

## Coal Blew Away

Maurie Mulheron

Do you know how heavy the winds blow here?  
His smile was rising from ear to ear  
The old miner sat back, he'd a story that day  
About the time on the coast when the coal blew away

All the mines around Bulli and further away  
Were being worked each week for only two to three days  
Just enough to stop them from getting the dole  
While the mine-owners secretly stockpiled the coal

Chorus  
The winds were so heavy on the coast that day  
The winds were so heavy that the coal blew away!

So the miners formed a strong picket line  
To try and stop the coal from leaving the mine  
From Sydney they trucked in the scabs each day  
With police on guard to keep the miners at bay

With scabs loading coal by the railway track  
The miners stepped forward, the mood blacker than black  
The sergeant stood between them with a gun and a sneer  
I'll shoot the first Commie who tries to interfere!

Chorus  
The winds were so heavy on the coast that day  
The winds were so heavy that the coal blew away!

A fifty ton load was sent on its way  
Scheduled for Sydney the very next day  
The miners withdrew, full of anger, despair  
No victory this time, no hope in the air

The train slowed down just near Waterfall  
 The guard heard laughter and this is what he saw  
 From a wagon some miners jumped onto the track  
 With shovels, grins and faces smeared black

Chorus

The winds were so heavy on the coast that day  
 The winds were so heavy that the coal blew away!

With his lantern he searched up and down the train  
 No coal could be seen, he searched in vain  
 And the headlines in the paper read the very next day  
 The winds were so heavy, the coal blew away!

Now as you listen to my story today  
 You might think it strange that coal could blow away  
 But the miners with their shovels in the wagon that night  
 Swear it is true and I reckon they're right

Chorus

The winds were so heavy on the coast that day  
 The winds were so heavy that the coal blew away!

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*Maurie Mulheron writes*

Great true story about a union victory down here in the Illawarra that occurred in September 1938 at the Old Corn Beef Mine. The story is told in the song. After the scabs had loaded the coal, 8 miners stowed away on the train and spent the next couple of hours shovelling out the scab coal onto the track as the train headed north to Sydney. The next day, when the police investigated, the Miners Federation explained to them that they knew nothing about the missing coal. By way of explanation, the union suggested that it could have been the heavy winds that had blown the night before! The *Bulli Times* ran a headline: "THE COAL THAT BLEW AWAY". By the way, after the coal had been shovelled off the train by the 'stowaway' miners, the Detective-Sergeant raced down to Thirroul the next day to interview the miners. An astute fellow, he visited Arthur McDonald, one of the miners. "Don't insult my intelligence," said the policeman, "by trying to make me believe that the bloody wind on the South Coast blew all that coal away. We think you bastards did it."

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