

# **CHILDREN'S EMPLOYMENT COMMISSION 1842.**

**REPORT by SAMUEL S. SCRIVEN,  
Esq. on the Employment of Children and  
Young Persons in the Coal Mines of  
North Staffordshire and Cheshire and on  
the State, Condition, and Treatment of  
such Children and Young Persons.**

**Edited by Ian Winstanley.**

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# COMMISSION

(UNDER THE GREAT SEAL)

## FOR INQUIRING INTO THE EMPLOYMENT AND CONDITION OF CHILDREN IN MINES AND MANUFACTORIES.

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**VICTORIA**, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland Queen, Defender of the Faith: To Our trusty and well beloved Thomas Tooke, Esquire, Thomas Southwood Smith, Esquire, Doctor in Medicine, together with Leonard Horner and Robert John Saunders, Esquires, two of Our Inspectors of Factories, Greeting:- WHEREAS, an humble Address was presented unto to Us by Knights, Citizens and Burgesses and Commissioners of Shires and Burghs in Parliament assembled, humbly beseeching Us that We should be graciously pleased to direct an Inquiry to be made into the Employment of the Children of the Poorer Classes in Mines and Collieries and the various branches of Trade and Manufactures in which numbers of Children work together, not being included in the provisions of the Acts for regulating Employment of Children and Young Persons in Mills and Factories and to collect information as to the time allowed each day for meals and as to the actual state, condition and treatment of such Children and as to the effects of such Employment, both with regard to their morals and their bodily health; NOW KNOW YE, THAT WE, reposing great trust and confidence in your ability and discretion, have nominated, constituted and appointed and do by these presentiments nominate, constitute and appoint you the said, Thomas Tooke, Thomas Southwood Smith, together with, Leonard Horner and Robert John Saunders, to be Our Commissioners for the purposes aforesaid and We do hereby enjoin you to obey all directions touching the premises which shall from time to time be given you, and any two or more of you, by one of our principle Secretaries of State and for the better discovery of the truth in the premises, we do, by these presentiments, give and grant to you, or any two or more of you, full power and authority to call before you such persons as you will judge necessary, by whom you may be the better informed of the truth in the premises, and to inquire of the premises and every part thereof, by all other lawful way and means whatsoever and We do hereby also give and grant unto you, or any two or more of you, full power and authority when the same shall appear to be requisite, to administer an oath or oaths to any person or persons whatsoever, to be examined before you, or two or more of you, touching or concerning the premises and Our further will and pleasure is, that you Our said Commissioners, or any three of you, do, with as little delay as may be consistent with a due discharge of the duties hereby imposed upon you, Certify to Us, under your hands and seals, or under the hands and seals of any three of you, your several proceedings in the premises; And We further will and command, and by these presents ordained, that this Our Commission shall continue in full force and virtue, and that you, Our said Commissioners, or any two or more of you, shall and may from time to time proceed in the execution thereof, and of every matter and thing therein contained, although the same be not continued, from time to time by adjournment: AND WE HEREBY COMMAND all and singular Our Justices of the Peace, Sheriffs, Mayors, Bailiffs, Constables, Officers, Ministers, and all other of Our loving Subjects whatsoever, as will within Liberties as without, that they may be assistant to you and each of you in the execution of these presentiments. And for your assistance in the due execution of this Commission, We have made choice of Our trusty and well beloved Joseph Fletcher, Esquire, to be the Secretary of this Our Commission, whose services we require you to use from time to time, as occasion may require. In witness thereof, We have caused these Letters to be made Patent. Witness Ourselves at Westminster, the Twentieth day of October, in the Fourth Year of Our Reign.

By Writ of Privy  
Seal,

EDMUNDS.

**LETTER OF INSTRUCTIONS EXTENDING THE TERMS OF THE COMMISSION TO  
“YOUNG PERSONS”**

*Whitehall, February 11th, 1841.*

GENTLEMEN,

THE QUEEN having been pleased to comply with the prayer of an humble Address presented to Her Majesty, in pursuance of a Resolution of the House of Commons, dated 4th. of February, 1841, ‘That Her Majesty will be graciously pleased to direct that the Commission appointees in answer to an Address of this House, on August 4, 1840, for the investigation of certain branches of Infant Labour, do include within its inquiry the Labour also of Young Persons designated as such by the provisions of the Factory Act’ I am delighted by the Marquis of Normanby to desire that you will include within your inquiry the Labour of Young Persons designated as such by the provisions of the Factory Act accordingly.

I am, Gentlemen,  
Your Obedient Servant,  
(Signed) F. MAULE.

*The Commissioners for inquiring into the Condition  
of Children employed in Mines, &c.*

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# ROYAL COMMISSION REPORT 1842.

## REPORT by SAMUEL S. SCRIVEN, Esq. on the Employment of Children and Young Persons in the Coal Mines of North Staffordshire and Cheshire and on the State, Condition, and Treatment of such Children and Young Persons.

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TO HER MAJESTY'S COMMISSIONERS.

GENTLEMEN,

I HAVE now completed employed in the mines, collieries, and furnaces in the neighbourhood of Cheadle, Rugeley, &c. As I have made no previous report upon this subject, I must be allowed to begin with Longton, Burslem, Shelton, and Kidscrew. In the first of these places are the works of Mr. Sparrow, called the Mossfield Colliery, where, upon an examination of the banksmen, I found that there were no children employed under the age to which my instructions extended. As however a previous arrangement with one of the butties, and with the Rev. Dr. Vale, the learned rector of St. James's, who kindly volunteered to initiate me into the mysteries of mining, had been made, I determined at once to descend with them. This was accomplished in chain 'slings' or 'tackles,' by means of a steam-engine, technically called a 'sawney,' or 'whimsey.' On alighting at the bottom, I found a large fire burning, by which the surrounding air became rarefied, and ascended tile up-cast shaft, occasioning at the same time other to descend the downcast shaft to occupy its place, and thereby creating a current to pass through the mainways, and by this means thoroughly ventilating the heads and workings.

We proceeded, with the assistance of candles on our journey, and met from time to time loaded corves drawn by ponies of twelve and thirteen hands, wonderfully apt and well trained for their work. The height of these passages obliged us to grope in the semiflexed position the whole distance of nearly half a mile, so that at the end had a painful difficulty in recovering myself. I cannot easily forget the scene that presented itself on my arrival at the place of operations, where about twenty men were working in their peculiar posture around the walls of the excavated chamber, assisted by the dim light of some dozen candles. Their appearance had something truly hideous and Satanic about it and prompted me to ask myself - Can these be human creatures? The heat arising from the congregation of so many persons and so many candles, together with the offensive odour from their excessive respiration, was intolerable; all were naked or nearly so.

I was informed by the buttie that wild-fire, as they call it, was not uncommon here and I too soon heard of a melancholy proof of it, an explosion having occurred only a few days after my visit by which three men were severely burnt and four others killed. There appeared to me to be a great want of precaution in the use of lights and by their frequent application to crevices in the strata of coal in order to ascertain whether sulphur was really present, as would be indicated by the burning of the jets that issued from them. By the way of amusement the men would sometimes inflate the mouth with a sufficient quantity to produce a stream, by contracting the lips and setting fire to it as from an argand burner to the great glee of others who looked on.

The next colliery I visited in this neighbourhood was that of 'Old Field,' in Fenton, which was reported to me at the time 'full of sulphur,' and its operations consequently suspended. The same morning two men had unfortunately been dreadfully burnt one of whom died three days afterwards. The other recovered. There were but two boys employed, and these upon the 'bank.' I then visited the 'Fenton Park' works belonging to a company, Messrs. Copeland and Baker having a number of shares. Here, too, it was my destiny to hear of another accident from an

explosion of firedamp, in which two persons were burnt. One died, the other recovered. These repeated calamities occasioned a disinclination to descend, especially as I found that the objects of my search were extremely limited in their numbers, and in no case amounting to more than one or two to a pit, and these sometimes a good distance apart.

At Shelton there are the blast furnaces and pits of Lord Granville, which I also visited with Mr. Forester, the agent. Some of them are worked by 'gins' and horses, there being a boy to drive. No young children were employed below. This I found to be the case throughout the whole of the collieries within the district of the potteries, they being occupied in the earthenware manufactories.

Before, however, I left Burslem, I understood that it was likely I should find many 'young persons,' who were now included in the commission, at the colliery of Mr. Kinnersley, at Kidscrew, a village containing a population of about fifteen hundred persons, about five miles distant, nine hundred of whom were employed by the above gentleman, who exclusively possessed the property round about. I therefore determined on devoting a day to an examination of the people and pits, in company with the Rev. Theophilus Campbell, the incumbent of Tunstall.

Some five or six years ago the inhabitants of this place were said to be in a state little removed from barbarism, notoriously ignorant, vicious, and depraved and as much a terror to the surrounding country as the now equally notorious 'Biddle Moor.' About this time, Mr. Kinnersley erected, at his own expense, an exceedingly elegant and commodious church, there being no other place of worship within some miles, together with a Sunday school for both sexes, and fortunately appointed the Rev. Mr. Wade to the living, whose devoted zeal in furthering the object of the founder in promoting the education and improving the religious and moral condition of the parishioners, soon became manifest and obtained for him the love and respect of every individual in the place. It was not long before a day-school for boys and girls was established by the same benevolent person, to which a master and mistress were appointed under the superintendence of the clergyman, which (like the church on Sundays) is crowded.

The character of the people is altogether different from what it was. They are now regular in their devotional exercises, steady and domesticated at home, industrious and hard-working in their avocations, and respectful and obedient to their superiors.

I descended with Mr. Campbell the pit called, from its great depth, the endless chain, accompanied also by the intelligent agent, Mr. Robert Heath. In alighting at the bottom we passed through a lengthened brick archway, having on either side stables for the accommodation of twelve or fourteen horses. We then took our seats in separate corves and travelled by stages of five or six hundred yards, for about a mile and a half, through low passages, and at times immense excavations, until we arrived at a steam-engine and an inclined plane. Here the heat from the boiler and fire was insufferable and obliged me to disencumber myself of some part of my dress. We then proceeded down the plane for three or four hundred yards to the heads and workings, where a great number of men and lads were occupied, the latter in 'drawing' and 'pushing' the skips to the rail in order to be drawn up by the engine. It may well be imagined that their appearance was truly disgusting, as having, during the time they stood before me for examination, not a vestige of clothing on, save their shoes and 'byats,' which term, I apprehend, is peculiar to this part of the country and implies the harness which in the south is described as the 'girdle,' but different from it by being a pair of straps over the shoulders, meeting in a broad piece behind and terminating in a chain and hook - a pair of closed scissors would well illustrate its shape. The girdle is objected to as causing the perineum to chafe, and producing inguinal hernia. Although I have been particular in my inquiries upon this subject, I have met with no examples of the kind.

On a reference to the minutes of evidence it will be seen that I examined four lads, the agent and an old workman, whose depositions concur as to the regularity of their hours of work, and that they were neither too many or irksome. The meals as in all other places of the kind, are taken at no stated periods, nor is there any specified time allotted for eating them, each person having a certain quota of work to do, they are all eager to get it over that they may ascend the sooner. Of all the occupations of life this to me appears the most laborious, dismal, and dangerous. To be deprived of the light of Heaven six days in the week - of all social intercourse with friends and of every domestic happiness and yet be satisfied, and choose it in preference to any other, is indeed extraordinary: but so it is. Ask them, and nineteen out of twenty will say, "I'd rather be collier than farmer or potter."

The only lead or copper mines to be found of any consequence in this part of the county are those of belonging to his Grace the Duke of Devonshire of the North Staffordshire Mining Company close by and at Deep Dale, near Grindon. To the first of these I was accompanied by the Rev. C. Westlake, of Leek, which I descended. Its enormous magnitude and depth (fifteen



hundred feet) rendered it a formidable undertaking however, it was accomplished with some effort but save the satisfaction it gave me, to no purpose, as no young persons were to be found. On returning to the surface I visited the stamping-mill, and there examined about twenty lads whose respective ages varied from ten years to eighteen, who with two exceptions could read and mostly write. All attended, when the weather would permit, the Sunday-schools of one or other of the immediate parishes, there being no church, chapel, or school nearer than Butterton or Wetton (two miles). All these boys were healthy, happy and contented. Their hours of work (which is that of sifting and cleansing the metallic ore) were regular, from six to six. The time for meals two hours, which they always had and their wages paid by the week, amounting upon the average to 7s. they never work overtime, or are employed at night.

In the North Staffordshire Company's works there are only twenty men and no boys. In the Deep Dale only four old men and no boys.

The next field of my labour was at the collieries at Cheadle, where I arrived on the 18th. Were I found the works of Mr. Bowers, 'the Wood-head Company' having four pits, those also of Mr. Holmes, the 'Delph-house Colliery,' of four pits, of Mr. Thomas Fowell, the 'Harplow Colliery,' of two pits, of Mr. Whithurst, the 'Litley Dale' Colliery; Messrs. Malkin and Hamsmersley, the 'Huntley Colliery'; Messrs. Bamford and Co., of the Dilhorn Colliery and the Cheadle Brass and Copper Company's Colliery and Brass Works, both at Cheadle and Oakamoor; from each of which I took more or less evidence.

It is gratifying to be enabled to say that I received from masters, agents, men and boys the best and most respectful attention and that I do not remember having met with a more intelligent class of labourers in my life. Nine-tenths of them were regular attendants upon one or other of the religious places of worship and had acquired in their later years a proficiency in reading the Scriptures by the good example of their parents the boys were growing up in godliness and wisdom. Every one that I examined, with scarcely an exception, could read fluently, their signatures will prove how they write. Their appearance indicated robust health, and contentment. I found no cases of injury to their persons resulting from the nature of their employment, barring here and there a contused leg, or head from the falling of a piece of coal. They go without murmuring to their work and return without any apparent fatigue.

The seams of coal in Cheadle are not more than from three to four feet, consequently all the mainways are low, with 'shaley' roofs, and wet bottoms. No ponies could therefore, work in them. I descended the Dilhorn pit and had to stoop, my hands supporting the body upon my knees the whole distance. This position the boys acquire when young and like the sitting posture of the 'pickers,' who rest upon their heels, becomes habitual to them. Pass these men in an idle hour and it is ten to one but you will find that they are resting themselves in this way. The corves or waggons which the boys draw or push when loaded weigh from four to five hundred weight, which seems very great but they rest on rails and are mounted on wheels which are not more than one-fourth of an inch in thickness, rendering their movement extremely easy. In no instance have I found females employed either in the bottom or on the banks, or could I conceive a more humiliating or proper place for them.

At Breton, near Rugeley, there are two collieries, one belonging to Earl Talbot the other to the Marquis of Anglesea, leased to Mrs. Sarah Palmer, and superintended by her agent, Mr. Grice. Both are conducted in a very orderly manner, the last I descended with the agent and found a goodly number of lads, whose occupations were those of cleansing the workings of 'slack' or small coals and of drawing and pushing slips to the mainways by 'byats.' In this pit ponies, asses, and heavy horses were used, as the thickness of the seams (eight feet) would admit of them. The loads they drew varying from twelve to twenty hundred weight. The roof was firm and rocky, bottoms dry and sound, explosions rarely met with but, as in Cheadle, the 'choke-damp' is common and got rid of by the usual means of ventilation. The boys were all robust and healthy, without personal injury or deformity. Their hours of work here never deviate from six to six, deducting one hour and a half for meals, which the butties never encroached upon. Many of these boys who live within reach of the village, where there is a national day and Sunday school, as well as an endowed Wesleyan, could read and write. The others could not. The returns will show correctly how many. The agent informed me that, on his arrival amongst them four years ago, he found the people in a very turbulent state but by a system of kind and firm treatment he succeeded in establishing good order and with this view framed certain regulations for their future guidance, engaging no man that will not pledge himself to act up to them. A copy of these I append.

In every colliery that I visited I have observed the practice of leaving the mouths of the pits

that have been 'worked out,' either loosely fenced off or altogether neglected. In some fields adjoining the towns, particularly at Longton, there are to be seen three or four guarded only by decayed rails, often so badly put together by rusty nails or rotten hemp, that the weight of one boy would break them down, and thus become a trap for the unwary whereas the expense of bricking them round to the height of four feet would be trifling, and the defence effectual.

Another practice that ought to be amended is that of allowing more than four persons to descend and descend together to or from their work.

In some of the deep shafts the chains weigh from two to three toils, added to this are the corves and chain-slings, contributing two or three hundredweight more; into these ten, twelve, or fifteen men and boys will leap, to the imminent risk of their lives.

It is not necessary that the weight alone should precipitate them to the bottom but it may happen that the boiler or machinery may be out of order. The engineer in whose attention they confide may be careless and unmindful of his duty, not stopping the engine when he ought, and thereby drawing the whole over the pulley above the pit and other unforeseen casualties to which they are at all times liable, may effect a fearful and terrible destruction of human life.

Within a distance of two miles from the town of Tamworth there are two collieries belonging to Mr. Best, called Keddlebrook and Glasscot. They employ seventeen boys, with from fifty to sixty adult males. Each colliery has two shafts. The mainways are five feet high and the seams of four feet thickness.

The coals are drawn in the first instance from the workings to the mainways by boys and then to the shaft by horses. On an examination of James Shirley, aged 16, and Joshua Sneyd, aged 15 (No.53 and 54), I found that it was the occasional practice of the butties to work their lads from five o'clock in the morning to three of the following morning, without their coming above ground even for their meals and then, worn out with the fatigue of twenty-one consecutive hours of work, were allowed only to recruit their strength with three hours of rest, as they were required to be at the pit's mouth at five o'clock again, to descend with others. Joshua Sneyd states:- "I sometimes do night work with other boys. We worked last night and all day yesterday and left the pit at three o'clock this morning. I got up again at five, having had two hours sleep, and went to work. Should have been to work now if you had not wanted me. I would rather have stayed at home longer but the butty said we were to work on to-day, as the work was wanted." This lad was very illiterate, as he knew not one letter from another but healthy and cheerful. James Shirley was equally so. I was informed by Mr. Best, the proprietor of the works, that they (the boys) often sought the privilege of working overtime to enable them to save a little money for 'wakes,' or fairs but the unwillingness with which they replied to the question whether they considered it as such, satisfied me that they would have forgone 'the privilege' for a good night's rest.

Out of the seventeen in the Keddlebrook Mine, four were under twelve years of age, the thirteen others were under seventeen, very few, not more than one-third, could read, and not one could write. They were all employed 'turning coals,' or driving corves. Their usual hours of work were from six in the morning to seven at night, out of which there was a nominal hour allowed for the dinner meal below ground, which they managed to dispose of in less than half the time.

There were other examples here of the consequences that are certainly resulting from the defenceless state of the mouths of the shafts. It was not long ago that one of the oldest colliers, a steady and industrious man, was walking towards the pit with the intention of descending. Having a candle in his hand, and deceived probably by the glare, he fell over the brink and was killed. The brother of Joshua Sneyd, the witness, met with a similar fate twelve months since. As only one side of the pit's mouth is required to be unguarded, I can see no reason why the other three should not be protected, as accidents are very frequent and fearful.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your most obedient servant,

S.S. SCRIVEN.

Lichfield, March 29th, 1841.

## EVIDENCE COLLECTED BY SAMUEL S. SCRIVEN, ESQ.

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### COAL-MINES OF NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE.

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#### THOMAS KINNERSLEY, Esq., COAL AND STONE PITS, AND IRON BLAST FURNACE, KIDSCREW.

##### No.1 Joseph Cowper, aged 17. Examined February 24.

I have been at work one year at the Bank, and in the Delph [coal pit] before that seven years, where I used to pump water. I cannot read. I cannot write. I went to day-school about three or four months at Ranters' chapel in Kidscrew. I go to church Sunday-school now regularly. I always go to church after that I begin to work at six o'clock in the morning and go home about half-past five. I am very tired when I get home but if there was an evening school I should go to it, if there was nothing to pay for it. It was only 6d., I suppose I could afford that out of my wages but I'd rather go free. I get 10s. a week am in constant employ filling slack above bank. My father is a labourer at the pits. I live with him. I have two brothers who work at pit. One gets 8s. the other 3s. 6d. Mother stays at home, sister goes to day-school at the National School. She is nine years old and can read well and write a bit.

I get tea and bread and butter twice - once before I go to work - once when I come home. I go home to dinner at twelve. Get mostly potatoes and beef, sometimes bacon. One hour is allowed for dinner. My breakfast is brought to me. I take my hour for dinner and generally work breakfast time to enable me to get away sooner I never do night work.

##### No.2 Mr. Robert Heath, aged 62, Agent. Examined February 24.

I am the agent for Thos. Kinnersley, Esq.'s, coal-pits and furnaces. I have been so employed about 14 years. I was so employed for 25 years at the Sneyd Colliery. I do not pay the people but their accounts of all descriptions are made up here. It is always the practice to pay them in hard cash or bank-notes. If there is an exception to this, it is to sell them, at something less than the market price, a strike of wheat, and grind it for them in the bargain. This is an accommodation for them. It is done at their own request. They can buy flour if they like elsewhere but it would be at a higher price and of inferior quality. We have about 900 men upwards, with boys. Out of this number not more than 70 have received this benefit, some in two strikes, some in one, some in half-strikes. I have threatened to do away with it because it gives us trouble and annoyance for they often quarrel who shall have it.

The people are expected to set to work at six o'clock. They must be prepared to begin to assemble at five, because they have a considerable distance underground to arrive at the seat of their labour. They leave, or begin to do so, at about four or half-past. They arrive at the pit's mouth at about five, sometimes before, sometimes after. On Saturdays they begin at two and leave off at twelve. This is the regular practice throughout the collieries in this neighbourhood and it is intended to enable them to wash and clean themselves for the following day and to set their houses in order. I have had now 14 years' experience in this place and am happy to say that I have observed a great change in the moral and religious character of the people. It arises in one measure from the attention paid to them by their clergyman, Mr. Wade, whose efforts during his ministry have been highly commendable. indeed from this cause alone, we have a different description of men. It is still more likely that they will improve from the growing desire to educate the young children, who have now both day and Sunday-schools attached to the church, superintended by the minister and built, together with the church, at Mr. Kinnersley's own expense. Their physical condition I believe to be good, inasmuch as that their wages are good. They live well and are

subject to no diseases from the nature of their employment. Colliers are always subject to casualties in ascending or descending pits and from fire-damps but we are very fortunate, as it is seldom we meet with them. Our pits' mouths are protected as much as they can be and so is our machinery. Children sometimes meet with accidents from machinery. I do not, however, remember a case now. The workmen, many of them, rent under Mr. Kinnersley. To their residences he has attached a piece of land for gardens, in which they grow their vegetables. This advantage they pay any additional rent. There is altogether 16 acres set aside for this purpose, with plenty of manure from the horses in pits to keep it soiled. I think our people are very provident and free from drunkenness, with few exceptions. They attend the church to cramming.

(Signed) R. HEATH.

**No.3 Daniel Knapps, aged 15. Examined February 24.**

I have been working here in Delph six or seven years. He began first to open and shut doors to turn the wind off and on, at No.8 pit. I cannot read or write. I never went to day-school. I go to Sunday-school now at the National, under Mr. Wade. They teach me from a book. I begin at one leaf and turn over to another. I don't know what it is about. When I had done to shut doors I began to drive horses. I does that now. I begin to come to work at five and by the time I gets down into Delph its 'most six. I come up again to bank at six or thereabouts sometoimes a bit arter. I works as you see me, without any clothes besides my shoes; sometoimes I puts on some trousers but I got a hardish job to-day. Yesterday I only drove horse, to-day I got to drive upon sloipes (rails) and to jetty too (upset the corve). I would rather work down in Delph than in pot-works. My father is dead. I left mother 'cause I was clemming (starving). She has had four children afore her was married. I lodge with Isaac Hall. He take my wages at the public-house. He gets all as I get. He finds me in clothes to wear. I got enough. He finds me in meat. I got enough to eat and drink. Tea for breakfast and bread and butter, beef and tatees for dinner, and a supper. If there was an evening school I should go to it to lam my book. Mr. Wade talks to us sometoimes and tells us to be good and to fear God. I sometoimes take his advice, sometoimes I dinna.

**No.4 John Vickers, aged 17. Examined February 24.**

I have been to work about four years. First worked at a farm for four years. My business is to attend at the pit's mouth and haul away the coals that come up from Delph. I get 11s. a-week for wages. Mother gets it from me. I get it from the charter-master. We work by the ton. I get paid at the public-house. I went to day-school for a few months before I worked at farm. I do not go to Sunday-school. I cannot read or write. I went to Church Sunday-school six years but I have left off twelve months. I go to church pretty regular. I come to work at six in the morning and go home about six. I am too tired after work to go to school in the evening. I would rather go if I could but, as I said before, I am always too tired. My father is dead. My mother keeps a child's school. I have three sisters, two of them work in the silk factories at Congleton. The eldest is 18 years. Her has 5s. 6d. a-week. The other is 14; her has 3s. 6d.. The youngest goes to National day-school at Mr. Wade's. They can all read but none of them can write. I get my first breakfast afore I come to work and bring my second breakfast with me. I have supping (milk meat). I go to dinner at twelve and have tatees and bacon. I always take my hour for dinner and get my breakfast how I can. I never do any night work.

**No.5 Thomas Hancock, aged 14. Examined February 24.**

I don't know how old I be. I have worked down here three years when I came first I opened and shut door to turn the wind on and off. If I didna do that the sulphur would get in Delph. I ha' never seen a blow up since I been here. I cannot read or write. I never went to day-school. I go to Sunday school at the National Church school. They teach me a, b, ab. I never went afore he (Mr. Wade) comed here. I drive horses now to and from the pit's mouth. I do not live with my father. His name is Luke Cotton. Susan Hancock is my mother. Luke was a collier. He

got sent out of the country some years ago.

**No.6 William Bambridge, aged 44. Examined February 24.**

I have been in this Delph twenty years. We have about seventy men and boys working here altogether. In the sixteen pits we have upwards of 900. This Kidscrew used to be a terrible place in former times. It is improved a soight sin' Mr. Wade a been here. The colliers wor very low and bad afore that. I see a deal o'difference now. This is brought about by the building o' the school-room and church: a good many o' the children can read their boibles and write a bit now, that's more than many o' the men can. There is a change sureloy. I look upon it the boys' work down here is not over much. They opens and shuts doors, droives horses and the loike. We seldom have any accidents with sulphur. A butty was killed a short whoile ago by a load o' coal falling top on him. I was talking with him at the time. I took him up quite dead.

This colliery (Kidscrew) is the property of Thomas Kinnersley Esq., and is of great extent, there being sixteen coal and ironstone pits with blast furnaces. The population of the village is between two and three thousand, who were wholly destitute of the means of religious worship or education, until within the last four years. They were notoriously a rude, boorish, vulgar and ignorant people and a terror to the surrounding neighbourhood. By the munificent benevolence of this gentleman a church was built to together with an elegant and commodious Sunday school, to which was appointed the Re, Mr. Wade, whose persevering energies to better the moral and religious condition of his flock have been attended with an almost miraculous effect. Mr. K. has also built a day-school which is attended by three or four hundred children, to which is appointed a master and two mistresses, paid by the weekly pence of the children and something in addition, the whole superintended by the same worthy minister. The miners with whom I have conversed appear one and all to be conscious of the blessing thus bestowed upon them and judging from their own admissions of what they were and from reports of their former characters, I should say that they must indeed be an altered people, as they exhibited throughout my examination of the works the utmost civility and respect. The attendance at the church I understand is very great, every sitting being occupied.

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**Mr. HUGH WILLIAMSON'S COLLIERY. 9 Pits.**

**No.7 John Maddox aged 14. Examined February 25.**

I work upon coal bank, helping the banksman, drawing coals in the corves from the pit's mouth. I have been to work foive years, I reckon. I came out of Shropshire. I did nothing there but go to school. I cannot read or write. I go to Church Sunday-school every Sunday, sometoimes, about three toimes a month or thereaborits. I begin work at six in the morning and leave at six. Sometimes I work all night, that is, from six at night until six in the morning, then I do not work all day. I go home and go to bed. I am allowed half an hour for breakfast. I do not always take the half hour, because there may be jobs to do. I am allowed an hour for dinner but only take half an hour for the same reason but then I get away half an hour earlier than usual, or at half-past five, unless there is extra work to do, when I get paid extra. My weekly wages are 6s. The butty of the bank pays me. He works by the ton. My mother and father are both on 'em dead. I live with the woman that reared me. I give her my wages, all as I get. She gives me food and clothing. I get milk-meat in the morning and taters at dinner, sometimes bacon or what she can get. She gives me clothes enough. She is a widow, with one child of her own.

**No 8 John Bennett, aged 14. Examined February 25.**

I first began to work down here about five years ago, drawina' slack and coals. We have no horses down here. I cannot read or write. I go to Sunday-school at Pitshills (the Primitives). I never went to day-school. I start from home to come to work at half-past five in the morning and bring my breakfast with me. I leave off work at six o'clock. Half an hour is allowed for breakfast and one hour for dinner. I always get my time. My wages are 10s. a-week. I am in regular work, very near. My father is a banksman, mother stops at home. I have seven brothers and sisters. Two of us work, the others are either out to service, married, or at home. My father's wages are about a pound a week. Before I came to Delph to work I run moulds at Eli Hawley's, at Burslem, for nearly 12 months, at Enrick in the Wood's two years running moulds and turning jiggers. If I had the same wages in the pot-works I would rather work there running moulds because I should be out of danger. I have seen men as was loike to be killed by coal and stone falling upon them. I have no fear of coming up and going down. I have never seen any fire-damps. I have enough tea and bread and butter and tatees and bacon to eat and I have better clothes at home. The people down here never lay on me.

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**Mr. PRICE WOOD'S COLLIERY. 3 Pits.**

**No.9 Joseph Sperratt, aged 45. Examined February 25.**

I have been a collier ever since I was six years old. I mean that I began to work in Delph when I was six and remained till I was fourteen. Then went into the army and served 14 years, chiefly in India, when I was discharged. I took to the Delph again and have continued ever since. I am married and have four children. There is only one as works in pit. He is under 13 years of age and can read and write. It is a common practice to take children to pit early in some places but not here, as they are generally sent to the pot-works. My boy has to open and shut the doors to direct the currents of air in the passages. That is the only work, or something of the like kind, that boys have to do. Some get the slack up to pits mouth. The work is very easy and they must do something. If I did not keep him to work he would perhaps he running about the country. We never work on Sundays, except the engine-man, who has to look after the water engine. If he neglected that, the water would gain on us and we could not get on. I always send my boy to Sunday-school. There are many Sunday-schools about here, which is a great thing for poor children. They are bad enough now but I cannot judge what it would be if there were none, a deal worse, no doubt. We have no other child working in Delph besides mine. I get 4s. 4d. a-day. The average amount of wages is 4s. A butty gets what he can make. Boy's wages vary according to his age and strength, from 4s. to 8s. or 10s. a week

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**ECTON MINE, belonging to His Grace the DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE, leased to MELVILLE ATTWOOD, ESQ., and COMPANY.**

**No.10 James Twigg, aged 16. Examined March 5.**

I am a dresser of copper and lead, that is I sift it and clean it with water. There are seventeen of us doing the same sort of work. The mill at which we work is a quarter of a mile from the mine. None of us ever work in the mine. There is no boy under eighteen there, they have men. James Barker, the mill man or master, looks after the water-wheel. We do not interfere with it. We all come to work at seven in the morning and go home at six. We are allowed half an hour for breakfast and take it in the smithy. We go to dinner in the smithy at twelve o'clock and take an

hour. We go home to supper. I can read a letter and write. I go to school. I used to go to school. There was a school at the mine once but there is not now, because there is a better at Warslow. We all work by the day and get 6s. a-week. We have no night-work. After March we get our wages raised to 7s. The work agrees with us all very well. I would rather be a miner than a farmer. I have been a miner or dresser six years about.

At the stamping-mill I examined 11 of these boys and found them all able to read fluently, having learnt at the Methodist Sunday-school. Their employment was similar in kind and degree.

**No.11 Melville Attwood, Esq., aged 25. Examined March 5.**

I rent the mine which you have explored with me of his Grace the Duke of Devonshire. I have not more than fifty or sixty hands now at work, including the boys which you have examined at the stamping-mill. These boys, with some few men, work by day wage, the rest are tributors, who work by the ton, or rather so much in the pound. Their hours of work are from seven to six. The meals will take them an hour and a half. We have no mines of any consequence in the immediate neighbourhood. All the boys can read, some can write. They received their education in the dissenting schools in the parish. We have no church school nearer Whetton. Upon the whole I look upon them as lads of very good character. I have had no occasion to question their honesty or sobriety. There is nothing in the nature of their employment detrimental to their health, as they all work above ground. I have two steam-engines and one water-mill outside and one large water-wheel in the mine. None of the boys are allowed to work at them or near them. I never hear any complaints from these boys as to the work, indeed they all appear to strive which should do best, as I give to the best bridler every now and then a book (the Young Man's Companion, or something else,) as a reward and also the same prize to the best vanner. I regret the want of church accommodation and a resident minister for this parish of upwards of six hundred persons and think that if the fact were represented to his Grace he would be sure to have one.

(Signed) M. ATTWOOD.

**No.12 Mr. George Buckley, aged 60. Examined March 17.**

I have been the agent of the North Staffordshire Mining Company four years and a half. We have 18 men employed below and upon the bank. There are only two boys under 18 years of age engaged and these are dressers of ore. Neither of them can read or write. One has no parents, the other only a mother; their wages are 8d. per day. They are occasional labourers. There are no other mines in this neighbourhood now in work, except Mr. Attwood's, the Ecton mine. There are no coal mines either, or any other description of work in which children are engaged in any numbers nearer than Cheadle or Leek.

(Signed) GEORGE BUCKLEY.

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**KIDSGROVE NATIONAL SCHOOL.**

**No.13 William Lambert, aged 23, and Mary Shufflebotham, aged 22. Examined February 22.**

We are the master and mistress of this school, which has been established about twelve months. It is supported by the weekly payments of the children of 2d. or 3d., which includes writing, arithmetic, geography, and history. The school was built solely by Mr. Kinnersley. (There is no endowment.) He furnishes the master with house and firing, who receives the payment from

the boys as his salary, which amounts to about £50 per annum. The mistress receives a regular salary of £3. per annum, with house-rent of about £4. A second mistress is educated and allowed £5 per annum. The system of instruction pursued is a modification of Bell's. The children meet at nine in the morning and leave at half-past eleven, one again at one and leave at four. They are regular in attendance. The youngest present is four years, the oldest fourteen. They are taken to work in the pits at eight or nine. I was trained at Shelton, under Mr. Andrews at Shelton. The mistress was trained at Rode School in Cheshire, on the Lancasterian system. We have 118 boys and 174 girls on the books. We average in daily attendance about 225. We attribute the absence of the rest to sickness, or to girls assisting their mothers at home. The children are taught working hemming sewing, knitting, marking &c.

(Signed) WM. LAMBERT.  
MARY SHUFFLEBOTHAM.

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## CHEADLE.

### WOODHEAD COLLIERY, rented by Mr. BOWERS.

#### No.14 Mr. Bowers, aged 33. Examined March 19.

I am the superintendent of my father's colliery, at Woodhead; I always make up the account of wages and transfer the amount to the machine man. We have eight pits, in which we employ about 50 persons above 18 years of age and about 30 under. Out of this number there are 13 butties, who employ and pay all the rest. The usual time of work is 10 hours a day. The characters of the boys are various, some good, some bad but I am of opinion that they are generally good. Many of them can read and write but this depends a good deal upon their parents who, if ignorant themselves, keep their children in ignorance. I have not observed any very material difference between those who have been well educated and those who have not, both make at times very good workmen and good and honest members of society but if I had to chose of two boys, one that could read and write, the other that could not, I should certainly take the first into my service, lest I should want him for any confidential or particular duty. We have had no accidents either from firedamp, blackdamp, or machinery, within the last two years.

(Signed) ELI BOWERS.

#### No.15 John Goodwin, aged 34. Examined March 19.

I attend the weighing machine of the whole colliery and keep the weekly accounts of the people. I also pay them on Saturday night, always in cash at so much per ton. I pay the butties, they pay the men and young people whom they employ. We have nothing to do with either the pay or engagement of the latter. We have three deep pits of about 100 yards and five others of from 15 to 26 yards, in each of these we have, at a rough guess, from 10 to 20 persons of all ages. There are no women or girls. They all go to work at six in the morning and come up when they have done their work, which is generally between four and five. They have to get about 12 rucks or 108 skiffs. They take their dinners always below and get their breakfasts and tea, or supper before and after they come up. About four descend together in chain tackles, very seldom in corves, master will not suffer it on account of their greater liability to accidents. Our tackle is made of flat rope. There is a bailiff whose duty it is to go down the pits and look after the work and tackle. We have also a superior engineer, who works one engine and if anything should be the matter with another he is called to that. The same number (four) come up together. I have been here between five and six years. I have never known a rope to break in that time, or known any accident by the carelessness



engineer. I have known of one accident from black damp, in which eight hands were killed. On that occasion two men, who had been to work at night, lighted a fire at four in the morning at about the middle of the road, which created the obnoxious gas and killed them. Six others descended at the usual time in the morning to their work, they died likewise before any assistance could be rendered. I have known of nothing of the sort since. We have no machinery below; the boys draw the skiffs on the rails, in some cases horses do it, that is only in one it. I think the youngest child we have employed is 10 or 11, the weight of the skiffs they drive is 500. They run them from the workings to the bottom of the pit in pairs. They never draw with the girdle, at least not many, most of them push or drive.

(Signed) JOHN GOODWIN.

**No.16 John Hammond. Examined March 19.**

I don't know how old I am, I was baptised 22nd last October. I went to school at Kingsley before I came to work. I have been to work more than four years. I go to Chapel Sunday-school at Kingsley where I live, about two miles off. I can read but cannot write. I have got no mother or father. I live with Thomas Stephenson and his wife Ellen Stephenson. They sent me to school and paid one penny a week for books and that like. I always go to chapel every Sunday with them, they are Wesleyans. I work in the slack-pit with three men who undertake the work. They pay me my wages, 7s. a week; I give it to Thomas Stephenson, who looks after me. He finds everything and is very good and kind to me and my two brothers, who live there too. Both of them work in pits, one gets 9s. a week, the other. When I'm in pit I draw coals with a pair of byats over my shoulders that come down my back. I keep my waistcoat on but take my shirt and jacket off. I keep my boots and stockings on and put a little cap top of my head. All the other boys do the same in the small pits. The passages from the workings to the pit's mouth is fifty yards and about three-quarters of a yard high. I am obliged to stoop very low to draw the corves on, or should knock my head. I can't always tell how heavy they are. Some is little ones, some is big ones, they weigh from 100 to 200 weight. I leave home at Kingsley at a quarter to six and get to the pit about a quarter past and go down. I come up about seven. I get my dinner down in pit, am allowed no particular time for it and I get it as fast as I can. I generally eat it in a quarter of an hour. I get meat pies, sometimes bacon and cheese with bread. The butties behave very well to me. I have never known other lads beaten. If they were to beat us master would soon stop that and make them fine a shilling. I like the work pretty well. It is hard sometimes. I get very tired when I get home.

(Signed) JOHN HAMMOND.

**No.17. Edward Edwards, aged 41. Examined March 19.**

I am one of the Charter-masters of the Woodhead mine, belonging to Mr. Bowers. I employ 12 men and eight lads under 18, the youngest is between 13 and 14. I undertake the work by the ton and pay the men and boys daily wages. The men receive 2s. 8d., some 3s., the difference is occasioned by the difference in the kind of work, the hardest workers, as those who pick and load too and get slack out. They continue to work a little later. The boys are paid in the same way, some receiving 1s. 8d. and 1s. a day, depending upon their age and strength and activity. Their employment is to push the waggons or skips upon the rail in pairs. If one cannot do it another is put on. The weight comes to about 400 and the number they draw from the workings to the pit's mouth is 108 or 109 rucks. We have no horse in the pit. The waggon-ways being level they (the boys) work in their waistcoats but without coats or shirts and with a girdle over their shoulders. I do not remember any accident that has happened within these few years from damp or machinery. About four go down and come up together. There are no bonnets to the tackle. I do not remember a rope breaking with men on. Our machinery is in good order. I never saw better. I have been a butty about 17 years. I do not think that children are over worked or ill-treated. When they come first they have light work to do. They are broken in by degrees. I do not think their health suffers from the work or from the place they work in. They seldom complain. I was never educated in my youth, that I have always considered a drawback to me. I should have stood a better chance if I could have read, and wrote.

(Signed) EDW. EDWARDS.

**No.18 Ralph Hammond, aged 16. Examined March 19.**

I push waggons along at Woodhead bottom-coal Colliery for Edwards the butty. I went to Kingsley day school and learnt to read and write, both of which I can do well. I attend the Wesleyan Chapel Sunday-school every Sunday. I came to work when I was 10 years old and get now 9s. a week full work. I give it to Thomas Stephens, who looks after me and my brothers. I come to work at a little before six in the morning and leave at four or five, sometimes later, that depends upon how I can get on. The passages in which I work be of pretty good fettle (repair) and can walk easy, they are four feet high, some places are less. It is harder work sometimes than at others, the roads are heavier. I get tired when I get home but I have to walk two miles. I get my breakfast afore I come from home and my supper when I go back. My dinner always in pit, the time allowed me to get it is uncertain. I do not take many minutes because I should be longer afore I came up if I did. I never had any injury in this pit, I had at another where the top was not so high, I got my head cut open there. That stoped me from work about a week. Another time the chain fell down the shaft and cut my head. I have seen firedamp come out of the seams of coal and have put a candle to it to burn. It never did me any harm. I only wanted to try it.

(Signed) RALPH HAMMOND.

**No.19 Thomas Cooper, aged 14, and Thomas Barker, aged 16. Examined March 19.**

We draw waggons in the bottom-coal pit for Edward Edwards, the butty. We draw in byats or shoulder-straps that come down over our backs and made fast by a hook to the front of the waggon. The distance we have to draw is about 300 yards. The height of the waggon-way four feet-there is plenty of air in the passages. I carry a candle with me, sometimes it goes out with the draft. We have no fires below to make drafts, there is plenty without. We are warm enough without fires. The men behave very well to us. They give us a lick in the back sometimes if we are not sharp enough, not very often. We have nothing to complain of in that. The work is very healthy for us, we can always sleep well at night and eat our suppers and breakfasts and dinners, I believe we can. We get meat in the morning, bread and cheese for dinner and potatoes and bacon, or that sort for supper. We go to school on Sundays at the Church Free School and both of us can read and write a little. I, Thomas Cooper, get 6s. a week, and I, Thomas Barker, get 10s. in full work. We would rather be colliers than sailors, or anything else. We like the work, it was never too much for us. All the boys in our colliery are strong and well.

(Signed) THOMAS COOPER.  
THOMAS BARKER.

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**THE CHEADLE BRASS and COPPER COMPANY'S WORKS.- (Coal Pits).**

**No.20. Simon Robinson, aged 16. Examined March 20.**

I have worked at the Delph-house pits six months, at Harplow, before that 7 months, at Litley Dale 12 months and here one week. I went to the day-school at Cheadle three or four years. I go to Sunday-school now, and can read and write. I draw the skips in this pit for John Barnes, and get 8s. a week. I strip my jacket and shirt, put the waistcoat on again a top o' my bare hide. I always work in byats. The distance from the workings to the pit bottom is not far yet, we have only just begun to head. At Delph-house it was 400 yards and very hard work, uphill and down. I got the same wages there, 1s. 4d. a day, while other boys had the same work and 1s. 6d. a day, that made me leave. We have but two pits here, one water, the other coal. It is a very wet pit. I work in

water up to my knees. It is a very cold pit just yet because we are only 18 yards deep. I have come to work at four o'clock in the morning this week and have left at four in the afternoon. I come so early because we are sinking three turns (or sets) of eight hours each, night and day. I then worked upon bank. I never met with more than one accident, that was coal falling on my foot and squeezed it. I was never burnt. I am always in good health. The work agrees with me very well but I should like anything else better.

(Signed) SIMON ROBINSON.

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## DELPH HOUSE COLLIERY.

### No.21 Mr. Thomas Holmes, aged 50, Occupier. Examined March 20.

I was first employed in these collieries as clerk, under Thomas Swinnerton, Esq., for 12 years. I then became the proprietor, and have continued so for 21 years I have three pits now at work and one engine or water-pit and from 80 to 100 men and boys employed, no women. If I could not carry on my work without women I would drop the colliery because I do not think it right to stow women and men together in such places. It would be both degrading and demoralising to do so. There are no pits, to my knowledge, in this neighbourhood in which they are so employed. In the south I believe they are. The boys are engaged generally in waggoning, pushing and pulling. They pull their jacket, waistcoat and shirt off and put on a flannel donkin (under flannel jacket) and draw in byats (two pieces of leather over the shoulders, falling down over the back and terminating in a chain and hook) which they attach to the skips or waggons. They work singly, unless one is poorly or weak, then they work in pairs. The heights of our waggon-ways are four feet or four and a half, so that there is not much stooping in the draw-roads. There is in the workings, where the men work in the flexed position, to which they become so used that if you see a number together in the highways of a pit it is ten to one but that they will take it to relieve themselves. We are not subject to fire-damps in this neighbourhood but are very subject to choke or black damp, which we take great care to get rid of by ventilation. I have never lost a man or boy since I have had the management here, now 33 years, or any accidents with machinery. As it regards the educational condition of the lads that work here, you shall go to the pits, examine them all and not find one that cannot read or write. They all attend the Sunday-school and have attended in their youth day-schools. A great many of them now attend the evening school after work to learn (as they call it) to sum. It is their own choice, not by my positive desire, although I am glad to know it. The parents wish it and doubtless insist upon it. The moral conduct of my men and boys is really good. If there is one scabby sheep amongst them he leaves of his own account. The rest are too much for him. I have not had occasion to discharge a butty for misconduct since I have been here, or the butty to discharge a man but very rarely. I do not allow any punishments to be indicted by men upon the boys. I believe the boys are very healthy, very happy and always willing to work. If upon any special occasion I wanted over-work done they would willingly and cheerfully give it. You will find the same at Harplow.

(Signed) THOMAS HOLMES.

### No.22 Joseph Salt, aged 54. Examined March 20.

I am a buttie collier and have worked in Delph House 12 years and more for Mr. Holmes. I contract for the 'Old Sawny' and the 'Litley' pits. I employ about a score men and near 40 boys in the two pits. The youngest is about 12, I cannot say exactly. I engage to deliver coals to the bank to the master at 3s. a ton, sometimes it is more never less. 12 10 or 13 years ago it was but 2s. 10d. The price rises or falls proportionate to the amount of the men's wages, which wages are regulated by the demand for labour. It has, however, been almost a regular price for the last 30 years. I have never known it vary more than 4d. a day and that only for a short time. We are now

drawing nine or ten tons a day. Before now I have drawn 20 tons and more than that. The men under me are paid day wage but they have to draw a number of corves per day each man, the quantity of corves depending upon the number of men employed. The average of men's wage is 3s. per day. The boys are paid in like manner, they having to draw or drive so many corves. Their wages vary from 8d. to 2s. 6d. per day, according to their strength and age, from 10 years to 18. They draw or drive on rails. The bottom is soft and slushy. The height of the mainways varies from three to four feet but it is always changing, as the earth is constantly rising. I have seen the mainways hove up clean full, stopping up air and everything in a few weeks. I have never known any fire-damp, wild-fire, or sulphur in the pits. We get plenty of choke-damp or black--damp, which we get rid of by good circulation, by lighting big fires at the bottoms of the up-cast shafts, or if that should not be enough, we pump water down the down-cast shaft and create a draft through the roads or adits. I have never known any death result from either foul air, or machinery, or defective ropes. About four years ago a little boy fell down the pit from the top by handling a corve which he had no business to do. He was killed. He was no pit lad. I began to work when I was seven years old and had no other education but at night and Sunday-school where I learnt to read and write, which I have found of great use to me in every respect as a collier and a Christian. Having seen and known these advances myself, I am a great advocate for the education of all our youths now-a-day. As it regards those who work in our colliery, I am glad to say that they have been very well looked to all of them can read and most of them can write. Every one of them attend Sunday-school. If there is an exception I do not know it. They work the same number of hours with the men that is, from six to seven to three or four, very seldom 12 hours. There are night sets occasionally, from six at night till two or three in the morning. This is the result of circumstances. At times there may be choke-damp, or machinery may be out of order. It is not a regular thing to work at night. I think they enjoy as good health as any boys, very different to factory children. They are never punished, or suffered to be by anybody. The men behave well towards them. I have been, as I said, 12 years at work here, and if I were required to be put upon my oath I could say, that I have never seen one of our men stop a day's work from drunkenness. It is not the practice for them to swear or be disorderly.

(Signed) JOSEPH SALT.

**No.23 David Carr, aged 16. Examined March 20.**

I work in the 'Old Sawny' pit for Joseph Salt the buttie. I came up from pit this afternoon, went home and put clean clothes on because it was Saturday night. I always do the same and so do the other boys in a general way. I went to day-school, go to Sunday-school now at the Independent Chapel. I can read (very well) and can write. I go to work betwixt five and six, come up at different times, sometimes three or four, four or five, five or six. All of us get our breakfast before we go down and our tea when we come up. We get our dinners down in pit and take it as fast as we can. We take half an hour and rest when we feel to want it. I never met with any accident in the mainways by waggons. I sometimes drive sometimes pull with a girdle. I strip and put on a flannel donkey or one of moleskin when we push we push with our hands, sometimes with our heads, just as it wants. We push with out heads when the corves run heavy. I like the work pretty middling. I think I should like some things better. I shut off at four mostly. It is my own fault if I do not go to evening-school. I mostly attend chapel of week nights. My father is a member of the Independent.

(Signed) DAVID CARR.

**No.24 Elijah Lownds, aged 17. Examined March 20.**

I have worked at the 'Sawny Pit' for Joseph Salt now seven years. I went to school before I came and go now to Sunday-school. I can read well (very) and can write a little. I always go to chapel Sundays. In the seven years that I have worked I had one accident - a coal fell on my head. I did not remember anything about it at the time but I was a fortnight in bed. It was down the shaft when I was going up. I never heard of one of the kind below or since. I draw the corves with a byat round my shoulders, the weight of the corve is about 400. The distance from the workings to pit's bottom 150 yards, some is 500, some less. I go all the length and return with empty cones. I draw about 12, or 13, or 14 a day. I am mostly very tired at the end of my day's work. It agrees

with my health very well. I was never sick from that cause. I can always sleep and get my meals with a good appetite. I have never known any punishment inflicted either on myself or other boys by the men or butties. I get 9s. a week in full work. I average about 7s. 6d. all the year round. I give it to my mother, she finds me all that I have for it and gives me 6d. out sometimes. I have no regular holidays. I get too many of them, as I only work four days in the week at times and then get only 6s. I would rather work six days than four. I like the work pretty well. I'd rather be collier than upon farm. I would not swop. If I began again I would be a collier.

(Signed) ELIJAH LOWNDS.

**No.25 Joseph Coates, aged 54. Examined March 20.**

I am a banksman at Mr. Holmes's 'Old Sawny' pit and have been employed there upwards of 40 years. I am the oldest upon the ground. When first I began men had 2s. 6d a day the 2s. 8d. and latterly 3s., then 3s. 4d., and now back again to 3s. The amount of wages depends upon the demand for coal and labour. I am paid by the day, 2s. 2d., and in addition a little for loading carts, &c, which makes up 3s. The characters. of the men and children in former times were not so good as now. There were no Sabbath-schools or chapels in Cheadle. There are now many and to that source I attribute the better state of the children. They used so to drink more and neglected their persons, their work and their families. I think they did not work so hard for their money as what they do now. I speak of the men, the boys worked harder, because things below were not so well managed as now that we have rails and our workings are higher. The machinery is now better (the steam). I formerly went down and came up by hand first and then by a 'gin,' now by steam and better gear but I never remember any accident that has occurred from bad gear. If that should be, it would be our own faults, as master never wishes us to get into danger. Most if not all the boys in our colliery can read and many write. They attend the Sunday-schools and evening-schools to learn. My opinion is, as a collier and the father of a large family (12 children), that it would be a great deal better for the next or present generation of children if they were required to read and write and be 12 years old before they came to work. I think they would be more enlightened, better men and better Christians. There would be less drunkenness in the country, less rioting. I am no scholar, although I can read well and learnt to do so after I came to work at eight years old but I know enough to be satisfied that if the next generation is better informed, that there will be many more loyal, well disposed, and honest men. I received a letter with the 'Staffordshire Advertiser' at the time of the potters' strike, in which we were advised to strike, and fix our own wages and time for working, which I and many others thought unjust and we refused to join. Things were doing very well and have continued to do without our meddling with politics. None of us are great politicians. We have no rioting or turns out, or anything else of that sort. Some of our colliers at our works are very clever men and many of the boys too. Two of the men are capital arithmeticians and can work any problem in Euclid. That man you have examined is one. He is a good land-measurer and is a deal employed for that purpose when there are disputes about land. Both are self-taught like myself. I cannot write now at all, my eye-sight fails me. I never could write much. I have had reason to regret. I believe all the children live well and clothe well if you go to Sunday-school to-morrow you will find them all respectful, clean, and well-behaved. All the chapels have Sunday-schools. I go to all of them when there is a sermon preached for them and give my mite to all.

**No 26 Charles James, aged 16. Examined March 20.**

I draw corves in the 'Old Sawny' pit for John Lowndes the buttie. I went to day-school before I went to work and go to Sunday-school now at Bethel Chapel. I always attend worship Sundays and sometimes on week nights. I can read (well) and can write a little. Don't know anything about summing. I go to evening-school to learn to write. My father is a collier at Delph House. He is a member of Bethel Chapel. He makes us all go to school. He cannot read much himself but he knows its value to us, and teaches us to value education. I go to work like all the rest of the boys at six o'clock and return from the pit at four or five but we have so much to do and the time we come up depends on how we do it, whether quickly or otherwise. I get milk and bread for

breakfast bread and cheese, sometimes flesh meat for dinner and potatoes and bacon for supper, always enough. I am never sick or ill. The work agrees with me very well and I like it. I'd rather be a collier than a farmer's servant. I feel very tired when I get to bed but I can sleep, eat, and drink as well as any boy. I am very happy at home and in the pit, so are all the other boys for what I know. I get a bit of play with them sometimes upon bank at marbles, balls, and prisoners' base, when we have done work at evenings.

(Signed) CHARLES JAMES.

**No.27 George Plant, aged 15. Examined March 20.**

I am a drawer of corves for John Lowndes the buttie. I have been to work six years. I went to school before I came to work at day-school and go now to Sunday-school at Bethel Chapel. I always attend the chapel worship. I can read (well) and can write a little. My work has always agreed with me. I have never had more than a fortnight's illness in my life, then I caught a cold above ground. I strip below ground and put on a donkey (a waistcoat with sleeves), and wear a pair of byats over my shoulders. I am not obliged to stoop much in the mainway as it is three or four feet high. I give my head a bit of a knock sometimes, or scratch my back but not enough to hurt me much. I never had any accident and was never beaten by the butties. If I neglect my work my wages would not be so good. I am not punished in any way. I am tired when I get home at night but have known other boys complain of it. Sometimes we meet together to eat our dinners in the pit in a dry place. We are all pretty hearty and eat our meals with a good appetite. We are all happy enough. I do not get mitch play, am too tired for that and I and a bit too old for that. I would rather be a collier than anything else that I knew of - that is, as I am to work.

(Signed) GEORGE PLATT.

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**RICHARD WHITEHURST and Co.'s LITLEY and HARLOW COLLIERY.**

**No.28. William Flewit, aged 14. Examined March 22.**

I drive corves and waggons for George Day the buttie. I went to day-school afore I worked in the pit and I go to Sunday-school now. I learn to read in Bible to get my soul saved. I go regular every Sunday unless I am poorly. I can read (very well) and write but very little. I am learning now in a copy-hook at home. I am too late to get Monday night's lessons or I should go. I go to pit about quarter afore six, leave home at a quarter past five. On Saturdays I go a little earlier because we all like to knock off earlier in the afternoon. I have a mother but no father. I never had one that I knew. Every other day but Saturday I go from pit at six or seven o'clock. The time, however, depends upon the quantity of coals got out. We have to work so much a day. Sometimes 'tis near the pit's bottom, sometimes away off. When 'tis away off, master puts another lad on to push or pull. We all strip when we go down and put on a short flannel donkey and a pair of byats. We could not work in shirts or jackets. It would be too warm and we should sweat desperately. I am very tired when I come up at night. I do nightwork in winter, when people want more coals but I do not work night and day too. We have turn and turn. I like the work pretty well. I'd rather work than be idle. I would rather be collier than a farmer's lad at plough. I don't often meet with accidents. I was once hurt in the leg by hitting it against the corve and was bad 14 weeks.

**No.29 Elijah Weston, aged 11. Examined March 22.**

I have been to work in the 'Cross Pit' at the Litley Colliery, 12 months. I went to day-school at Huntley before that for two years. I go to Sunday-school now, I can read (very well,) but cannot write. I push waggons down in pit, upon rails. The distance from the workings to pit's mouth is two score yards or more. I am obliged to stoop, the waggon ways are about four feet more or less high. I go down about six o'clock and come up between five and six, or six and

seven. When I have done my work I have drawn six rucks a day there being 12 corves in a ruck. The weight of every corve with waggon and all is 500 and a-half. I get my dinner down in pit and take half an hour to eat it. I get sometimes bacon and tatees. I get breakfast before I go down and tea or supper when I come up. I always get as much as I can eat. I earn 4s. if I work six days. I give it to my mother. I got a father but don't live with him (illegitimate). I like the work very well. I am tired when I've done and go home and get to bed. I can sleep very well, eat and drink very well and am in very good health. I'd rather be a collier than a farmer's lad. I don't work every day and when I don't I get a bit of play at marbles.

**No.30 Mr. Howlett aged 63. Examined March 22.**

I have been, and continue to be the agent and one of the principals in the firm of Whitehurst and Co. Colliers, and work the Litley, and Harplow pit. We have one pit at each place. At Litley there are 10 men and eight boys under 15, at Harplow there are nine men and six boys. I have been engaged in the colliery all my life. The mode of working is very different and much easier than it was years ago, because we have now steam power to draw the coals instead of the common barrel or winder that was used and because the boys draw and push corves on rails instead of drawing them upon slips. There is quite as much room in our mainways as there used to be. We employed boys at that time as young as we do now, as it regards the moral state of the men and boys as compared with those of the present it was far different and much worse. There were no schools, Sundays or week days, or chapels. There was one church and that was all. There was a deal more vice, profligacy and drunkenness. The boys and men do now attend the chapels and schools and have profited by it. I can see a vast difference in the characters, though there are some here and there that are bad still and will not receive instruction when they may. We were never subject to wild-fire or choke-damp in our pits, at least hut very seldom. Our seams are narrow and therefore not so liable to accumulate gases. The weather influences the state of our pits in a great measure. When the wind is high, or when rain is indicated by the barometer. The circulation is not so free as it should be, then the choke-damp collects, the candles go out and we take the precaution of lighting fires at the bottom of the up-cast shaft or part way down it. This speedily gets rid of it and the candles burn again. We have no Davy lamps or ever had occasion to use them. We never had an explosion or the symptoms of one. We have had no accident with machinery, or ropes. The ropes are renewed as often as we think it necessary. We have no general rule for renewing them.

(Signed) THOMAS HOWLETT.

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**Mr. WHITEHURST'S COLLIERY, LITLEY DALE, CHEADLE.**

**No.31 Thomas Weaver, aged 14. Examined March 22.**

I have worked at Litley Dale pit five years, as a drawer of corves. I never went to day-school but go to Sunday-school every Sunday at Zion Chapel. I can read, but cannot write. I go to work at six o'clock in the morning and leave at six at night. If I make a day's work. I go down in the slings with corve and all, sometimes two and sometimes three others go down with me never more than three. The same numbers come up together but never more than four. When I get down I strip my jacket and shirt and waistcoat. I put my waistcoat on again and a pair of byats over that (a leather strap with a chain at the end). The distance of the workings from the bottom of the shaft is 90 yards. The rail does not extend all the way, about 30 yards short. The run is downhill. The weight of the corve is 400. Another boy helps me then by pushing or drawing. The height of the way up to the rail is about three-quarters of a yard I reckon. We are obliged to stoop to get on. I draw 30 corves a day. It is middling hard but I like being a collier. I would full as leave be a collier as farmer. The work agrees with me. I am very well in health. I am never sick or ever sorry except when I've got no work to do. I can eat and drink and sleep very well and get enough of it.

**No.32 Samson Day, aged 11. Examined March 22.**

I have been to work in Litley Dale Colliery about one year and a half, drawing curves for George Day the buttie. He's my father. I went to day-school before I came to work at Cheadle. I go to Sunday-school now. I can read and write. I go down in pit at five or six in the morning with father and come up when he does. I never met with any very serious accident. Sometimes dirt falls on us and hurts our legs. I do not remember that I ever laid by a day from sickness, or accident. I do not find the work too much for me. I do not always work six days a week. Sometimes only two and a-half days in three. Other days I fetch water and do add things at home for mother and work in garden a little bit with father. All the men down pit behave very well to me. I never get flogged. I have seen other boys slapped upon the back with the bare hand if they are lazy but never hurt much. I am tired when I get home. I get my supper and go to bed. I have enough to eat and drink.  
(Signed) SAMSON DAY.

**No.33 Mr. Thomas Fowell, aged 44. Examined March 22.**

I am the owner of the Harplow Colliery employing five men and three boys. I reside in Birmingham and am well acquainted with the neighbourhoods of Dudley, Wolverhampton and Blister. The people there who work in the collieries are better paid but are more and much less civilised than in this place. The boys are certainly not so well provided or cared for, either physically or morally. The educational condition of the children here is half a century before them. I believe most of ours can read and write and attend regularly any places of public worship in this place. We have no sources of political excitement. I never heard of such a thing as a radical meeting, nor do I believe the people know even what is meant by Chartism, Socialism, or any thing of that kind. They are generally speaking a sober, honest, hardworking, industrious and loyal class of men. I should say in an extreme degree. I am, and have been for some years in the habit of holding conversations with the labouring colliers, agents and masters, and have never heard any complaints made by one party or the other of ill-usage. It is very rare that I hear of accidents in pits, either from choke-damp, sulphur, or wild-fire machinery, or gear. There are occasional cases of choke damp but never of wild-fire. Our seams of coal vary in thickness from 20 inches to three feet. The gases cannot accumulate in them. We always look after our machinery. If the men were to complain of its ill condition it would be immediately rectified. I do not remember any case of accident, except that a boy falling down a shaft who had no business there. We have no system of rewards or punishment for boys. I do not ever here of punishments being inflicted by the men, they are generally too indulgent to them. The men are of a very religious character.  
(Signed) THOMAS FOWELL, Principal.

**No.34. Simeon Wheaver, aged 17. Examined March 22.**

I draw waggons for Thomas Flowett the buttie. I never went to day-school, but go to school on Sundays. I can read and can write a little. Father is a collier and works at Litley Dale I get 11s. a week if I work full time. I only work about four days, upon the average in the winter and less in summer. I never work at night. I go to pit at six and leave at six. The work agrees with me very well. I like it middling. I don't mind what work I do as long as I get enough to eat. I give my money to my father who has to support a large family. I have eight brothers and sisters, three of us work, the rest are too young. I get bacon and tatees for dinner, and supping for supper, (milk or broth). I am always in good health.

(Signed) SIMEON WHEAVER.

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**CHEADLE BRASS and COPPER FOUNDRY, OAKAMOOD.**



**No.35. Joseph Jeffries, aged 17. Examined March 23.**

I have been here to work live years, as a wire-drawer. I went to day-school at Oakamoor before that for two years, I went to Sunday-school there too. I can read pretty well and writ. There are two lads under 18 working in the same room with me as wire-drawers. Both of them can read and one can write. I come to work at six o'clock and go home at six. Two hours are allowed out of this for meals. We always go when the bell rings and come in too. I work by day-wages for master, not for men. All the rest do the same. There are no bargain wages of any kind. I get 9s. a week. I am not bound an apprentice. None of the rest are either. I never met with any accident in the machinery. I never saw anybody else meet with accidents at the work I am at. About 12 months ago, a boy had his arm taken off by the pinion of the wheel. He nearly lost his life but by great attention to him, he recovered and is now the post-boy for the works and parish. It was his own fault, as he was staring about when he ought to have been greasing the wheel. I have never no sickness or ill health. I like the work very well. It is easy enough. I live with my sister, as I have no father or mother. She is married and she has nothing else but what my wages bring. I have enough to eat and drink.

(Signed) JOSEPH JEFFRIES.

**No.36 William Finney, aged 16. Examined March 23.**

I work in the smithy of the Cheadle Companies' Brass Works. My brother works there with me. He is younger than me. I went to day-school before I came to work and to Sunday-school. I have worked here a year and a half. I can read and write. I come to work at six o'clock with all the other people. When the bell rings, we go to breakfast at eight, return at half-past eight, go to dinner at 12, return at one, go to tea at four, comeback at half past and leave work at six. I do this regularly six days in the week. My wages are 6s., my brother's 6s. I have another brother a wire drawer getting 4s. None of us are apprentices. The overseers and workmen are all very good to us upon the works. They are never known to ill-use us. All of us work by day wage. We are paid every other Thursday in hard cash. Both myself and brothers are in good health. We never met with any accident. One of my brothers did by getting his hand caught in a pulley. He recovered his hand again, as well as ever. We have nothing to complain of from anybody and are very happy and comfortable.

(Signed) WILLIAM FINNEY.

**No.37 Thomas Wilson, aged 74. Examined March 28.**

I have worked for this company 63 years. I think I am the oldest servant of the company but I have two brothers who have just given over wire-drawing, one is 82, the other 85. They have worked here ever since they were able. They began so long before me that I do not remember their beginning. There are 12 or 15 men now upon the premises as old and older than myself whose united ages amount to almost a thousand years. In my time a vast many men and boys have been brought up to the business. Our ages are sufficient proofs that there nothing unwholesome in the nature of it. I have seen a few accidents with the machinery, be these accidents in a general way are resulting from carelessness. I have never known an lives lost. Our hours of work are very regular and average 12 hours a day. If there should be any extra demand we make seven days a week or 14 hours a day deducting two hours for meals. We all come at the same hour and go home at the same, there is no difference with any of us. When the bell rings it is a sufficient notice. The boys in the works conduct themselves very well for anything I know to the contrary. They are all intelligent boys and attend at the desire of Mr. Wrag, the church or chapel and Sunday-schools. I believe they are better educated than they used to be. They have a better chance than they had in my time. My wage are a pound a week. I am paid like all the rest on every other Thursday, always in cash. Our workmen are well-conducted, quiet, orderly men, they behave very well to the boys upon the works and to their children at home. There are no punishments of any kind. If a man misconducts himself, our masters will not employ him. They will not keep drunkards upon the premises to be bad examples to the young ones. I think we ought to be the thankfullest of men, for we have the

best masters in England, God bless 'em.

I cannot write, I never went to school when a boy. I can read the Scriptures thank the Lord. I would have every child do that much.

[These works are very extensive, in great order ; rooms very spacious, cleanly, light, and well ventilated.]

*24th. March* - Descended the Dilham Colliery with John James the Agent, found the men had ceased working and had to come up. Took no evidence. The bottoms were very wet and all the drawing was done by boys. Mainways too low for ponies. This was the pit that was to have supplied London and contains coal enough for about a month's consumption or less.

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### NATIONAL DAY SCHOOL. - (Boys.)

#### No.38. William Chell, aged 23. Examined March 18.

I have been the master of this school now two years. I was appointed on its opening. I was trained for the appointment at the National School at Hanley. I am paid by annual salary out of the general fund, which is under the management of a committee. The school is supported by voluntary subscriptions and built by a grant from Government. The three first classes pay 2d. per week, the others 1d. They are pretty regular in their payments but not in their attendance. This irregularity is the greatest difficulty we have to contend with; their parents. The generality of them, do not appear to appreciate the value of education, being ignorant themselves. I found the educational condition of the children, when I first came, very low, in fact the generality of them could not read a chapter. The system of education practised is that of Bell's, with occasional deviation and consists in reading from the Scripture, spelling writing, arithmetic, and geography. They attend at nine o'clock in the morning and leave at 12, come again at two and leave at half past four-five days in the week. They are chiefly the children of agricultural labourers, a few colliers and some few respectable lads. They take the children of colliers away early to work in the pits. From that cause there is much ignorance amongst the parents themselves cannot bear to be under the least restriction, nor will they allow their children to be. The youngest now present is about six, the oldest is 13, at which ages we limit them. There are on the books 146, generally present 120. My salary is £60 per annum. No perquisites of any kind. There is another school in the town or ought to be, which is an endowed school. Its income being £20 per years. The master has lately died and it is not now continued. The fund is accumulating but I believe it is to be reopened at Lady-day.

(Signed) WM. CHELL.

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### GIRLS' SCHOOL.

#### No.39. Hannah Twigg, aged 26. Examined March 18.

I have been mistress of this school about 18 months and was trained only in the next room under Mr. Chell, the master of the boys school. I have 115 girls on the books. There are generally 70 in attendance, at present there are 40. The absence of the rest is to be accounted for by sickness, small-pox being very prevalent. My salary is £20 per annum. I have heard the deposition of Mr. Chell and accord with it. The only difference between the education of the boys and girls is that the latter are taught plain needlework, such as sewing, marking, knitting and hemming. The children are equally or more irregular than the boys in their attendance, as the mothers keep them at home to

look after the infants and as they are sent early in the tape factory to work, they have not much chance of obtaining any education.

(Signed) HANNAH TWIGG.

[This is an elevated, spacious, and comfortable school-house, well ventilated, warmed, and clean.]

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### **CHEADLE INFANT SCHOOL. Established June, 1839.**

#### **No.40 Caroline Morgan, aged 21. Examined March 19.**

I have been mistress of this school since it was first established. I was appointed by the committee of management. I was trained in the Church of England Infant School at Liverpool, under Mr. Clark. We are supported by annual subscriptions, voluntary contributions and by the 1d. a week payments of the children. There are now 56 on the books. We had 97 before last Christmas holiday's examination. The falling off is consequent upon Dissenters not being allowed to come. The rector prevented their coming because they (the parents of the children) did not like them to go to the church, which he insisted upon. We had a very good school before that. Some of the pupils were big girls. He the rector will not receive now the subscriptions of the children. The consequence is that the Dissenters are talking of having a school of their own. The youngest child present is about one year and eleven months old, the oldest about eight. Their education consists in Scripture reading, spelling, multiplication tables, sewing, knitting, and marking. Their hours of attendance are from nine to twelve and from two to half-past four. The parents of the children are factors, colliers, shopkeepers and others. They are pretty regular in their attendance and in their payments. All healthy, clean, and well-behaved. The room is belonging to Mr. Phillips and forms part of the factory. We pay no rent for it.

(Signed) C. A. E. MORGAN.

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### **CHURCH SUNDAY SCHOOL, for Boys and Girls.**

#### **No.41. Mr. William Chell and Mr. George Morris, Teachers for Boys; and Miss Catherine Halcomb, Teacher for Girls: Examined March 21.**

We are teachers of this Sunday-school, have been so since its establishment. There are 160 boys on the books with five teachers. The number of boys present is 140 and 115 girls on the books with six teachers, present 90. The children meet at nine in the morning and break up at eleven, then attend the church service. The instruction is confined to scriptural reading and catechism, no writing. The next evening the master of the day-school gives gratuitous instructions in writing to the boys and girls about 20 attend. They are all very healthy, well-behaved to us as teachers and to others in authority. They are very easy in their persons and regular in the morning but in the afternoon not so much so. The greater part of them are children of colliers and agricultural labourers. We always commence the duties of the school with prayer and singing. The clergyman takes part occasionally.

(Signed) CATHE. HALCOMB.  
 GEORGE MORRIS.  
 WM. CHELL.

[These schools held in the same rooms as day-schools. All the children look remarkably healthy, orderly, and clean.]

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**WESLEYAN SUNDAY SCHOOL.**

**No.42 Thomas B. Armett, aged 45, and William Turton, aged 38. Examined March 21.**

We have been teachers from 11 to 12 years. There are 110 girls on the books with 13 teachers, 100 boys with 10 teachers, present altogether about 150. Their absence is to be accounted for by sickness, some not having clothes. Many of them are the children of colliers and weavers. They assemble at nine, break up at half-past ten and then attend the morning service of the chapel. They meet again at half-past one, break up at four and are then dismissed. We commence the duties with prayer and singing, conclude them in the same way. The system of instruction is strictly Scriptural (the collective). and consists in readings from the Bible and Testament only. No writing on the Sabbath. We have an evening-school, as a kind of reward for good attendance, for writing. About 20 upon the average attends. We pay the master £2 per annum. Our opinions of the moral condition of the children in this place is very favourable. There are some bad people certainly most of our children can read well, some write, many of them. They are orderly, cleanly in their persons, and respectful to us.

(Signed) THOS. B. ARMETT.  
WILLIAM TURTON.

[These rooms are very, commodious, clean, well ventilated, light and healthy.]

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**METHODIST NEW CONNECTION SUNDAY SCHOOL.**

**No.43 Ann Sutton, aged 25, and William Kemp, aged 33. Examined March 21.**

We are teachers of the boys' and girls' Sunday-school of this chapel. The number of boys 45 on the books is 70, with 10 teachers, 50 of girls, with 6 teachers. There are about 100 present altogether. They meet in the morning at nine o'clock, break up at half-past eleven and then go home, meet again at half-past one and break up at half-past two then attend Divine worship. The instruction is strictly Scriptural and consists of readings from the Bible Testament and spelling. No writing but we give gratuitous instruction in writing on Monday and Thursday evenings. About 25 attend on those occasions. They are altogether the children of working people in the collieries and tape-works, pretty regular in their attendance and make progress. We have some convincing proofs of that they are respectful to us, with few exceptions, considering their disadvantages. We think upon the whole they are pretty well, very cleanly in their persons, healthy, and orderly.

(Signed) ANN SUTTON,  
WILLIAM KEMP,  
Teachers.

[These two rooms are commodious, well ventilated, light, airy, healthy, and clean.]

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**INDEPENDENT SUNDAY SCHOOL.****No.44 Mr. Horn, Aged 48, and Mr. Nutt, aged 48. Examined March 21.**

We have been the superintendents of the boys' and girls' school held here about six years. We have 70 boys on the books, with 8 teachers, 70 girls, with 8 teachers. There are about 120 present. The instruction we impart is strictly Scriptural and consists in reading from the Bible and Testament, catechisms and a little spelling but no writing. On Monday and Wednesday nights we give gratuitous instruction in writing. There is a regular master, to whom we pay £6 per annum. On these occasions about a good number attend. The pupils meet here at nine in the morning till half-past ten and then attend public worship, meet again at half-past one and break up at four, then go home. We commence the duties with singing and prayer and terminate them in a like way. Our opinions of the moral condition of the children in Cheadle is that it is low. There is a good deal of vice, such as drunkenness, amongst parents and you may expect to find the same among the children. When we have but one school on the Sabbath we have to compete with six days of vice. Most of our children can read and write.

(Signed) THOMAS HORN.  
WILLIAM NUTT.

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**No.45 Mr. Joseph Pegg, aged 48. Examined March 23.**

I have been a schoolmaster in the parish nearly two years, and kept first a private There is an endowed school in the town for the education of 12 of the poorest children for the parishes of Kingsley and Cheadle. Its income is £20 per annum, left by the Rev. Henry Stubbs, besides the interest of £30 bequeathed by some parties whose names I will endeavour to obtain. [Andrew Newton Esq.]. This school has been in operation many years until last September. At that tune I was elected by the parishioners as the future master. Then there were four or five pupils, which I took on at my private house and I made a formal application to the rector and overseers to fill up the vacancies, which has never yet been done, because the rector wished that this school should merge into the free national school, which Dissenters objected to, as well as two-thirds of the parish. This dispute between the rector and parishioners never having been settled, has occasioned the withholding of my salary, the breaking up of the house in which the school used to be held and the loss to the poor children, which are entitled to the benefit of it. I have private scholars now mixed with the public, altogether about 30. They are of all classes, factors, colliers, farmers and small tradesmen. I have never observed any marked difference between the children of the two first classes, as compared with the two last physically, educationally I have. They are inferior, attributable to the more limited means of their parents to afford instruction partly and partly to the want of education in the parents themselves. As a coal district, I should say that the moral condition of both parents and children generally is good. There is great progress making in education now, which results from the gratuitous teaching of the different denominations of Christians in Sunday and evening schools. We have no industrial schools in the parish. The children of this parish are healthy, robust and well formed. I have never observed any deformities in their reasons, resulting from the nature of their employment. I do not know that it is in my power to afford any other information bearing upon the subject of your inquiry.

(Signed) JOSEPH PEGG.

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**EARL TALBOT'S COLLIERY, BRERETON, near RUGELEY.**

**No.46 Mr. Thomas Small, aged 36. Examined March 25.**

I am the bailiff of these coal-works, was appointed on the 1st of January of the present year. I was bailiff at Mr. Henry Pitt's colliery near Wednesbury before I came here, for 13 years. We work now two pits, two others are out of repair. Their working is consequently ended. We have at a rough guess upwards of 200 hands, including about 40 boys under the age of 18. A considerable number have left us now that two pits are out. We have no females. In the south of Staffordshire a great many are employed as they cannot afford to pay men. It is upon the bank that they are employed. The youngest boy we have at work is 10 years. He carries picks to the shop to be sharpened. The depths of our shafts 160 yards. There are two shafts to each pit, one up-cast, the other down-cast, by which we ventilate, assisted by fires. We have no accidents have had none since I have been here either from fire or choke-damp, from machinery, or ropes. It is my duty to look after the gear. I examine it three or four times a day. Four, or five, sometimes six people go down together, the same number come up. We have bonnets to our tackle and frequently use them to protect the people from coals or bricks falling down upon them. Our workings from the shafts are 3 or 400 yards. The mainways are laid with rails. Our corves are drawn by ponies, along them. None of our boys draw, or push the corves, or have occasion to wear byats, or girdles. The height of our mainways are from four to five and a half feet. The seams are barely four feet. Our people are paid every fortnight on Thursdays, in cash. They come to work between five and six in the morning and leave at six. No boys or seldom men do night work. The general character of our boys is pretty good. I never hear any thing amiss in them. They never complain or grumble about their work or wages but seem pretty happy and contented.

(Signed) THOMAS SMALL.

**No.47 William Burgess, aged 13. Examined March 25.**

I push dans out of the workings into the mainways with Noah Bradbury, for Edward Gough the buttie. The distance from the workings is 20 yards, sometimes not so far. The weight of the loaded dan is almost 3 or 400. It runs upon wheels and rails. It is not hard work. I never met with any bad accidents. I hit my legs now and then, not my head. I know better than that, for I stoops to prevent it. I come to work between five and six and leave about six. It does not depend upon the quantity I do. It is from six to six for 5s. a week. I live at home with father, he is a collier. I get enough to eat and drink, and clothes to wear. I go to Sunday-school. I went to day-school and learnt to read and write. I always give my wages to mother, she goes to receive the reckoning. I like my business very well and would rather be collier than anything else.

(Signed) WILLIAM BURGESS.

**No.48 George Radford, aged 11. Examined March 25.**

I have been to work for Edward Gough the buttie, rather better than 12 months. I run dans for him from the workings to the mainways, about 12 yards sometimes more, then the ponies take them on. I come to work at six in the morning and leave at six. I get my breakfast of coffee and bread and cheese, before I come, and a lunch of bread and cheese at nine o'clock down in pit. It is sent down and I then get tatees and meat, and bread, and beer, 25 and half an hour to take it. All the other boys do the same, at half-past 12 or 1. I get nothing afterwards till I come up to tea. I am sometimes tired when I go home, not always. We have not six working days in the week, sometimes not more than four, the other days I get plenty of play. I like a little play but I like work too. I only met with one accident since I have been at work. Then a piece of coal fell off the roof and broke my finger, that disabled me a fortnight or three weeks. Edward Gough behaves very well to me. I have no occasion to find fault with him or anybody else that I know of. The men never beat us. I can read and write. I went to day-school and go now to Sunday-school always at the Methodist chapel. I can cipher and know something of accounts.

(Signed) GEORGE RADFORD.

**No.49 George Sanders, aged 14. Examined March 25.**

I am a driver for Edward Gough the buttie. I always ride in front of the corve and drive boxer the pony. He only draws one at a time, a distance of about 200 yards. I drive all through and do not have stages because the distance is short. It is easy work enough. I would rather drive a pony than push the corves. I never went to day-school. I go to Sunday-school and can read a bit but cannot write. My father is a coal hagler, he drives horse and cart. I live with him and give him my wages of 1s. 4d. a day. I am in good work, about five days a week. I never had any accident in the pits. I go down in the morning at six o'clock and come up at six, with 12 or 13 others men and boys. I am sure as many as that go down and come up together. If the rope was to break we must all be killed. Some of us get into the tackles, some stand in the 45; skip, others kneel down and others hold on how they can, they never hang on the chains. We are not forbidden to come up in such numbers. All the people behave very well to me I have never been ill-used, or have I seen others ill-used. I like colliering very well. I would rather be in pit than at the plough, or at any thing else. It agrees with us very well. I can always eat and drink my allowance. I do not go to evening-school. I did go for a week or so but I knocked off. It was my own fault that I did. I used to pay 6d. a week. I did not like to go longer.

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**MARQUIS OF ANGLESEA'S COLLIERY, leased to Mrs. SARAH PALMER.**

**No.50 Mr. Grice, aged 57, Agent. Examined March 26.**

I have been agent for this colliery about four years. I was agent for Kettley colliery in Shropshire nineteen years. I had then a great many men and boys under me. Here I have about 130, with six pits, only two of which are in work. It is my practice to pay the charter-masters and theirs to pay the men. It is not usual here as in the North to consider the men as employed by the charter-masters but by me. They are neither allowed to take on or discharge either man or boy, without first obtaining consent of the person in charge for the time being. We pay the butties or charter-masters once a fortnight in cash. The characters of our people have been before now refractory and disorderly, being without rule or regulation. They are now under certain printed regulations, which I do not allow to be infringed upon, nor do I ever employ a man or boy without first ascertaining his moral character. The character of the men depends upon the character of the master. My men and boys are at this moment as good, steady and industrious, orderly, and regular, as any class of men in the country. I do not allow the charter-masters to regulate the amount of the men's wages. The day's wages are permanent unless the market price of coals should alter and then both masters and men are paid accordingly. The depths of our shafts is 132 yards. I do not allow more than six persons to descend together although our machinery is capable of raising a ton because I do not think it proper or safe to do so. Our machinery may give way by small weights as well as real ones. They descend in baskets, or corves, with steam engines and the treble chain. I consider the treble flat chain with welded links the safest. I descended myself in the first that as ever made and have never known of an accident with only one of them. The ropes are liable to chafe and strain, particularly over small pulleys. Our mainways are six feet high, are railed and worked with large horses. We never use boys for drawing or pushing except when heading airways and that very seldom. Therefore we have never occasion for byats, girdles, or belts. The only use we have for boys is in driving horses for cleansing the headings or holes. Our people are expected to come at six in the morning and leave at six for a day's work. They very seldom work at night. We have not enough for them in the day, particularly in summer. We ventilate the two shafts, the up-cast and down-cast, without having occasion for fires. We have very rarely any accident. Only one has occurred since I have been here and that was the result of carelessness. We have Davy lamps and should use them in case of necessity. They do not answer as a light to work by. We have no choke-damp.

THOMAS GRICE.

**No.51 William Upton, aged 13. Examined March 26.**

I work as horse-driver for John Smallman, the charter-master. I have been employed nearly four years. I went to day-school a little. I go to Sunday-school at the national school at Gentleshaw. I can read and can write but not much. I come to work by six o'clock and go home at six. I get 6s. 6d. a-week when in full work. I only work four or five days on the average. My father is dead. I live with my mother and give her my wages for my board and lodging. I get my breakfast before I come to work and my luncheon of bread and cheese in the pit about nine o'clock. My dinner then to about twelve or one. I am allowed half-an hour to take it. I come up to tea or supper. I never do night work. I have bread and cheese for dinner, sometimes bacon. The men behave very well to us boys. They never thrash us. They swear at us now and then if we are not quick enough. I never had an accident in pit of any serious sort. I get a bit of a blow in the head now and then. I have never been burnt. James Hecock was burnt by explosion once and his brother at the same time. One of the boys got his leg broke by the wind from the fire. It blew him against one of the skips they all got well again.

(Signed) WILLIAM UPTON.

**No.52 Thomas Holland, aged 14. Examined March 26.**

I have been to work only three months for John Smallman, the buttie. I follow the donkey. I live with master and he gets my money. He gives me plenty to eat and drink and plenty of clothes. I come to work when he comes and go home when he goes. I got no father or mother. They have been dead five years. I went to day-school about two or three weeks. I do not go to Sunday-school. My clothes are not very clean, else I should. I can read and learnt to read in Gloucestershire. My father and mother used to live there. He was a sailor. I like my work very well. I would rather drive plough, because there is less danger above ground, for no other reason. I don't care for the work. The men all behave very well to us, except one man, John Mills, who overlooks the waggon ways. He knocks me down in the coals if they fall off the slip. He thrashes me with anything he can lay hold of. If I complained to the buttie he would not say anything. We seldom see the agent, Mr. Grice. He would not allow it if he was told. If there are 9, 10, 14, or 15, they all come up and go down together. They all scramble in the slips and chains. They sometimes come up one at a time but I am sure I have seen 14 men and boys. The boys got in the middle. The men stand outside.

(Signed) THOMAS HOLLAND.

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*March 26th.* - Descended the Hayes Colliery Pit. and took the depositions of the foregoing witnesses. Depth, 130 yards, mainways, half a-mile; height, six feet, seams, eight feet thick, worked by horses, boys driving. Met with great civility and respect from agent and workmen. Boys all healthy, happy and discontented only from having less than six days' work to do. All that I examined here and at Lord Talbot's could read well and mostly write, attended regularly Sabbath-schools and places of worship. I was informed by both agents (Mr. Poole and Mr. Grice) that the men were orderly, religiously inclined and peaceable, comfortably housed, regularly paid, and well fed. I here enclose a list of rules and regulations agreed to before hiring, which is rigidly acted upon.

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**TAMWORTH.**

**Messrs. BEST and Co's. COLLIERY. - 2 Pits, Kettlebrook and Glasscot.**

**No.53 James Shirley, aged 16. Examined March 30.**



I work in the pit, driving horses. I have been so employed a year. Three years before that I drove gin at Glasscot. I like driving gin best because I would rather work above ground than under. I would rather see daylight. I go to work at six in the morning, or a little after. There are about 16 lads in the same pit with me. We all come together, and go together, about seven o'clock, out of that we are allowed one hour for dinner. We get our breakfasts before we come to work. We carry a bag containing bread and cheese for luncheon, which we take when we can. There are no boys that work in our pit with belts or girdles, except the two who cleanse the headings for the men called headers. I went to the national day-school about 12 months. I go to Sunday-school now. I cannot read or write. They used to teach me out of a little book, I don't know what. I go to the Catholic Sunday-school. I never strip my clothes at work, to the skin. Other boys do and then put a donkey on, or waistcoat. I am paid by the buttie, day wage, and get 8s. a-week, and 1~.5 cwt. of coals. I give it to my mother. She finds me in food and clothes. I get bread and cheese every day and a morsel of meat on Sundays. I get none on the week days. I have only one brother that lives at home. He earns 7s. a-week. My mother takes in washing. I don't know what she earns. The men in pit behave to me pretty well generally. They give me a hit with their fists now and then when the waggon gets off the rails. I never knew of boys being ever beaten badly. I never had any accidents. I don't know of any other. My brother walked into the pit about three years ago and was killed. A buttie walked in before that, with two candles in his hand, when going to work and was killed. If the pit had been fenced off, they would not have lost their lives.

**No.54 Joshua Sneyd, aged 15. Examined March 30.**

I have worked in pit driving horses between four and five years. I come to work at six and go home at seven. Sometimes I do night work in turns with other boys. We worked last night and all day yesterday and left work at three o'clock this morning. I then went home and went to bed. I do not often work at night. I should have been to work now if you had not wanted us. I went to pit but the clerk sent us here. I got up at five o'clock this morning to go. I had but two hour' sleep. I would rather have stayed at longer but the butties said we were to work on to day. The butties made us work last night. The work was wanted very particular. The butties and men behave to us sometimes well, sometimes badly. They deserve it. I never went to day school in my life, except for one day. The next I was fetched to go to work. I go to Sunday school most every Sunday. I can read a little, not much. [He could not read his letters.] I cannot write. I get 7s. 6d a-week from Benjamin Baker and Thomas Brooks, the butties. I do as much work as James Shirley and get 6d. less. I don't know why that should be. I am older but he is bigger and that's the cause, I reckon. I live with my mother. A brother lives with me and works in the same pit. He gets 8s. a-week. We get enough to eat and drink. The work agrees with me very well and with all the rest of us. One boy has hurt his back from falling back on some coals we have a sick club and if one of us should be hurt. We are allowed 3s. a-week and a doctor. We pay 6d. a month for that. I do not know of any accident in the pit from explosion, except when four ponies were killed, no men. That was two years ago. A boy and a man walked into pit.

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