



### Activity Four

<b>Activity Name</b>	<b>4. The Industrial Revolution</b>
<b>Learning Aims</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Appreciate the difficulties and challenges of life in the mining communities of the Brendon Hills in late Victorian and Edwardian times.</li> <li>○ Understand how the Mineral Line was part of the Industrial Revolution.</li> <li>○ Learn about children at work during the Industrial Revolution.</li> <li>○ Investigate the impact the railway had on Exmoor.</li> </ul>
<b>Links to National Curriculum</b>	<p><b>History</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Knowledge and understanding of events, people and changes in the past</li> <li>● Victorian Britain</li> <li>● Unit 18: What was it like to live here in the past?</li> <li>● Unit 12: How did life change in our locality in Victorian times?</li> <li>● Unit 11: What was it like for children living in Victorian Britain?</li> </ul>
<b>Resources required</b>	4a Children at work worksheet; 4b Miner and child miner; 4c Mineral Line timeline
<b>Activities</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Complete Children at work worksheet (4a).</li> <li>2. What impact do you think both the West Somerset Mineral Railway and the West Somerset Railway would have had on people living on the Brendon Hills? Think about the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Travel</li> <li>● Sounds and smells</li> <li>● Daily life</li> <li>● The landscape</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Using the Mineral Line timeline (4c) for reference create your own large scale timeline for the classroom wall.</li> </ol>

### Teacher information

#### The Industrial Revolution

The Industrial Revolution was a period in the late 18th and early 19th centuries where major changes in agriculture, manufacturing, mining, and transport had a profound effect on the socioeconomic and cultural conditions in the United Kingdom.

Starting in the later part of the 18th century there began a transition in parts of Great Britain's previously manual labour and draft-animal-based economy towards machine-based manufacturing. It started with the mechanisation of the textile industries, the development of iron-making techniques and the increased use of refined coal. Trade expansion was enabled by the introduction of canals, improved roads and railways.

The changes subsequently spread throughout Europe, North America, and eventually the world. The onset of the Industrial Revolution marked a major turning point in human society; almost every aspect of daily life was eventually influenced in some way.

Britain managed to build a huge empire during the Victorian period. It was also a time of tremendous change in the lives of British people. In 1837 most people

lived in villages and worked on the land; by 1901, most lived in towns and worked in offices, shops and factories.

Factories and machines were built to meet this demand and new towns grew up, changing the landscape and the ways people lived and worked. People who had previously worked as agricultural labourers in the countryside were attracted to the West Somerset Mineral Railway because it offered them higher wages and more job security.

#### Iron and steel

Henry Bessemer was an inventor who found a way to convert iron into steel. Steel was both stronger and lighter than iron. This made it possible to build huge structures such as bridges and ships.

Because iron could be made into steel this meant that the iron ore which was excavated from the mines on the West Somerset Mineral Railway was very much in demand.

#### Children at work

Children were key workers during the Industrial Revolution. Children were cheap, uneducated, and small enough to fit between tight fitting machinery that adults couldn't get between.

They worked very long hours with little breaks and no fresh air. They often

## Langham Engine House

worked in very dangerous conditions resulting in injuries or even death.

At the start of the Industrial Revolution there was no legislation about working conditions in mills or factories. As factories spread rapidly the owners of mills, mines and other forms of industry needed large numbers of workers and they didn't want to have to pay them a high wage.

### **Steam power**

Steam railways were originally built to transport goods, but they also meant that people could travel easily around the country for the first time. They also brought new foods to towns and cities.

The Industrial Revolution rapidly gained pace during Victoria's reign because of the power of steam. Victorian engineers developed bigger, faster and more powerful machines that could run whole factories. This led to a massive increase in the number of factories.

In the mid nineteenth century the two railways (West Somerset Mineral Railway, and West Somerset Railway) had an impact on Exmoor's infrastructure and economy.

The West Somerset Mineral Railway was an 11 mile long railway constructed from 1857 - 1864 to transport iron ore from the Brendon Hills to the harbour at Watchet.

It was opened to passengers in 1865, and was a new and important means of travel between communities in the Brendon Hills and Watchet. It was only on rare occasions that miners' families could afford to spend an eighth of their weekly wage on a railway ticket. The seats of the first and second class compartments were upholstered, those of third class had timber boards. The mines closed in 1883, but the railway stayed open until 1898.