Introduction

The Institute Library doesn't have a huge collection of mining songs and poems, but has some archival and other material that may not be available elsewhere and this guide indicates how to find these items. Useful websites are also noted.

Books

Poems modern and contemporary

*The Hartley calamity* Joseph Skipsey (poem)

*The Hartley men are noble and*
*Ye'll hear a tale of woe*
*I’ll tell the doom of Hartley men -*
*The year of sixty two*

*Twas on the Thursday morning, on*
*The first month of the year*
*When there befell the thing that well*
*May rend the heart to hear*
*etc.*

Colls, R. The collier's rant: song and culture in the industrial village. 1977

Cooke, George *The miner's pocket companion, a poem: enlarged and corrected, containing the principal accidents in collieries in the counties of Durham and Northumberland. Also the loss of the royal charter to which is added as an appendix, the Hetton Colliery explosion. 1861*

Griffiths, B. *Pitmatic: the talk of the North East coalfield. 2007*
Songs/poems used to illustrate the language

Harker, D. I. *Songs from the manuscript collection of John Bell. 1985*
Section: Coalwork

*Colliers of Wear and of Tyne* J.M. Clarke (song) 1811

*The brewer may sing of his barrel*
*And tell you the strength of his ale*
*The sailor may sing of the ocean*
*And tell you how nicely they sail*
*The soldier may sing of the battle*
The well ordered phalanx and line
I’ll sing you a song about colliers
The colliers of Wear and of Tyne

Hard wrought but still cheerful and hearty
The life of a collier you know
With picks made of very good metal
We hew down the board as we go
And tho in the colliers black market
There’s nothing but coals for to sell
The numbers that live by our labour
Would make a long story to tell
etc.


Poems, prose and songs.


Newton, Gwen (ed) *We are women, we are strong: the stories of Northumberland miner’s wives* 1984-85. 1985
Has poems and songs

Wilson, Thomas *The pitman’s pay and other poems*. 1893

Biography of the singing mining family with words and music of their songs

**Some individual songs/poems**

**In the Tracts**
(Bound collections of a variety of pamphlets, reports, leaflets, newspaper cuttings, etc)

Not all songs in the *Tracts* are in the Library catalogue – a spreadsheet listing others is available.

Verses on the Cruelty of the Masters to the Pitmen 1844
*Tracts 54, 227*

*O Lord hear the poor pitmen’s cry
Look down on us with pitying eye
With heavy bondage are opprest
And all our families are distrest*

*Thou heard the Israelites of old
And led them to a blessed fold
Deliver us from slavery
And set the sons of Britain free*

etc.

*The pitmen’s union* by William Walker Story and George Watson
*A new song on the pitmen’s grievances* by Jane Knight
Sunderland T. Huntley 184?
*Tracts, 214, 53.*
*The miner's right*, by James Purdy  
**Tracts 54**, 251

*The miner's complaint*, by R.H. Fawcett  
**Tracts 214**, 36 (from *Miners advocate* 2 Dec 1843)

*Ryhope Colliery; or, The Black Diamond Wallsend*  
A new song - tune, "Dog cappy"  
**Tracts, 64**, p55-56

They may talk of their pits on the Wear or the Tyne,  
Of their Primrose so good or their Wallsend so fine;  
I care not to brag but I'll drink no both rivers,  
If Ryhope coal beat not their best samples to shivers.

Chorus  
*Weel done Ryhope, canny place Ryhope,*  
*Ryhope's the place, Tally O! Tally O!*

*It's as bonny a coal as the world ever saw,*  
*As clean as a sixpence, as black as a craw;*  
*So bright that like sunshine it dazzles us a',*  
*So roundey, folks axes "what's getten the sum?"*

*etc*

**In the NEIMME Archives**

Currently there is no online access to the archives lists, so you will need to contact the Library for assistance.

**Forster archive**  
NRO 3410/For/1/18/100  
c1831  
Song entitled *The Pitmen's Complaint*, by J. Knox, printed by J. Marshall, Newcastle

**Bell archive**  
NRO 3410/Bell/12/256  
July 1844  
Song entitled *The Miner's Doom*, by Henderson Fawcett  
Poem entitled *Verses on the Cruelty of the Masters to the Pitmen*, [1844]

**Watson archive**  
NRO 3410/Wat/1/27/32  
Song entitled *Fish Betty's Account of Herself. A Parody on Billy Oliver*

**Websites**

Coal Mining Songs and Poems - Pitwork site  

FARNE: Folk archive resource North East  
Searchable archive of songs

Yorkshire Garland Group  
[http://www.yorkshirefolksong.net/song.cfm](http://www.yorkshirefolksong.net/song.cfm)  
Search for mining.
A collection of poems - Coalmining history resource centre

Some poems and stories all with a mining theme - Welsh Coal Mines site
http://welshcoalmines.co.uk/Poems.htm

Coalfield Web Materials
http://www.agor.org.uk/cwm/
Poems, songs

The Tommy Armstrong Society
http://www.pitmanpoet.org.uk
'The pitman poet' from North West Durham

Trimdon Grange explosion (song) 1882

Let's not think of tomorrow,
Lest we disappointed be;
Our joys may turn to sorrow,
As we all may daily see.
Today we're strong and healthy,
But how soon there comes a change.
As we may see from the explosion
That has been at Trimdon Grange.

Men and boys left home that morning
For to earn their daily bread,
Little thought before the evening
They'd be numbered with the dead;
Let us think of Mrs Burnett,
Once had sons and now has none -
With the Trimdon Grange explosion,
Joseph, George and James are gone
etc.

Joseph Skipsey
http://www.gerald-massey.org.uk/skipsey/index.htm

Bersham Colliery Poems
http://www.aditnow.co.uk/documents/Bersham-Coal-Colliery/Bersham-Poems.pdf

Scotland's songs
http://www.scotlandssongs.com

Janey Buchan Political Song Collection
https://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/cca/research/music/projectsandnetworks/jbpsc/

Mudcat cafe
http://www.mudcat.org/
Folksong lyrics search and discussion forum

English Folk Dance and Song Society song collections search
http://www.vwml.org/search