

Roachburn Colliery 1908

Words and Music: Nigel Harbron

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It consists of four staves of music. The lyrics are written below the notes. Chord symbols are placed above the notes. The lyrics are: 'Near Hall-bank-gate in Cum-ber-land there used to be a pit, And Roach-burn Coll-ery was its name, you may have heard of it. For_ fif - teen years it plied its trade, A_ safe place it was said, But then one day the roof caved in and three brave men are dead. Those men died down be - low, down be - low, down be - low_ they died.'

Near Hallbankgate in Cumberland there used to be a pit,
And Roachburn Colliery was its name, you may have heard of it.
For fifteen years it plied its trade, 'A safe place,' it was said,
But then one day the roof caved in, and three brave men are dead.

Ch: Those men died down below, down below, down below they died.

It was one hundred years ago, in nineteen hundred and eight.
The early shift was underground, the coal to excavate.
The night before the mine was wet - more pit props were put in -
But little did the miners know that the seam was very thin.

Above the pit there was a bog filled up by Winter's rain.
As miners worked up through the seam, the nearer it became.
A final blow from someone's pick went through the seam so thin,
And tons of water, mud and moss came pouring down on him.

James Wharton died in seconds flat, there was nothing he could do.
Bob Pattinson and Matt Hilliard, then led the rescue crew.
But they too never came back out, their bodies never found.
Now all three men lie out of reach a mile down underground.

The Roachburn shafts were all filled in, near Byron Pit closed too.
An enquiry found no-one to blame, and that is probably true.
But while we send men underground just armed with shovels and picks,
There will be some who won't return when the cruel earth plays its tricks.



The Roachburn Memorial

IN
REVEREND
MEMORY OF
WILLIAM WHARTON
HEWER WHO WAS KILLED
BY THE FLOODING OF ROACH-
BURN MINE * * * * AND OF
ROBERT PATTINSON
DEPUTY OVERMAN * * * AND
MATTHEW HILLIARD
BACK OVERMAN * WHO BRAVELY RETURNED
TO THE PIT AND GAVE UP THEIR OWN LIVES
IN THE ATTEMPT TO RESCUE THEIR COMRADE
JANUARY 28 - 1908