

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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Banks of the Dee

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Last Saturday night by the banks of the Dee,
I met an old man in distress I could see.
I sat down beside him and to me he did say,
"I can't get employment for my hair, it's turned grey."

"I am an old miner, aged fifty and six.
If I could get lots, why I'd raffle my picks;
I'd raffle them, I'd sell them, I'd hoy them away,
For I can't get employment, my hair it's turned grey.

When I was a young lad I was just like the rest
Each day in the pits I'd do my very best.
If I got a good cavil I'd be hewing all day,
Now at fifty and six my hair has turned grey.

Last Wednesday night to the reckoning I went,
To the colliery offices I went straight forenenst;
I'd got my pay packet, I was walking away
When they gave me my notice, 'cause my hair it's turned grey.

Now all you young fellows, It's you that's to blame
If you got good places you'd do just the same.
If you got a good price, man, you'd hew it away,
But you're bound to regret it when your hair it turns grey.

For I am an old miner, aged fifty and six.
If I could get lots, why, I'd raffle my picks;
I'd raffle them, I'd sell them, I'd hoy them away.
For I can't get employment 'cause my hair it's turned grey.

Recorded by Killen, Gallant Lads are We

This song reflects the agony of those who, in Joe Glazer's song, are "too old to wo@k and too young to die". It describes the distress of the "collier's second childhood" when the old miners were put back on the heaps, picking slate with the young lads. No relationship to 18'th Century Banks of the Dee.

hoy - throw; lots - bids; cavil - place of work; fornenst - right away

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