Mine Terminology – Job Descriptions

**Beltman/Belthand**

A person who operates and maintains the belt.

Surface worker, responsible for aspects of the operation of the conveyor belts used for transporting coal

**Check Inspector**

Official of the union appointed by the underground employees to look after interests regarding safety. The duties are laid down in the regulations governing mining operations.

**Checkweighman**

Mineworker selected and employed by contract workers to check employers’ tallies of their output; often a Lodge official.

**Clipper**

Typically a young mine worker, responsible for clipping the coal skips onto the hauling rope.

**Contract mineworker**

A worker paid according to a work contract relating to output rather than according to a day-wage; a face worker of wheeler.

The mining of coal on a contract basis where the miner is paid for the amount of coal mined

**Craft –worker**

In the mining industry, a term identifying a worker who belonged to a craft-based union rather than the Miners’ Federation.

**Day-wage worker**

A worker paid by time rather than by output. The mining industry had day-wage and contract miners.

**Deputy**

Supervisor in charge of a section or district of a mine, and all employees working

therein. The statutory duties, responsibility and authority of a deputy are set down in the regulations governing mining.

A mineworker with the lowest level of supervisorial job; requiring a Deputy’s Certificate from Technical College. According to miners, deputies should have been concerned with safety issues, but were often forced to become guardians of the employers’ production levels

**Faceworker**

A miner working at the coal face itself; the elite of the unskilled workers in the mining industry and paid by contract.

**Hauler**

Wheeler

**Inspector**

Person appointed by the Government (Department of Mines) under the mining

regulations. His/Her duties include the making of examinations of the mine to ascertain whether the regulations relating to the operations are being observed.

**Manager**

The management official in day-to day control of a coal mine; qualified by Manager’s Certificate form Technical College.

**Overman**

An underground supervisor in coal mines; intermediate in status between a deputy and an undermanager.

**Pit-brow lasses**

Women working at the mine surface

**Ripper**

An experienced mineworker who is responsible for breaking down the roof of mine roadways in order to enlarge or extend the roadways

**Road-layer**

Day-wage worker responsible for laying and maintaining rail tracks underground.

**Screenman**

A surface –worker, responsible for screening the size of coal produced at a mine.

**Shifman**

Day-wage worker

**Shotfirer**

A miner, qualified by a certificate from a Technical College, who is responsible for the use of explosives underground; has some supervisorial powers in relation to safety issues.

**Superintendent**

A high-ranking managerial officer in the coal industry; responsible for a number of mines and managers.

**Surface-worker**

Mineworker who does not work underground.

**Under - Manager**

A position holding responsibilities defined by law. An undermanager is usually the

person in charge of underground mining operations on a shift and is next in authority under a manager or deputy manager. Requiring a 2nd class certificate of competency or certificate of service.

Superior to deputies and overmen, but responsible to a manager.

**Washer**

A surface worker involved in washing dust or impurities from coal

**Wheeler**

Usually a young contract worker; responsible for using pit ponies to transport coal skips to and from the faceworkers.

**Pit ponies**

Horses used to transport coal skips underground.

Occupational terminology

**Carvil**

Ballot regularly conducted among contract mineworker to distribute work sites

**Consideration**

When factors in the control of employers lowered the output of contract miners, workers sought compensation payments, or considerations, for these factors. Negotiations over considerations produced many industrial disputes.

**Crib**

Lunch or lunch-time. Meal eaten by miners in the middle of their shift.

**Darg**

A limit collectively self-imposed by contract miners on their output

**Dog-watch**

Night Shift, from about 11 PM till 7 am, depending on individual mine sites.

**Intermittency**

A condition of irregular operation, once common in the mining industry because of overcapacity and the over-supply of the market for coal; a condition leading to stand downs, often at short notice.

**Man-shift**

One man working one shift comprises a man shift. Output of coal in tonnes per man-shift is accepted as a measure of the efficiency of the operation.

**Nystagmus**

Common eye disorder among coal miners

**Pneumoconiosis**

A chronic disease of the lungs that is caused by inhaling coal dust.

**Red Roll**

List of miners killed in industrial accidents

**Standard Mortality Ratio (SMR)**

Actual deaths as a percentage of expected deaths for any given population or cause of death

**Stay-in strike**

A strike based on the occupation of the underground workings of a mine.

**Stump**

Union dues

**Water money**

Additional specified amount of money paid to a person called on to work in a wet place.