



Exploring coal mining with folk song

Blue Scars

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.

Supported by the National Lottery through the Heritage Lottery Fund.



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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.

Blue Scars

'Blue Scars' is based on the stories, ideas and vocabulary from the 'History detectives' and 'Learn some words' activities done at St.Thomas' School in Featherstone.

Miners spent so much time down the mine working in the black coal that the dust often became engrained under their skin and was impossible to wash out, leaving a permanent blue scar. In this song it is also a metaphor for the way the town is still affected by its mining past. It is something that will never go away and will not be forgotten as memories live on through the town's heritage and history.



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Lyrics

1. I can see the blue scars on my Grandad's arms,
Reminders that the coal mines took over from the farms
Look behind the playground you'll see the grassy stacks
Underneath the fields up there the miners broke their backs

Chorus: Blue scars running through the miners' hands
Coal dust engrained in us forever
Black seams running underneath the land
Reminders of our history, our heritage, our past, Blue Scars

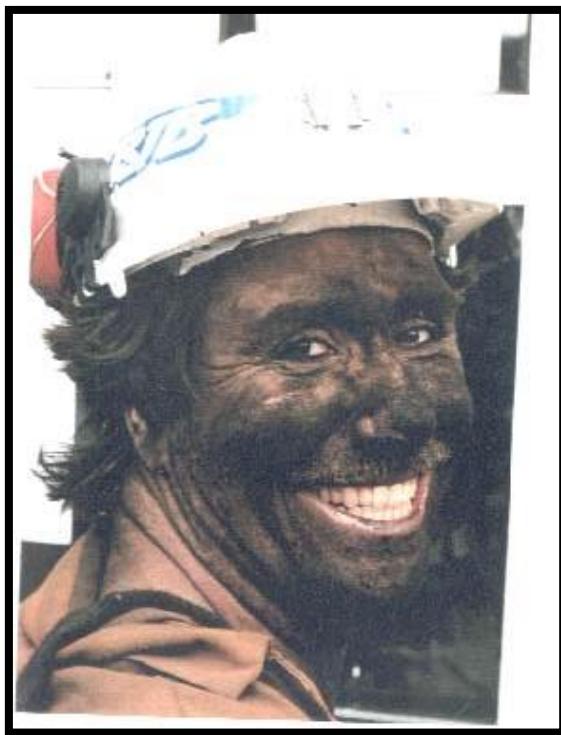
1. We can see the carvings on the mural from our school
On the corner there's a coal tub filled with flowers instead of fuel
Look beside the roadside you'll see the old pit wheel
reminding us not long ago its job was very real
3. Gravestones in the cemetery, Memorials in the town
The miners faced their fears in the cages going down
Black tears falling down their cheeks, the horrors are no lies
They hung their tags up on the racks and kept their spirits high.

-
4. High and low flames flickered as you checked your Davey lamp

The underground's the devil's if you don't detect your damp
Coal as black as night sky but you couldn't see the stars,
Crawling through the tunnels with your blue and aching scars

5. Lunch was from a snap tin and shifts were 12 hours long

The hearts of our community, the miners loved a song
Thrusters, hewers, hurriers, the little trappers too
The ponies and the families here's a memory song for you



© NCMME

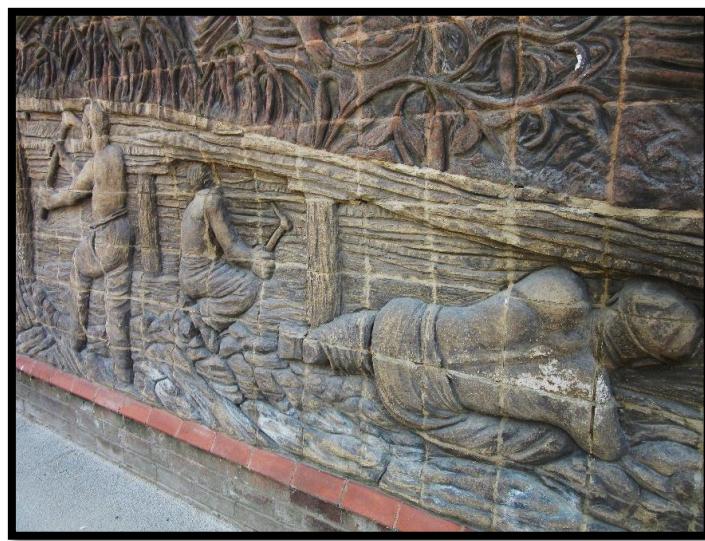
Blue Scars Questions

1. The chorus uses the words 'Heritage' and 'History'.
Discuss what these mean.

2. Discuss why you think it is important to learn about our past.

3. Listen to the song or use the lyric sheet to make a list of all the landmarks in the song that demonstrate the town's mining heritage.
Are there any similar landmarks in your town or village?

4. What are the 'Blue Scars'?



Featherstone Memorial Mural (© Bryony Griffith)

Blue Scars

Written by Bryony Griffith with Lucy Huzzard and Year 6 pupils at St.Thomas' CE (VC) Junior School, Featherstone

Piano

6

12 Chorus

Blue scars run-ning through the mi-ners' hands, coal dust en-grained in us for

16

ev - er— Black seams run - ning un - der - neath the land re -

19

min - ders of our his - to - ry, our her - it - age, our past, bl - ue scars.

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

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.

wakefield
music services

Wakefield
Music Education
HUB

Providing Teaching Directing Forging Inspiring Fostering Creating Building Serving & Delivering
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