

# Called Up Sent Down The Bevin Boys War: A Forgotten Chapter in British History

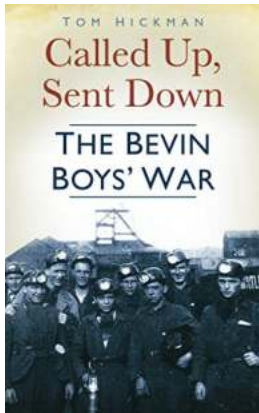


During World War II, while most young men were being called up to join the military and fight on the front lines, a lesser-known group of heroes emerged in Britain. They were the Bevin Boys, a force of young men conscripted to work in the coal mines to support the war effort.

## **The Bevin Boys: Who Were They?**

The Bevin Boys were named after Ernest Bevin, the Minister of Labour and National Service at the time. In 1943, the government introduced the "Manpower Act," which allowed authorities to conscript men between the ages of 18 and 25 into various industries deemed crucial for the war. One of these industries was

coal mining, as coal was vital for powering the country and supporting the military operations.



## Called Up, Sent Down: The Bevin Boys' War

by Tom Hickman (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

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Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 389 pages  
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The Bevin Boys were chosen through a lottery system, with their names being drawn to determine who would be called up into the mines. Many Bevin Boys had no prior experience or knowledge of mining, making their transition to underground work incredibly challenging.

### Life as a Bevin Boy

Life as a Bevin Boy was far from glamorous. These young men would spend their days working long shifts in the dark and dangerous mines. They faced risks such as cave-ins, explosions, and continuous exposure to harmful substances.

Despite the difficult conditions, the Bevin Boys contributed significantly to the coal industry. Their efforts helped maintain the country's energy supply, supporting both the civilian population and the war effort. Without their sacrifices, Britain would have struggled to sustain its operations.

## **The Bevin Boys and the Legacy of War**

Despite their valuable contribution, the Bevin Boys' role in the war has often been overlooked and overshadowed by the bravery of the soldiers on the front lines. This lack of recognition resulted from the absence of a specific medal or formal acknowledgment of their service.

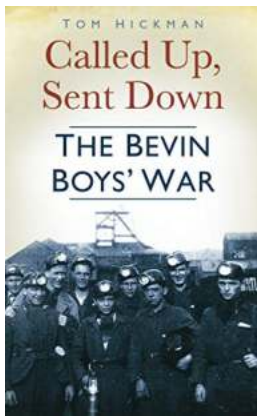
It was not until 2007, over 60 years after the end of the war, that the Bevin Boys were finally recognized for their efforts. Former Prime Minister Tony Blair acknowledged their contribution and awarded surviving Bevin Boys with a badge of recognition.

## **Remembering the Bevin Boys**

Today, efforts are being made to ensure the Bevin Boys are properly remembered and commemorated. The Bevin Boys Association was formed in 2013 to bring together surviving Bevin Boys and keep their legacy alive. The association holds events, gathers stories and memorabilia, and advocates for greater recognition and support.

Memorials have been erected throughout the country to honor the Bevin Boys' contributions. These include plaques, statues, and exhibitions that help perpetuate the memory of their sacrifice and hard work.

The Bevin Boys played a vital role in supporting the war effort during World War II. Despite the physical and emotional challenges they faced, they tirelessly worked in the coal mines to ensure the country's energy supply remained intact. The Bevin Boys' service should never be forgotten, and their stories deserve to be shared as an integral part of British history.



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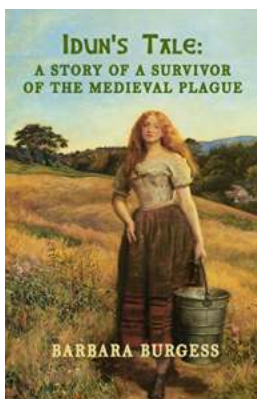
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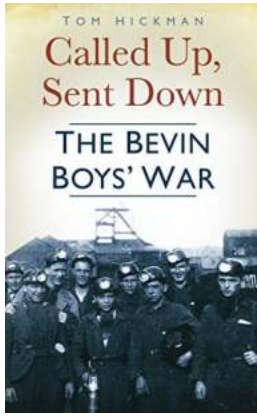


At the outbreak of the Second World War the government short-sightedly allowed thousands of miners to enlist in the armed services. By 1943 the war effort was in danger of grinding to a halt because of a lack of coal. In answer Ernest Bevin, the Minister of Labour, sought service volunteers – and compulsorily sent 20,000 18-year-olds, who'd expected to fight for their country, down the mines with them. Some were so angry that they preferred to go to prison. The majority went to do their best. But some were psychologically, and others physically, unsuited to such dangerous work. Many were injured; some died. Called Up, Send Down is an enthralling oral and social history of an episode of war that has never been fully told.



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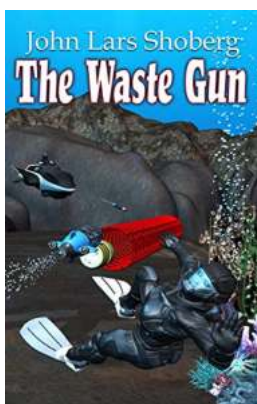
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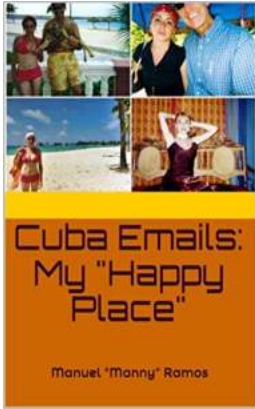
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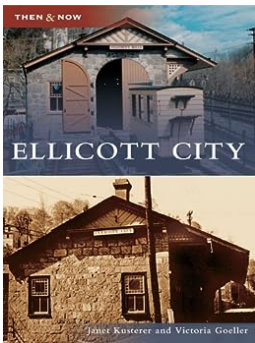
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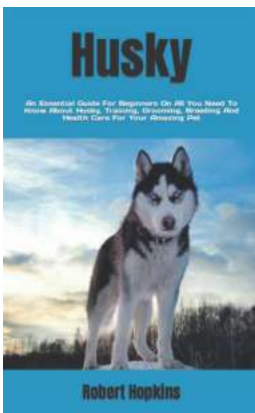
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