

A seven-part drama series for television

OUR BROTHERS BELOW

They wanted to fight for their country, not dig for it!

Writer: Jaye Swift

An extraordinary tale of five young conscripts sent down the coal mines during World War II. None are prepared for how their lives will unravel as they fight a very different battle - underground.

In 1944 Britain faced a shortage of coal. To tackle this problem eighteen year old conscripts from all walks of life, known as the Bevin Boys, were balloted out of the armed services into coal mining. Those who refused, were sent to jail.

This seven-part period drama follows the lives of five Bevin Boys sent to work in a South Wales coalfield during the final year of World War II. Friendships form, tragedy occurs, demons are faced as each Bevin Boy follows his own personal journey into the terrifying underground world of coal mining. This is an emotional tale highlighting a hidden world that really existed. Based on true-life accounts from the Bevin Boys themselves, this adds even more dramatic resonance to the narrative. Every day the Bevin Boys faced an enemy that was as dangerous as being on the battlefield. The only difference was their battlefield was the coal face.

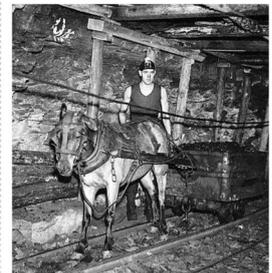
Our Brothers Below is a compelling, character-driven series with a gripping storyline filled with conflict and intrigue. The Bevin Boys form an unconventional group drawn from very different social backgrounds. Although thrown together they share a common experience, as their interwoven lives are played out in the shadow of the imposing coal mine. Combining 1940s style with the drama of the coal face adds a strong visual resonance that will engage the audience and draw them in.



The Bevin Boys working the mine

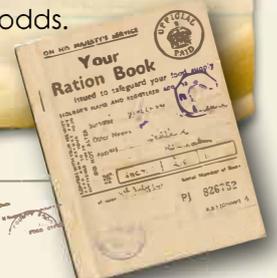


Filling the dram



Bevin Boy with a pit pony

The Bevin Boys often faced ridicule and aggression from locals and were frequently accused of being conscientious objectors to avoid combat during war time. To add to this injustice The Bevin Boys vital contribution to the war effort was not officially recognised for over 50 years, after which many had died. This underlying prejudice held against the Bevin Boys is poignantly echoed throughout the series. Above ground although their lives lead very different paths, below ground facing the same animosity and danger they work together to overcome the odds.





The Bevin Boys



Miners family

This series has a wealth of strong characters, all very distinctive and engaging in their own right, led by five key Bevin Boys.

Edward Williams, a shy middle class accountant becomes good friends with **Alun Jenkins**, a local lad whose father the much-admired **Bryn** works down the mine. Edward hates every minute of life as a miner but Alun and his family help him to cope with it. Edward makes friends with **Maurice Turner**, who served three months hard labour for refusing to take up coal mining. Maurice, the son of an Earl, applies for an appeal hearing only to be refused over and over again with grim repercussions.

Isaac Hughes a self-assured, stylish young man is married to the devoted and pregnant **Alice**. On meeting Alun's sister, the glamorous **Sioned** who works in the pit canteen, Isaac is captivated by her and so begins an affair. But when Sioned discovers Isaac is married, things spiral out of control. His life is further complicated underground by **Price**, the Charge Hand, a brute who has taken an instant dislike to his cocky attitude and is hell bent on destroying him.

Robert Lock, a talented blacksmith with a dark past, lodges with the local **Harries** family in town; gradually falling under the spell of the landlady's daughter, **Cerwen Harries**, a strongly determined land girl. Robert faces his own war when he has to confront his abusive father to rescue his deaf brother **Thomas Lock**, risking his life in the process.

Throughout the series each character endures their own personal drama, with lives enjoyed as well as destroyed. From the rise of love to family clashes, from playful humour to emotional devastation Our Brothers Below is true to the realities of war time life. As all their lives become inextricably linked, the series ramps up to a major pit disaster the outcome of which effects everyone in the community.

WHAT MAKES THIS SERIES STAND OUT

Original and little-known story of the Second World War

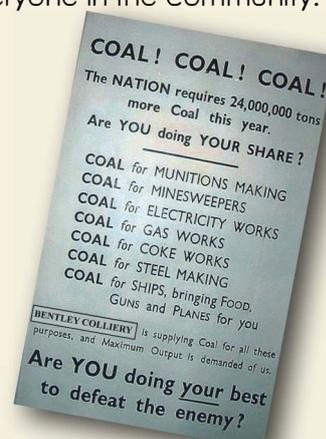
Based on real-life accounts, extensively researched

Eloquent and sensitively written script with a real sense for drama

Diversity of characters with great male & female roles, young & old

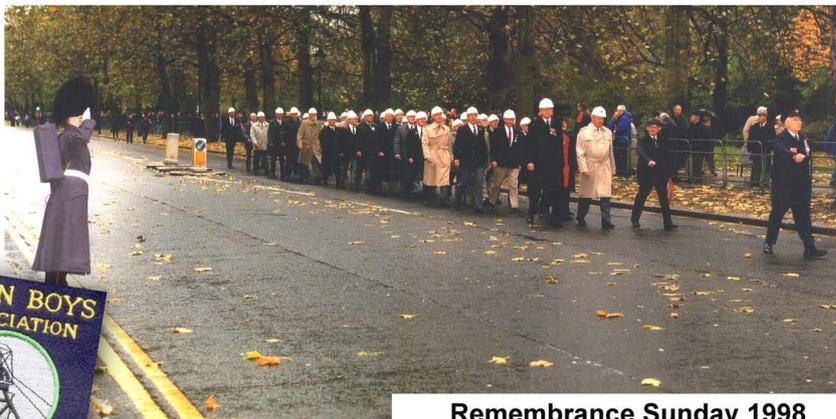
High potential for a visually stand-out television series

Feeds the current global passion for period dramas



The story of the Bevin Boys during World War II is relatively unknown, ask anyone on the streets if they have heard of them, more often than not, the answer is no. The Bevin Boys always referred to themselves as 'the forgotten conscripts'. I knew nothing about them until a visit to Big Pit (coal museum near Blaenavon, Wales) in 2006 when I happened upon an article commemorating the 60th anniversary of the Bevin Boys. Intrigued, I began to investigate and what I discovered was an astounding story. So who were these forgotten conscripts?

Forty eight thousand young conscripts fought their war underground in Great Britain's coal mines, such was the dire need for coal. The Bevin Boys received a mere four weeks training before being sent to work alongside experienced coal miners in collieries around the country. Researching the Bevin Boys was arduous. Information was sporadic and sparse. In March 2008 I contacted Warwick Taylor, MBE, Vice President of the Bevin Boys Association informing him I had an idea to write a drama series about the Bevin Boys. We met a few weeks later and have become firm friends during the following years of research and writing. Warwick put me in touch with the South Wales Bevin Boys group, and upon invitation attended their yearly reunion in 2008. I interviewed numerous Bevin Boys and the stories they told were fascinating. I immersed myself in research - reading several self published autobiographies, making trips to many pits, learning all about coal mining and life in Wales in the 1940s to help form the story in my mind. Once my script was finished I published a website about the Bevin Boys, with full support of Warwick Taylor who gave me all the material needed to create theforgottenconscript.co.uk. Out of the 48,000 Bevin boys not many are left. It's time to tell their story.



Remembrance Sunday 1998

The Bevin Boys fought fifty years for the right to march past the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday. First paraded in 1998, their last official parade was 2012, Jaye L Swift was invited to march alongside them.

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