

activity

1 Look at sources 11 and 13 and the information in the text.

a In what ways does the writer in the Edinburgh Review disagree with Mr Tremenhoe?

b How reliable do you think Mr Tremenhoe's report might have been? Explain your reasons as fully as possible.

2 Look at the information in the text. Why do you think the miners unions decided to argue that the work of the pit brow girls was degrading to women?

Even some of the middle-class women who were looking for new ways forward for women agreed with some of these attitudes. Emily Faithfull included 'the loading of railway trucks' and 'dragging coal waggons' in a list of unsuitable jobs for women, saying:

SOURCE 12

We do not want to turn women into men, nor to see them doing men's work.

Emily Faithfull, 'The Unfit Employments in which Women are Engaged',
The Victoria Magazine, 1863

Another writer argued that work on the pit brows was not 'unfeminine'. It provided the women with regular work and made them independent. As for bad language:

SOURCE 13

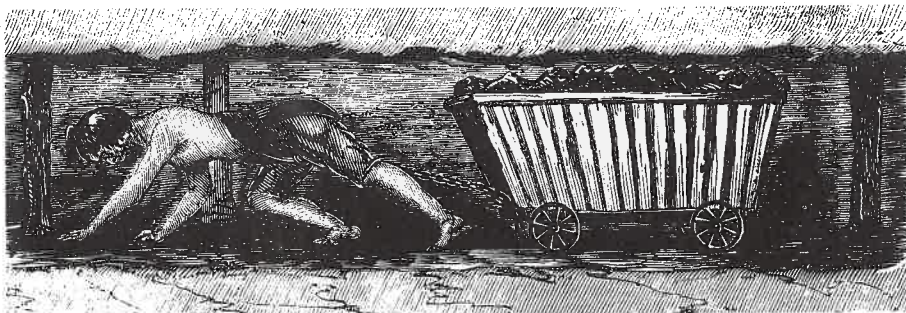
They hear on the pit mounds exactly the language they would hear at home, and much less of it, for work is not favourable to conversation.

The Edinburgh Review, April 1863

Trade union opposition

In 1842, Parliament passed a law banning the employment of women and children underground in coal mines. This followed the publication of the report of a commission of inquiry which showed that women and children were being forced to work in dreadful conditions. The report was illustrated and the public was horrified by the pictures as well as by the descriptions of what was going on (source 14).

SOURCE 14



A Woman working underground in a coal mine. An illustration from the First Report of the Children's Employment Commission (on mines), 1842.

Male miners had other reasons for opposing the employment of women and children in mines. Women and children were paid less than men. Employers could use this cheaper labour either to put