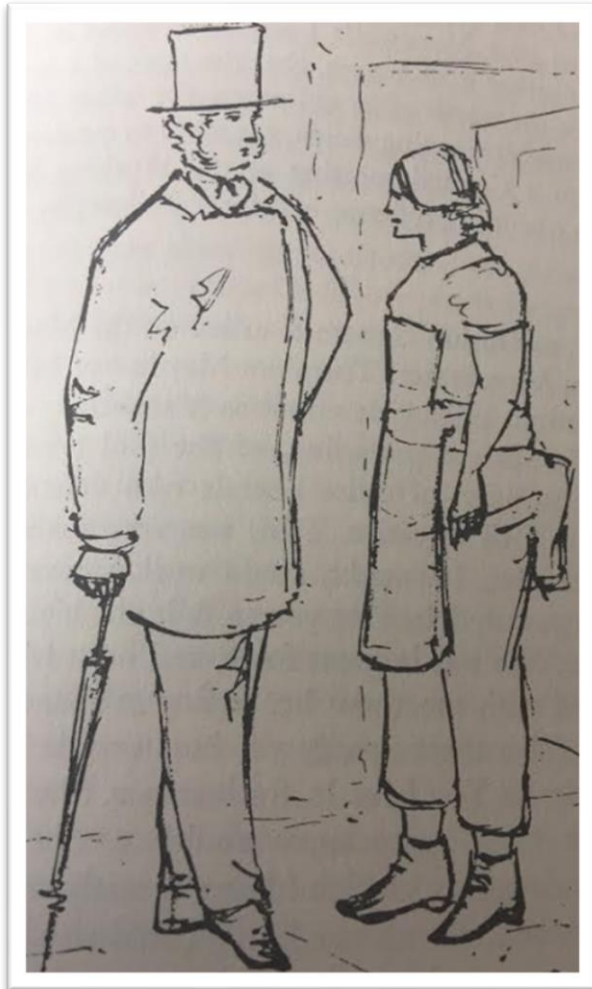


Arthur Munby (1828-1910), a Victorian poet and eccentric, visited and stayed in Wigan, sometimes at the Victoria in Wallgate, throughout the 1860's, visiting collieries' and talking to and photographing the girls working on the pit brow. The postcards "carte de visite" were a source of widespread curiosity and fascination to the Victorians.



The Haigh Moor Brewery provided a change from coal, and was a place dear to Munby's heart, being entirely run by young women, apart from three senior men. Girls were taken on for training there at eleven or twelve years of age.

From his diary, I saw several little girls in tiny trousers in the cleaning house: and.... He has a constant supply of female prentices. They all fress alike, and their dress is the same as the collier-girls', a loose cotton shirt, a waistcoat, and flannel fustian trousers (petticoats would be in the way, as Mr Sumner says), with the skirt pinned up around the waist. Cotton bonnets are worn for outdoor work. Such as dress is very picturesque and serviceable; and being perfectly clean – not blackened as at the pits-is extremely becoming..... When the women were turned out of the pits in 1843, Mr Sumner, seeing the injustice of that measure and the distress caused by it, took some of the excluded pitwomen to work in his brewery. These of course brought their

costume with them: and the dress and its wearers answered so well, that ever since, Mr. Sumner has continued to employ female labour and has ended by putting his whole business in the hands of women. "They are quite capable of doing all the work," he says, "and they do not, like men, drink more beer than their labour is worth".....