

# MINING TERMS used in the LCMLA Scheme

Black – terms used across several regions

Other terms predominantly used in **Derbyshire**, **North Wales**,  
in the **South West**, the **Forest of Dean**, the **North of England** and in **Southern England**

Adit	A horizontal tunnel into a mine from a hillside for access to the vein or to drain water from the mine, sometimes called a level. Not horizontal, usually about 1:150 upwards
Adventurer	Share holder in proposed mining operation
Afterdamp	Noxious gases left after underground explosion
Air Door	Door fixed across a level to direct flow of air for ventilation
Arching	Roof supports in a level built of stone, wood, concrete or iron.
Attle	Cornish term for waste rock of no value
Back filling	Waste rock, which is dumped in a disused area of the mine to save the time and expense of bringing it out to a surface tip (also sometimes to support the mine so that a greater amount of rock can be extracted adjacent to backfilled areas)
Bagging	Roof stone separating from the rock overlay and sagging downwards - an indication of potential hazard.
Banjo Shovel	Short handled shovel (Cornwall)
Bal-maiden	Cornish term for woman employed in surface ore preparation
Balance Bob	Counterbalance on beam engine
Banksman	Foreman in charge of works in and around the surface winding gear
Barracks	Building where miners lodged at the mine during the week.
Barytes	(US- Barite) The mineral barium sulphate. Also called heavy spar.
Bell Pit	Primitive form of mining – involving sinking of a shaft to a shallow seam, and mining outwards to the point of collapse
Billy	Box attached to a child's back to carry iron ore out of the mine
Bind	Synonymous with mudstone
Blackdamp	Asphyxiant mixture of mine gases predominantly carbon dioxide and nitrogen – synonymous with "chokedamp" . It is heavier than air, best test is a naked flame test with an upright candle.
Black powder	Gun powder, used for extracting rock.

Blende	Sulphide of zinc, properly known as sphalerite. The chief ore of zinc. Sometimes known as Black Jack.
Block	Roughly trimmed lump of slate.
Blondin	Wire rope spanning a quarry on which a traveling pulley could lift and move loads.
Brassey	Term used in association with the occurrence of iron pyrites
Brush Ore	Low grade iron ore, crystal structure looks like a brush.
Buddle	Trough or circular pit where ore was separated from waste.
Caban	Recess cut into the rock underground for shelter
Calamine	Zinc Carbonate.
Calcite	The mineral calcium carbonate (note Aragonite is another crystal form of CaCo <sub>3</sub> ).
Chert	A hard siliceous rock, like flint, found as nodules and layers in the limestone. Often black but may weather white.
Caisson	Method of shaft sinking involving a structure sunk from ground surface by continually excavating beneath the bottom of the structure
A Chase	"Cut a Chase" a groove cut into the rock with a pick to allow a block of rock to be removed
Coe	Derbyshire: a small shed, usually of stone, above or near a mine, in which the miners kept their tools and sometimes a change of clothing. The climbing shaft was often under a trap door in the floor of the coe.
Concentrates	Processed ore, usually non-ferrous, suitable for smelting.
Coffin level	A narrow tunnel, coffin shaped in section, usually dating to the early mining period and driven without the use of explosives.
Country rock	Naturally occurring rock, igneous, metamorphic or sedimentary, in which the mineral vein is situated.
Cross-cut	A passageway cut through solid rock from one vein to another (technically cutting across the rocks/beds rather than along them, also known as a cross measures drift in coal mines)
Crusher	Machine with two revolving drums to crush ore
Dram	Truck on rails to carry ore out and materials in to mine.
Deads	(See also 'backfilling' above) Useless stone or wastes from a vein or working, usually stacked in abandoned workings, often on timber platforms which are now dangerously unstable.

Dressing	The reduction and sorting, by hand or machine, of ore into grades suitable for further processing. Also the process of trimming roofing slates to their finished size.
Drumhouse	Structure supporting the drum of a balanced incline.
Engine shaft	A larger shaft equipped with winding machinery (or a pump engine shaft with or without a man lift on the pump rods) rather than a stow or windlass.
False floor	The floor of a tunnel made of timber and clay, constructed after the original floor has been mined away.
Fathom	Nautical measurement of 6 feet, widely used in the mining industry.
Firedamp	Explosive methane gas associated with coal mining.
Firesetting	Primitive method of breaking rock for tunneling, by heating then quenching.
Flat	A body of ore generally lying more or less horizontal, usually parallel with the bedding planes of the enclosing country rock.
Flat Rods	Iron or wooden rods transmitting motion from an engine to pumps.
Floor	Working level of a slate quarry underground.
Fluorspar	The mineral fluorite, calcium fluorite, widely used as a flux in blast furnaces and as a source of fluorine in chemical industry. Also used for special glasses and ceramics.
Forefield	The working face of a mine, usually the furthest point from the shaft.
Free Miner	Person with free mineral rights issued by the Gaveller on behalf of the Crown.
Gale	Surface area allocated to a free miner into which he is allowed to work
Gaveller	Bailiff of mines in Forest of Dean with legal powers
Galena	The mineral lead sulphide, the chief ore of lead.
Gangue	Secondary minerals in a vein in which the more valuable minerals occur.
Ginging	The dressed stonework around the top parts of a shaft holding up the loose ground.
Hade	The slope of a vein from the vertical usually measured in degrees.
Hangingwall	The wall or cheek of the vein which is uppermost (geologically sequenced) as the vein hades. The opposite (normally lower) side is the footwall. Normally the upper and lower sides, but in a vertical vein the geological sequence is important

Haulage road	Tunnel in which tubs of ore are hauled.
Hopper	A wooden chute fixed into the wall and roof of a level, through which ore is discharged into tubs from the workings above.
Horse level	A major level where horses are used for hauling tubs of ore.
Incline	Inclined underground level or surface track for access or haulage. a) Balanced Incline - two parallel tracks with pulley wheel at top, where weight of full wagon descending pulled up empty wagon. b) Chain Incline - device running on chain or wire rope instead of rails. c) Mass Balanced Incline - single track with iron weight running between the rails to balance weight of down-going load. d) Powered Incline- device where engine was used to haul loads upwards. e) Table Incline - where wagons were carried on a moving table rather than on the rails themselves.
Iron Stone	Iron ore
Jackroll	A manpowered windlass for raising kibbles from a shaft.
Jumper	Long iron rod, pointed at each end, which was used to drill shot holes by repeatedly hitting it against the rock face.
Kibble	A large bucket used to lift the ore up a shaft.
Level	A horizontal tunnel, adit, sough or drift. A level may also be a surveying instrument.
Lode	Mineral vein. A fissure containing a deposit of ore.
Launder	Wooden trough for conveying water.
Leat	Surface channel for conveying water.
Manway	A walkway or ladder-way between levels.
Mill	Surface building where slate or ore was processed.
Mine	(Open to debate – as opposed to Quarry)
Mochyn	The iron weighted balancing trolley of a mass balanced incline.
Nelly	Small forked stick held in mouth like a smoking pipe to hold a candle.
Ocre	Iron oxide, forms in red, yellow and purple.
Old man	(T'owd man) Places worked by former miners or the former miners themselves.
Ore	Material from which metal could be extracted by smelting.

Ore chute	Near vertical chute for moving ore downwards by gravity.
Pack wall	Deads built up along side a level, e.g. in flats or pipe workings.
Pelton Wheel	Small waterwheel with cups into which a jet of water was directed.
Pillar	In a Slate or Stone working (or any mine), the area of rock left undisturbed between chambers for the purpose of supporting the ground above.
Plate Rail	Old style of railway where the trucks had flat wheels and the rails had a flange.
Plug and feather	An old method of splitting rock by inserting wedges in opposition into a drilled hole
Pillar and stall	The mining method of leaving pillars to support the roof. N.B back-filling was also a very important method of supporting the roof often used in conjunction with pillar and stall mining.
Pillar robbing	The bad practice of thinning pillars underground to cheaply obtain slate (or stone or mineral). ( Often carried out on the retreat from an area, so not necessarily 'bad practice' to the original miners)
Pipe	A body of ore lying more or less horizontally, but long and narrow. Grades into a flat by broadening. Many pipe veins are in fact ancient caverns filled with ore. Pipes may branch out of a rake.
Portal	The entrance to a level, usually constructed from local stone.
Powder House	Explosive store.
Quarry	Place where stone or slate was excavated, either on surface or underground.
Rake	The local name for the main type of mineral vein found in the Peak District. A body of ore disposed vertically between two walls of rock and thus having a straight course across country.
Rise / Raise	An underground shaft driven upwards above a working.
Roofing shaft	In slate, the first cut made in developing a chamber, made along the top of the vein, above the intended extraction area.
Scrin	Derbyshire, a short often thin, vertical vein of ore. Often branching out of a rake.
Sett	Area of a mining lease.
Shaft	Vertical or slightly inclined entrance for access, haulage or pumping.
Sheave	Grooved pulley wheel.
Shot hole	Hole bored in rock to take explosives.

Shrinkage stope	A system of overhand stoping where the miners use the broken ore to stand on.
Slab	Piece of finished (or partly finished) slate, thicker and larger than a roofing slate.
Slag	Waste material usually in heaps
Slideway	Unrailed incline.
Slimes	The finest mud from the crushing machines.
Sough	Derbyshire, a drainage adit.
Spoil	Waste rock tipped on the surface.
Stemple	A piece of wood wedged across a working or vein, for use as a rung of a climbing way or as part of a platform or lodgement for stacking deads, or part of a roof support. Stemples of dressed stone occur in a few mines.
Stink damp	(Hydrogen sulphide) smells of rotten eggs, caused when timber or vegetation rots. The ability to smell this gas is lost very quickly (it knocks out the olfactory nerves within seconds) and this can give a false sense of security. NB very dangerous.
Stope	A worked out vein after removal of the ore, left as a cavity. When working upwards it is overhand stoping. Downwards is underhand stoping.
Stow / Stowe	Derbyshire, the wooden windlass over a shaft for raising ore.
Stulls	Heavy horizontal timbers fixed from wall to wall in open stopes to hold back the hanging wall. ( Also to support false floors where a stope below has taken the crown pillar [i.e. the floor of the upper level] out).
Sump	An internal shaft, not connected to the surface, sometimes called a winze, Alternatively a sump is a hollow in the bottom of a mine for collecting the drainage for pumping.
Tell tails	Stones deliberately inserted into cracks to fall out if movement takes place, to indicate possible hazards.
Trunc	Table of a table incline.
Twll	Open slate pit.
Untopping	Removing the overburden of an underground working to enable the slate pillars to be extracted. Modern machinery makes this economic.
Vein	The body of minerals enclosed by rock usually vertical or near vertical, possibly striking through the rock for great distances and for great depth.

Whim	Winding engine powered by horse, steam or water.
White Damp	Dangerous gas – Carbon monoxide
Winch	Portable device for raising loads, either hand, steam or air powered.
Winze	A small underground shaft sunk from one part of a mine to another. - opposite of a raise or rise



