

A COAL MINING CHRONOLOGY

- 43-410 AD Coal was in use in Roman Britain as evident from the remains found at stations along the Roman Wall, from the Tyne to the Solway Firth. Coal was also used to feed the sacred flame in the temple of Minerva at Bath. The principal use for coal at this time was probably as ballast in the empty grain ships returning from Tyneside to the Fens. Some writers say that the Romans used coal for salt-making, however, there is no evidence to support this claim.
- 852 The Saxon Chronicles of the Abbey of Peterborough, record the payment for twelve loads of fossil, or pit, coal to the abbey in 852 AD.
- 1085 In the Domesday Book there is no mention of coal mining in England, although there is detailed information about other trades and industries.
- 1180 One of the earliest references to the working of coal in the northern coalfield appears in the Boldon Book, in which a grant of land was made to a collier to provide coal for a cart-smith at Coundon. A similar grant was made to the smith of Sedgfield and the smith of Bishopwearmouth had 12 acres for the iron work of the carts and found his own coal (*carbonem*).
- ca. 1200 The records of Newbattle & Holyrood Abbeys show that coal began to be dug on the south shore of the Firth of Forth, at Carriden in Linlithgow and at Preston in East Lothian before the end of the reign of William Lionheart in about 1200.
- C12th By the late 12th century coal was being used by smiths and lime burners.
- C13th By the 13th century the coal produced rarely exceeded 15,000 tons/yr.
- The first evidence for the use of coal for salt-making dates to the 13th century. The Priory of St Bees, in Cumbria, operated a saltworks probably at either Whitehaven Harbour or the site of the later Saltom Pit. However it is unlikely that the fully fledged panhouse salt-making process took off until the 15th century and then probably in Scotland before England.
- 1228 By this date, sea coal was being shipped to London, as shown by a lane in London which went by the name of ‘Sacole Lane’, and was later changed to ‘Secole Lane’ in 1253.
- The earliest workings of ‘sea coal’ were situated on the coasts of Northumberland, Durham and the Firth of Forth estuary.
- ca. 1235 One of the first references to coal in a document was in a grant of land on the coast by Adam de Camhous to the monks of Newbattle Abbey in Scotland. The grant included the right to build a road to the shore for the