



- Coupler** 1849: A boy who couples or connects, by means of the coupling chains, the tubs of coal in order to form a set or train.
- Drivers** 1825: boys employed to drive the horses, that draw the sledges, rollies and wagons, from the crane to the shaft.
1849: A boy employed in driving the horses on the main road underground. He is usually 14 or 15 years of age.
- Hewers** 1825: persons that hew or cut the coal from its natural situation.
1849: A man who works coals. His age ranges from 21 to 70. His usual wages (1849) are from 3s. 9d. to 4s. 3d. per day of 8 hours working, and his average employment 4 or 5 days in the week. He also has, as part of his wages, a house containing two or three rooms, according to the number in his family, and a garden, of which the average size may be 6 or 8 perches ; also a fother of small coals each fortnight, for the leading of which he pays sixpence.

1892: The hewer is the actual coal-digger. Whether the seam be so thin that he can hardly creep into it on hands and knees, or whether it be thick enough for him to stand upright, he is the responsible workman who loosens the coal from the bed. The hewers are divided into "fore-shift" and "back-shift" men. The former usually work from four in the morning till ten, and the latter from ten till four. Each man works one week in the fore-shift and one week in the back-shift, alternately. Every man in the fore-shift marks "3" on his door. This is the sign for the "caller" to wake him at that hour. When roused by that important functionary he gets up and dresses in his pit clothes, which consist of a loose jacket, vest, and knee breeches, all made of thick white flannel; long stockings, strong shoes, and a close fitting, thick leather cap. He then takes a piece of bread and water, or a cup of coffee, but never a full meal. Many prefer to go to work fasting. With a tin bottle full of cold water or tea, a piece of bread, which is called his bait, his Davy lamp, and "baccy-box," he says good-bye to his wife and speeds off to work. Placing himself in the cage, he is lowered to the bottom of the shaft, where he lights his lamp and proceeds "in by," to a place appointed to meet the deputy. This official examines each man's lamp, and, if found safe, returns it locked to the owner. Each man then finding from the deputy that his place is right, proceeds onwards to his cavelt, his picks in one hand, and his lamp in the other. He travels thus a distance varying from 100 to 600 yards. Sometimes the roof under which he has to pass is not more than three feet high. To progress in this space the feet are kept wide apart, the body is bent at right angles with the hips, the head is held well down, and the face is turned forward. Arrived at his place he undresses and begins by hewing out about fifteen inches of the lower part of the coal. He thus undermines it, and the process is called kirving. The same is done up the sides. This is called nicking. The coal thus hewn is called small coal, and that remaining between the kirve and the nicks is the jud or top, which is either displaced by driving in wedges, or is blasted down with gunpowder. It then becomes the roundy. The hewer fills his tubs, and continues thus alternately hewing and filling

Putters 1825: those who fill the corves (strong osier baskets in which the coals are conveyed) and lead them from the hewers, on four-wheeled carriages called Trams, to the crane or shaft. The barrowman pulls before, and the putter putts or thrusts behind. In high seams, horses are used instead of men.

1849: (see [Barrowman](#))

1892: The putters used to be divided into trams, headsmen, foals, and half-marrows. These were all boys or youths. Their employment consisted in pushing or dragging the coal from the workings to the passages in which horses could be employed. Formerly the coal was conveyed by the putter in corves or tubs. Now small waggons called trams are generally employed. When a boy dragged or put a load by himself he also was designated a tram. When two boys of unequal age and strength assisted each other, the elder was called a headsmen and the younger a foal. The former usually received two-thirds of the amount earned jointly by the two. When two boys of about equal age and strength aided each other they were called half-marrows, and their earnings were equally divided. The introduction of metal plates and waggons in place of corves, however, has almost done away with joint labours of this kind. Formerly the labour of the putter was of the most arduous description. Wilson describes it as having been "the most distressing slavery." "It was," he says, "generally performed by boys, in nine cases out of ten too weak for the purpose, if even the materials had been better than they were over which the trams then passed. What must it have been when a beech-board was a godsend? And, more frequently, they had to drag their load over a fir-deal or the bare thill [the natural floor of the mine], the former too often split from constant wear, and the latter too soft to bear the load passing over it. Now the whole way is laid with metal plates, even up to the face of the workings, so that a man or lad may run the tram before him both out and in, the plates being so formed as to keep the tram in a right direction." It was customary at one time to employ girls and young women as putters. This disgraceful and demoralising practice, which continued in Scotland and some parts of England until it was prohibited by law in 1843, was abandoned in the county of Durham about the year 1790. Even before that date the custom was more prevalent in the Wear collieries than in those of the Tyne.

1894: Person who pushes mine waggons from the working place to a horse road or mechanical haulage road

Rolley-Way Man 1849: A man whose business it is to attend to the rolley-way and keep it in order. It is also his duty to keep away the work, and see that no time is lost in getting the full waggons to the shaft and the empty ones in-by again. His wages are about 2s. 9d. for 8 hours, or 3s. 4d. if he stands 12 hours (1849).

1892: The rolley-way is a road or path sufficiently high for a horse to walk along it with the rolley, and is kept in repair by the rolley-waymen. The driver has charge of the horse. The onsetter transfers the tubs to the cage in which they are raised to bank, where the coal is weighed, screened, and sorted

Shifters 1825: men who repair the horse-ways and other passages in the mine, and keep them free from obstructions.

Stoneman 1894: Person who makes excavation in "stone" i.e. hard strata other than coal

Trappers 1825: boys of the youngest class, employed to open and shut the doors, which keep the ventilation in the workings regular.

1849: A little boy whose employment consists in opening and shutting a trap-door when required : his wages are 9d. or 10d. per day of 12 hours (1849). At present 1s. to 1s. 2d. per day of 8 hours. (1888).

1892: They are the youngest boys employed in the mine. They are stationed at traps or doors in various parts of the pit, which they have to open when trams of coal pass through and immediately to close again, as a means of directing the current of air for ventilation to follow certain prescribed channels. It was formerly the practice to send boys of not more than six years to work in the mine as trappers. They remained in the pit for eighteen hours every day, and received fivepence a day each as wages. He was in solitude and total darkness the whole time he was in the mine, except when a tram was passing. He went to his labour at two o'clock in the morning, so that during the greater part of the year it was literally true that he did not see daylight from one Sunday till the Saturday following.

1894: Boy attending to a ventilating door