

Mining

What springs to mind when you think of the mining occupation? For many people it is the image of a man covered in coal dust. However, Britain did not just have the coal mines of Wales and the north of England, but also tin mines in Cornwall, lead mines in the north of England and down the Welsh borders, iron mines in the Forest of Dean and the Weald and then copper mines in north Wales.

It is a rich and varied history that lies behind the mining industry with hardship and tragedy walking hand in hand with the everyday lives of our ancestors.

What did they do?

There are many terms for the different jobs that were undertaken in the mines, both deep in the pits and on the surface. Here are some that you may come across:

Bal Maiden – Usually a young, unmarried female who worked on the surface at a Cornish mine.

Buddler – Maintained and used the vats or buddles that were used in lead and tin mines to wash the ore. These were angled troughs that had water running through.

Hewer – A miner who worked at the coalface, cutting the coal out of the seam.

Hurrier – Often a young boy or girl, who was paid to drag baskets or small wagons of coal from the coalface to the surface

Pikeman – Responsible for dropping the roof in the "thick" seam. He had a very dangerous and skilled job, and was one of the best paid men in the mine.

Pit Brow Lass – A female who worked on the surface of the mine, sorting coal

Prop Bobby – A man who checked the pit props.

Rack Maiden – A girl who worked in the Cornish tin mines, dressing the ore, which was a process of separating the ore from minerals.

Rolleyway Man – Maintained the underground road or rolleyway in the mines

Sinker – A man who was contracted to sink new shafts in a mine. A highly skilled job.

Please be aware that this is just a small list of the more unusually-named occupations in mining. You will probably find a lot more!

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If you have a question about your ancestors who worked in Mining, we have a forum where you can post those questions. Register for FREE at <http://www.genealogy-specialists.com/> and tell us about the ancestor that you are researching. The members will do their best to help you.

If you would like to discover more about your ancestors who worked in Mining, whether in the tin mines of Cornwall or the coal, iron and copper mines elsewhere in Britain, the types of work that they did or want to know more about their lives, listed below are some products that will certainly help you - and all of them are available from [www.parishchest.com](http://www.parishchest.com). Just pop the reference number in the website search box to see the details:

- My Ancestor was a Coalminer Ref: SR-MY05
- Fish, Tin & Copper or Cornwall it's Mines & Miners 1869 Ref: ARB-1347
- The Story of Mining in Cornwall Ref: CEL-03
- And They Work us to Death - Volumes 1 & 2 Ref: GNT-BEN1 and GNT-BEN2
- 1859-1899 North of England Mining Accident Victims Ref: OI-BCD085
- The Miner's Son 1885 Ref: ARB-0554

Many more products are also available from Parish Chest that would be specific to the area that you are researching. Use the website search box to pop in key words such as **Miner** or **Coal**. You never know what you might find!