.

Don't go down the pit, my hinny,
Don't go down the pit, my son.
Find yourself a job above ground,
Don't do what your father's done.

Never mind the easy money,
Never mind what others say.
Try to find a better living,
A safer way to earn your pay.

Once the cage has started dropping,
There's no life for you to see.
Work above the ground, my hinny,
Where the birds fly strong and free.

When you're working at the coalface,
There's no time to stand and stare.
Cutters' blades are always whirring,
Deadly dust is in the air.

Just because your brothers work there,
Don't believe the tales they tell.
Miners' lives are not worth living,
Every day's a glimpse of hell.

Forty years your father worked there,
Once he stood both proud and tall.
Then the coal dust started working,
Now he's good for nowt at all.

He'll not see the next year out,
His life on earth is almost done.
Don't go down the pit, my hinny,
Don't go down the pit, my son.



An artist's impression of 'volunteers' going on a rescue mission in 1882

I was brought up on the edge of the Durham Coalfield, and went to school with lads from Trimdon Grange - of Trimdon Grange Explosion fame. For a while I was quite taken by the daughter of the District Nurse from Trimdon, but, sadly, little came of the relationship.

This is, of course, a woman's song, as men in County Durham rarely call each other 'Honey' (more than once)!